TERRA INCognita

An analysis of a geographical anachronism and an historical accident

or

Aspects of the cultural geography of British Honduras C.A.

by

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B.A., Leicester University, 1967

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The research contained in this thesis was based upon the whole of the Colony, and was conducted in all of its constituent districts, but does not purport to be a survey of every part of every district. As will become apparent through the course of this work, British Honduras has no well integrated transportation system, and although the research was conducted during the dry season, there were a number of locations which were still cut off from normal access. To quote the Roman Catholic priest at San Antonio (Toledo), "Some years you can reach them and some years you can't."

The published bibliographic material on the Colony is incomplete because figures have never been collected except for the most basic demands of the census. Even this material is at times of doubtful validity, as it often asks questions which the people do not understand or cannot answer or are too suspicious to answer. This is especially true with reference to contemporary figures on racial groups, national income and general social and economic characteristics of the Colony. Another reason for the incompleteness of the material is that on a number of occasions the factual material which has been collected has been subsequently destroyed by man or nature (see p. 13).
Much of the material, which is used in this work has been published elsewhere, but the bulk of it is the result of the author's travels in British Honduras. Many of the opinions expressed are solely those of the author, but where a deeper significance, over a longer period of time, is inferred, the material was often collected from interviews with various Hondurans. Most important in these discussions were government officials, especially the District Officers; the Social Development Officers; Leo Bradley, the Chief Librarian and one of the most knowledgeable men on local lore, in the Colony; and Rudy Castillo the Information Officer. But discussions with the non-official people of the country also proved of immense value and often filled gaps left by the official sources. Before such information was used attempts were made to cross-check the material with other members of the populace in order to give it a more complete factual basis. This approach, similar to the participant observer technique was considered to be the most valuable within a country where the people are of different cultural backgrounds, where there is no tradition of formal investigatory techniques, and where statistical data are incomplete or non-existent.

The methodology is similar to that adopted by Gibbs (1883) and Norris (1883) and makes the best use of limited information sources, within a country whose variegated
colour and character will never be completely reduced to tables and graphs.
ABSTRACT

This study is an introductory survey of some aspects of the cultural geography of British Honduras C.A. The problem which was investigated was twofold; firstly, how this enclave of the British Empire grew up to be Britain's only colony in Central America, despite the numerous and powerful pressures in existence to prevent such an occurrence. Secondly, to what extent the many cultural groups who go to make up the population of British Honduras have established distinctive cultural landscapes within the country, and how well integrated these separate cultural landscapes are into an overall British Honduran landscape.

I consulted relevant bibliographic material, in order to discover the historical conditions that have enabled the Colony to be founded, to survive, and to grow in size, population and importance. It was hypothesized that for British Honduras to survive, as a cultural anachronism within the context of Central America, there must have been a more powerful force at work than simply historical accident. Thus, secondly, a field examination of the country was conducted in order to reveal the personality, or personalities of British Honduras. Each district and the capital city were investigated in order to find evidence for the hypothesis. The backgrounds of the cultural groups were investi-
gated wherever possible, and examination made of their group identities, and of the identity of the groups with the country as a whole. A selection of ethnographic studies of the surrounding culture areas of the Caribbean, the Western Caribbean, and of hispanic Central America, were investigated to see how far the Colony is part of any one of these areas.

It was concluded that there is indeed a strong nationalistic feeling within the Colony which, despite its changing nature over time, might have been a contributory factor in the survival and growth of the country. Although there is some evidence that there is a 'British Honduran' feeling within the Colony, there is also considerable evidence that the numerous cultural groups still strongly identify with themselves and with the landscapes with which they have contemporary and historical association. Since Hurricane Hattie in 1961, however, there is some evidence that these cultural groups are being broken up and spread out in a greater mixture throughout the Colony. This is partly the effect of the dislocation caused by the hurricane but also partly an effect of the present economic situation within British Honduras. It might also be a reflection of the changing values and attitudes of the members of the groups, as the country comes in greater contact with the industrial societies of the world.
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Not all of the upland area of Cayo District has been denuded. This river is one of the headwaters of the Belize River.

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(Lviii) Mullins River (New) Town was constructed on an aided self-help basis after Hattie, but the life and vigour of the settlement, once the eighth largest in the Colony, was snuffed out by the hurricane and the present village is a shadow of its former self. p. 278

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Figs. 4 and 5 can be seen on a larger scale as Figs. 9 and 10 in Romney, D.H. (ed.), Land in British Honduras, London, 1959.
INTRODUCTION

"If the world had any ends British Honduras would certainly be one of them. It is not on the way from anywhere to anywhere else. It has no strategic value. It is all but uninhabited..."
Aldous Huxley

This study is a preliminary survey of the cultural geography of a community which, through a series of 'historical accidents' tempered with a sprinkling of human design, has become what Parsons would term a 'cultural anachronism', "preserved through isolation and the persistence of the human spirit." An attempt will be made to investigate the ways in which a number of very different cultural groups, which make up the population of the Colony, have responded over an extended period of time to their somewhat unique pattern of physical environments.

The pattern of this work will be twofold: it will begin with an explanation of the past physical, cultural, and economic landscapes of the country, as it is hypothesized that these have played important parts in the story of the Colony, and also have had significant effects in the shaping of the present environment. An attempt will be made to find out some of the reasons for the patterns of culture which developed and explain how these have been incorporated within the physical structure of the country.
Place name evidence, and the evidence supplied by some of the features of the current house-types will be examined to see how far the cultural patterns have been translated into the environment. 4

Secondly the origins of the various cultural groups will be discussed and an examination will be made of how far they have translated their individualized cultural backgrounds into their present environments. This will be done on a regional basis, with the administrative boundaries of the country, both internal and international forming the edges of the areas which will be examined. There are a number of reasons for this not wholly satisfactory approach, the main one being the effects of the more recent history of the Colony. The last ten years have seen more movement than ever before of cultural groups away from their traditional heartlands. To examine the groups individually would involve repetition of material concerning the landscapes where a number of these groups have come together. This approach in itself has its difficulties, and to avoid much of the repetitive description of the cultural groups which could occur, comprehensive studies of each group will only be undertaken for the areas where these groups have had most effect over an extended period of time. To be able to adopt this approach, something must first be said about each cultural group.
CULTURAL GROUPS

In British Honduras there are three major cultural groups (numerically) and at least nine minority groups. The largest is the Creole\(^5\) element, a term used here to designate the descendents of the original settlers, the Baymen\(^6\) and their Negro slaves. In practice there is a wide variety of racial types ranging from the Negro to the Caucasian, but within the Colony the term Creole is used for all, and this terminology will be retained. They are found chiefly around Belize City, the cultural core of the Colony.

The second most important group is the Amerindians or Mayan Indians,\(^7\) both terms being used in their description. As will be noted later, there are four groups of Mayan Indians, most of which are separated areally as well as tribally, but all of which are to be found on the inland borderlands of the Colony.

The Mestizos, the third major element, are a mixed-blood group resulting from intermarriage between the Amerindians and whites, usually of Spanish origin. This group also predominates away from Belize City, but is found nearer the more densely inhabited areas of the north and west, and especially in the administrative centres of Corozal, Orange Walk and Cayo, and the town of Benque Viejo. There are fewer Mestizos in the southern part of
the country, as the Amerindians of this area have experienced little contact, until recently, with European elements.8

Both of the latter two groups have entered the Colony from the adjacent areas now constituted as the Republics of Mexico and Guatemala. They are, therefore, different in this respect from the other cultural groups who entered British Honduras mainly from overseas.

The largest of the minority groups is the Carib Indian element, which is found in isolated communities (using this term in a cultural sense and not necessarily as a comment upon accessibility) along the coastlands of the Colony, south of Belize City.

The Mennonite elements of the Colony are increasing both in numbers and in economic importance, and are to be found chiefly in Orange Walk District, although there are two settlements near Cayo.

Other minority groups who are to be found scattered throughout the country include Chinese, British, North American, Spanish, Syrians and East Indians. Most of these peoples are cultural elements rather than cultural groups, as they are not generally found in clusters, but scattered throughout the Colony.
The nomenclature used to describe the Colony is itself somewhat varied and confusing. From its origins in the seventeenth century until the early eighteenth century the settlement was more often than not described as being located in Honduras. It was only one of a number of such communities, and for a long time was no more important than the others.

With the passage of time it grew both in size and in importance and became known to both friend and foe as the 'settlement of Belize,' and "up to 1840 the name Belize was applied both to the capital city and to the colony as a whole -- a usage which still obtains in Spanish-American circles." From 1872 onwards "the Colony of British Honduras" was 'de jure' as well as 'de facto' the name of the settled area, when the British government at last recognised the area for what it had really been for half a century or more -- a colonial country. More confusion is added to the question by the self determination principles of the present government which has decided that it will not wait for independence before re-adopting the name 'Belize' for the country as a whole. Thus the current literature abounds with references to the country as both 'Belize' and 'British Honduras'. It would be easy, but historically incorrect, for the present author to follow Allsop's example and adopt the "official international nomenclature" of
'British Honduras' in all cases; but an attempt will be made, where possible, to use the contemporary usage, and to avoid further confusion the title Belize City, or Belize District, will be used where appropriate.

THE POSITION OF THE COLONY

Physically British Honduras is a coastal strip of eastern Central America, but culturally and economically the Colony has little in common with this larger region and historically has been shown by Clegern that the mainstream of economic and cultural influence has been outwards from the British settlement to the neighbouring countries. "As pirates' lair or woodcutters' camp or trading wharf, as enclave or settlement or colony, the area around Belize was a bridgehead of British influence on Spanish America." Although the Spaniards had settled the higher lands north and south of British Honduras, they never attempted to settle within the limits of the colony, for the dense forests of the country, guarded by the malarious swamps of the coast, had offered no inducement for settlement from the sea." The Colony has developed, therefore, largely independent of its 'natural hinterland,' having its origins suigeneris to the Central American mainland.

British Honduras has not, however, been cut off from outside influences, and has at present, and has had in the
past, a number of important links with other cultural areas in Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas. As Crosbie and Furley have pointed out, historically British Honduras has been "inclined towards the sea and to the historic links with the English-speaking islands of the Caribbean and across the Atlantic to Britain."\(^{15}\) To this statement must be added the qualifying point that for the last hundred years the Colony has become increasingly oriented towards North America,\(^{16}\) and most particularly to the United States.\(^{17}\) This has been both a cultural and economic phenomenon and appears likely to gain increased momentum in the future. Crosbie and Furley's remark has considerable validity with respect to the early history of the Colony despite its relative isolation (see Fig. 1) from the rest of the British West Indies, (Jamaica, its nearest neighbour and the only island with which Belize has had consistent historical contact, is some 700 miles away).

But despite these many and various historical and contemporary links it cannot be said that there is a common British West Indian consciousness, and even less that British Honduras forms part of anything approaching such a consciousness.

"Isolation and competition impel British West Indians to emphasize their differences; .... Each island feels superior or jealously guards some special virtue. 'The sea tends to divide rather than unite' wrote the future Lord Halifax a generation ago about the difficulty of federating the West Indian archipelago."
'Sentiment and development do not flow naturally over the sea from one island to another.'" 18

These words were written of the islands but apply equally well to the mainland settlements in the Caribbean area. This lack of contact has meant that very different cultural elements of daily life which otherwise might have been changed by steady influence of West Indian norms continued to remain predominant. For instance, the attitudes towards the tilling of the land and towards slavery were originally very different in this British settlement and the consequences of these differences can still be seen today.

For very similar reasons, some of the conclusions which have been reached about the British Caribbean societies are relevant, indicating that these culture areas have had some long lasting effects upon the Colony.

Firstly British Honduras is a plural society, as are so many of the Caribbean societies. 19 That is to say that the Colony contains a number of cultural groups who have adopted similar institutions, but practise them in different ways, and to such an extent that they may be termed different cultures. 20 Smith's definition of societies as "territorially distinct units having their own governmental institutions" is not always sufficient as Lowenthal has pointed out. 21 But in the context of the physical and cultural isolation of British Honduras, it will suffice.

This is not to say that the society of British Hon-
durais is altogether plural; "if it were, it would not be a society at all, but only an assemblage of functionally unrelated communities." It is hypothesized that the Colony exhibits plurality to an extent such that it can survive as a society within the number of very different environments which are to be found within the country, whilst being homogeneous enough to be able to exist as a single political entity.

Secondly, the lingua franca of the country is English, which is taught in the schools between the ages of six and fourteen, and the majority of the population use a form of English as their first language. Also a large part of the population is Protestant, particularly around the capital city.

Moreover, the country has a sense of independence which dates from its foundation, which is comparable to that of other Caribbean countries. But this is not meant to suggest that the Colony ever considered itself as part of the British West Indies. Indeed, "there is considerable evidence that they viewed the island colonies as an adjoining room in the imperial mansion." Independence or independence?

The West Indies Federation was founded in a sea of distrust and nationalism, but it is significant that British
Honduras did not consent to join it to begin with. "There were many Hondurans who at first sight saw in the proposed Federation, not progress towards the goal of independence, but merely a change of masters. They bitterly resented 'merging their identity' in a general West Indies amalgamation, where their comparatively small population would find British Honduras overshadowed by such more fortunate rivals as Jamaica or Barbados."25

This sense of independence, but independence as a 'British Caribbean Colony' had been a distinguishing characteristic of the country's policy long before the 1950's. Virtually from the foundation of the settlement, the colonists had been calling upon the British government to formally annex the settlement and bring it into the 'imperial mansion'. The Archives are full of references to these demands from the early eighteenth century onwards, although it was not until 1862 that the mother country finally took heed and formally annexed the settlement. This was despite the fact that the home government on numerous occasions had had to concern itself with the home and foreign affairs of Belize.

At many stages of its existence, these themes of love of the homeland and freedom from external influences has taken on an almost Victorian and Kiplingesque character.
"O, land of the gods by the Carib Sea,
Our manhood we pledge to thy liberty!
No tyrants here linger, despots must flee
This tranquil haven of democracy"\textsuperscript{26}

But it must be recognised that the British Honduran concept of liberty of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries was a very different phenomenon from the Belizean liberty of today, and undoubtedly had very different effects upon the landscape. Today the call is more and more for total independence from Britain, which will almost certainly lead to an increase in the already high degree of North American economic and cultural intervention. S.A. Haynes work (above) is more a poem of the old school. "Milton Arana's 'Birth of a Nation,' composed to mark the achievement of internal self government, puts the call in a more urgent, more specific form:

'Rise up, dear friend, and grasp your neighbour's hand;
With common heart subdue this, nature's land!
In years to come a future generation
Will rise and stand -- an independent nation.'"\textsuperscript{27}

RESEARCH SOURCES

The investigation is based upon two sources: field research and bibliographic material. The former consisted of a three month visit to the Colony, during which most parts of the country were investigated; this visit was conducted during part of the dry season of 1969 (the dry season runs from late December to early June and the research was con-
ducted from January to April). This is important to keep in mind, as the country presents a very different prospect to the researcher during the wet season, and might lead to some very different opinions and results.

The bibliographic material is scanty, partly because only a little has ever been collected, and partly because a large amount of what was collected has been subsequently destroyed by the ravages of climate and man.
NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION

1Huxley, Aldous, Beyond the Mexique Bay (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), p. 35.


3In this account 'Colony' will be used to designate British Honduras, in order to avoid confusion with the 'colonies' of the Mennonite settlers which are located within the country.


5The term Creole is used in British Honduras to designate a negro or a person of mixed white and negro parentage. The difference between this usage and that of the Southern areas of the United States should be noted.

6The Baymen were the original white settlers of the woodcutting colonies around the Bay of Honduras, the name referring to this physical feature.

7In this account the terms 'Indians', 'Amerindians', and 'Mayan Indians' will be used interchangeably, and references to other groups will be made as 'East Indian', etc.

8The Spanish speaking elements of the Colony, consisting of people of Spanish descent, Mestizos, and many of the Mayan Indians will be referred to as the Hispanic elements of the country.

9The whole of the coastal area of the Bay of Honduras was for some time known simply as Honduras. It is a term which comes from the Spanish word "hondura", depth, the soundings along the coast having been found unusually deep by the Spaniards, especially close in shore.


Belize City is physically part of Belize District, which is one of the administrative areas of the country, but is administratively a separate unit.


Parsons, op. cit., p. 54.

The term is used to refer to the United States and Canada.

Refers to the United States of America.


Ibid.

Allsop, loc. cit.

Clegern, op. cit., p. 161.


28 British Honduras has been particularly unfortunate in the preservation of its archives. Besides all the ravages caused by decay, damp and the insect pests that abound in a tropical climate, both fire and tempest have been particularly destructive." The various invasions of the Spanish in earlier times "must also have destroyed any orderly collection of records that existed." For a fuller account of such troubles, see the Introduction to Volume 2 of the Archives (footnote 13, Chapter One, below), pp. ix-xii.

29 A large quantity of records were apparently once destroyed in the administrative offices in Cayo District, because they were 'taking up too much room.' They had earlier been removed to the Western District from Belize City, for a similar reason.
CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND OF BRITISH HONDURAS

ORIGINS AND EARLY SETTLEMENT

For a country which is only the size of Wales or the state of Massachusetts, British Honduras has a considerable range and diversity of landscapes, (Fig. 1). The most noticeable contrast can be seen to be between the low-lying swampy coast, and the better drained areas of the interior of the country. The low-lying coastal stretches vary in width from north to south. To the south there is a comparatively narrow band of mangrove swamps which adjoin the flanks of the Maya Mountains, a range which rises to 3680 feet at Victoria Peak. To the north of the Stann Creek area, the coastal mangrove-swamp increases in width and much of the area of Belize and Corozal Districts are rendered inhospitable and useless by these conditions. Parts of the coastal areas are elevated Pleistocene terraces, often covered by fine savanna (notably between the Belize (Old) River and the Sibun) and more locally a vegetation type known as 'pine ridge'. This latter phenomenon is characterised by a prevalence of yellow pine (Pinus cubensis) and not by a ridge-type formation, as the name is given both to undulating and comparatively level country.
The coastal areas are made more inhospitable by the dangerous waters offshore which contain many small islands (over 175), known as cays,¹ not all of which are exposed to view. The coastline is protected by the second longest barrier reef in the world, and the mangrove covered shoreline exhibits few distinguishing features. In total the first view presented by British Honduras to the western world was singularly uninspiring, and the first European observers did not stay to investigate further.

Originally much of the country would have been covered with rain forest of one kind or another, but it is doubtful whether any truly pristine rain forest has existed for several centuries. At the height of the Classic Period of Mayan civilisation, much of the country was relatively densely settled (Fig. 2), and little of its area escaped cultivation under the native (milpa) system of agriculture.² There have probably been enough Amerindians remaining in the area of what is now the Colony to prevent much of the regeneration of the tropical rain forest to a near primary state, and the early British settlers continued this process with their woodcutting activities.

These early European settlers found an interior with a dual character. The northern half of the country is an extension of the Yucatan peninsula, with rolling limestone countryside. To the south are the more mountainous areas
characterised by limestone, uplands, metamorphics, and extensive tracts of granite. Upon their arrival in the mid-part of the seventeenth century, they found an area rich in pine, logwood and mahogany, as well as other less important trees, and they remained to exploit these resources at their leisure. The country's forests have until recently always been the economic backbone of the settlement.

Within this general picture there are a number of local landscapes, which have had a considerable influence upon the cultural groups who have come to live in them. This has been true since the days of the Mayan settlers, a group which effectively demonstrated that even such an apparently inhospitable land can be greatly developed. ³

Originally it was felt that the Mayas had populated and developed only the inner borderlands of what is now the Colony, and indeed many early authors did not credit British Honduras with any significant Mayan settlement at all. But around the beginning of the twentieth century more work was done on the area, often by amateur archaeologists, or semi-professionals such as Thomas Gann, and it became obvious that the Ancient Maya had had more than a passing interest in the area. Since this time, Anderson, ⁴ Satterthwaite, ⁵ Thompson ⁶ and Lundell, ⁷ among others have investigated the ruins left in the Colony after the
fall of the Classic Mayan civilisation, and these workers have demonstrated that much of the area was densely cultivated by the Mayan Indians.

Most recently Pendergast has placed this part of the Mayan civilisation in a more maritime context, and has shown that it is likely that the coastal waters of the Bay of Honduras were well-known long before the seventeenth century settlers began to re-discover their diverse nature. Indeed with a few notable exceptions (such as the areas around Stann Creek Town and Belize City) the settlement patterns of the present time appear to mirror much of the layout of the Classical Mayan period, as the continual discovery of archaeological sites on presently settled lands shows. (Some indication of this coincidence of settlement patterns can be seen by comparing Figs. 2 and 3.) These remarks must not be taken too literally, however, as the apparent lack of Mayan settlement elsewhere might merely be a reflection of the shortage of research undertaken in these areas. If this is the case, future archaeological work might turn up a very different pre-historical pattern of settlement.

