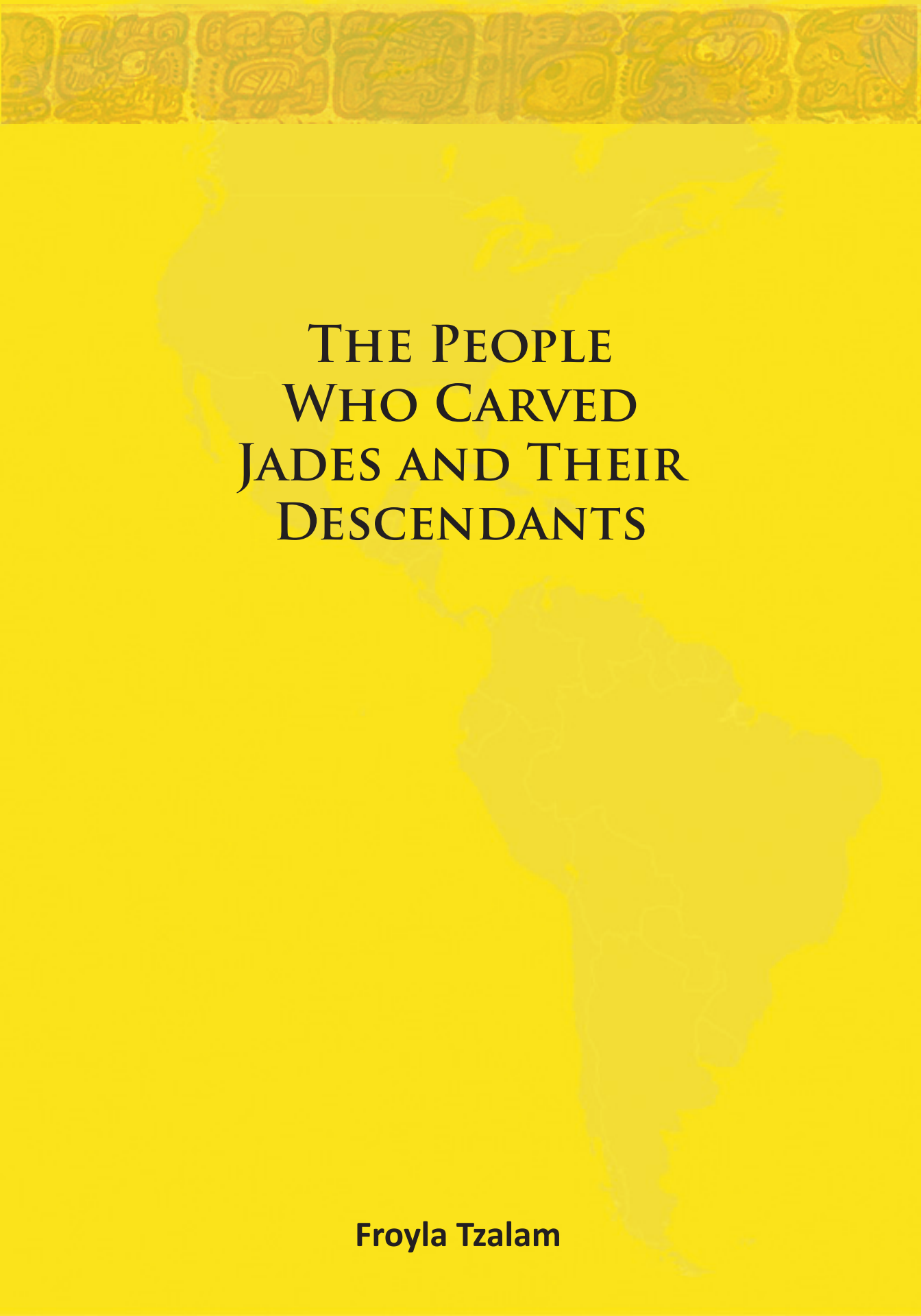


THE PEOPLE
WHO CARVED
JADES AND THEIR
DESCENDANTS



Froyla Tzalam



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Montse Casadumunt

Cen (Ken) Family of Xaibe, Corozal

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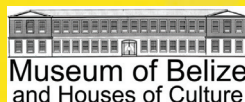
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Dedicated to the People of Belize



FOREWORD

THE EXHIBITION

In 2006, Belize celebrated its 25th anniversary of Independence and NICH marked the occasion with its celebrated exhibit: "Jades of Belize." As we prepare to celebrate our 30th anniversary, NICH, with UNESCO providing the finance, is taking the opportunity to enhance and expand the Maya Jades of Belize by presenting an interpretive approach and calling the exhibit: "THE PEOPLE WHO CARVED THE JADES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS". This exhibit uses the current Maya artifacts in a more contextual setting, placing a more human face on the exhibit and this ancient culture.

Who are the people that excelled in plotting the path of Venus, used the zero, and were able to feed millions using raised fields, terraced hillsides and aquaculture? In this exhibit, we have tried to emphasize iconographic representations of the Maya world such as the Maya creation story similar to the western Bible, the Popul Vuh. Particular emphasis has been made to show how the majority of the Maya (farmers, builders, artisans, housewives) lived and produced the objects we see here: ceramics, lithics, monuments, and jade handiwork. What do these objects tell us about the Maya people?

This display should begin to answer those questions. The Maya used their environment, creativity and hard work to create one of the more inspiring civilizations. This exhibit will expand and instill much needed information, pride and respect for our Belizean indigenous Maya culture that paved the way and continues in a down to earth way to carve out a positive life here in Belize for the Maya today. The world and the Maya are constantly renewing and regenerating like Chiccan, the Maya serpent undergoing a process of shedding and transformation.

THE BOOKLET

The booklet shows us that the Maya were just the beginning- the foundation of this thirty year old nation! It highlights the resistance against European power and control which affected the course of Belize's history such as the change in status from colony to Crown colony. The Maya have always been facing change and coming up with new solutions beginning from the time of their ancestors' (Archaic People). The fact that Belize has a vibrant Maya population is a sign of their success. They were just one of many people: enslaved Africans who revolted for freedom, indentured Indians, and others who have made this gem their home. All a we mek Belize!

Lita Hunter Krohn
March 31st, 2011

PALEO-INDIANS

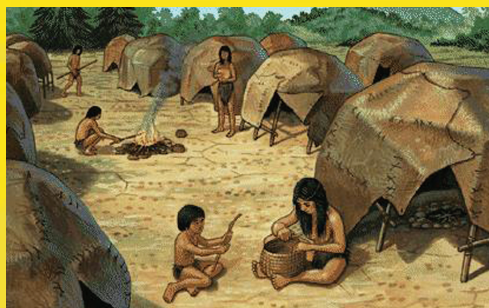
The first people of Belize came from Asia more than 12,000 years ago. They are known as Paleo-Indians. The Paleo Indians and their descendants, the Archaic People, had a common ancestry with the Chinese and Mongolians and other Asiatic people.



Giant Sloth Femur, Santa Familia, Cayo. (Approximately 20 inches in length)



Giant Sloth



Big animals provided leather for tents and clothes, bones for needles and meat for sustenance.

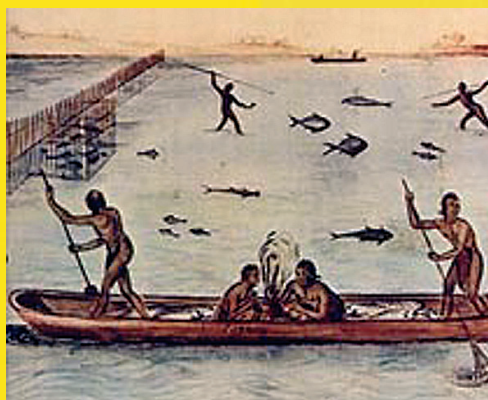
ARCHAIC PEOPLE

After 8,000 B.C.E. the Pleistocene period ended and the environment changed leading to the extinction of mega fauna which contributed substantially to the Paleo-Indian diet. These changes forced the Archaic People to be more reliant on foraging for plants and capturing small game. In other words, the Paleo Indians became the Archaic People.

Over time, these hunter-gathers and their nomadic lifestyle developed into small settlements dependent on farming.



Archaic stone tools



People living along the coast and lagoons made use of natural resources.



The atlatl was one type of tool used for hunting.



Teosinte, the ancestor of corn or maize, was experimented on continuously for thousands of years.

Ceramics from Cuello, Orange Walk



The end of the Early Preclassic period (1200-900 B.C.E) saw the establishment of the first Maya villages. They include Cuello and Colha in Orange Walk, and Cahal Pech and Blackman Eddy in Cayo. Pottery marks the transition from Archaic to the Preclassic period. The inhabitants of these villages increasingly relied on agriculture for subsistence and experimented with the early form of maize and other plants. They participated in long distance trade for the acquisition of exotics such as jade, obsidian, and marine shells. From these humble origins several of these sites later developed into complex and sophisticated Classic period communities.