The Europeans move in

Waddell explains the lack of early settlement by the Spanish in this area of Honduras as being the result of "a series of historical accidents" but the story is not
this simple, for it was the physical environment, often in an entirely passive way, that had the final word, and there was also some degree of deliberate human intervention. Both Montejo and Davila traversed the coast of the country and found it uninviting and unsuitable for settlement.

Attempts by Spanish priests to 'convert' the native inhabitants failed also, partly due to the lack of encouragement given by the local populace and partly because the isolation of the settlements prevented the mounting of a powerful campaign. Later attempts to catholicize the peoples of the area ran into an additional problem -- the English had intruded and took active steps to discourage the Spaniards. One Dominican priest, Father Delgado, fell into the hands of the English whilst crossing the south of what is now British Honduras in 1677, and was robbed of his clothes.

Early British settlement in the western Caribbean area was usually designed to foster one of the more popular British pastimes of this era -- the looting and destruction of Spanish shipping. The Spaniards, understandably, were keen to discourage this rather one-sided sport, and succeeded in dislodging the buccaneers, pirates or patriots (the definition varying over time depending upon whose side you were on, and whether the countries were at war or not) from Old Providence (Providencia) in 1641 and from Ruatan (Bay
Islands) in 1642 (see Fig. 1, inset), only to see them set up a base near what is now Belize City. These 'adventurers' may or may not have been the first people to live in this area of the Bay of Honduras, for tradition has it that the earliest record of British settlers in the area is attributed to 1638 when a small party of shipwrecked sailors found refuge on the coast and managed to establish themselves. This aura of uncertainty is a strong one in the early history of the settlement of Belize, for not only the origins of the settlement are disputed, but also the derivation of the name it has come to be known by.

There are basically three theories to explain this name, and all are significant as they cast some light upon the cultural background of the Colony, as well as demonstrating political and emotional allegiances. Evidence exists for all three, but in each case the same evidence can be used to refute the arguments.

The most popular theory, or at least the one to which the greatest number of words has been devoted, concerns the travels of one Captain Peter Wallace, a buccaneer for sure, and very likely the first mate and right-hand man of Sir Walter Raleigh "on the ill-starred expedition of 1617 in search of Eldorado." The most conscientious historians trace the development of this seaman's name through a variety of versions such as "Wallis" and "Balis" to the present conclusion. These stages, as well as others,
can be seen on a number of old maps, giving considerable support to this theory. The problem with this argument is that these derivations are generally accorded to be Spanish corruptions of "Wallace" and no historian attempts to give an explanation of why a predominantly British settlement should readily adopt the names given to it by the very people they were seeking to avoid for such a long period of time. The theory does, however, introduce some points which are worthy of note. Firstly the early settlers were predominantly British, and more than this, they were very often Scottish, "Wallace" being just one of many who hailed from that part of Britain, and who found their niche in the western Caribbean.

The second possibility, which is rarely given much credence, suggests that the derivation of the word is from the French 'balise' or the Spanish 'balisa',\(^\text{15,16}\) both words meaning a buoy or a beacon. Although there was a strong French element both in the Caribbean and in the occupation of buccaneering, and although the Spanish element within the area is undoubted, the theory seems unlikely, as shown above, for the British influence in the country has been the strongest since the inception of the settlement. Also, one of the chief advantages of the site was to be found in the treacherous nature of the surrounding waters, as will be seen, and it seems doubtful that British settlers, and less so British buccaneer-settlers, would
not only advertise their presence on a hostile coastline, but also show a guiding light for the Spanish warships. It is only in recent times, when comparative peace has come to the country, that a number of warning lights have been erected on the shores of the Colony.

Initially the third theory, seems even more unlikely, and yet it has managed to gain the support of the present government. This idea, put forward by Anderson has been given some historical backing by Bradley. It proposes that the name goes back even further to the ancient Maya civilisation. Thus Belize would be a corruption of the ancient Mayan name for the river on which the city now stands. Although there is evidence of a highly developed Mayan civilisation having existed in the pre-historic past, numerous authors have stated quite firmly that at the time of early British settlement, "there is no record of any indigenous Indian population and no reason to believe that any such existed except for in the interior." But one of the traditions of the country has it that in order to bypass an early ban on cultivation in the area, the woodcutters at least partially supplemented their diet by trading with the Indians. When the diet of the 'pork and dough boys' is found to have been "seven pounds of flour and six or seven pounds of salted pork per week" the desire for supplements is understandable. There is still the recurring question, however, even if this
was the case, of why the British settlers should have adopted an alien name for their settlement. The present political support for this theory might stem from a desire to identify more with the ancient settlers of the Colony than with colonial lifelines, and can then be seen as just one more aspect of the present Independence movement.

The place name evidence, particularly that found off-shore, graphically illustrates this wild and uncertain period of the history of the settlement. A large number of the cays were named by the early visitors and settlers, Turneffe itself being a corruption of Tierra Nueva, and representing the major Spanish influence in this part of the Colony. It is significant that few of the idlans' names owe their derivation to the Spaniards, and 'Spanish Lookout Cay' was probably one of the points from which a watch was kept on the Caribbean Sea for the Hispanic marauders.

Why did the settlement of Belize persist, to grow into the Colony of British Honduras? From many of the written accounts, one might gain the impression that it was because of the chance factor, coupled with the apathy and pre-occupation of the Spaniards with 'better things'. Sir Eric Swayne feels that the British are in Belize because they have "always tenaciously held on to their own"22 -- the British Bulldog character coming out in far off lands. Perhaps it is a combination of all these factors, or perhaps
Aldous Huxley again provides the answer when he dismisses other possibilities than the force of habit which he feels is the strongest. "British Honduras goes on being British because it has been British."  

The British assert themselves

The earliest settlers from Europe, in the Bay of Honduras, were prepared to take full advantage of the situation which they found, which consisted of a vast amount of marketable wood and no direct restrictions upon their freedom. Consequently they varied their economic activities from buccaneering to logwood cutting with the minimum of effort. The latter occupation gained ascendancy after 1670 when Britain agreed, in a treaty with Spain, to suppress buccaneering. As logwood cutting gradually increased, the settlements (and particularly that of Belize) grew in size, population and importance despite numerous military and diplomatic discouragements from the Spanish authorities who governed the surrounding areas. The Spanish forces made, however, no attempt to settle the area and, typically, following their raid on the Belize River settlements in 1754, the Spanish force withdrew with the comment that Belize was "only fit for the English." The British, if anything, rather consolidated their position in the first half of the eighteenth century, by resuming the connection, established by the Providence colonists, with the friendly
Indians of the Mosquito shore, who were violently anti-Spanish, and had never been subdued. This policy had twofold advantages in that it gave an increased area for wood-cutting as well as another stretch of coast in which to take refuge from the Spanish forces.

Mahogany gradually began to assume a more important position within the economy of the settlement during the eighteenth century as its uses began to be exploited, and tastes changed within the European market to make products of mahogany desirable. It was, and is, only found on a scattered basis throughout the country, and it may be that it will only grow in clearings (such as tree-fall sites) or in the regenerating agricultural plots (milpas) of the Amerindians. If this is true, the distribution of mahogany throughout the southern part of the country, where the trees grow slowly and often poorly, away from its ideal conditions, might be more easily explained.

Other woods have been exploited such as cedar, sapo-dilla, Santa Maria, fiddle-wood, rosewood and ironwood, but none assumed the position of the logwood and mahogany trees until the coming of pine-cutting in the nineteenth century. Pine has been extremely important to the Colony, especially during the last hundred years, and will be examined more closely at a later stage.

As pointed out above (p.3), place name evidence can
play a part in elucidating and reinforcing the bibliographic material on the country. This is the case with the material concerning the place of woodcutting in the Colony. Evidence gathered both from settlement names and from street names within the settlements, shows the dominant place that woodcutting has held in the economy. There are streams and streets throughout the country which commemorate the Baymen, Logwood, Mahogany, and the various aspects of the physical environment which were significant to these early settlers as woodcutting camps or landmarks. In addition a great many of the settlements were named after the woodcutters, and the memory of various individuals will remain forever, in the cultural environment of the country (see Figs. 1 and 4).

The three major woodcutting activities have a number of things in common: they have all provided the mainstay of the economy, and of the most populous and important of the cultural groups, the Creoles, at one period of time. Together these woods made up the chief natural resource of the Colony, and the only one which can yet be said to have been exploited. Lastly they are all worked out. There is no record of logwood being cut in contemporary Belize. Mahogany is still an important timber, but brings in not nearly as much revenue (allowing for inflation and expansion of population) per capita as it used to. It still does, however, provide an important source of income to
some of the inhabitants of the Colony during one season of the year.

The country did not learn its lesson from the above two cases, and pine has now been largely worked out. Pine is still cut but most is too young to be of great use. It is now imported from the U.S. and the neighbouring Spanish-speaking nations. This state of affairs has caused some scandal within the country, and the government is trying to encourage the people to use substitutes such as Santa Maria. This policy is meeting with only limited success, however, and often the result is a curtailment of building or an increased use of artificial materials such as concrete. The National Development Plan does not assume that forestry will "commence to recover" until the mid 1980's.

Much of the history of the Colony is tied up with the configuration of the coast but at this juncture only one more point will be made to demonstrate its usefulness to the British settlers. In 1798 came the last physical challenge to the Baymen. This was the much exaggerated Battle of St. George's Cay, which is celebrated by the Colony as a justification for holding the settlement by right of conquest. In fact it made no difference to the legal title but it is not without some significance as it demonstrated the unique relationship that existed between master and slave in this settlement, and also
showed the strategic significance of the area. For three days the Spaniards tried to force a passage over the shoals to the mouth of the Belize River, but in these shallow waters they were at a disadvantage and were driven back by the fire of the sloops and the gun flats of the British. 33

Lastly, the country gained significance to a number of world governments when it was proposed as one of the possible starting points for a trans-isthmian canal. 34 Upon the gaining of greater knowledge of the landscape of Central America, this idea was soon dropped, however, and the international fortunes of the settlement again relapsed into obscurity.

The problems of making a living

Living on the coastlands of the Bay 35 was not by any means a simple matter and life was complicated as well as aided by the natural environment. For instance, the wood which the settlers searched for was not (excessively) easy to come by and had to be hauled and floated long distances before it could be shipped. The ships, even the comparatively small ones of the eighteenth century could not come too close to shore as the Spaniards had found to their cost, and loading was a long and expensive business. But the price of logwood on the London market at one stage reached £100 per ton, and made life worthwhile for most
and very prosperous for some. This was true despite the fact that for a number of reasons nearly all food had to be imported at considerable expense.

The early nineteenth century saw the beginnings of a new chapter in the history of the Colony, a closer association with North America. Some small change was produced by the war between Britain and the United States in 1812, but the first major change was the pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine, later to be reinforced by the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. These acts of diplomacy finally finished the chances of increasing British influence in Central America (as the 'Colony of the Bay Islands' affair later showed) but gave some recognition to the already existant settlement around Belize.

The American Civil War demonstrated that the British Hondurans had similar feelings to the British, for the Colony basically supported the South, and made a lot of money in blockade running. More important, the Lieutenant Governor spent a lot of time trying to persuade both liberated slaves and Southern whites that the Colony would make a good home. A number of the latter tried it, but most returned to the U.S. Nevertheless, the experiment put the Colony on the map for a good many Americans and trade with the United States began to increase more and more. The mail route had fluctuated for some time between Jamaica and New Orleans, but circa. 1878 it was changed permanently
to the latter city by Governor Gorlee, and this also resulted in increased trade with the U.S., particularly with regard to fruit.

The wood trade with the United States also stems from about the time of the Civil War, and until recently, when the trade has been reversed, this had been a very important source of revenue to the Colony. Around the middle of the nineteenth century the U.S. agent in Belize, Leas, concluded that "this country ... is likely to secure an impetus through American energy and enterprise that the people here have never dreamed of or regarded as possible." The support for this statement came later, and is still coming, and numerous projects at present underway in British Honduras indicate the the economic relationship with the U.S.A. is by no means stagnant.

The cultural significance of North American influence is becoming increasingly obvious within the country. The language is being more and more Americanised, and bank exchange rates are advertised in United States and Canadian dollars, not in English pounds: indeed the Colony itself is on the decimal monetary system. A great number of British Hondurans are visiting the North American countries, and more and more (proportionately) are also gaining higher education in these countries. The proportion of Belizean automobiles made in the United States is rising, and the inhabitants drive on the right rather than the
left. Although the country is unlikely to become *de jure* the 51st State,40 *de facto* this might happen, as the path to North America is growing ever wider.

Other patterns of economic activity have been few, but some have played, or are playing, their part in the development of the cultural milieu. The sugar plantations of the northern districts have led to a new pattern of communications and marketing and to a great extent to a new way of life, with the Indians changing over almost *en masse* from a milpa system of agriculture to a cash-crop economy. There has been a similar transformation in Stann Creek District where citrus fruits have been the catalyst. New settlement patterns and new ways of life are being caused by the new economy, and since the 1961 census this southern district has become one of the most populous, whilst still being one of the least developed.

As Ashcraft points out, "the present economic structure bears the deep impression made by the events of the country's past."41 In many parts of the country this is still true, but in others it is being falsified by modern patterns of change.

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND**

Much of the influence of the physical background has already been touched upon or mentioned, but in addition to
FIG. 3
BRITISH HONDURAS
FARMING POPULATION
Scale of Miles

MEXICO

SHADING AREA = APPROXIMATE AREA FARMED
Where farming involves shifting cultivation the
approximate area found has been assessed from the
amount of land used during the previous 5 years.

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the large number of passive effects of the environment which were accepted and even looked for by the colonists, the country has exerted a number of more active influences upon the people. The strength of this influence can be roughly gauged by a study of the place names in the Colony (see Fig. 1). Although many remember particular people, historical events, and economic activities, a large number are descriptive of the physical and biotic features of the area which were felt to be influential and important by the early settlers.

One of the most irksome aspects of the physical environment manifested itself in a series of hurricanes which have plagued the Colony up to the present day. "Few instances in early times are recorded, though it is known that there were hurricanes in 1785, 1805, and 1813. The country appears to have escaped for most of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and a belief grew up that British Honduras was outside the hurricane belt. This was rudely shattered by a most serious storm in 1931, which caused a tidal wave that engulfed Belize and resulted in great damage and the loss of 150 lives." This particular calamity was more than usually significant to the capital, as the area which suffered most casualties was that called Queen Charlotte Town, locally known as Calcutta. The reason for this is not fully known; one story has it that the East Indian
A street scene in Belize after Hurricane Hattie. The wooden buildings are badly damaged and the street is blocked but the brick-built building on the right is virtually undamaged.
inhabitants of this area were less prepared for the calamity and their houses were more susceptible to the invasion of water; another possibility is that by pure chance the calamity had its worst effect at the south-east corner of town. Whatever the reason the result is without doubt -- the East Indian community was destroyed, and did not recover, and today there is only one East Indian family living in this area of the capital. No other sector grew up to replace Calcutta as a minority group area, and today even the old name is being forgotten.

Since 1931 the country has experienced a series of hurricanes which have successively hit the whole country. The southern part of the country has been hit in 1941 and 1945. The latter disaster more or less destroyed Punta Gorda, 'capital' of the Toledo District, as well as many of the surrounding villages. Corozal, the administrative centre of the District of the same name was almost totally destroyed in 1955, along with some of the surrounding villages such as Sarteneja. But as Huxley points out "even a tidal wave may have something to be said for it. It does at least clear away the slums. Our governments and municipalities are less brutal; but they are also, alas, a good deal less effective." Corozal, Sarteneja and some parts of the surrounding villages were completely rebuilt and redesigned after 1955 and the new houses, water systems and road networks are much superior to the old.
After Hattie many of the streets were blocked and under water, and passable, if at all, only to pedestrians. Many of the houses were rebuilt in similar styles and often with the same materials.
Belize City was itself struck again in 1961 by Hurricane Hattie, perhaps one of the most significant recent contributions to the cultural geography of the country.

"Hurricane 'Hattie' struck Belize on 31st October, 1961, bringing death and devastation overnight. In addition to terrific rain and hurricane force winds in gusts of up to 200 m.p.h., the coastal areas had a 15 feet tidal wave. The wind and rain swept across the middle of the country in a swathe about 100 miles wide from Maskall 28 miles north of Belize City to 70 miles south near Monkey River Town. The eye of the hurricane passed over Mullins River Village, 28 miles south of Belize City in the general direction from North East to South West into Guatemala. Although the Orange Walk, Corozal and Toledo Districts were not affected, the devastated area comprised some three-quarters of the country and affected over 75 per cent of the population."46 Hattie's instant destruction had a number of other significant effects, not least of which was the devastation of 3,000 square miles of forest area (one of the Colony's greatest money-makers) "by the wind and the concomitant evils of fire and disease."47

Also it put the country back onto the 'mental maps' of many people throughout the world, and led to a great influx of relief money and goods. There followed an enormous reconstruction and rebuilding boom which is still going on today. Many people gained new houses made of new
(iii) One of the oldest buildings in Belize City. Note the brick basement and the remains of the attic window in the 'roof'.
materials and paid for by the various forms of outside help. Although the owners have to repay much of this money over a period of time, the event was almost a blessing in disguise for many as they would never otherwise have got the capital together. The most notable example of this rebuilding is a new capital site. The hurricane finally convinced the authorities that Belize was no longer a safe site, particularly for the storing of records and for the processes of government. The new site is now well on the way to completion, and although its story is not one of continual success it is certain that the new city will have a great effect upon the country in future years. If nothing else it would appear to be safe from all but the most violent hurricanes.

Lastly, the aftermath of Hattie was characterised by a number of significant redistributions of population. Some of these involved specific cultural groups in important ways, and may have longlasting effects upon the cultural geography of the Colony.

The hurricane must be considered as a significant feature of the climate of the country. They usually strike in the months of August, September and October.48

The character of the inland parts of the country has had a number of significant effects upon the subsequent cultural patterns, not the least of these concerning
style of house in the lette background (see text).
the older areas of Bellei city as le evilenced by the
for a junk-yard by Hurricen Harty. This is one of
once one of the open spaces in the city but reduced (1a)
communications. The swampy, low lying nature of the coastal areas and much of the northern section of the Colony, coupled with the shortage of building stone has meant that road building and maintenance in these areas is very costly and difficult. The vegetation is thick and fast growing and coupled with the heavy rainfall this means that a continual patchwork policy of road maintenance is necessary.

The nature of the country's river system, as Morris has pointed out, has always been important, affording natural highways to the interior and directly leading to much of the country's economic development. Campeche, on the northern shore of the Yucatan peninsula, had started its life in a similar way to Belize, but had failed partly for political reasons, and partly because "the labour of hauling the logs down to the seashore had grown intolerable.... The cutters had heard great stories of the comparatively virgin forests further south beyond the Rio Hondo, in the Belize River district, where swift streams and creeks lay at the edge of the clearings ready to carry the timber to the sea." Today the importance of this historical pattern can still be seen in the landscape, where many settlements cling to the river banks, the watercourse still providing the major means of communication with the outside world. This pattern is slowly changing, however, and as the government is pushing new roads through, the settlements are moving up the river
Little road construction was attempted before 1930, partly because of the lack of money, partly because of the lack of urgent demand, and partly because of the existence of the rivers which at least in part satisfied the need. As Caiger points out, in 1951 a little over 300 miles of road was in existence, but this was about 295 miles more than twenty years before. The situation is very different now, although there are virtually no roads which can be called 'all-weather' in the North American sense. But the government seems to have adopted a policy of putting as many roads as possible in first, and worrying about their upkeep and surface later. Whether or not this is the best policy is debatable, but the only other feasible alternative within the present fiscal context is to have a very few well surfaced roads. The sugar companies have also been important in the sphere of road-building, as they want their estates to be accessible, and a few other companies and a handful of private individuals have also played their part. In the dry season it is only the extreme southern part of the Colony that cannot be reached by motor vehicle, and apparently in some years, even this is possible, along abandoned logging tracks. Unfortunately during the greater part of the year the situation does not approach quite so closely to
The boundaries of the Colony

The boundaries of the Colony, both internal and international have fluctuated widely over the years. For a long time the boundary was disputed and 1783 saw the first delineation, which was followed in 1786 by an agreement which further expanded the area of the settlement. But both of these treaties with Spain pertained to woodcutting, and not to permanent settlement. In 1859 an Anglo-Guatemalan Treaty at last fixed the southern and western boundaries in their present positions, but this treaty has never gained international recognition. After further dispute the Mexican government agreed to an Anglo-Mexican boundary treaty which fixed the northern boundary on the Hondo River, which had been its traditional location for more than a century.