Artist illustration of Cuello

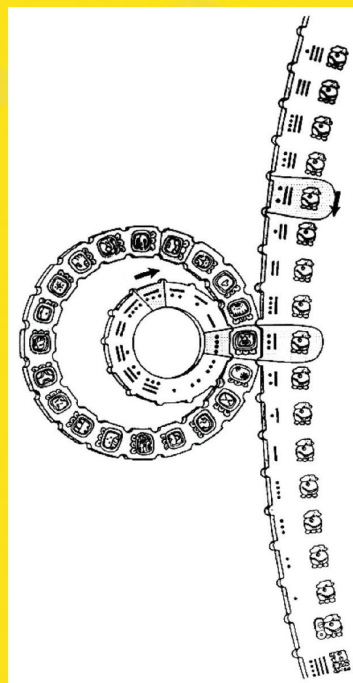


THE ANCIENT MAYA: THE PEOPLE WHO CARVED JADE

Religion was an integral part of Maya society: it was the basis of power, astronomy, agricultural rituals, creation stories, calendrics, and community life. It inspired innovation, wealth, status, and the production of beautiful ceramics and art. These were the people who carved jade.



Illustration of artists carving stela



Maya calendar illustration



Jade ear flare, Pomona, Stann Creek. It has four texts written on opposite sides of the flare.



Buena Vista vase, Cayo

The vase was made for Lord K'ak' Til (Fire Tapir), ruler of the ancient city of Naranjo, in present day Guatemala. The vase was recovered in 1988 from a royal tomb at the site of Buena Vista, Cayo. It contained cacao and depicts the Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, after killing the gods of death.



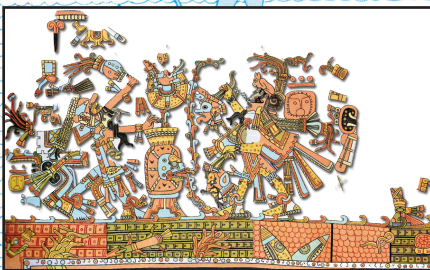


The social pyramid illustrates how Maya society was organised. The farmers were the backbone producing surplus food which allowed others time to innovate and administrate. Each member of society contributed to Maya civilization.



Ancient Maya farmer

Mesoamericans, like Belizeans, today acquired many products and ideas from other regions. The last major cultural impact was wrought by Europeans and most recently by globalisation. European conquerors introduced a new worldview supporting a different relationship between humans and the environment.



The Santa Rita Mural dates from the Postclassic period. It shows Mixtec (Oaxaca) influence. There was a lot of trade and outside contact during this period in the Maya area.

THE MAYA: THEIR LAND AND THEIR TRADE ROUTES

COLONIAL MAYA: FROM SUBJECTS TO OBJECTS OF HISTORY...

Maya religious and political institutions were among the first organisations to be targeted for destruction by the Spanish. The Maya rulers and administrators were therefore among the first to be eliminated. Maya commoners were then forced into providing free labour for the benefit of the Spanish encomenderos.



Spanish torture an indigenous ruler.

Nachan Kan and Gonzalo Guerrero were resistance fighters of Yucatan. Gonzalo Guerrero, shipwrecked off the coast of Yucatan, later was assimilated into Maya society and died alongside the Maya people. A Spanish administrator allegedly reported that when Guerrero was killed, his naked body was tattooed, and he was wearing the Indian dress, a loincloth. Nachan Kan was a Maya leader and Guerrero's father in law. When tribute was demanded from him, he replied that he would pay with "turkeys in the shape of spears and maize in the shape of arrows."

RESISTANCE TO SPANISH COLONIZATION

Resistance to Spanish rule took two main forms: fight or flight.