Over the years, the country has been subdivided into smaller administrative units in order to facilitate the day-to-day running of the Colony. Belize City has always been run on a somewhat different basis to the rest of the Colony, because of its historical position as a merchant centre rather than as an area of woodcutting, and because of its size, population and urban nature. In earlier times the country was divided into Northern, Central, and Southern Districts, but this pattern was soon changed.
and Belize District was delineated; since this time its boundaries have not changed.

Cayo District, originally part of the Central District, has varied in size since its inception as an autonomous area, gaining some land from Toledo District in 1954, when a more 'geographical' line, the crest of the Maya Mountains, was taken as the boundary.

Corozal and Orange Walk Districts, previously the Northern District, have only been recently divided, and as their division was largely artificial, not having cultural, economic or physical validity, they will be considered together in this work.

Stann Creek District, which once made up the Southern District with Toledo, has changed its boundaries only minimally over the years. The changes have been a result of the gaining of better knowledge of the physical environment rather than a realignment to coincide with economic or cultural divisions.

Toledo District has always been made up of less useful lands to the south, and its boundaries reflect the conveniences of the other districts rather than a viable area located around an economic, physical or cultural centre.

Despite the somewhat careless and piece-meal division
of the country, the resultant districts do have considerable contemporary validity, and to a great extent reflect the cultural backgrounds of the groups that inhabit them.
NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

This word is pronounced 'keys' (kees).

It is unlikely that there were many Mayan Indians left in the area of the Colony by 1000 A.D.

See the distribution of settlement on Fig. 2.

Anderson, A.H., Brief Sketch of British Honduras (Belize City: Printing Department, British Honduras, 1958).


Waddell, op. cit., p. 3.

Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Caiger, op. cit., p. 32.


Caiger, op. cit., p. 31.


Caiger, op. cit., p. 31.
17 Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 35.


23 Huxley, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

24 Logwood yields the dye Haematoxylin, originally very expensive but now completely declined in importance with the invention of synthetic aniline dyes. Most of the logwood is found in damp, moist districts to the north, but there are also many tracts to the south, where logwood was plentiful.


27 Such as shipbuilding, furniture making and wood-panelling.


29 Taken from a cover story in the *Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Belize City: Friday, January 24, 1969).


31 At the end of this war Britain agreed to a *status quo ante bellum* and all captured territories were returned to Spain.


33 Burdon, *op. cit.*, p. 252 et. seq.


35 An expression used in place of the 'Bay of Honduras' by the inhabitants of the area.
36 Although there were many poor people there was a class of wealthy people composed of merchants and landowners, such as Thomas Paslow and Captain Yarborough.

37 Ashcraft, op. cit., p. 4.

38 In this Treaty both England and America, with their eyes on the future of a trans-isthmian canal, promised not to fortify any places in Nicaragua or 'any other part of Central America.' Bulwer put it in black and white at the time that 'His Majesty does not understand the engagements of the Convention to apply to His Majesty's Settlement at Honduras or to its dependencies.' Clayton explicitly concurred. (Caiger, p. 115).


40 A number of Americans resident in the Colony believe that pro-American feeling is so strong that a referendum would produce a majority of people wishing for the country to become a state of the U.S.A., or at least to attain the status of Puerto Rico.

41 Ashcraft, op. cit., p. 10.

42 Waddell, op. cit., p. 60.

43 Swayne, op. cit., p. 168.

44 One East Indian family lost forty-five relatives (Donohue, p. 52).

45 Huxley, op. cit., p. 29.


48 Waddell, op. cit., p. 60.

49 Morris, op. cit., p. 10.

50 Known to the British as Campeachy.

51 Caiger, op. cit., p. 58.

52 Ibid., p. 175.
CHAPTER THREE
THE CAPITALS OF THE COUNTRY

BELIZE CITY -- CAPITAL CITY IN A SWAMP

Belize City is more than a "unique waterfront community,"¹ it is a unique experience. It is a settlement conceived because of its location, and it is now being strangled by this same factor. As Morris suggests, "Belize was, no doubt, in the first instance, selected as the headquarters of the settlement, owing to its position at the mouth of the principal river. It certainly could not have possessed any other advantages."² In the past, this was an important advantage, enabling the city to establish considerable economic and cultural influence in this part of the world. It became the centre of entrepot trade in eastern Central America and the western Caribbean,³ of both legal and illicit natures; and only gave up this position after the opening of the Panama railroad and later after the cutting of the Panama canal, when the country's careful consolidated trading expertise proved insufficient to preserve its importance. From this time the capital city began to assume its present-day position as a semi-parasite upon the economy.

Location has always been the major advantage of
Belize City, but ironically it is the situation of the city which may now spell its end. The city has twice in the last half century been swamped by the seas whipped up by hurricanes, when its two-foot elevation proved to be pitifully inadequate as protection against the water. Many of the administrative functions of the capital are not being prepared for removal to the new capital site near Roaring Creek (see Fig. 5); Belize may soon only serve as the outport of the new city.

The long-term government plan\textsuperscript{4,5} calls for the construction of a 'super-port', five miles south of the Sibun River mouth, which if constructed might sound the death knell for Belize City.

The City can be reached by land, sea and air, but the traditional means -- by water, is still the most important. The majority of the country's imports come in by sea, although because of the gently shelving land offshore, the goods have to be lightered in from up to one mile away: Belize will never be a "big-ship seaport." The harbour of Belize is used only by pleasure boats, fishing boats, the occasional coastal trader and a few miscellaneous craft. The largest ships to use the port are the sailing boats which ply between Sarteneja and the capital city, via the northern section of the inside passage. Small craft also reach Belize City down Maulover Creek, having travelled by river and canal from the
settlements along the Belize and Sibun Rivers, and the lagoons to the south. Since the improvement of the road system, the inland waterways have become progressively less important, except for bulk goods, but such people as the villagers of Gales Point still derive great benefits from the traditional mode of transport. This village is relatively isolated within Belize District, and the opening of the Burdon Canal in 1929 has enabled its inhabitants to more easily and more safely connect with the capital.

There are two major roads out of the capital, one leading north and the other west. The latter is mainly used for domestic traffic, its only international connection being with the isolated area of the Peten which can only be crossed during the dry season, and then the passage is somewhat risky. The road north is the country's only effective international land connection, joining British Honduras with Mexico and North America. It is a poor road and in places is almost unpassable, especially during the rainy season or a high tide. The road also connects the capital with the airport, and one stretch is often flooded during a high tide, thus effectively cutting the city off for a number of hours.

The International airport, once Stanley Field, is about eight miles from Belize City, being located at the nearest point where physical conditions allow such a
(v) An aerial view of Belize City, looking north-west. Note, the promontory that is the Fort George area; the sharp division between city and swamp in middle-left of the picture; and the low-lying Riders Cays to the middle-right. Through the centre of the city runs Haulover Creek.
function to be located. The landing strip has recently been extended so that it could provide for small passenger jets (e.g., the BAC 111), but there is some debate as to whether it would be possible to extend the runway further, because of the adverse physical conditions. There is also some debate as to whether this will be necessary, at least in the near future, as few of the planes now landing are filled to capacity, and there is little problem with the volume of air traffic. The airport buildings and facilities are also currently being extended to cope with the predicted increase in traffic volume in future years.

The city is located on Haulover Creek, a distributary of the Belize River some four miles away from the main stream. It is based upon a delta of alluvial detritus, leaving the city surrounded on three sides by water and having no point more than a few feet above mean sea level. High tides coupled with strong onshore winds often leave parts of the town underwater, drainage is nowhere ideal, and is frequently non-existent. The small area above sea level has been built up partly by natural processes but largely by the laborious filling-in of mangrove swamps over the years by the Belizeans, with some government action consolidating this largely piecemeal reclamation. The efforts of the citizens have been great, but have been frustrated by the natural conditions of the
(vi) The edge of a canal after the 1961 hurricane. Many of the less substantially built houses were totally demolished. Note the bed by the side of the water.
area, and more particularly by the drainage problem.

"Ditches were dug in an initial effort to try and drain the land, but because of its minimal elevation this proved quite unsuccessful. A pattern of reclamation began which has changed little to date. This takes the form of cutting the mangrove, laying it over as a mat, then hauling in coconut husks, sawdust or other absorptive materials as filler. The pipeshank coral is brought in from the lagoon areas and placed as the second lift as base material for the final layers of sand. This complex engineering practice has undoubtedly been important to the process of reclamation, but less obvious and deliberate measures may have helped to provide at least the initial base for the city. In the past the area around Belize was used by the loggers to prepare their wood for the English market, which most often took "squared, or so-called manufactured logs."8

"The logs were hauled out onto the mud, and the chips and cut-off ends formed a deposit which gradually sank in and solidified the swamp. The workers were most expert but thirsty souls, and working in that hot, moist temperature found it necessary, in order to quench their thirst, to resort to the excellent but fiery Santa Rita rum, a product of the north of the colony known locally as 'white-eye'. The empty bottles sank amongst the chips and log ends, and it is possible now to put down a boring 60 feet,
The Collet Canal, one of the open sewers of the city, built as a drainage channel in an area which is only about two feet above mean sea level. To the left is part of the Queen's Square area and to the right is Mesopotamia. The 'construction' on the edge of the right bank is a public lavatory.
and to find mahogany chips mixed up with rum bottles with surprising regularity."\(^9\) Other systems of land reclamation are also used, using many kinds of materials, even waste paper and tin cans,\(^{10}\) but all are prevented from being greatly successful by the problem of drainage.

"Initially, on the north side a canal was dug to act as a main drainage course to reclaim the land. In the 19th Century the South-side Canal was dug and finally in the early part of the 20th Century the Collet Canal was dug."\(^{11}\) Today these serve two functions, "as drainage courses and as sanitary sewage basins which discharge into the sea with normal tide range."\(^{12}\) The system is far from satisfactory as the tidal range is small and the tidal flow both meagre and slow, and on hot and rainy days especially, the Belize is pervaded by the smell of sewage which is never completely dissipated and is one of the most noticeable characteristics of the city. The Belize of fairly recent times was described by Dr. Gann as:

"...a picturesque little place; its white walled red roofed, broad verandahed houses, standing in spacious grounds filled with palms, fruit trees, and flowering shrubs bathed in perpetual sunshine, and cooled by almost constant sea breezes render it one of the most delightful spots in Central America. Wide canals, spanned by picturesque bridges and traversed by dugouts and other small craft which run the whole length of the town, have given it the title of the 'Venice of the Caribbean' by which it is sometimes known."\(^{13}\)
Dr. Gann either saw little of the city, or it has changed a lot, for nowadays this description is inaccurate, and epithets used to describe the settlement are seldom so flattering. The canals are now full of sewage and require regular dredging -- a facility which is unfortunately not always available. It is significant that the catfish and carp which thrive upon such effluent, are protected by a municipal law, and cannot be fished for on pain of arrest. There does not seem to be much effort on the part of the inhabitants to break this law, for the Belizeans seem to be convinced that these fish could not provide good eating. The existence of these particular animals may be part of the reason that very little fish of any sort is sold within the City, although the waters around the Colony abound in marine life.

Probably Dr. Gann's description was accurate fifty years ago, for it is the last half century which has seen some of the greatest growth in the city's history. Caiger gives the population of 1900 as being about 12,000.14 It is now nearer 40,000 (and still growing), a figure which is approximately one third of the country's total.

The composition of the city.

By the very nature of the resources of the country, which include a lot of timber products but few more re-
Crumbling remains of one of the earliest basements ever built in the settlement of Belize. The bricks were transported from Britain as ballast in wood-carrying ships. Slaves were once (reputedly) chained to the walls of such basement areas.
sistant building materials, it is not surprising that most of the buildings are made of wood.

There are a few exceptions to this rule, as a number of the more recently built dwellings have been made of concrete and some of the older buildings are partly or wholly constructed of brick. The bricks in question came from Britain, as ballast in the ships which arrived to trade in logwood, and the basements of a number of the houses are made of this material, many still containing iron rings reputedly to which slaves were chained. A smaller number of buildings are wholly made of brick, the most notable being St. John's Cathedral, constructed at the south end of town, near the Governor's residence, consecrated in 1826 and the coronation site for three Mosquitian Kings.

Most of the older buildings are larger than the new, reflecting a time of greater affluence and vigour in the Colony, and the majority of these were better built. They have withstood the tests of at least two hurricanes and have suffered relatively minor damage.

The most noticeable characteristic of the buildings of Belize City is their tendency to be built with their floors above ground level, and a number of explanations have been put forward to account for this method of building upon 'stilts' or 'posts'. Inevitably the physi-
One of the contributors to the disaster of Hattie was the rotten condition of the stilts on which the houses were built. City regulations now demand concrete bases to the pillars to provide strength and durability.
cal factors have played a great part, as the swampy con-
ditions, tendency to inundation by the sea, and the
numerous insect pests that are fostered by the area, all
suggests that a building above ground level is the most
appropriate. It is also a method of building suggested
by climatic experts, as it allows a free flow of air about
the dwelling place. 15 It is also probably an adaption
to the use of wood for building, at least to a partial
extent, as it has been pointed out above that some of the
original buildings had brick basements, which were firmly
fixed to the ground. Also some of the more modern build-
ings, made of 'concrete' blocks are constructed on the
ground with little provision for free air movement be-
neath them.

Whatever the original reasons for this style of house
construction, it seems certain that the method has now
become part of the culture of the people, as wherever
Belizeans travel they tend to build houses off the ground.
One English fruit-plantation owner hired some labourers
from the City to build him a good (but inexpensive) house
near Kendal (Stann Creek District). Upon returning to
the site a few weeks later he was astonished to notice
that before beginning to build the house the carpenters
had built a number of (quite expensive) concrete pillars.
Upon trying to establish why they had bothered to do this
in an area of good drainage and distance from the water,
The remains of the market area after Hurricane Hattie; a view from the swing-bridge. The building on the left was totally de-roofed and both were badly damaged by winds of more than 200 m.p.h.
the owner found that the men were nonplussed by the question. They had not considered the possibility of constructing the house in any other manner. There are numerous other examples of this cultural adoption within the Colony. The method of building does not preclude the construction of large houses, and in the Old Town and Fort George areas there are three-storey buildings, often with the roof being used as a dwelling area also, on top of five or six foot stilts. Usually, however, the buildings are of two-storey construction in the older areas, and one-storey construction, with the provision for further growth, in the outlying areas such as Lake Independence Area and Cinderella Town (Fig. 4).

Besides being characteristically built of wood and above ground level, the buildings of Belize City have a number of other striking features. In contrast to much of the rest of the country, their roofs are all of metal, usually galvanised iron, but occasionally asbestos or aluminium. If Morris' account is accurate this has been the state of affairs for at least 100 years. Much of the rest of the Colony has a similar roofing type, but generally this is more recent, and often only postdates the 1961 hurricane. A number of explanations have been put forward, the most important being the consideration of fire, for in such close proximity the houses are in great danger from this element, and the smallest of fires
In the background in the previous illustration, the present-day market area to that shown in (x1)
could be disastrous. There are a number of towns, in the Colony (eg., Belize City, Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Stann Creek) which now prohibit the further construction of thatched roofs, due to the fire hazard. There is also the problem of getting a potable water supply. It was not until the 1940's that it was discovered that water from the Pine Ridge areas near Hattieville (seventeen miles off) could be used for domestic purposes. Many houses still have their more ancient system of water-collecting, a large vat which catches rainfall runoff from the metal roofs. (Thatched roofs would not be able to provide this service.) In the past the roofs were much more steeply pitched, thus making the houses cooler, but the experience of the recent hurricanes has led to a flattening of the roofs and there is now only a handful of the old type in existence.

Verandahs are important to Belizean architecture, varying from those in the Fort George area where two or three stories are surrounded on three or four sides, to those of the poorer people which are usually found only on the front or back of the house. There are both climatic and economic reasons for this method of building; the house is kept cooler and it provides a cheaper form of living space which can be used in the Tropics for most of the year. But once again cultural factors appear to be important, and several of the methods of building
described above have been adopted as forms of architecture.

The original house form, and the part first constructed would be a simple shack, on high posts. When enough money is gained this is added to in ways handed down through the centuries. It is rare that the actual house size is increased, but verandahs are added to the front of the house, and verandahs or filled-in verandahs to the back. The final step not always taken, and not always necessary would involve the filling in of the area between floor and earth, thus making a two storey dwelling. The process of increasing the verandah space can then be continued. A number of houses have filled their verandahs to make additional closed-in space and then built a further verandah on this section of the house.

What was probably originally a mode of building prompted by the physical background of the area has now been evolved into an efficient method of piecemeal architecture, with the house like some colossal jigsaw puzzle. In this method of building lies the root of the Belizean's dissatisfaction with the newer building materials, which are less adaptable. Often the builder will use inferior quality young wood which has a (relatively) short and unsatisfactory life, rather than use the concrete blocks which are slightly more costly in the short run, but much cheaper and more efficient, as well as being more hurri-
cane proof, in the long run.

Another architectural phenomenon which is found all over the country, but appears to have stemmed from Belize City, is the shuttered window. These have the advantage of being more adaptable than most other kinds, and yet fairly easy to operate and not too expensive to make. They are found in the British and French areas of the Caribbean, and also in parts of Spanish and Portuguese America. They are now beginning to die out somewhat, newer houses being built with wooden, glass, or plastic louvres, and there is now a factory in Belize City producing this latter commodity.

In past decades, the buildings of Belize City were well kept and apparently well painted, but in recent years the decline of the city's fortunes has seen a decline in housing standards, and nowadays very few of the buildings give any indication of having been regularly or recently painted. Even those financed by the government and originally a bright blue and white (the government party's colours) are now peeling and faded. The buildings along the commercial streets are an exception to this general rule, but it seems likely that it was the paintwork, and not the mode of construction that led Carr to describe the buildings as 'shacks' and 'native houses', both being derogatory terms when taken in context. Indeed the Belizeans are generally acclaimed as being master
builders in their own way, and building projects throughout the country from Punta Gorda to Cayo, to Corozal, usually have their share of carpenters from the capital city.

In the hurricane of 1961, "one third of the buildings were completely demolished, one third were heavily damaged and the remainder had suffered partial damage." The Reconstruction and Redevelopment Corporation was initiated and received 1,200 applications for financial assistance in rebuilding. The damage was bad, but the sturdy construction of a number of the buildings prevented an even greater disaster. Many of the houses suffered because their stilts, rotten below ground level because of the saturation of the earth, snapped off in the high winds. Soon after the hurricane a law was passed requiring all new buildings to have their posts firmly entrenched in concrete, so that such a disaster might be prevented in the future. Nearly $354,000 B.H. was given by the Corporation in the form of housing grants and in addition over $1,300,000 B.H. was handed out to the inhabitants of the City in the form of loans. Without this financial aid it is doubtful that the city could have returned to normal so quickly. Pictures and accounts written a year or so later show that the visual form of the capital was back to normal, to such an extent that most of the buildings were replaced in the same places
and in the same style. Indeed the visual form of the city has been the same for considerably longer, and photographs of Belize a century ago might have been taken by a contemporary photographer. 20

The Local Areas of the city.

Belize City has a very recognisable pattern of growth, mainly because the physical environment is such that it lends itself to piecemeal exploitation. Originally the site was less extensive and more fragmented than it is now. The majority of what is now relatively solid land was once mangrove swamp, and some of it was open sea; the area has been reclaimed by a process of piecemeal reclamation (see p. 57). Old maps and the present day street and canal networks enable the researcher to divide the city up into twelve districts, 21 all of which have some cultural validity, and historical background, and which are recognized by the citizens as being local areas.

In addition to the documentary evidence, the contemporary field evidence, and the support given as verbal testimony by the inhabitants, the forms of street nomenclature are also useful in the indication and designation of the various local areas of Belize City. The street names vary in type from one sector of the city to another, although the chief difference can be seen along the boundary
between the pre 20th Century area, and that built up in
the last sixty years. The former has its share of
'commemorative' names, 'functional' names, 'environmental'
names, and names which remember long-dead personages.
The latter areas are much more deliberately named, almost
as if a conscious effort was made to preserve some of
the history of the country in the landscape, and indeed
this might well have been the case (see Fig. 4).

There are also a number of names which only thicken
the question marks which abound in the country, for only
historical surmising can account for them. Thus there
is Orange Street: there are two settlements in the
country called Orange Walk, but it seems unlikely that
either was named after the fruit, and one is left to
speculate about the strength of early Dutch (or possible
Irish) influence in the Colony. There are records of
Dutch buccaneers (such as Nicholas van Horn) but no evi-
dence of settlement by Netherlanders.

The Old Town site: in many ways the Old Town is a
goingraphic entity with a consecutive history, but
culturally and economically it is segregated into a number
of sections. The sea-front areas on both sides of the
river have traditionally been the areas of upper-class
settlement. These are the areas that most closely
approximate those described by Cann, with clean white
houses and freshening winds. The advantages of such a
One of the older buildings of Belize City, now serving as government offices, and located at the bridge-foot next to the Paslow Building, the only post-office in the city (left back-ground). The age of the building is indicated by the steep pitch of the roof and the use of the top-storey/roof area. Note also the shutters, symbolic of the old Belize.
location have not been overlooked in recent developments, and almost without exception the better class housing of the city may be found along the sea-front.

The northern part of the Old Town is the oldest and most extensive, and contains many of the original government establishments such as mental hospital, hospital, poor house, gaol, police station, public works compound, etc. It also contains a number of large and important residences, and much of the population of the city; the majority of these people live along the main streets, but some of the houses are located within the centres of the blocks, and can only be reached by narrow winding alleys running along property lines. Little building space is wasted and the backyard of a house invariably contains another house. The buildings are often very old, having withstood the ravages of the century's storms, and the road names celebrate long forgotten personages or indicate simple facts of life. The road pattern is in parts confused and in parts almost grid-like, but everywhere the pattern of alleyways ensures that the visitor always has a new path to tread.

South of Haulover Creek the road pattern is much more grid-like, reflecting its later inception, and the street names reflect the values and loyalties of the inhabitants of the time. The most easterly section was reclaimed from the sea during the Victorian period and
Compare this to the previous picture. Originally it had a similar roof, but this was destroyed by Hurricane Hattie and this cheaper version was added as a temporary measure which has become permanent.
what was South Front street is now recognised as Regent Street. Once again the Southern Foreshore is the area where the rich have their homes, and at the most southeasterly point of this part of town lies the Governor's residence, resplendent in its extensive grounds, and still largely as it was a hundred years ago.

Although the basic plan of this part of the Old Town is grid-like, later infilling has led to some confusion, and the section between the Southside and Collet Canals is one where industrial concerns are mixed up in a hap-hazard way with private dwellings. Once again there is little waste of space, and narrow alleyways lead to the centre of blocks where another section of the populace lives, often hidden from the major roads.

The Old Town is the commercial centre of the city, with Albert Street, Queen Street, and North Front Street bearing most of the shops, agencies, banks, bars and brothels. It is the area with most of the city bustle and most of the night life, and the location of the market at the southern foot of the swing bridge emphasizes its central function. Although some of the roads have sidewalks, most do not, and are flanked only by drainage ditches which lead directly to the sea or to a canal.

The impression is one of age, or more properly medieval-ness, as on either side of the road in the Old Town the houses loom to great heights, two or three stories high, and often
Not the roof from the previous picture, but also owes its origins to Hurricane Hattie. In this case the building was blown away and the family now occupies the roof.
on stilts, and the great preponderence of shadow over sunshine on the streets reflects their compactness.

The condition of the environment varies from bad to good. Not surprisingly the main streets are better kept than the side streets, but occasionally a little-used street is well surfaced. The roads are so narrow, however, that a one-way system has been instituted throughout most of the Old Town centre, and few of the streets are without a considerable volume of traffic.

The houses are of both old and new type, and are both well and badly kept. Some of the best looking buildings are 50 - 100 years old, and yet some of the most recently constructed dwellings are seriously dilapidated. In parts there are areas which even within the terminology of Belize might be called slums, but in the context of the country most of the areas are just lower-class housing units. Class and status are often reflected in the architecture, but not always. The Prime Minister's house is one of the most externally dilapidated of all, and there are some much poorer people who take great pride in their personal external environment.

In terms of housing, however, the Old Town is an area of decay. If Gann's and Morris' descriptions were at all accurate, this part of the city has suffered a grievous loss in terms of aesthetics. Fruit and shade
(xv) Not all of the houses were rebuilt after Hattie. Two families live in these 'shacks', which are atypical of Belize City.
trees are now sparse, the rats and land crabs are at least holding their own, and the once ubiquitous coco-nut palm is a rare sight to behold. This may be a change in economic status, a change in cultural values, a change in physical background, or a combination of these factors, but whatever the cause, the result has been that the city is no longer looked upon as the 'Venice of Central America' but more as the 'Cesspit of the Caribbean'.

The Fort George area is closely related to the past of the City by its urban morphology as well as by its name. Originally this part of the settlement was separated from the Old Town by the sea and, containing the major part of the settlement's defences, it now forms the district with the wealthiest class of people and the most grandly important private dwellings. Dominating the point is the Baron Bliss tomb and lighthouse and the Fort George Hotel, built after the Second World War by the British government and easily the best in the country.

The Fort George section of town contains the largest park (one of three designated specifically as such, a reminder of the premium placed upon land) in the city which is curiously empty for much of the time, and dominated by a bandstand which is silent for most of the year.

In keeping with the heterogeneous character of the
(xvi) Some of the original houses in the Old Town area had shingled sides, often made out of cedar, once a minor export of the Colony. Note also the brick basement, and the shutters.
(xvi) In the Fort George area there are a number of large houses built when Belize was having better fortune. Even these large (often) mahogany built buildings were placed on high stilts. Verandahs are typical of this age and local area, as are the shutters and large lots.
(xviii) The Fort George park, a showplace rather than an area of recreational use, this open space is usually deserted, except for the occasional band-concerts.
city, and indeed of the country, this upper class area also contains customs wharfs and the bonded warehouse, and even more surprisingly the Volunteer Army quarters, located alongside three-storey, multi-verandahed almost hurricane-proof residences.

This is the area with the American and Mexican Embassies, both impressive buildings, with a private hospital and until recently, a dearth of overt commercial activity. But of late the covenant has been broken and some more obvious commercial activities are creeping in, with a gas station at the 'border' area and a recently opened store selling Coca-Cola and groceries. In context these may be looked upon as indications of a decline in residential cultural values within the Fort George area.

Yarborough is a district of very different character. Originally part of the plantation of Captain Yarborough, it was obtained in 1792 as "a Public Burial Ground with provision of space for those not entitled to Church Rites." This cemetery now runs between two lanes, flanked by houses and churches for a third of a mile, in boulevard style, from St. John's Cathedral to the Collet Canal. It is no longer used for burials, but for drying the laundry of the nearby inhabitants of the area and is now a centre of some controversy as the planners in the town wish to make it into a public park, a move
Yarborough cemetery, now disused, except as a location for drying the laundry of the local inhabitants. In the background is St. John's Cathedral, a brick-built structure built in the early nineteenth Century.
which would necessitate disturbing the dead of a century or more.

Yarborough is a poor area within a poor town, and it gives rise to one part of an incongruity within the City. In the south of the settlement, from the Yarborough area north-westwards there is a minor ridge of higher ground, which would have been, and might still be, the best place to build residential dwellings. The land crabs are less numerous and the saturation of the soil is less complete. Yet the people in the city have tended to gravitate towards the northern part of town, and with a few exceptions the area south of South Creek road is comparatively under-inhabited. It is perhaps typical of the Belizeans that they should pick the most unsuitable spot within an eminently unsuitable location to build their capital city. 24

Newtown Barracks has been in existence since the last years of the eighteenth Century, and was built originally for the 6th West India Regiment. 25 It is now an area of tennis clubs, open space, and houses for government officials, most particularly the English officials who still help to run parts of the economy. A bleak and somewhat isolated area during the wet periods, it can be one of the most pleasant areas during sunny times, being located far from the smell of the city and also having the advantage of the sea breezes. The housing provided
(xx) The area known as The (Newtown) Barracks now houses government advisers from Britain and Canada. These houses were built, and are owned by the government.
is not of architectural beauty, but compares favourably with most of that in Belize in terms of construction and strength. The actual barracks were never a great success in this area and the British Army currently has its camp out near the airport.

The Newtown Barracks area is one of transitory occupancy in both the residential and social sense, and probably has changed little in function since Lindbergh landed the Spirit of St. Louis on the grassy section adjoining the sea front in 1927. The city as a whole has grown but not all parts of the settlement have participated in the expansion of the urban area.

Areas of intermediate age. Queen Charlotte Town, once known locally as Calcutta, has led an undistinguished life, and has for a number of years been the chief slum area in a city which has itself been called an "Imperial Slum" by some visitors. Much of this part of town consists of shanty huts and swamps, and little development has occurred here in recent years. Its two major through roads are little used, one petering out in the nearby marshes and the other inconspicuously joining up with the Western Highway at the edge of town. The whole desolate appearance of the area belies its closeness to the nearby city centre, about half a mile away.

In 1882, however, Queen Charlotte Town gained a
certain notoriety, albeit short lived, when the cemetery in Yarborough was closed and "The Vaults" were opened in order to bury the dead of the city above ground level.

This practice, although apparently much easier and healthier, led to a riot in the town, with the superstitions of the people being revealed. They demanded an area for below-ground burials for their friends and relatives and after a very short life the Vaults were closed and Lord's Ridge Cemetery was opened at the edge of town where the Western Highway now runs like a braided stream through tombstones and picket fences.

These were the early areas of the city, all intimately connected in some way with the river mouth or the sea. There was no perfectly clear line around the area, but a fairly accurate edge can be drawn. These parts of town have always had a fairly high concentration of population, but in recent years, with the continuing pressure on existing space, the concentration has become greater and must surely be reaching saturation level. Even where the absolute number of houses is smaller per acre, the pressure is often as great, as the houses are larger, and the Fort George area is probably as full as the rest of the older section of town. The pressure has been obvious for a number of years, and also the problems and solutions have been open to inspection. Canals have usually been the key to the answer, and it was the cutting of
canals to the west of the Old Town that enabled new areas to be fully opened up, although there had been some settlement in these parts prior to excavations.

These are the areas of the city whose place names most easily accord with those of the rest of the countryside, and it is tempting to call them the most natural, as they give acclaim to the environment, the early functions of certain areas, and remember certain people who would have had an important part to play in the city's history. It is perhaps ironic that many of the less 'natural' street names to be found in the 'newer' areas of the city give more indication of the country's ways of life than do those already described.

Mesopotamia, characterized by its street names as well as by its own title was settled by returning veterans of the First World War who had fought chiefly in the Middle East. Many of the houses were built by the re-vitalised colonial government, which no doubt wanted to forestall any more riots such as those of 1918 when the returning soldiers destroyed parts of the town as a protest against unemployment, homelessness, and high prices. It is an area of fantastically high-density housing, making the Old Town look like a Garden City in comparison. In about 70 acres there are some 1000 dwellings housing some 6,000 people. It is surrounded on three sides by the filthy canals of the city, and is a centre
of poverty and drunkenness. Once again there is an almost grid-like pattern to the streets, which vary in both width and direction\textsuperscript{32} for no apparent reason, the through streets from east to west often being narrower than the side streets. That part of the area which flanks the Southside Canal is not truly Mesopotamia, being built at an earlier date, and it reflects this different age in its street plan, the routeways being closer together than in the more 'modern' part. The area was greatly improved after the 1931 hurricane\textsuperscript{33} and again after the 1961 hurricane providing additional proof of Huxley's judgement (p. 38).

The new town. During the 1940's, the crisis spoken of by Anderson as existing in housing became accentuated and the government used a suction dredge to fill the areas of what are now Cinderella Town, King's Park and Hone Park, with sand and coral from the sea bottom.

Cinderella Town was developed as a government scheme and the houses show their similar origins despite later alterations by the inhabitants of the area. It is a small area dominated by the Technical College, but is one of the most distinctive local areas of the city, being most easily recognised and located by the inhabitants.

Most of the houses are built in a similar style to the privately constructed small houses of the city, al-
The government housing development in Kings Park, near the Cinderella Town border. The houses are strong and well built but differ considerably in style from the 'native-built' dwellings.
though a number have been extended from their original size. In addition there are a number of decrepit flat-roofed stone 'shacks' which are reminiscent of pill-boxes or poor imitations of Mexican flat-roofed houses.

Hone Park has grown up as an area of better class housing, with private architects and builders constructing most of the dwellings in stone. Government ministers, merchants and independent businessmen live in this somewhat exclusive area which is once again distinctive in its image and cooled by the sea breezes of the Trades. It is an area which is easily distinguished from the rest of the city. Its place names differ from the immediately surrounding area, its spacious lots are in direct contrast to those of most of the city, its inhabitants are of a high income bracket, its architecture is distinctive, but alien to the traditions of the country, and for some time to come it will be physically separated from the sprawl of the city. It was conceived and designed as an exclusive area and has most certainly attained this somewhat dubious distinction.

King's Park has only recently been built up, and still much of it consists of swamps. The modernity of the area is shown in its road pattern and street names, it being a district of short, angled roads and numbered streets. The houses are of two types: there is one group built of concrete, on the Cinderella Town border as part of a
government scheme. Most of King's Park, however, consists of large houses on high stilts being built by various forms of private enterprise.

Expansion was going on fast about this time (the late 1940's) and the Queen's Square district was pushed out westwards from the Collet Canal. Much of this part of the city also consists of government-built housing and there is still an air of expansion and newness, with the nearby mangroves providing plenty of room for expansion. Queen's Square itself seems to have been forgotten by all this development. A rectangle of scrub and rubbish heaps amongst the houses near the canal, it is frequented by children, but by-passed by most other people. Parks once again do not seem to be important to the people of Belize City, and if their apparent apathy is a true indication of their priorities, they must rank high in the world amongst groups who care little about improving the external environment for aesthetic reasons.

Ex-Servicemen's Area compares in origin at least to the Mesopotamia district. Built for veterans of the Second World War (who this time saw little military action), it is a wedge between Queen's Square and Queen Charlotte Town, giving the appearance of a token for the soldiers, perhaps in the hope of forestalling new riots. Much is still undeveloped mud-flats, with most development going on at the moment along Neal's Pen Road, on what was pri-
vate ground, with no facilities and no supervision. It is so forgotten that at one point a house is being constructed in the middle of what is to be the major north-south axis of the city, Central American Boulevard.

Lake Independence Area, the last of the city's districts is as forgotten in many ways as Queen's Square. A centre for housebuilding and another graveyard of historical names, resurrected by the present government, its nomenclatural origin is somewhat forgotten. Lake Independence is a sludge and weed-filled pond which is bypassed by the populace without a second glance. These factors may be a symptom of the problems of the country. There are good ideas and grand nomenclature present, but there is no capital to do these ideas justice, and in the final analysis nobody really seems to care.

There are other areas of settlement, but they are of little importance. Along Princess Margaret Drive, there will be a number of schools and colleges built to add to those already present and this may become an important centre in a few years time. On the Haulover road on the way out of town, there are a few houses and similarly some people live on the Western Highway to the other side of Lord's Ridge, but in general the settlement patterns are well marked by the edge of the mangrove swamps, and people are content to continue the process of concentrating in areas already too crowded.
The reasons for this concentration are manifold. The city has grown in numbers but not in services, or at least not in service area, and the Downtown area is still very dominant for both the buying of goods and services and the social life of the people. There is only one post office and four banks in the city and all are to be found within two thousand yards of the swing bridge. Indeed four out of five of these are within one hundred yards of the river crossing. The outlying areas are deficient in services and transport although a recently instituted Volkswagen bus service has proved extremely successful. But all the routes lead to the city centre and there is only one market, at the bridge-foot. The cost of clearing and filling land is still prohibitive and the inhabitants of Belize City are not in an easy position to get any kind of wealth. The outlying areas are more difficult to drain, as they do not have the canals of the more easterly areas, and during the rainy season the populations of the westerly districts have to use dugouts to reach their homes. It is not at all surprising that most houses are built on stilts and those with two stories have little furniture devoted to the ground floor. Sanitary arrangements are bad in the Old Town and Mesopotamia, but they are more or less non-existent in the poorer areas elsewhere. It will not be a bad thing at all if the expansion of the city is grossly curtailed by the building of better modern towns elsewhere. Historical
Symbol of hope for the future. The new bridge, being constructed at a point which is presently at the edge of town; the project is financed by the Royal Bank of Canada.
accounts indicate that Belize could adequately serve ten to twenty thousand people but the present population of 40,000 is overstraining the available facilities, and if the overworked medical facilities break down the city would be open to attack from disease and pestilence.

It is indicative of the inadequate services away from the town centre, that poor as the people are the Volkswagen bus service has proved successful. This is true despite the fact that most of the population is concentrated within one mile of the Downtown area. Few people walk more than a few blocks if they are travelling along a bus route, and fewer would consider walking to the extremities of town. The outlying districts are unknown to most of the populace who become easily disoriented if they stray from their traditional paths, or home areas. A new bridge is being built (with Canadian finance) where Central American Boulevard joins Haulover Creek, and yet few people who lived away from this area could locate it, even approximately on a map, and fewer could make their way directly to it. Yet all appear to cite it as an example of progress and potential within the city.

In recent years the problem of construction has been great, and even in 1931 there was a shortage of lumber. The overcutting of pine and the shortage of mahogany meant that the supply of wood has all but fallen off. For a number of years the government has been experimenting
with synthetic building materials but cost has always been prohibitive. Recently a new approach using a combination of earth, clay and cement has been tried in the King's Park area, bordering Cinderella Town (see above), and houses can be constructed on this basis for $2000 B. H. including numerous facilities. These buildings are of very different form to those of traditional structure, both in materials used, and style, for they have no stilts as such, and the price may yet prove to be prohibitive, but for other reasons such as the shortage of wood, they may be the forerunners of future houses.

People and Places.

Much of the character of Belize City is to be found in its setting, design, and architecture, but what brings all of this to life is the population of the settlement. Within the bounds of the city are found representatives from most of the cultural groups of the Colony, with the possible exception of the Kekchi Maya. Not all of the groups supply a significant proportion of the city's population, but most are notable by their presence.

Numerically, most of the inhabitants of Belize City are Creoles, this terminology here signifying the results of the mixture between the slaves and the original white Baymen, both groups originating, for the purpose of this account, in the settlements of the British along the
shores of Central America from Campeche to Greytown, and also from some of the offshore islands. A number of attempts have been made to classify these peoples into 'negroes' and 'coloureds' (eg., Census, Waddell, p. 70), but in practice it is unlikely that many families do not have blood from both racial groups in them, although the percentage of negroes has been estimated at 4% (Bradley). This would, however, be difficult to ascertain, as it seems unlikely that either official or family records would be complete enough or detailed enough to be able to justify any such classification. The Creoles vary in colour from black to dusky white, and their facial features vary from 'Negroid' to 'Caucasian': these variables rarely coincide in enough of the people in any one area to justify the division of the Creoles into separate groups.

The major uniting factor between these groups is their 'Creole' mode of speech, variously called a variety of English, a dialect, or a different language. But even this is not a good indicator, as the other cultural groups also speak creole rather than standard English, and in British Honduras the language of a person is by no means an ethnic indicator. Indeed as a number of authors have intimated, and Allsop has demonstrated, a large number of the peoples of British Honduras speak more than one language and can switch from one to another with ease.
Spanish is the most popular second language for native English (Creole) speakers, but the Amerindians often speak a Mayan dialect, Spanish and some English, and the Caribs may speak English and Spanish as well as their native tongue. The languages of the smallest of the minority groups do not appear to have survived, with the possible exception of some Chinese.

Although there is, to a great extent, a Creole 'culture', this is, by definition, a heterogeneous and non-definable phenomenon. Just as the Creoles are themselves a conglomeration of the other ethnic groups that have lived in the country, so their culture is a similar aggregate. As West and Augelli have pointed out, the original slaves were by no means taken from one culture area in West Africa, and since their arrival in Jamaica had undergone considerable mixing before being re-transported to the Central American settlements (in itself an illegal and surreptitious process as they were not colonies of Britain). The original Baymen, themselves a diverse group, had no qualms about intermarriage, and since these times a number of other elements have been introduced, chiefly by the other cultural groups now present in the Colony, and the result is a cultural confusion which probably has not yet jelled, and has led to the belief that there is a 'race of British Hondurans' in the making. Belize City is itself the 'Mecca' for the Creole popu-
lation and to a certain extent this leads to the belief that this part of the population runs the country for its own ends.

Some sections of the Creole population are still superstitious, and the Colony is still the home of Obeah men and bush doctors, and traditional cures for diseases, snake bites, etc., are still very popular. This is more true for the 'rural' Creoles than the 'urban' Creoles, but superstitious practices are not totally without relevance in Belize City.

The Creoles are the group, more than any other, which regards itself as a Belizean people, both with respect to the city and to the future independent country. They have the greatest national rather than racial or 'foreign' identity, a state of affairs which arises from the melting-pot effect that British Honduras had upon the many tribal groups which are represented in the country. Several of the other ethnic groups of the Colony feel stronger ethnic allegiances, or have more in common with the neighbouring Republics, or feel no national allegiance at all, but only a strong group relationship. One of the results of this feeling, which is added to by the Creoles' apparent dominance of government and the core of the country, is that some of the other cultural groups believe that they are being discriminated against. This feeling is particularly prevalent in the north, where many of the inhabitants
still feel close ties with Mexico, and where the two Districts provide a major part of the revenue of the country. The inhabitants of Corozal District particularly and Orange Walk District to a lesser extent feel that they are being short-changed by the government of the country. There is not a sufficient body of written information in existence to prove or disprove such a belief, but as long as the accusation stands, it may have a divisive effect upon the country, and more so when the Colony gets its independence.