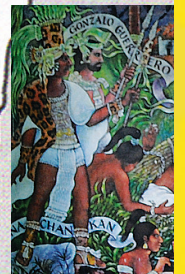
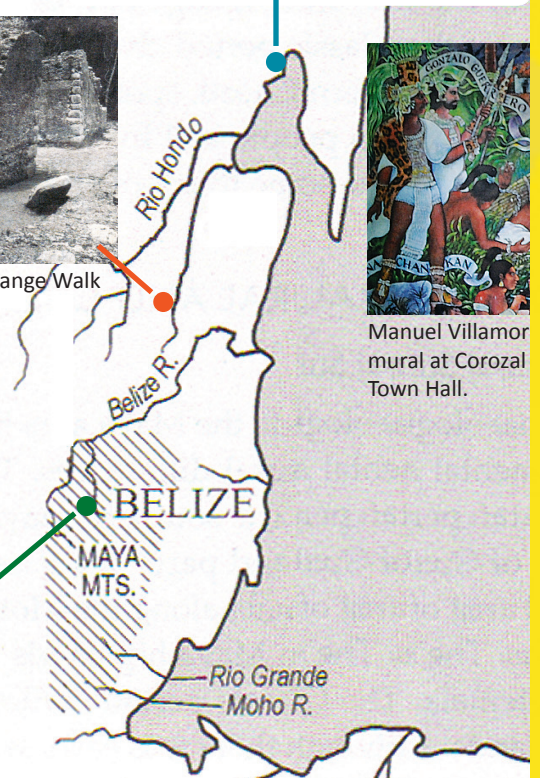


Site of Lamanai church, Orange Walk

In western Belize, the resistance was led by Ah Chan, nephew of Ahau Kan Ek, king of the last Maya kingdom to be conquered in 1697. Ah Chan was an ambassador for his uncle but then switched sides twice. Under him, the Itzaj, Mopan and other Maya united to resist colonization.

The Maya burned down mission towns at Tipu and Lamanai. People were forcibly moved to other mission towns in Peten such as San Luis. Smaller groups of Mopan, Itzaj, and Chols most likely remained in isolated communities in Belize.

PETEN



Manuel Villamor mural at Corozal Town Hall.

MAYA RESISTANCE TO BRITISH COLONIZATION

The first British record of the Maya was in 1766, and it was most likely the result of greater British encroachment into the interior for forest products. In 1809, Captain Henderson described the Maya as a 'hostile' and peculiarly ferocious' people.



West Indian Regiment soldiers from 1884

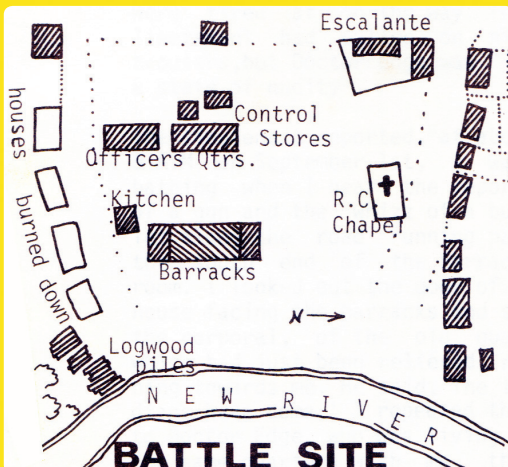


Meeting between representatives of Britain, Mexico and Santa Cruz Maya in 1884.

Marcus Canul, Corozal Town Hall



West Indian Barracks, 1872 was attacked by Marcos Canul.



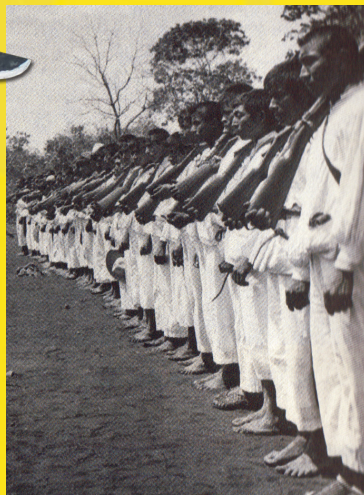
When Marcos Canul demanded rent from timber companies from 1856, he was demanding a right provided in the Treaty of 1853. When the ruling elite based in Belize Town were unable or refused to pay for security against Maya attacks, they dissolved the Legislative Assembly in the hope that London would pay for security costs. In so doing, they gave up local control. Canul was fatally wounded in 1872 at the Battle of Orange Walk.

CASTE WAR: CONTINUING RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM

The Caste War was one of many armed conflicts between the Maya and Spanish/Mexican authority. Starting in the mid 1840s, this rebellion almost led to the creation of a Maya state in Yucatan. The Caste War left an indelible mark on shaping Belize's future. Northern Belize's population increased substantially, and the refugees injected Spanish and Yukatekan languages and cultures, changing the economic and political landscape of the colony.