It is not too difficult, however, to understand at least some of the origins of this dissatisfaction. As was pointed out above, the Creoles are the only group in the country without some form of divided loyalty to cultural group or foreign country. They are centred around Belize City, which is undoubtedly 'their' city in practically every sense of the word, and they provide the major labour force for the city and its hinterland, if nothing else because they are the most populous group. The sheer numerical superiority of the Creoles is shown by the fact that they are the major ethnic component of all stratas of society, and are numerically the most important group in all of the types of economic activity, of both well and poorly paid nature.

As Belize City is the capital of the country, as well as being the major doorway in and out of the Colony,
it is not surprising that the rest of the country is given the idea that the area is being controlled by the Creoles. This group has traditionally lived in this area and is by far the largest in numbers in the capital city. Belize gives the impression of being controlled by the Creoles simply because this is in fact the case. As the city is the home of one third of the population and the commercial centre of the country, it is somewhat to be expected that more money will be spent on it than on the rest of the country.

Unfortunately Belize City is also the greatest drag on the economy of the country. Its great size and relative importance enable it to soak up much of the country's income, but it provides little in return. The City itself provides no agricultural produce, and its citizens contribute little more. The industrial backbone of the town consists of a few wood yards, a couple of saw mills, some bottling works and a cigarette factory. Even the vast quantity of rum consumed is produced outside the city boundaries and shipped in. The populace appears to survive by providing services and by filling government offices and Land Rovers, and by engaging in the economic passtime of odd-jobbery. It is a source of some amazement that the town can support its populace, and again Huxley's words come to mind. Today Belize City "fails to support" a population which approaches and possibly exceeds 40,000.
It is not surprising that the people who dwell in other areas of the country feel somewhat cheated. It is to be hoped that this situation changes in the future, and the growth of the new capital site might be the boost that the country needs. If the Creoles have to move about to preserve their livelihood, they might also change their way of life.

As an example of the conflict between the ethnic groups, two descriptions of the Battle of St. George's Cay can be given, the former as it appears in the history books of England and the latter as described by a Mestizo from Corozal.

According to the first account, the Spanish fleet was driven off by a combined Bayman-Slave force, which had the help of a very small British military contingent. Besides the stout hearts of the defenders, the difficulty of navigation in the coastal waters and sickness on board the Spanish ships are felt to have been contributary factors. It is significant that after the battle the British discovered that one of the cays contained a large number of graves, more than could possibly have been killed in the fighting.

The Mestizo's account runs very differently and it must be remembered that this man's ancestors may also have taken part. This story suggests that the sickness
was more serious than the British believe, and that the Spanish ships were so undermanned that all of the sailors were in danger of being marooned. They sent to Belize for help and medical attention. The British thought that this would be a good opportunity to get rid of the Spanish, and sent out their slaves to slaughter the surviving sailors.

It is not really important which account is true, but which account different groups think is true. As it seems likely that September 10th (the anniversary of the battle) will be chosen as Independence Day, such a difference of opinion might have more serious consequences in the future.

The other cultural groups have some representation in the city, but only the Chinese, the East Indians, and the Syrians have had any great significance in the settlement. There are some Mestizos, but in relation to the Colony as a whole, their numerical importance is negligible. Those that are found in Belize City follow a wide variety of occupations, but are chiefly working for the government. This is largely a reflection of the function of the city as the capital of the Colony, and the situation might change greatly with the inauguration of the new capital.

In addition to these groups, there are also some
British and American expatriots in the country, few of whom are present on a permanent basis, but who make up a significant element in the country. The British, along with some Canadians, are chiefly government officials on short-term loan. The Americans are mostly economic speculators, trying to open up the country to the industrial outside world.

The East Indian population has been scattered since the 1931 hurricane, when it formed a large section of the populace of Queen Charlotte Town, and the few remaining families are now being assimilated into the Creole population.

The Chinese and the Syrians form much of the merchant class in Belize City, but do not form overt sub-cultures within the settlement. The Syrians, often also termed Turks, Lebanese and Arabs, appear to have drifted into the country on a haphazard basis over the last century or so.

The Chinese may be the survivors of an attempt at indentured settlement by the Colonial government around the mid-19th Century, but it seems just as likely that they are the relatives of Chinese families who are found over much of the Caribbean area, pursuing a similar way of life. By all accounts the Chinese labourers mentioned above 'died of disease or overwork, or were
seized by wild Indians, or fled to the Amerindian communities and were assimilated into these. The Chinese merchants of Belize City have stronger links with their homeland than might be expected of indentured labourers, and a number of families still send their children to Hong Kong for schooling and most understand and converse between themselves in one of the Chinese dialects.

THE NEW CAPITAL -- CAPITAL CITY IN THE BUSH

Often proposed in the past, the notion of relocating the capital of the country became a prominent idea in the Colony after Hurricane Hattie. "Shortly after the 1961 hurricane the People's United Party (PUP) came to power and part of their platform was that they would push for a movement of the present capital to a new site." Although in the wake of Hattie there was a strong feeling for relocation, as time went on the desire for movement began to wane, until it again became a political question five years later. "Little was done until 1966 when there was a necessity to fulfill or at least make an effort to fulfill their promise of the movement of the capital as part of the original platform." The site had been chosen during this period of time "after very careful consideration: it is 17°15'N by 88°45' or, geographically almost exactly in the middle of the
FIG. 5. Location of the new capital site.
country on the Western Highway from Guatemala where it forks to the two parts of Belize City and Stann Creek Town approximately 50 miles from both. The Belize River is only a stone's throw away from the town centre and is in fact the source of the water supply. The writer of this missive was obviously an optimistic stone thrower, as the river is one mile from the Town Centre, and this was not the only miscalculation made in the early stages.

"In 1966, the preliminary clearing of the new site was started by the government using hand labour to clear the growth on the site. It was apparent immediately that it would be necessary to bring in machinery to clear this site. A forty-ton Nation Builder was brought in and leveled the site, but by the time that construction began in late 1967 second growth had taken over and began to cause problems. The site was recleared and preliminary surveys and construction layout was begun."

The problems of construction in such an area have been overcome by the contractors, but the labour supply has not been so cooperative. The contractors are, not surprisingly, a British firm, as the British government is footing most of the bill, but although it is a company with experience in tropical building projects, the date of completion has had to be changed, because of the problem of labour.
(xxiii) Semi-detached houses at the new capital site. An experiment which has proved none too popular, as there is no tradition of such dwellings in the country.
The labourers are chiefly Creoles, who, as has been noted, have expertise in building in wood, but little tradition in concrete building, and their philosophy on life does not involve the concept of speed -- one Creole saying is "Time longer dan rope." The labourers see no particular reason for working fast as they are relatively content with their lot in life and have no great desire for change. Thus they leave the job on numerous occasions when something better turns up (such as a National holiday) and often only return when they need some money. As they have no special skills in the tradition of building houses of concrete blocks, and even less knowledge of making them hurricane proof, as is the desire of the government, a large number of skilled outside experts are needed to act as foremen. The overall result is that the work does not progress as fast as it might.

"Proposals for the new capital were designed for an ultimate population of 30,000 with a population of 5,000 for the Phase I development. Proposed expenditures by 1970 for the New Capital were to be eleven million dollars which were to be in the form of loans and contributions by the British government. Already they are running into problems due to a shortage of funds; the results of which are the elimination of certain roads, minimalizing some of the construction of public buildings, and cutting
Single storey, semi-detached houses at the new capital site.
corners on housing." Despite this series of problems, "it is intended that the seat of Government will be moved from Belize City to the New Capital during 1970. The public buildings under construction include a Legislative Chamber to house the National Assembly, two 3-storey blocks of Government Offices, a Police headquarters and a Public Works Department headquarters; in short, a nucleus of the necessary accommodation for the administration of the country. In addition, there is a properly planned market, including cold storage, to deal with local produce and fully serviced commercial and industrial sites to encourage local industry."

It is unfortunate that such a potentially useful project should be constrained by the lack of funds. In a country whose major resource is its surfeit of land, the most ambitious project of all time is being crammed into an area of minimum size. The lots are much larger than those in Belize City, but the uniformity of the houses and their barrack-like formation removes all visual evidence of such spaciousness. The major problem is that of services, for this is to be the first settlement in the country with sewer drainage, and if the houses were spaced out more, the costs would soar. The result is that the city looks like a barracks-town, the houses built in rows and squares, and only the city centre gives an impression of difference, aesthetics and imagination.
One of the single family dwellings being built at the new capital site. Note the other buildings in the background, indicating the close-packed housing at the site.
Most of the houses are single-family dwellings, and in external form at least they are reminiscent of the new Belizean government project in Kings Park, Belize City. As has been pointed out before, this style of housing only minimally follows the traditions of the country. More unfortunate was the decision to build some semi-detached houses on an experimental basis. Out of 763 projected dwellings, 290 are of this form, and they appear to be the least popular of the housing forms.

The Town Centre shows more imagination, and the Legislative Chamber was designed in pseudo-Mayan form in order to capture at least some of the traditions of the country. A number of other facilities are being included in the plan, such as a provision for schools, a hospital, ecumenical centres, electricity, water supply and sewage disposal.

"The prime consideration in building is a minimum design strength to resist hurricane winds of 140 m.p.h. in respect of public buildings and schools and 110 m.p.h. in the case of residential accomodations." These provisions should be sufficient, for the distance between the coast and the new capital site also serves to decrease the speed of the winds. In such a position there will be no danger from the inundation of the sea which has always caused most damage and loss of life in Belize City.

Besides leading to uniform regimentation in housing,
(xxvi) The bright spot of the new capital site is the city centre. In the middle of the picture is the Legislative Chamber, which is being constructed in pseudo-Mayan style, as a link to the Colony's past.
the small budget has also meant that landscaping has had to play a secondary role to the construction of buildings. It is somewhat ironic that in a country where vegetative growth is so fast, the imaginative planting of trees and shrubs plays little part in the present plans for the new capital site. In many ways the new capital gives an impression of tokenism, which is unfortunate for in order to succeed it will need the wholehearted support of the country and its inhabitants.

The initial population "will represent civil servants and those people involved in the service industries." These people will almost certainly be supplied by Belize City, and its initial effect upon the countryside will be small. As the surrounding area is sparsely populated a number of official schemes will be needed to bring people into the sphere of direct influence of the new town.

The cheapest houses are being built for just over £1000 ($4000 B.H.) and this does not include the numerous subsidiary costs such as roads and services which make the prices range from $6500-17000 B.H. This figure is much too high for most of the population of the country to be able to afford and the housing will have to be subsidised or sold on long-term mortgages if the poorer (average) people of the country are to be attracted to it.

Although communications are present, if not good,
with parts of the west, south and east of the Colony, the north is still cut off from this development, and a road will have to be built up to Orange Walk Town in order to involve these peoples in the new site. The lack of this routeway at present only increases the feeling of persecution that the inhabitants of the northern Districts have of the Creoles. If the road was built it would also have the side effect of opening up an undeveloped and largely unsettled area of the Colony, almost certainly radically affecting the economy. It is to be hoped that this opening up would lead to an influx of population into presently sparsely settled areas, and not to an egress of the few settlers already there.

At present the new capital site is a centre of controversy and problems. It is now well on its way to completion, and yet it still does not even have a name, although "some have suggested 'Mopan', which is the name of the indigenous Maya tribe which never surrendered to either the British or the Spaniards." 54

There is also the problem of overcoming the influence and power of the city of Belize, and the fear that the new capital may become another Brasilia, with a small resident population and a great commuter dash to the coast every Friday. If the new site is a success, "considerations must be given to the fact that slowly Belize City will lose its importance as a political and economic centre." 55
The deciding factor might well be the building of the new port south of Belize City.

If all goes well, a situation which would be pleasantly new to the Colony, the new capital may provide the much needed stimulus that the country is searching for, and combined with a new series of roads and a new port, it may lead to the development of the interior of the country which is so essential to its success as an independent nation. It is unfortunate that such an important project should be shackled by financial difficulties and it is to be hoped that the number of corners cut does not lead to the future downfall of the scheme.
NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1Clegern, op. cit., p. 7.
2Morris, op. cit., p. 12.
3Clegern, op. cit., p. 59.

4See Latin American Report, "A New Look at Belize (British Honduras)," International Trade Mart., New Orleans, L.A.


6This project was paid for partly by money from the Baron Bliss Trust. Baron Bliss was an Englishman with a Portuguese title. He died in 1926 within sight of the Colony, without having ever set foot in the country, but left a large bequest to the Colony in his will, receipts from which have been put toward numerous projects in the country. (Caiger, pp. 153-156.)

7Odaffer, op. cit., p. 7.
8Swayne, op. cit., p. 166.

9Ibid.

10Some sections of the Lake Independence Area particularly give the impression of being housing estates built on garbage tops, because of these methods of reclamation.

11Odaffer, op. cit., p. 7.
12Ibid.

13Referred to in Carr and Thorpe, op. cit., p. 15.
14Caiger, op. cit., p. 135.


17 Carr and Thorpe, op. cit., p. 142.

18 Ibid., p. 16.

19 Odaffer, op. cit., p. 10.

20 From the Reporter, January 10th, 1969.

21 Odaffer, op. cit., p. 1, and field research by the author.

22 See note 6 (above).

23 Burdon, op. cit., p. 194.

24 Odaffer, op. cit.

25 Burdon, op. cit., p. 244.

26 Burdon, op. cit., p. 31.

27 Ibid., p. 319.

28 This was the first time an aeroplane had landed in the Colony (Caiger, p. 153). This area now constitutes one of the few park-areas of the city. It is used mainly by the 'lower-class' residents of the city as a picnic spot and bathing area, but also by visitors to the city.

29 Most of the street names commemorate locations in the Middle East.

30 Caiger, op. cit., p. 148.

31 Approximate figure; author's estimate.

32 Some of the streets are much wider than others, whilst being no more important or well used, and often the better used streets are comparatively narrow. Some of the directional changes are due to the topography of the area, but others are not so easily explained.

33 Anderson, op. cit., p. 5.

34 The blocks for the houses are made from a mixture of earth and cement. The roofing is of aluminium. The idea for this type of housing came from Mr. Smiling, the Draughtsman and Field Officer in the Housing and Planning Department, after he returned from training in Trinidad where he saw this type of house being constructed. It is expected that these houses will be given out to people
in the lower-income brackets. (From the Reporter, Vol. 2, No. 12, Friday, March 21st, 1969. Belize City.)

35Anderson, op. cit., p. 5.

36Bradley, L.H., Personal Communication.

37"Although Obeah has a hold on certain sections of the community, the greater part of the population does not believe in it....Bush doctors have cures for snake bites and fever including malaria. Medical physicians have been known to turn over snake bite victims to the snake doctor for cure....Contribo is used for malaria cure, it being a vine which is steeped and drunk like tea, and originates with the Carib." (Donohoe, p. 64. Further descriptions of superstitions, etc., see pp. 61-66.)

38See Chapter Two, p. 24, of this account.

39As related to the author.

40Caiger, op. cit., p. 127.

41Waddell, op. cit., p. 18.

42Odaffer, op. cit., p. 11.

43Ibid.


45Odaffer, op. cit., p. 11.

46The New Capital project is financed under the aid programme of the British Ministry of Overseas Development through its Caribbean Division, and is administered on behalf of both Governments by the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations, London, in collaboration with the Reconstruction and Development Corporation, Belize. The over-all Consultants for the scheme are Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick & Partners, London (Civil and Structural Engineers) with associated consultants, Norman and Dawbarn (Architects and Town Planners), London; Widnell and Trolley (Quantity Surveyors), London; Freece Cardew and Rider (Electrical Engineers), London. The main Contractors are Pauling and Company (Overseas) Ltd., London.

48 Odaffer, op. cit., p. 12.
50 Ibid., p. 3.
51 Ibid., p. 8.
52 Odaffer, op. cit., p. 12.
CHAPTER FOUR
BELIZE DISTRICT, HISTORIC CORE OF BRITISH HONDURAS

THE LOCATION OF THE DISTRICT

The boundaries of the district represent a reasonable selection of the conformities and anomalies (in relation to the cultural patterns) which are to be found within the country; its place names, as much as those in any other district, indicate the pattern of its history; its settlement patterns represent those of the rest of the country and its people are certainly more Belizean than those of the other districts. Although the district is that area which is more affected by Belize City than any other town, it is not altogether a historically justifiable entity. Few of the boundaries of the country could be justified at the time of their inception, yet with minor reservations all have become entrenched as adequate administrative lines and in some cases as edges of 'culture sheds'.

The shape of the district is very similar to that of the country, long, in a northerly direction and narrow. As has been pointed out, the reason for the country's shape is strongly bound up with the physique of this part of Central America. Similarly the shape of this part of
the country is connected to the physical background of the area, and once again the waterways play an important role. The district around Belize owes much of its existence and character to the watery nature of its environment. Its shape has been determined for a number of years, appearing on maps in the nineteenth Century. North of Belize City the district is influenced by the Belize River and the small streams which run westwards from the coast. To the south the Sibun River has always been of importance (it once served as the southern boundary of the settlement) and still is an important artery in the country. In this area there are also a number of west-east flowing streams, and two important lagoons, which since the completion of the Burdon Canal have served as an important inland routeway. Only the Belize and Sibun Rivers flow for any great length outside of the District.

The westward extent of the district is slight when seen in the light of 'geographical' distance from Belize City, and to understand this situation a dichotomy must be recognised between Belize City the administrative centre of Belize District, and Belize City the capital of the Colony. As a district administrative centre, the city effectively controls its hinterland but not those of other towns. As a capital city its role is to control the whole country, and its influence is ubiquitous. Away from the boundaries of the district the regional towns have a
(xxvii) Temple of the Masonary Altars, Altun Ha; this archaeological site is presently being excavated by the Royal Ontario Museum. It lies in the area of Rockstone Pond Village, a linear settlement which runs along two converging roads from Lucky Strike on the Northern Highway.
strong influence and by and large are autonomous in their own areas, but are subject to the final say of Belize City. The relationship has many similarities to Philbrick's focal area concept. "A focal area is divided into two parts -- core and periphery....The core portion contains people and activities upon which surrounding population and activities come to focus; the periphery contains population and activities which focus upon that core. The area of human organization as a whole is defined by the focal relationship between these two parts."2 In the case of British Honduras, Belize City performs a dual function, in some senses a part of the periphery, but in most senses the core area.

The northern section of the landward boundary of Belize District is geometrical in form, a type usually used by British surveyors when they were working in unknown areas or areas through which there was no distinguishing natural feature to be followed, or areas too complex in some way to enable the demarcation of any other form of line. To a large extent all three conditions apply here. This is one of the least settled areas of the country. Just a short time ago the wreckage of a light aeroplane, lost while flying relief from Mexico after Hurricane Hattie, was found strewn over a large area just off the northern highway near Maskall. It had been undetected, despite numerous searches, for eight years. It is one of
the flattest, swampest areas of the country, in which little agriculture can easily be carried on and where the chief distinguishing features are level elevation and dense secondary undergrowth. It is also an area where two of the major cultural groups, the Creoles and the northern Mayan Indians, come into contact. As such it proves a problem for division on cultural terms, as the villages on either side of the boundary contain both cultural groups; and there is no real solution to this dilemma. This was not so true in the past, as it is really only in the last ten years that the Creoles have extended their influence so far north, but it is doubtful whether there was a clearcut break at any stage of the Colony's history. In such circumstances the straight-line might be as accurate a delineation as any.

The next stretch of boundary-line, from Revenge Lagoon accords in some places to historical precedent, in some cases to expediency and in some cases to apparently no principle at all. In the north it follows an important watershed, dividing the Belize River drainage from that of the New River, but to the south of the Western Lagoon, expediency begins to play its part and a series of water course and straight lines divide up the area, with most of the settlements of the area being left in Belize District.

Historically parts of this line have some validity.
There were two main streams for mahogany extraction, the Belize River and its tributaries and the New River and its subsidiary waterways. Logs were rafted down the former direct to Belize City. The wood was collected in the lagoons of the latter, a process which is still carried on, and towed out via the New River and the sea to the saw mills along the Belize River near the capital city. The villages which are to be found in Belize District were all chiefly connected with the former, whilst the area to the west was largely uninhabited and still is, except for the time of log cutting, when it serves as a magnet to the Creole log cutters who leave many of their villages almost deserted in order to pursue their traditional practices.

To the south of Labouring Creek the boundary runs through more or less uninhabited country, following a creek where this is convenient, but for the main part running straight. The boundary between Belize and Stann Creek Districts is also a straight line; once again this is suitable as most of the land is unused, although a slight deviation indicates that the boundary-maker was aware that Mullins River Town is tied more to Stann Creek Town than to the capital city.

Belize District also includes a large number of the offshore islands, but only two of these, Ambergris Cay and Cay Corker (Cay Caulker) have any significant permanent
settlements, and both fit ideally into Belize District.

It is difficult to indicate the character of this district, as this is made up of a number of very different parts. Much of the region is unpopulated or only sparsely populated and upon first observation it is not easy to see how Belize District was once the most important logwood and mahogany-cutting area in the country. The population is found in two major belts, whilst large tracts of the land remaining are almost totally unpopulated. The coastal areas are decidedly uninviting, but there are interior areas which are quite suitable to agriculturists, and yet very little of the area is developed for this mode of production. Once a heavily wooded area, Belize District is now largely a region of scrub and secondary growth. There is little or no commercial mahogany cutting, excepting an occasional tree. Logwood has been superceded by synthetic chemicals. Pine has been almost totally worked out, although it must be pointed out that this was not the best pine-producing district even in its heyday. In fact, this district has been bypassed almost completely cash-economic-pursuits, in a country which in itself is almost totally bypassed by these forms of economic activity.

This does not mean that the district is economically and culturally useless. The Creole culture is strong, if hard to define, and is becoming more entrenched. As the
small number of projects which have been started have shown, the land could be used to produce cash crops, at least in part. The experience of the agriculturalists along the river valleys would seem to point to a good future for such areas as producers of truck crops for the capital city. Although getting the earliest of starts, Belize District has now dropped behind all the districts but one (Toledo), in economic output, however, and appears to be getting less promotion than the latter area. There are agricultural schemes in Belize District, such as the Mussel Creek Rice Station, experimental rice paddies along the Western Highway, and a cucumber growing company near Boom village, but the northern and southern extremities of the district are still undeveloped, and little is heard of plans to open them up.

Belize District is to all intents and purposes on the decline. The government hopes to halt this decline with (first of all) a road-building policy to open up the agricultural lands. It remains to be seen whether this opening up will result in the moving in of development or the moving out of people to a more immediately suitable home.

THE ISLAND VILLAGES OF THE COLONY

The islands are really a culture area of their own, and contain to a large extent an autonomous cultural
(xxviii) San Pedro, Ambergris Cay. Fishing village and holiday resort, the growth of this settlement has been severely restricted by land speculators (see text).
group which is more purely Spanish than any other in the Colony. This statement is more true now than previously since there are now only two major island settlements in the Colony. Prior to Hurricane Hattie some of the smaller cays, such as St. George's Cay, had minor villages on them, but now only a few summer residences and the occasional tourist lodge (as on the Turneffe Islands and Cay Chapel), remain.

Both the village of San Pedro on Ambergris Cay, and the settlement on Cay Corker were begun in their present form by Spanish-Mexican refugees fleeing from the War of the Castes in the nineteenth Century. Cay Corker, also known as Cay Caulker, may have been important, as one traditional explanation of its name suggests, at one time, for the cleaning of the wooden ships of the buccaneers, but it was not settled to any extent until the mid-nineteenth Century. There was no permanent settlement on Ambergris Cay, so named because of the grey, amber-like material found there, either until this time. Both communities are fishing villages, and both were started by people from the Mexican coastlands, but there has been little contact between the two and a state of competition and rivalry exists.

San Pedro is only approachable by sea, and gives the impression of being the proverbial tropical paradise, with myriads of coconut palms, long stretches of sandy beaches,
Housing on Ambergris Cay is similar to that in Belize City although the population of San Pedro is of Spanish origin, and contacts with the capital are not frequent.
houses which are built upon the sand with apparently no consideration for the biblical warnings against such practice. Surprisingly enough the community can supply its own water from wells, despite being surrounded by saline conditions. The people get most of their food from the sea, and trade the surplus with Belize in order to get the goods they cannot themselves produce. This island has a lower annual rainfall and a higher percentage of beaches than most other areas of the country.

This village is the largest of the two island settlements, having some 900 inhabitants, and in addition to the somewhat subsistence type of economy, there is a flourishing crayfish cannery which sends its produce to the U.S., and a great potential for increasing its already significant tourist trade. It is the opinion of both the Belizean government and many foreign investors, that Ambergris Cay as a whole and San Pedro in particular will in the future (and possibly the near future) provide the most promising site for future tourism in the country.

But this possibility has not gone unnoticed, and on either side of the village, which is itself only about half a mile long, the land has been bought up by American speculators who propose to open up the area to North American tourists. This has had a number of benefits to the village, but also one significantly bad result, for at the time of writing there were only three or four vacant
Cay Caulker (Corker) is similar in a number of ways to the settlement on Ambergris Cay. The houses are once again similar to those of Belize. The population is of more mixed origin than that of San Pedro and contacts with the capital city are more regular.
lots in the village, which has already extended over the swampy ground on the leeward side of the cay. In a very short time new families and perhaps some of the old ones, will be forced to move out in order to survive. The way of life will undoubtedly change as the pressure of the urbanized world enters village life. Fishing may well survive on a small scale, but the tourist trade will surely become the dominant economic way of life, and full-scale fishermen may find themselves obliged to move elsewhere. This in itself might be difficult, as few of the other cays are habitable, and these too are being taken over by tourism; and there are few other fishing communities in the country which could provide a home to the 'refugees' from the present settlements.

Cay Corker, in many ways similar to its neighbour, with a sandy front door, mangrove covered back door, palms and beaches, is not in nearly such a dire position. The areas of mangrove swamp are also being used for housing on this cay, but there is still room to build on sand, and the community can afford to have a soccer/cricket field for the younger villagers. The community is much more cosmopolitan than that of San Pedro, and its connections with Belize are developed far above the few weekly boats which ply from Ambergris Cay to the capital city. A fishing village, Cay Corker markets its produce via the 'Northern Fisherman's Coop' in Belize, and there is a
constant traffic between the two settlements. This more cosmopolitan nature is shown in the greater variety of ethnic types, an increased number of bars and clubs, and the different nature of the tourist industry. In San Pedro people come to stay for a week or two, in Cay Corker they stay for a few days. International tourism is not quite so important at Cay Corker, but it provides a place of escape for more of the Belize City population than does its northerly neighbour, organizing dances and regattas on National holidays, and providing a week-end refuge for those who tire of the faster pace of life in the capital.

THE MAINLAND SETTLEMENTS

Inland villages show a very different face to the world than do those of the cays. They are chiefly subsistence agricultural settlements, although the inhabitants are always looking for odd jobs to make a living. Most of the people who live in Belize District are of Creole descent, and together they probably provide one of the greatest pools of odd-job labour in the world. Every man can turn his hand to driving, house building, road repairing, etc., but most important of all to woodcutting. Belize District loses much of its male population to the mahogany cutting areas of Orange Walk during the dry season, when the Creoles leave to pursue their traditional economic way of life.
Housing in the Belize River valley. The style is that of the capital city, but the materials are different. In these areas cabbage-wood is often substituted for pine.
There are two types of village in Belize District, those by the rivers and those by the roads. The former are clean, green, and agriculturally minded, giving the impression of great tranquility. The latter are dusty, covered with a layer of chalk from the roads, more cosmopolitan minded (whilst still pursuing agriculture on a subsistence basis) and by their very location have an air of bustle and speed. The latter are located on the Northern and Western Highways; a few of these have a relatively short history, although they were also mostly the original settlements of the early woodcutters; their different character is a modern phenomenon. Many of these early villages died but some survived: others just remain as names on the map. Nearly all the villages have a soccer field/cricket field, symbol of Britishness, but significantly often also used for baseball.

CULTURAL PATTERNS AND ARTIFACTS

Housing.

The housing of Belize District is also of two major types, one of which is similar to that of Belize City, and the other which has more affinity with the dwellings of the Amerindians. The latter was, until recently, the dominant form, and consists of a thatched roof made from a palm such as the cohune, and wooden walls most often made from the bark of the cabbage palm, but also occasion-
More Belize District housing. In this example the roof is still thatched, although the rest of the house follows the usual Belizean pattern, even down to the stilts. The building in the background is a separate kitchen. Cabbage-wood is again the building material.
ally using palmetos wood. If properly made from trees of the right age, and if properly maintained, this type of dwelling can be as long lasting as its more modern counterpart, and is better suited to the climate of the area. Even where a newer dwelling is constructed, of different materials, the old methods and materials are often still used to construct outhouses and sheds.

The type of construction as used in Belize City, namely board sides and a zinc roof, but more particularly using the same basic shapes and, even where not necessitated by swampy ground, using the principle of 'posts' or 'stilts', slowly began to be used in the outlying areas, first by the merchants and the more wealthy and by the government agencies, and later on a wider scale. This type of construction was still, however, something of a rarity in Belize District before 1961. Hurricane Hattie destroyed much of the housing in this area and damaged even more, and many homeowners became eligible for loans from the Reconstruction and Development Corporation. In Belize District there were 1578 applications for assistance and $265,997 B.H. was given in housing grants to the area. In addition over $110,000 B.H. was given in the form of loans. Such an influx of money was unprecedented and had great effect upon the housing structure of the district. It gave many people the capital and opportunity to improve their homes which they would not otherwise have got. In
addition over $8000 B.H. was given in Farmers' Housing Grants to the people of the district. The size of the impact may be gauged by recognizing that the population of Belize District at this time was only about 8,000; few families failed to gain financially from this natural disaster. Belize District has also improved its looks and image, for although the modern houses are in some ways less suitable than their predecessors, and although not all of the recipients of the grants built their homes in the new style, the villagers agree that their settlements give a better visual impression than before, and appear more wealthy than they perhaps are. All of the villages now have more than half their houses built in the more modern style, and in most the proportion is significantly higher than 50%.

Cultural Groups.

The majority of the population of the district is made up of Creoles, and this group is a territorial extension of that which lives in Belize City. Consequently the comments made previously (in Chapter Three) about the Creoles, apply, but in addition some remarks must be made which are more applicable in the district because of its more rural nature, and subsequent different history. In particular the way of life is different in Belize District from the capital city, because the economic
base of the area has been of a different kind, namely forestry with some agriculture, rather than commercial and administrative enterprises.

Historically, slavery appears to have taken a very different form in the settlement of Belize than it did elsewhere. This was necessary as the basis on which slavery was built was different. The woodcutting could not be carried on in the normal plantation fashion, and a certain degree of trust and even camaraderie had to be accorded the slaves by their owners. This may have also been the case in the other woodcutting settlements of Central America, but in the Caribbean islands woodcutting was not the basis of the economy, and the social system was consequently different. This is not to say that there was not dissatisfaction, however, and the Archives contain numerous references to Spanish enticement of dissatisfied slaves into the hispanicized areas. It is usually taken as indicative of the somewhat better state of affairs in the Belize settlement that at the Battle of St. George's Cay the Creoles were armed and joined the Baymen as equals in defeating the Spanish, often performing acts of individual heroism.

Traditionally the Creoles are forest workers, and they have gained the reputation for being non-agriculturalists and more than this, for despising those who partake in such pursuits. In the early days of the Colony the practice of
agriculture was not pursued for a number of reasons. Firstly the Spanish-English agreements prohibited the cultivation of crops. Secondly the early settlers did not have any great expertise and experience in tropical agriculture. But probably more important was the fact that it was more profitable not to engage in agriculture. For a long time there were only a few inhabitants, and it is likely that the turnover of settlers was fairly high. Also, more important, was the high price of slaves which meant that the Baymen had to use them as full-time woodcutters and could not afford to release them for agricultural work. The result was that most of the settlement's food was imported, from Britain, the West Indies, or the U.S., and this is an aspect of the economy that has not changed too much. Most of the energies of the populace are spent on paying for its daily bread.

"The greatest drawback to agriculture has always been the want of a steady labour supply. The mahogany cutter from the beginning, raised by his independent life to a privileged position, looked down upon the field labourer, and a distaste for paid plantation labour unfortunately exists. It is true that every man looks forward to some day in his old age owning a spot of land, there to build his hut and raise plantains and yams for his family; but in the mean time, whilst still able to stand the hard life of the woods, he refuses to leave it for any other."
When by any chance he is out of a job in the colony, he prefers, rather than undertake field labour to go outside the colony to work at mahogany." 7 Although written in 1917 Swayne's words have more than a ring of authenticity today.

But it is not altogether fair to say that the Creoles are non-agriculturalists. As Ashcraft points out the slaves were allowed to work on their own land, after they had completed the work for their masters, and this provided a supplement to the diet. Also it must be pointed out that there are a large number of Creoles in Belize and Cayo Districts who make their living from tilling the soil, and the other districts also have some such representation.

The physical environment, as well as their cultural background must have had at least a reinforcing effect upon the non-agricultural activities and traditions of the Creoles. As has been pointed out, most of the Creoles of British Honduras live in Belize City. The area in the immediate vicinity of the capital is, to say the least, an uninviting prospect for the farmer, for even crops which might thrive in wet conditions would be put off by the salinity of the soil. Morris painted a picture of great beauty when he described the vegetative growth which was to be found in Belize City in 1883, and yet he had to admit that "owing to the sandy nature of the soil,
which is impregnated with salt, and the proximity of water to the surface, gardening in Belize is pursued under very disadvantageous circumstances. Crabs dig up and destroy many plants; while rats, attracted by the presence of coco-nuts, are very destructive to bulbs and roots.\(^8\) The destructive power of the hurricanes must be added to this already fair comment in order to show that attempts at gardening are by no means easy.

Perhaps the examples set by the Creoles of the Belize and Sibun River valleys are important here, as they show that where the physical environment is suitable, and where the rewards are ample enough, the cultural traditions of at least some of the Creole population may change, at least with respect to agriculture. At present, however, the traditions appear to be getting the upper hand, and while this is the case a large amount of food will continue to be imported into the Colony, chiefly for the consumption of the Creoles.

The other cultural groups have some representation in Belize District, and there is evidence that pluralism was once more important than now. For instance, in 1879, 'public lands near the Manatee River' were made available to a group of (450) distressed Italians from Guatemala.\(^9\) There is, however, no further mention of the fate of this settlement, and no apparent Italian influence in contemporary British Honduras.
There are some Amerindians living in the district, chiefly on the northern borderlands, although there is a scattering of them elsewhere. For instance, the village of Maskall, one of the oldest in the country, has a high proportion of non-Creole people, usually easily distinguishable by their house-types, and made more noticeable as they tend to predominate on the northern side of the Northern River, while the Creoles cluster on the south bank.

In addition there are a number of Caribs, Chinese and East Indians, along with an occasional British or American expatriate, but nowhere do these groups form a significant proportion of the population.

Settlement patterns.

There are two major types of settlement to be found in Belize District, one water oriented and the other road oriented. As had been pointed out before, the former is the oldest pattern, and indeed it was at one time a much more extensive pattern than now. Morris' 1883 account mentions settlements that are no longer in existence or which have undergone a change of name, and all of which were riverain villages. He also points out some places that were even then deserted settlements, once woodcutting camps or Indian villages, and still to be found on contemporary maps (eg., Beaver Dam). The waterway pattern
has been in a process of constant change, as it has at different times depended upon very different economics, and even now it is undergoing change. As a road is put through close by to a river-oriented settlement, it is often the case that the centre of settlement moves up the bank to the road (eg., Bob Eiley, Washing Tree and to a great extent the villages between Bermudian Landing and Rancho Dolores). Even the villages which are still set out along the river bank are usually dependent upon a road for their main connections (eg., Freetown, Sibun and Little Bermudian Landing).

But the major road pattern of settlements is to be found on the Northern Highway where the villages stretch, often indistinguishably together, along the roadside in a ribbon pattern. At least some of these villages are post-road phenomena, and help to demonstrate the impact of a new transportation pattern, projected upon a more historic one.

Perhaps more than any other district, that around Belize reflects its history in the landscape, and a knowledge of both can help to demonstrate very important aspects of the cultural geography of the country. Indeed, the history of the area is often brought up to date. For instance, as the dry season comes on, many of the villages of the district lose a large part of their population to Orange Walk District where at Hill Bank and Gallon Jug
the traditional logging economy is continued.

Place name evidence.

The place names of this district show a fairly typical collection of examples of those found in the country as a whole. They show quite clearly the influence of the original settlers, both pirates and woodcutters, and in many ways show the character and history of the district; in this respect there is a similarity with areas of North America, also settled and explored by Anglo Saxons, which have similar forms of place-name expression. A number of these names can quite easily be traced back to their origins, and as no specific study has been done on this mode of expression in the country it is worth recording some directions and examples that are to be found in the Colony.

A few of the names in Belize District refer back to the prehistoric settlement of the country. 'Belize' itself may have had such an origin, but more certain is the settlement of Rockstone Pond. This linear village circles around the ruins of a past Mayan ceremonial centre known as Altun Ha, which was built of stone quarried from two spots nearby which are now filled with water, and one of which, coupled with the ruins themselves, gave rise to the contemporary name. Although only recently excavated, these ruins have been known of for a much longer period
The eastern approach to Hattieville, a "temporary" settlement set up after the 1961 hurricane as an emergency rest centre.
of time as is shown both by the name of the present-day village and by the fact that the site is devoid of these pieces of archaeological intricacy having been used as road-building material by the earlier British settlers who saw them as a god-send in an area largely devoid of any such suitable materials. The workers were not discouraged by the protestations of the Archaeological Commissioner, who pointed out that the rock was too rotten to supply good road-building material, and part of the country's heritage was ground beneath the wheels of carts and trucks.

The cays, and to a lesser extent, the mainland show the influence of the buccaneers and pirates who used the settlement as a base in earlier times. The Bluefield Range and Gallows Point Reef are ominous reminders of this former occupation and way of life.

A large number of the place names refer to physical features of the country, and collectively these form the largest and certainly not the least significant group.

Hattieville is the most modern, being a barracks village which was set up after Hurricane Hattie as an emergency relief centre for the homeless. In all, eleven huts were built, 300 feet by 30 feet, each containing sixty 10 foot by 15 foot rooms in which a family of up to fifteen people might be housed. The huts were built
One of the windowless huts in Hattieville, 300 feet by 30 feet. Each hut contains sixty 10 feet by 15 feet rooms, each housing one family.
without windows, and smaller huts of a similar design
were built as stores and clubs. Over 1700 people still
live, or rather exist, in this settlement. As a relief
measure this was fine: the tragedy is that people are
still living in these buildings, hopefully waiting for a
new town to be built nearby.

The more progress-minded moved out and formed their
own community called, simply, "17 Mile". The rest wait
for "New Town" to be constructed. This will also be near
the 17 mile mark. It has been mapped out and designed
already, by a Canadian, and will be a pattern of cul-de-sacs
and circular roads, very different from the semi-grid
plan of most of the settlements in the country. The houses
will be built by the future inhabitants themselves of
concrete blocks which they are currently making in their
spare time. They will lease/buy the land and be helped
by the hopelessly inadequate sum of $275 B.H., $150
coming from the government direct, and $125 from the Re-
construction and Development Corporation. The present
rate of progress is slow, however, and it would seem
that Hattieville will persist into the near future at
least.

About a mile down the road is the less aptly named
Tropical Park. This consists of a number of deteriorating
stone houses and a defunct country club, once the dream
area of an American Real Estate agent who is based in
Belize City. As a centre for white people, and high government officials, probably the only people who could afford to live there, the site has failed. This is partly because of the pull of Belize City, partly because of the desolate nature of the countryside around the Park, a savannah area subject to periodic fires and periodic flooding, and probably also because it is located so close to Hattieville which has a certain reputation for lawlessness.

The term 'pine-ridge' is also significant, and more so because it is so widespread and yet technically inaccurate. It is a name given to areas which have (or used to have) extensive concentrations of pine on them, but does not necessarily refer to a ridge-type formation (see p. 17).

Most of the hills in this region, even some which are barely above the general level, have been given names, such as Big Hill, White Hill, and Freshwater Hill, and this is probably because any alleviation from the general flatness of the relief was considered worthy of note. The creeks and lagoons were also named at an early time very likely for the opposite reason. There were and are so many that some nomenclature had to be given to them to help the settlers distinguish one from the next. Thus there is a Freshwater Stream, a Dry Creek and an Almond Hill Lagoon. "There are two 'falls' along the Belize River near to
Burrell Boom and Bermudian Landing. One is known as 'Big Falls,' and the other as 'Little Falls,' ... and the reason is self-explanatory."\(^{10}\)

Besides the physical features of the country, a large number of locations were named after flora or fauna which may have been dominant or significant in the area. These form perhaps the largest group of all, and many of them are too obvious to bear more than passing commentary; thus there is a Mahogany Creek, Bayman Creek, Mussel Creek, Mangrove Creek and Indian Creek. Others deserve a somewhat more lengthy discussion.