CAUDILLO JACINTOPAT

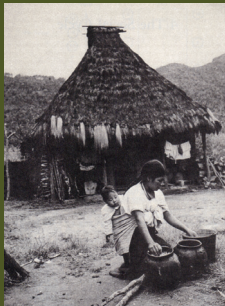


Cecilio Chi and Jacinto Pat were Maya military leaders who initiated the Caste War.



CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

While there was much change on the political and economic landscape, people continued with private rituals and everyday activities. New foods, clothing, dances, and religion were slowly Mayanised. The exchange between all these people (Africans, Maya, Europeans) created new cultures which have influenced Belizean food, music, folktales, language, and dance.



GUATEMALA AND THE MAYA

There were rebellions throughout the colonial period in Guatemala as there had been in Mexico. Three main events that affected Belize were: the aftermath of the conquest of the last Maya kingdom, the Itzaj in 1697 in Peten, the economic policies initiated in the 1860s, and the genocide in the 1980s.

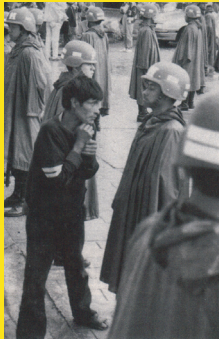
The result was the mass movement of people between Guatemala and Belize especially in the Cayo and Toledo districts. In a manner similar to the Yucatec Maya's impact in the north (sugar production and the change to Crown colony status), the Maya of southern Belize would also shape the country's future-politically, economically and culturally (milpa farming, cash crop production: corn, rice and animal husbandry).

"...to modernise the country, Barrios, ...expropriates the lands of the Indian communities,..to integrate the Indian into the Nation, the liberal government makes him a serf of the coffee plantations,soldiers tour the plantation distributing Indians." *E. Galeano 1877 The Civilizer, Guatemala City*

Rigoberta Menchú, Nobel Peace Prize winner (1992) meets with Belizean Maya, Pio Coc.



The infantry is headed by "Spanish" officers but the rank and file troops are mostly indigenous. These soldiers are generally conscripted and stationed outside the areas of their ethnic group.



1978 Massacre of Panzós- soldiers killed more than one hundred Q'eqchi' protesters.

CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Rituals are the worldview in action.



DESCENDANTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO CARVED JADE

BECOMING SUBJECTS OF HISTORY ONCE MORE



Maya leaders once more head to the seat of power, Belmopan, to have indigenous rights recognised.

Left to right: Basilio Ah, Florentino Tzalam, Diego Bol, Primitivo Coc, Juan Cal (1985).

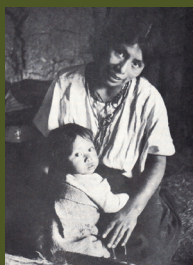
- That the GOB recognizes that the Maya People have rights to lands and resources in southern Belize based on their long-standing use and occupancy.



AN AGREEMENT made this 12 day of October, 2000 BETWEEN the GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE (hereinafter referred to as the GOB) of the One Part and the TOLEDO MAYA CULTURAL COUNCIL, the TOLEDO ALCALDES' ASSOCIATION, the K'EKCHI COUNCIL OF BELIZE, the TOLEDO MAYA WOMEN'S COUNCIL and the ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS who are collectively described as the MAYA LEADERS REPRESENTING THE MAYA PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN BELIZE (hereinafter referred to as the "Maya Leaders") of the Other Part.

CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Maya people are actively creating and promoting their identity, history and culture using western technology. For all the Maya groups, standardization of languages has led to printed texts of stories, religion, local history and a greater consciousness. Incursions on land and human rights are immediately tweeted and blogged on the internet alerting everyone.



DESCENDANTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO CARVED JADE

The global economy is unpredictable: a cash crop today may be worth nothing tomorrow.



The chicle industry employed Maya in the north and west of Belize. Chicle was used to make chewing gum and tires. The introduction of latex killed the industry in the 1940s.

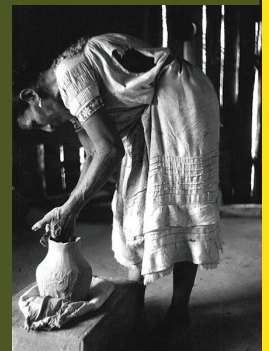
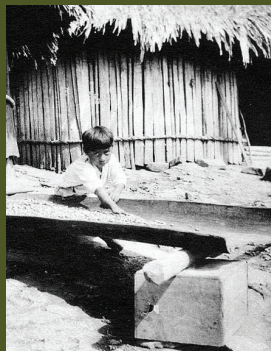
Sugar cane farming was introduced by the Caste War refugees. It became the number one cash crop replacing mahogany.