Double Head Cabbage, once called Two Headed Cabbage, "is the name of a landing, supposed to have been given on account of a cabbage palm having developed a branching stem, an anomaly which occurs somewhat rarely amongst coco-nut palms."\(^{11}\)

Manatee River and the old settlement of Manatee were presumably named because of the manatee, or sea-cow which had been observed in these parts, and which supplied and still supplies a supplement to the settlers' diet.

The economy of the country is often acknowledged in different places with Mahogany Creek, Cutters Lagoon and Burrell's Boom. The latter, often just known as Boom village or The Boom, was the location of a blockage across the Old (Belize) River where mahogany logs were
The ferry at Bermudian Landing. During the rainy season the river rises to the top of its banks (near the pick-up truck, and behind the photographer). This ferry is typical of those in the Colony.
"stopped in their passage down the river, and claimed by their several owners." Joe Goff Barquedier was presumably the place where Joe Goff loaded his logs into the River. The word Barquedier or Bacardier "is a local word used to denote the point at which the logs are placed in the river to await the floods that will carry them downstream to the coast. The word is, presumably, a corruption of the Spanish word embarcadere (a 'quay' or 'loading point')."

Another large number refer to stages in the history of the country, and their origins can only be more sketchily guessed at, as the people or functions after whom they were named have died out. Thus there is a Government Landing, Cooks Lagoon, Bob Eiley, Washing Tree and Burnt House. More certain is the origin of Bermudian Landing and Little Bermudian Landing, for it was at these points that settlers from an island in the West Indies landed and tried to make their fortunes. Egypt was so called, probably by a settler who had served in the First World War in the Middle East; that is, for the same reason that most of the streets of the Mesopotamia area of Belize City have 'Middle East' names.

Spanish influence can also be seen, particularly in the north of the district, and if Anderson is correct there may be more evidence of Indian influence in place names than is readily apparent.
In addition to those names which can be speculated upon, or determined in their origins on a more certain basis, there are also a large number of names for which there is no certain evidence, or room for speculation. Such might have been the fate of Lucky Strike, so named by a road working gang after the American cigarette, or Scotland Half Moon, a stretch of road to the east of Bermudian Landing, which has its origins more closely hidden in the history of the Colony. A number are now dropping from local usage, such as Egypt and Beaver Dam, and others are being changed -- Washing Tree villagers are now moving up the river bank to the new road and the new settlement is called Bicayne. It would be a loss to the country if they died without trace for at present it is part of the country's heritage that an explorer equipped with old books and old maps could follow the paths trod and the rivers paddled a century ago.

Belize District is reaching a turning point in its life, and the next few years may be crucial in deciding whether its economy will grow or further disintegrate. It is to be hoped that whatever happens the cultural history and the cultural geography of the area is not irretrievably destroyed.
NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1 "Belizean" in this context means, more associated with the new, independent image of the country as the nation of Belize.


3 The native 'crayfish' is the Florida type 'lobster'.

4 Although only partially completed, the Tropico Sports Club has been well planned on paper. Its chief organiser is R.O. Chandler whose headquarters are in Memphis, Tenn. A mile of sand-beach frontage in two sections, some on the south side of San Pedro and some on the north side has been acquired either through outright purchase or through long-term option. (See pp. 22-24, Latin American Report.)

5 Most of the villages have a playing field which is used for soccer, some cricket, and occasionally baseball. This British influence can be seen throughout the Colony.

6 See note 32, Chapter Two of this account.

7 Swayne, op. cit., p. 170.


9 H.M.S.O., Report of the British Guiana and British Honduras Settlement Commission, Colonial Office, H.M.S.O., London, CM7533, September, 1948, #61, p. 219. Donohoe (p. 58) refers to a small settlement of Catholic refugees from Spanish Honduras who established themselves at Mullin's River (Stann Creek District). This may be the same group of people referred to by H.M.S.O. report. If so the descendents have now been largely scattered, by Hurricane Hattie and subsequent events (see section on Stann Creek District).

10 Bradley, op. cit.

11 Morris, op. cit., p. 11.

12 Ibid., p. 12.

13 Thompson, op. cit., p. 224.

14 Bradley, op. cit.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS

COROZAL DISTRICT

The Location of Corozal.

Historically, the next most important area of the country has been that which was known for many years simply as the Northern District (see p. 47). In recent years this has been subdivided into the districts of Corozal and Orange Walk, taking account of the increasing activity and diversity of the area, which had rendered the previous administrative area too great for one local authority. Corozal District is reached by a dirt and tarmac road from Belize City, built in the 1930's on top of previous trails. For this reason it is a winding road, at times a wide rutted highway and at times a narrow rutted track. From the north the district is connected to the all-weather tarmac highway from the Quintana Roo area of Mexico. The contrast is sharpened by the border posts on either side of the International Bridge, built by the Mexicans to replace the ferry that had previously been in existence, and which forms the border zone: the British side, known as Santa Elena, is a collection of nine buildings ranging from native thatch huts to the stone
border post itself; a functional if not flamboyant arrange-
ment. The Mexican side, also called Santa Elena, is a
village, which is almost too large for this minor de-
signation, and its crowning glory is its modern border
post, or rather set of border posts, a startling monu-
ment to the good life on the far side of the river. This
state of affairs has not, however, always been the case,
for up until recently the only connection with the Re-
public of Mexico was via the small village of Consejo.
From this settlement ferries used to ply to and fro from
Chetumal, checking in at the small customs office before
(perhaps) continuing a seaward path to Sarteneja or Belize,
or the cays. Now this once important village is crumbling
away, the jungle is taking over again, and the border
post is manned by one customs officer who is there chiefly
for the convenience of the villagers of Sarteneja, or the
occasional boat from the cays. Most traffic now follows
the landward route.

The contrast of routeways is all the more lamentable
because when the British road to Santa Elena was constructed,
the "connections on the other side were not complete"¹ and
the present contrast is an entirely recent affair.

Corozal District now has two landward routes from
the Mexican border to Orange Walk, one going through the
town of Corozal, the district's administrative centre,
and the other plying a more westerly route which keeps
Corozal Town is a mixture of housing types. This is similar to those in Belize City, although the recessed verandah is more typical of the northern districts. Note the stilts and the kitchen area added to the house after its initial construction.
it a mere five miles from the Hondo River for most of its length. Both of these roads give an impression of great industry and wealth, at least during the sugar cane cutting season. Corozal District is part of the country's 'Sugar Belt' and it is no accident that these roads open up the richest of the district's cane fields.

The traveller who journeyed along these roads would gain, however, a false impression of the district, for he would have seen only half the coin. On the eastern side of the New River stretches an area that is, for the most part, unpopulated and desolated. This section constitutes over half of the area of the district, which at 718 square miles is already the smallest in the Colony. In some ways this sums up the country, for even the large-scale industries of British Honduras have only brought small-scale development.

The boundary of this district and that of Orange Walk, the next administrative area to the south, is once again a 'geometrical' line. Although its original validity cannot now be readily distinguished, it may have indicated, at least for part of its length, the limit of the influence of Corozal Town at the time it was drawn up, for Orange Walk Town has only recently gained a northerly outlook.

The border with Mexico was the source of great dispute, as it has been the most turbulent frontier of the
The back addition to this house is incomplete and shows the piece-meal Belizean method of building; once again its location is Corozal Town.
Colony, and to a much greater extent has always cut through more populous areas. To complicate the matter, the inhabitants on both sides are of the same ethnic groups. The Hondo River, along which the border runs, was claimed by the Baymen, to be the limit of logwood cutting operations, and this fact was eventually recognized by Mexico, in 1783. This woodcutting limit eventually became the international boundary, and is the one across which most non-sea-going international trade, of both a legal and an illicit nature, moves. The river was designated a boundary line, once again, because it had a convenient form in the landscape. It has since gained considerable relevance within the context of the area, and undoubtedly some of the settlement along its banks owes its existence to the international status of the waterway.

The people of the area.

Until recently, there were two cultural groups in Corozal District who, together, made up nearly the whole population — the Amerindians and the Mestizos, or mixed-bloods. In more recent years, however, there has been a significant change, as an increasing number of people of Creole origin have moved north. There has always been a Creole element in the north, as a hangover from the logcutting days and as an administrative and educational contribution to the Colony, but since the increased activity
The only thatch-roofed building in Corozal Town; it is used as a storehouse/kitchen. The roof is typical of the northern and central areas of the Colony, with tight, well-trimmed thatching.
has been going on in the north country, this element has increased spectacularly in size.

The Creoles are concentrated chiefly in and around the administrative centre of the district, but are also found along the major highway leading to this town. There are very few to be found away from these areas except where there is a Creole policeman or schoolteacher. In Corozal Town, once almost totally of hispanic origin, the District Officer estimates that there are now up to thirty per cent Creoles, and some estimates put the proportion even higher. They chiefly live on the outskirts of the town, reflecting their recent entry, and the town centre is still strongly hispanic. There are also a few Carib Indians to be found in the town, who are also recent immigrants.

In addition there are some East Indian settlers, although this group has been ethnically 'diluted' to a great extent in recent times. The numbers were once great enough, however, to justify setting up the village still known as Calcutta, on the northern road to Corozal Town. They were used as labourers in the early sugar estates and still fulfill this function today. Those that have not intermarried with other cultural groups, and some of those who have, now chiefly inhabit the villages of San Antonio and San Andres.
After Hurricane Janet a large number of concrete-block houses were built in Corozal Town. An attempt was made to imitate the country’s board-built housing styles, although most of the pre-hurricane dwellings had been thatched huts.
Most of the rest of the inhabitants of Corozal District consist of Amerindians of Maya type, and mixed-bloods or Mestizos. Both help to make up what might be termed the Hispanic element of the country. The members of the latter group are a racial mixture of peoples of European origin and of the indigenes of the area, who are termed Yucatecan Mayas. The Yucatecan Maya consist of the Santa Cruz Indians and the Chichanha or Icaiche Indians. These groups immigrated into the Colony, as did the Mestizos, chiefly around the mid-nineteenth Century and more particularly at the time of the 'War of the Castes,' an uprising against the Spanish overlords of the Yucatan. The story of these Indian tribes is quite complicated, as the groups were at times friendly with, and at other times up in arms against the British Colonists, but it has been well documented by a number of authors and what concerns us here is the end result.

Before the nineteenth Century there were few Indians in this area of the Yucatan peninsula, although the numerous ruins to be found in the area attest to the fact that this had once been a relatively densely settled area during the height of the Mayan culture. But since the early part of the last century, a number of Indians have been moving back into the area. The War of the Castes in the Yucatan area during the mid-part of the century accelerated the movement, also introducing a number
(x2) The new Corozal? At least the mayor (the owner of this house) would like this to be adopted as the norm by the populace. It is much more of the style of a Mexican house, and resembles closely some to be seen across the Hondo River in Chetumal. It is interesting to note that extensions to this type of house take a different form to those previously noted.
of Spanish and Mestizo elements, and after the death of
the Santa Cruz leader, Canul, at Orange Walk in 1872,
the settlement became more permanent, although there was
also some movement back into the Republic.

To all intents and purposes, the Indians of the area
justify the title of Yucatecan Mayas, as they are now
areally intermingled, although individual families can
still indicate their tribe of origin.

The proportion of Mestizos varies from village to
village, and until the more recent period of economic
upheaval, with few exceptions it did so on a simple
diffusionsist principle, out from Corozal Town. Corozal
was the first settlement of note in the north, being founded
"largely by refugees from the massacre of Bacalar," although in outward form the town is modern, having
been totally replanned and reconstructed after the hurri-
cane of 1955, which also devastated much of the surround-
ing district. There always were, of course, exceptions
to the diffusion principle, even prior to the present day
where the picture is much more complicated. For instance,
the settlement of Xaibe, about three miles from Corozal
Town, and reputedly the second village settled by the
Indians, is inhabited by Indians who are of almost 100% Mayan background.

Corozal Town is a very quiet town, many of its in-
habitants preferring to travel to Orange Walk and Chetumal (Quintana Roo) for their nights out, and the shortage of restaurants and bars (compared with the rest of the towns in the Colony) testify to the lack of social life and cosmopolitan nature in this administrative centre. The town has no hotel; the one which used to be in existence burned down in 1968. Potential patrons have to soujourn in Mexico or Orange Walk Town, and the two Government Rest Houses (designed for Official personnel only) are always full, often having to take in stranded outsiders as a courtesy measure. It is a waterfront town, situated on Corozal Bay, and has some rapport with the sea, although few people who reside in the town are connected with fishing or developing the town on a maritime-tourist basis. Corozal is overshadowed in many respects by Chetumal, its nearby Mexican neighbour, also destroyed during Hurricane Janet, and rebuilt in a more spacious fashion than before. But Chetumal has an aura which Corozal lacks, and plans for civic development in the latter town have never been put into practice. Since 1955, "Corozal has been rebuilt, with new municipal buildings and many modern houses. In many ways it was a disappointment: there has been some attempt at town planning, but many of the buildings seem dis-connected, out of place, though the reason for this can be traced. After the hurricane many people preferred to obtain a loan from the government to build their own houses. As
a result, the old familiar wooden shack stands beside the new-style concrete-block and asbestos house." The Creoles who are now moving into the area are locating themselves, along with the few Carib immigrants, in a new 'suburb' of Corozal Town, and are bringing with them their traditional form of housing, which are often better built than their description as "shacks" would give credit for. The mayor and his followers are trying to promote, as much by example as by active movement in housing affairs, the increased use of flat-roofed Mexican-type houses made of stone but these are still anomalies in the town as a whole. Wooden buildings are by far the most common, and the same styles, although in different proportions, are found here as in the rest of the country. Both rich and poor alike live in both wooden and concrete-block houses, and once again it would appear that there is no great preference for the new style, which may become the most common when wood becomes more scarce, but not necessarily the most popular.

Originally most of the Hispanic inhabitants of the northern districts were subsistence agricultural settlers, and indeed up until fairly recently this was still the case. The men folk spent a large part of the year preparing a 'milpa', the name given to the agricultural plot which was cultivated by these peoples on a shifting basis. These milpas provided the rice, beans, maize, etc.,
on which the families would live, and often produced a surplus which could be used for bartering purposes. This system of agriculture was by no means a steady one, for from the beginning the British woodcutters interfered with the ecological balance of the area, having extended their operations up to, and possibly beyond, the banks of the river Hondo (see p. 172). This incurred the wrath of the Indians at a number of times, during the nineteenth Century, as the Archives document, and the numerous running fights and massacres which culminated in the defeat of Canul at Orange Walk in 1872 testify that the region was unhealthy for permanent occupation in more than the strict medical sense. These Indian raids may be seen partly as an extension of the troubles suffered by the Mexicans in the Yucatan, but also at times they were certainly provoked by Mexican inspired leaders, who hoped to convince the British that they should return south, at least to the boundary formed by the New River.

There are very few true Spanish elements in Corozal today, indeed in the Colony as a whole there are only three of note. Two of these, at San Pedro, Ambergris Cay and at Cay Caulker have already been referred to. The third is at Sarteneja, an independent village which has a number of contacts remaining with the Republic, and the population of which is markedly more Iberian than are the populations of the more westerly mainland villages.
Housing in the north.

The Indians' 'native' housing is typical of Mayan peoples throughout the Yucatan area, and is almost identical to that used in the ancient Mayan civilisations. It consists of a tightly thatched roof of cohune palm or bayleaf palm, the latter being preferred, but also being more scarce. The walls are made of canes, with the gaps in between being filled by mud to form a wind and relatively water resistant white chalk marl, which provides both a pleasing appearance and a method of keeping the house cool, as the chalk reflects the sun's rays. But even within the Indian villages, 'modern' housing, usually of wood construction is to be found, and it is regarded as a move up the social and economic scale. The old pattern of housing is still dominant but it is slowly being superseded by the new. Corozal Town used to consist of such Indian architecture, as did Sarteneja village, but both were rebuilt, after Hurricane Janet, of stone and concrete, and although Sarteneja has partially reverted to thatch huts, an anti-fire ordinance will forever keep such dwellings out of the administrative centre.

In the outlying areas, the traditional ways are still much stronger. After Janet, another model village was built, with zinc roofs and stone and cane walls, and was called Yo Chen. A number of the villagers preferred the old style of housing and moved a short distance down the
road and built their own village of Yo Chen with traditional housing. The model village still remains, now renamed Cristo Rey, and both settlements share the same village council. The ways of the industrial world are not always seen as worthwhile by the people they seek to improve and they are not always as relentless and unyielding as their proponents would wish. Native housing in the villages and wooden housing in the towns may continue to be in evidence despite the wishes and efforts of the authorities.

**Landscapes in Corozal.**

*The desolate east.* As has been indicated above, Corozal District has an almost Jekyll and Hyde personality. The good part is very, very good, but the bad part is almost totally neglected and forgotten, and contributes little to the economy of the country. The boundary between the two is not strictly the New River, for to the east of this line lies the village of Progresso, itself a flourishing cane-cutting settlement set on the picturesque lagoon of the same name. This lagoon is fed by the Freshwater Creek and drained by John Piles Creek, but the line of this watery stretch does not strictly conform to the east-west division any better, for to all intents and purposes the Progresso area is a productive island in an unproductive sea of secondary growth vegetation. This isolated image is intensified by the village's communication
Although it has a map connection with Corozal Bay, the only way to reach it is by Orange Walk Town. 

De jure, it is in Corozal, but de facto it is in Orange Walk. Its sugar goes to the factory at Tower Hill, and it has become the practice for government agencies to include its affairs under the offices of Orange Walk Town.

Other than this village, there is only one settlement to the east of the New River which justifies lengthy discussion. A few hamlets are to be found near the Laguna Seca but they contribute little to the economic or cultural landscapes.

If Progresso is isolated, Sarteneja is cut off. It is 16 miles from Corozal as the sea gull flies, but in British Honduras this doesn't happen often. The Trade Winds blowing from the east ensure that any non-powered boat making its way from the 'mainland' back to Sarteneja could never follow the route of the normal seagull. As most of the inhabitants do not have motor powered boats, the settlement is effectively more cut off than its 16 miles from 'civilisation' would indicate. In fact the village is closer to Chetumal and many of its inhabitants, identifying with this country as much as with the Colony, take the shorter route via Consejo, to get to market. A number of the larger boats also ply to Belize City, to sell the fruits and vegetables which the villagers grow on the productive alluvial soils of the area. Sarteneja
was totally reconstructed after Hurricane Janet in 1955 and consists largely of concrete and stone buildings of similar nature to those of Corozal Town. Most, however, of those built since that time have been of 'older' styles and constructed of the 'older' materials, and the village can now be easily divided into the 'old' and the 'new'.

It is a growing village, partly because it deals in boats, fish, fruits and vegetables, which are in great demand in the Colony, but also partly because it has absorbed most of the people from the rest of the empty area of Corozal District, particularly the area around Shipstern Lagoon. The village also has some tourist potential and plans are afoot to build an American sponsored resort, which will undoubtedly have great effect upon the economy of the village, and upon its social outlook.

The rest of the empty area of Corozal District used to be more popular and more useful. The salt marshes, lagoons and mangrove swamps are cut across and connected by the lines of old trails and tracks, once used by the woodcutters, and the place names of the region still show this once important external influence. But it is unlikely that anything other than subsistence activities have gone one in this section of the country since the last of the woodcutters pulled out; it is a desolate area, and is usually left out of even the most ambitious plans for development of the Colony.
The sweet life in the west. The Jekyll area of Corozal District is rapidly approaching total utilisation, and the catalyst that sparked the growth of the area was, unusually within the Colony, a more West Indian crop, sugar. This part of the district can only be separated historically from the adjacent area of Orange Walk, which superficially appears similar and has grown for similar reasons.

Sugar was grown in the Corozal District during the nineteenth Century, but only a little was exported, and the industry all but collapsed when Europe went in big for Protection and Sugar Beets at the end of the last century. Sugar still survived, on a small scale, serving as the raw materials for the numerous rum distilleries.

Since this time, the sugar scene around Corozal has fluctuated greatly, but it never really gained significance until 1935 when it gained precedence over the Toledo District as the location for a second-hand mill, which had been bought from Cuba. A more modern plant came in 1955 but the real break through was not until 1963 when Tate and Lyle gained control of the Corozal Sugar Factory. They modernized the plant and increased the capacity to 50,000 tons a year. Corozal Town and the surrounding countryside were soon found to be on top of a boom which is still going on, and which has made the district probably the richest in the country. The sugar is shipped down
the New River from the factory at Libertad (once known as Pembroke Hall, but succumbing to the nationalist feeling that is being drummed up in the country) to the Corozal Bay, and thence via the inside passage to Belize City for export. The distilleries of the area still consume at least part of the produce of the fields, in making the national drink.