Malaysian logging companies were given concessions in areas where the Maya lived and made use of the land.



CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

In Belize, the Mopan and Q'eqchi' continue to make ceramic utensils, instruments, baskets, and art. In addition, farmers are using organic methods of improving fertility of their land.



DESCENDANTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO CARVED JADE

PROMOTING MAYA VALUES FOR ALL BELIZEANS

Tumul K'in Center of Learning, Blue Creek, Toledo is an example of Maya values and philosophy as the cornerstone of education. Its student body is made up of students of all backgrounds from all over Belize.



Students of Tumil K'in and residential dormitory.



CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

The Maya/Mestizo are also organising themselves into cultural groups. All three cultural groups in Belize are in communication with the Mopan and Q'eqchi' of Guatemala and the Yukatek of Mexico sharing information.





The Maya, like other people, were always influenced by other people and cultures sometimes peacefully, other times violently. Change was a constant. However, nothing prior to the 16th century prepared them for the European invasion. The elite were replaced by new ones whose aim was plunder and obliteration of the cultures encountered. Thus started 500 years of native silence on history and the creation of a new world for the Maya.

However, the Maya as we have seen were far from silent. They were actively and passively resisting their invaders. They continued earning a living from the environment while making use of western guns and machetes. The Maya elite were eliminated, but the carriers of culture survived.

The Maya are in all of us. We inherited their physical legacy (cities and artefacts) and our lives contain the strands of the ancient Maya worldview culturally through language, stories, dance, and rituals. The Maya accomplishments continued through time and space. Their resilience to injustice and their survival is a testament to the human spirit, one that Belizeans can build on. As George Price said in *The Maya of Belize, Historical Chapters Since Columbus 1972*, "The evidence of Maya resistance to aggression in the past may well serve as an inspiration to the Belize of the future."





Illustration of Belize in the 1500-1600s.

MAIN POLITICAL EVENTS FOR THE MAYA OF BELIZE

Year	Event
1511-	Gonzalo Guerrero, a shipwrecked Spaniard and Maya leader Nachan Kan (ruler of land including Belize and Mexico) resist the Spanish.
1525	Hernan Cortez passes through south western Belize while on a military expedition. Encounters the Itza Maya of Peten.
1615-1619	Tipu, a Maya city located on the Macal river becomes a colonial centre.
1638-1641	The Maya burn and abandon Lamanai and other mission towns beginning the end of Spanish influence in Belize.
1642	Pirate attack Salamanca de Bacalar, seat of Spanish authority in southern Mexico. This ends Spanish control of the Maya provinces of Dzuilincob and Chetumal in northern Belize.
1697	The military conquest of the Itzaj in Noh Peten, Guatemala, leads to movement of people from there to other parts of their kingdom in southern and western Belize.
1701- 1704	Spanish missionaries report Maya settlements being raided by Buccaneer/Miskito people for enslavement.
1707	Christianizing and military attempts by other Maya in the Peten leads to resistance by Ah Chan, leader of the Mopan, Itza, Chols and other Maya groups.
1724	Mission towns in Belize are either abandoned or have their inhabitants forcibly moved to other mission towns in Peten such as San Luis.
1766	Colonial records indicate the presence of independent Maya living in the forest of Mexico and Guatemala but that they are a smaller population than those living under colonial control.
1798	Battle of St. George's Caye.
1847	Refugees escaping the Caste War join other Maya in northern and western Belize.
1850-1890	Militarised Maya groups such as Chichan Ha, begin negotiations with Belize or Mexican governments. Others such as the Chan Santa Cruz Maya continue to resist until the early 1900s.
1853	Treaty of 1853 is signed in Belize between the Chichan Ha Maya group and the Mexican government
1858	Alcalde Jurisdiction Act
1860	Economic reform and land confiscation leads to major displacement of the Maya in Guatemala. Many of them later settled in the Toledo and Cayo districts.
1860-1872	Marcus Canul, resistance leader of the Icaiche Maya attacks logging camps in lieu of rent. He is wounded at the Battle of Orange Walk in 1872.
1871	Belize becomes a Crown Colony.
1872	Crown Lands Ordinance: Lands occupied by the Maya and the Garifuna settlements are "reserved" to them under the protectorate of the Crown
1884	Belize brokers a deal between the Santa Cruz Maya and the Mexican government.
1981	The constitution of Belize "requires policies of state which protect... the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans, including Belize's indigenous people"
2000	Ten Points of Agreement is signed between the state of Belize and the Maya of southern Belize affirming their status as indigenous people and "that the GOB (Government of Belize) recognises Maya People rights to land and resources in Southern Belize based on their longstanding use and occupancy."
2007	Supreme Court of Belize awards landmark decision to Conejo and Santa Cruz villages on indigenous land ownership
2010	Supreme Court of Belize affirms indigenous lands rights of the Maya of southern Belize

SOME MAYA SURNAMES

Y=Yukatek, M=Mopan, Q=Q'eqchi'

The language may indicate the ethnicity but it is not always the case. A word may exist in more than one language.

	Maya Pronunciation	Language	English Equivalent
Acal		Q	
Ack, Ac	Ak	Q, M	vine
Balan, Balam,	Balaam	Y, M	jaguar
Balona (Baluum Na)		Y	jaguar house
Bol, Boll		M	
Bolon		Y, M	nine
Cal, Caal		Y, M	neck
Camal		Y	
Can, Kan	Kan	Y	snake
Cantun	Kan tun	Y	stone snake
Camul		Y	
Cawich		Y	
Cen, Ken		Y	
Chan		Y	small,
Che, Chee	Che'	Q, M	tree
Chen (che'en)	Che'en	Q,	hole
Chi	Chi	Y, M	mouth
Cho		M	
Choc		Q, M	
Chocho		Q, M	
Chuc	Chuuk	Y, M, Q	sweet
Chun		M	tree specie
Cob		Y	
Coc		Q	turtle
Cocom (Kokom)		Y	
Cowo, Cuouh		Y, M	
Cueul, Kukul			
Cunil, Kunil		Y	
Ek, Eck		Y, M	star, dark
Ical		Q, M	
Ico		Q, M	
Ixi'im		Q, M	corn, maize
Keme		Y	
Ku		Q, Y,	
Mai		Y	ankle
Mesh, Mex	Me'ex	Y	beard, moustache
Moh	Mo'	Y, M	macaw
Nah	Nah/Naj	Y, M	house
Oh	Oh'	M, Q	
Patt		Y	
Pech	Pech	Y, M	tick
Pol	Pol	Y, M	head
Pop	Pop	Q, M	mat
Pot, Poot		Y	
Puc, Puek		Y	
Salam (Tzalam)		Q, M	jail, type of tree
Sam		Q	
Shish, Xish		Q, Y	sediment, left over
Sho (Cho')	Cho'oh (?)	M	rat
Tec, Teek, Tek		Y, M	
Tesucum, Tesucun		Y, M	
Tun	Tun	Y, M	stone
Tush	Tux	Y, M	curly
Tut	T'ut'	Q	parrot
Tzac	Tz'ak	M	medicine
Tzib	Tz'iib	Y, M	write, author
Tzub	Tz'ub	M	child,
Tzul		Y, M	moth
Uh	Uj/Uh	Y, M	moon
Uk, Uc		Y, M	louse
Yah	Yaj/Yah	Y, M	hurt
Yat		Y	
Yaxcal		Y, Q	1 st /green neck
Witz		Y, M	mountain, hill
Wook		M	seven
Rash, Rax		Q	
Bul, Bull		Y, M	beans
Wewe		M	



Froyla Tzalam is a proud mother, wife and member of the human race. She grew up in San Antonio, Toledo and Sherborn, Massachusetts. Having traveled for over ten years, she decided to come back to Belize. She worked for the National Institute of Culture and History for five years before working with the Maya people in Toledo. She is particularly interested in learning and sharing Belize's history and culture because it is important for her and other people to realize that the European (Spanish and British) invasion was just a moment in Maya history and the history of human kind. She observes that many Maya people today are unaware of their ancestors' history and legacy and wants to be a part of the process that fills the gap. She says that the Maya are not a people without history for they fought against a system that aimed to deprive them of their dignity as human beings. She says that Belizeans must critically reflect on their colonial legacy to develop both their human and natural resources with dignity and courage.

The Yalloch vase, Peten, authenticates a modern tale of the sun god as a hummingbird which is still related in Guatemala and Belize today.