Areas that were once almost virgin forest (the Amerindiens had moved out of the area long enough ago for the original cover to regenerate to a large extent) and later exploited for their wood-producing capabilities, only to be simultaneously and later used as areas of shifting (and some settled) cultivation, have now been turned over to a monoculture of sugar production. The native food production system is slowly being squeezed out, partly because the milperos only rented the land and it has now been bought by the sugar company or re-developed by the large landowners, and partly because the Indians can see the chance to gain economic and social advancement, and are willingly abandoning their cultural heritage for the new form of production. There are numerous dangers in this approach, especially in such a fluctuating industry as sugar, where politics play as big a part as economics, and not the least of these is that the already strained food market is having more weight thrown upon it. More money is coming into the country through sugar sales, but
more is going out for the purchase of foodstuffs. It will undoubtedly remain as a debatable point, whether or not the coming of the sugar industry is to be an agency of good or evil.

An important point about the sugar industry, however, is that while Belize Sugar Industries does dominate exports, smaller farmers in Corozal and Orange Walk Districts also share in the growth pattern. Under an agreement with the government, Tate and Lyle buys a certain proportion of its cane from the farmers, most of whom operate through a cooperative, while the remainder comes from its own fields.\(^8\)

Sugar has great potential in the Colony for a number of reasons, but the extent to which this potential is developed will depend as much upon the inevitable political implications of expansion of production as upon economic factors. The soil of the country and the climatic conditions of the northern districts would appear to be such that the cane grown there has one of the highest sucrose contents in the world, comparable to that produced in the fertile lands of Cuba, and far richer than any other Caribbean islands. Also the factories were able to gain the benefits of modern machinery and intense mechanisation: as much as anything this latter point is crucial, and is possible because of the sparse population which is to be found in the Colony. The economic effects of sugar production
have been important, but, just as important have been the cultural effects of this cash cropping upon the subsistence indigenes.

There is considerable doubt at the moment, which is partly contributed to by the archaeo-Belizean situation as to the economic patterns of the Ancient Maya. It is not certain whether the Indians who once inhabited this area of Central America, and who built their culture to such a high degree, could have survived without at least some form of settled agricultural practice. The works of Thompson and Willey appear to reveal the existence of large areas which were once cultivated on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. But at some stage, this civilisation broke down, and the remaining Indians scattered throughout the area and reverted (?) to the more ancient system of milpa agriculture. It has already been pointed out that the British woodcutters caused some destruction and disruption in the system, but until recently this was the common Indian practice throughout the country, and in the districts of Cayo and Toledo the system can still be seen at work in full swing.

A revolution in the landscape.

In the northern part of the Colony, however, the picture as seen in the west and south, has been almost totally changed by the sugar industry. In addition to numerous
social changes, in life styles, economic changes in prospects for the future, and cultural disruptions, there have also been a number of alterations in the physical landscape, as a result of the actions of Belize Sugar Industries.

It has already been pointed out that before the 1950's there were very few roads within the Colony, and Corozal was no better off than elsewhere -- Consejo was still the chief international contact point of call until quite recently. At present, however, both the government and the sugar company are pushing out more and more roads, and now all of the villages to the west of the New River can be reached by sugar truck and Land Rover (although other vehicles may experience a certain amount of difficulty at times) at least during the dry season. Progresso, as pointed out (above) can be reached from Orange Walk Town along a wide, but bumpy road.

The effect of this recent contribution is in some places extremely striking. The road to Consejo is well surfaced and easily passable for most of its length, but where the sugar fields end it reverts to its former character as a narrow rutted track. The village of Patchchakan, reputedly the first Indian village settled in the Colony, used to be one of the most isolated, but now the Northern Highway runs past its houses, and the surrounding fields are full of sugar cane. If the sugar quotas hold, the pattern of life for these Indians will rapidly undergo
The pattern of communications is drawing more and more people to the highways, and what was an area of scattered but nucleated rural settlement is rapidly becoming a region of linear villages. From Santa Clara to Corozal, settlement is almost continuous, and it is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish the old village boundaries; and the other stretches of roadway are experiencing a similar phenomenon.

The region of the Colony which was once its turbulent frontier is rapidly becoming its most prosperous, densely settled area. Its economic stability is assured, as long as the political stability of the Colony is not upset, and the international trade in sugar is not radically disrupted.

Place name evidence of cultural influences.

The place names of Corozal District do not give such an accurate picture of the background of the area as do those of Belize District. Most of the names are of Spanish origin, and the majority commemorate Saints and as such give a reasonable picture of the present hispanic environment.

There are also a number of Indian names, such as Xaibe (Cross Roads) and Patchchacan, Yo Chen and Chan Chen. Sac Xaan, on the Hondo River, is strictly a Mexican village,
but has some influence as a trading and crossing point with the Colony. "The name is derived from the Maya words sac, white and xan, a leaf. . . . (It refers) to the palm-leaf used in hat-making, which, when cleaned and split up, turns white, and which is very plentiful in the vicinity." "Sarteneja is a Maya word meaning 'water in the rocks,' and this was observed by the very first settlers in 1849.""There is, however, little evidence of the early British influence, even the administrative centre of Corozal (cohune palm ridge) having its origin in the Spanish language. Only Louisville in the populated part of the district retains some non-Spanish flavour. It is in the un-populated swampy areas, east of the New River, that there is some evidence of past British influence, although the number of names still there does not do justice to history, and even here Spanish names are as often encountered. Only a few places, now more or less uninhabited, such as Turnbull, Little Belize, Cowpen, Fireburn, and Shipstern are representatives of the once important influence of the British woodcutters.

As the country wends its way towards independence, trying at the same time to preserve its cultural integrity, it seems likely that in the north at least, the hispanic elements will continue to grow in importance.
ORANGE WALK DISTRICT

Situation of the district.

The road from Belize City to the Mexican border is the oldest in the country, and connects some of the most historic settlements including Corozal and Orange Walk. The latter, once known as Orange Reach, erstwhile capital of the logwood cutting industry, seasonally the capital of the mahogany and chicle industries, and now thriving on a year-round basis by courtesy of the sugar industry, is reached from the capital city via a stretch of low-lying marshland and pine forest. From Orange Walk northward, the road runs through richer country, duplicating (although not altogether supplanting) water transport to a great extent on its way to the International border.

The Administrative centre.

Orange Walk Town, one of the few inland centres of the country, was originally conceived as a river-bank settlement, but now the pattern of growth is up the slopes, away from the New River, and onto the higher ground to the west of the northern road. It is the administrative centre of Orange Walk District, although its location is by no means 'geographically' central. Orange Walk Town is a seasonal town. Throughout the year it is more alive than Corozal Town, but during the woodcutting season its true vigour is seen, and its historic importance as the entrepot
centre for mahogany and chicle can be easily recognised. For these few months in the year it is once again a town of the past, with saloons and restaurants springing up all over, and for a short time at least sugar is not the main topic of conversation. The rest of the year the fortunes of the town are dependent upon the sugar industry, and for this part of its life the town settles down into a much more staid, respectable existence. It is because of the sugar industry that the town has a more regular pattern of growth, and the end of the woodcutting season no longer means economic misfortune for much of the populace.

The town of Orange Walk is one of the economic centres of the country, being involved in most of the commercial aspects of the Colony's limited economy, but being surrounded by the worst road network in British Honduras. The mileage of roads is increasing, but their condition is one of steady deterioration. The north is not an easy region for the road builder as has already been noted, and the communications facilities of Orange Walk District get a great amount of use throughout the year. Until the Public Works Department can afford to black top these roads, they will hold an anomalous position in the Colony, helping to bring in more revenue to the Colony than others whilst being more injurious to the very traffic that amasses this revenue.
Landscapes in Orange Walk District.

The roadside. As usual the main highway is one of the worst conditioned of all the roads, although it is not the worst, this dubious honour being gained by the road to Shipyard, which possibly reflects part of the world view of the followers of Menno Simon who live here (see later). The roads of the northern areas suffer partly from the poor road-building resources of this part of the country, but the increased volume of traffic must be the main culprit. The results of this state of affairs can be seen easily by the traveller, within the roadside landscape. "In contrast to Stann Creek and the Cockscombs to the south, the rainfall here is much less, and what there is soon drains away in the porous rock. The great trees of the rain forest, draped with vines and creepers, here give way to a tangled thicket of smaller trees and bushes, in which only the tall trunks of the sapodilla, scarred by chicle tappers and clustered with orchids, stand out. For many yards back from the road the bushes and trees are thickly coated with white dust, and hardly any green can be seen."11

The land of the loggers. The borders of Orange Walk District to a great extent reflect its ancient hinterland much better than the present state of affairs. It is a district with a split personality, one side devoted to sugar and the other to the exploitation of the
forest resources. Partly because of the nature of forest exploitation, based as it is (and was) in the Colony upon the navigable rivers, the district is greatly extended away from the administrative centre. Much of the area of the district is as close to Cayo (San Ignacio) and Belize City as it is to the town of Orange Walk. The rivers led the loggers into distant areas where it was still feasible to make use of the forests, but where anything but a transitory settlement would have been an anomaly.

"During the days when logwood was felled in large quantities for export, Orange Walk was the most important district town in the country, for it was the centre of the industry. When the price of logwood fell on account of the introduction of cheap artificial dyes, it became impoverished and a large number of the inhabitants emigrated elsewhere, only to return in the mahogany boom." With the relative decline of mahogany, the town suffered again, no longer gaining the prestige and financial recompense that it had when this wood was a chief item of world trade. The seasonal woodcutting boom was still significant but the town was only revived to its present condition by the coming of the sugar industry a few years ago. Today the mahogany trade is still important in the town's economy but Orange Walk is no longer so dependent upon its fortunes.
The sap of the sapodilla tree, Chicle, which is used in the production of chewing gum, and which has long been associated with Orange Walk District, and British Honduras as a whole, is now becoming much more localized as a production crop. Once produced throughout the area (Thomas Gann wrote as late as 1928 of an important area of chicle production around Laguna de On, centred on Honey Camp) its centre of production is now around Gallon Jug, and although the chicleros used to range far into the neighbouring Republic, little of the latex is now (legally) imported from Guatemala. Chicle production, once a major employer of local labour, and of desperadoes from much of Central America now appears doomed as an industry of any significance, at least within the Colony.

Chicle was for many years a major export of the Colony; "the number of pounds weight of chicle exported from Belize rose from 260 thousand in 1899 to nearly three and a half million in 1914, the bulk of it going at this time ... to the United States." But the development of artificial materials, which can be produced in the greater quantities which are demanded today, has largely put the producers of this once-essential constituent of chewing gum out of business, although as will be pointed out below there is still some seasonal activity. Bad bleeding practices have also contributed to the decline of this industry. "In order to maintain a steady
supply of chicle, the trees should not be retapped until the cuts are properly healed, which takes from four to ten years. Unfortunately this rule is not observed, and as a result the chicle industry is liable to die out over a short period of time."14 Such practices have been, unfortunately, all too common in the various stages of the economic history of the country, with short-term gain being the goal, and planning for the future being negligible.

Gallon Jug, situated at the end of a logging railway (once the railroad that ran from Stann Creek to Middlesex) built in 1940 which runs from Hill Bank, on the New River Lagoon, is the working centre of both the contemporary industries of the area, mahogany and chicle exploitation.15 "The area is worked for mahogany by the Belize Estate Company, and contracts are sold to the chicle managers to bleed the Sapodilla tree there. Besides the economic importance of Gallon Jug, it is also a place with a history; there are many Maya mounds, as yet uninvestigated, and for many years in the last century it was a camp for the militia en route for the Mexican border to put down Indian insurrections and raids into British Honduras' territory. In this latter connection many small treasures have been found, such as buttons, cuff-links, coins and firearms, and perhaps most important of all a gallon jug which gave the place its name."16
The Sugar Belt. The northern part of the district is in many ways a continuation of the more developed part of Corozal District. It is part of the "Sugar Belt" of the country, and has a developmental history which is more dependent upon this more northerly area than it is upon the rest of Orange Walk District. Originally part of the area exploited for its forest resources, the area of the district which is north of Chan Pine Ridge and west of the New River is now being increasingly given over to the cultivation of sugar cane.

The story of sugar in Orange Walk District is much more recent than that of Corozal, although rum distilleries such as that at San Lorenzo bear witness to the fact that the crop has been known in this part of the country for some time. There are a number of factors which would indicate that Orange Walk District, at some future date, will become more important than its neighbouring district in this economic sphere. Land is much more readily available in the Orange Walk area, and the cane fields are still being extended. The road which leads from Orange Walk Town toward Blue Creek 'village' is the scene of a number of clearing and planting operations, on behalf of Belize Sugar Industries, the sugar being taken to the new (1967) factory at Tower Hill, which was begun in 1963 after a sugar quota was obtained from the U.S. The same advantages and disadvantages of sugar production in
British Honduras apply in this district as they do in that of Corozal. The future of the area depends once again upon the interplay of politics and economics, and it remains questionable as to whether full capacity (over 100,000 tons) will ever be reached (only 50,000 tons were produced in 1967).

The sugar industry is now beginning to extend its influence into other economic spheres. Belize Sugar Industries are now experimenting with the possibility of breeding cattle, always a scarce commodity in the Colony, with the use of molasses as a dry season food-stuff. Previously much of this material was wasted, while at the same time the few cattle in the Colony were suffering through a shortage of fodder. If the experiments prove to be successful, two problems may be solved with one action.

The settlement patterns of the country-side of Orange Walk reflect its history and its economic position. The land which is still devoted to the woodcutting and chicle production is virtually devoid of any settlement, and what little there is, is still dependent upon the water-ways. Hill Bank and Gallon Jug are seasonal camps, and only support a handful of people during the rest of the year when the logging railway is mothballed. Other once-important settlements such as San Jose (which played an important role during the troubles of the nineteenth
century) and Indian Church, Water Bank and Backlanding, are all but deserted, and from the Labouring Creek northward, the first settlement of any size that is encountered is San Felipe. This settlement, and the more northerly Guinea Grass, both 'southern outposts' along routes pushed out from Orange Walk Town are now experiencing periods of growth, and if the sugar industry extends as far as is possible, their importance will become even greater. These villages have something else in common, both are last stops before proceeding on to meet groups of the most recent immigrants into the Colony, the Mennonites.

The settlement pattern in that area of Orange Walk which is part of the 'Sugar Belt' is similar to the corresponding area in Corozal District. It is a pattern that is dependent upon roads, although in many cases the roads are new in both construction and influence. Many of the villages have had some connection with Orange Walk Town overland, for a long time, but the present most direct line of communication is a recent introduction. Thus the quickest and best routes to San Roman and Chan Pine Ridge are no longer those shown on the most recent maps. The sugar company has often found it better to open up a new route rather than improve the old. Once again in this district there are two major road routes, but in this case only one is of more than local importance, that from Blue Creek via Yo Creek, to the town of Orange
Walk being in the nature of a feeder line which opens up a new area, but terminates within this 'new' area. As was the case in Corozal District, better communications are a result of intervention by private industry as much as by government agencies.

**Housing Conditions.**

In housing, the district is a reflection of both Belize District and Corozal District, having both native housing with thatched roofs and plastered walls, and board buildings, with zinc roofs, and often on stilts.

The native housing can be said to vary inversely with the wooden housing. In such villages as San Felipe and August Pine Ridge, the thatched huts predominate, as they do in most of the others in the district with the exception of the Mennonite settlements. It is once again the district town of Orange Walk which shows a difference. Here there has been no hurricane, however, and three out of every seven houses are thatched. Once again there is a city ordinance in the interests of fire protection which prevents the building of more thatched houses, and it cannot be ascertained how much effect this has had. But the fact remains that in this district as in Corozal there is most 'native' housing where the proportion of Amerindians is highest, and where the non-Indian population is strongest, board and zinc buildings predominate.
Cultural Groupings.

Ethnically Orange Walk District is an area of mixtures. It contains some elements of all the cultural groups of the country, and yet is the historical home of none of them. The majority of the inhabitants of the district are Mayan Indians (belonging to the same tribes as those around Corozal), and the Mestizos, although there are a significant number of Creoles, especially around the administrative centre. As was the case with Corozal District, the proportion of Creoles appears to be increasing, and if the effects of the new capital include an encouragement to move away from Belize City, this trend may become more important.

The place names of the district reflect the ethnic mixture quite closely. Everywhere there are some names with their origins in the Spanish language, introduced by the Spaniards and now spread by the Indians. The distribution of these names indicates that the Indians wandered far and wide, and their settlements extend far to the south of the district. The greatest concentration of Indian villages is, however, predictably, in the northern part of the district, where Mexican influence is and was strongest, where there is the greatest density of Amerindian settlement, and where the influence of the sugar crop is becoming stronger. "There was a Maya Indian village of San Jose which existed on Belize Estate Lands
for many years. In the 1930's this land was needed by the Company, and new land was allocated to the inhabitants of the original village several miles away. . . . The settlers were not too keen to change (to) the new land, and to some respect, the change had to be made almost forcibly. The new community is about a mile from Orange Walk Town and is known as San Jose Nuevo or San Jose Palmar." 17

Once again the British influence shows up in the more wild and unsettled areas of Orange Walk District, and again there is little of such evidence in the Sugar Belt region, with the exception of Douglas, Guinea Grass and Orange Walk Town itself. Most of the names occur along the New River, itself an example of British nomenclature, and Big Pond, Backlanding, Water Bank, and Hill Bank mark the line of the ancient mahogany route to the sea. There are also some more scattered names, such as Honey Bank, Booth's River and Victoria Falls, which show how far the British penetrated to cut their logwood and mahogany.

The Mennonites

Origins and importance. The lifelines of Orange Walk District have traditionally been the Hondo and the New River, which served as the means of transportation for both goods, people and lumber in the past. It is perhaps fitting that on these rivers have settled the
Mennonite houses in the colonies of British Honduras take a number of forms, and are mostly in better condition than this one. The front is a filled-in addition to the house-proper which can be seen behind.
groups of people, the Mennonites, who may prove to be in the future (and to a large extent have already proved to be today) the best hope for successful agriculture in the Colony. It is perhaps significant, and perhaps again coincidental, that the only other large group of Mennonites in British Honduras are to be found by the other major river of importance in the northern part of the Colony, the Belize River itself. The Mennonites have proved to be important in showing, practically, that the Colony has great agricultural potential, and they have also effectively demonstrated that with sufficient safeguards and preparations there is no reason why white people cannot develop this potential. They have not been the first group to do this, as the Confederates in the Toledo District showed similar prowess a century ago, but they will probably prove to be the most important, at least within the foreseeable future.

"The Mennonites -- a religious sect which had its origins in the Anabaptist wing of the Protestant Reformation in the Low Countries in the first half of the 16th Century -- and particularly certain of their more conservative branches, have had a history of repeated migration to remote frontiers in an attempt to maintain their traditional agrarian way of life. In response to unacceptable legislation and cultural incursions from the secular world, but always prompted also by land hunger, the
A better quality Mennonite house at Blue Creek. The narrowness -- the house is one room in width -- and verandahs are typical of Mennonite housing.
Mennonite groups now in British Honduras have within the past century engaged in three such migrations -- from South Russia to Canada in the 1870's, from Canada to Mexico in the wake of the two World Wars, and latterly to British Honduras. 18  "A partial exception to this general statement is a small group -- some ten families -- of Amish and Old Mennonites from the United States, who since 1965 have also located in British Honduras." 19

"The immediate background of the Mennonite colonies in British Honduras, then, is predominantly found in their Mexican experience, with further background in Canada." 20 This is important to keep in mind, because the different responses of these groups to their environments, both physical and social, stem directly from their recent patterns of experience.

"The forebears of the colonists in British Honduras represented two of the three distinct branches of the Mennonite persuasion -- Altkolonier and Kleine Gemeinde -- which emigrated from South Russia to Manitoba in the 1870's." 21

The Kleine Gemeinde were a later group to emigrate to Mexico from Canada (they emigrated in the late '40's and early '50's) and this shows in a number of overt ways. They speak better English than the other Mennonite colonists, have more liberal, worldly views, and have a different outlook on economic matters. Another factor
Blue Creek once again, this building is made of concrete-blocks, but retains its characteristic shape. The motorcycle belongs to an American student-volunteer from a Mennonite college.
in their favour was their previous wooded (Manitoban) environment which enabled them to find their feet in British Honduras much more quickly than their Orange Walk District neighbours. The exact numbers who emigrated to the Colony in the period of time 1958-61 have been variously given, and as some of the early settlers later returned, it might be impossible to be totally accurate. Minkel, however, gives the figure as being 1000, and in the light of the evidence this seems reasonably accurate. In 1966 there were between 2800 (Mindel) and 3600 (Sawatsky), which increase demonstrates the success of the migration. It also shows the importance of the migration to the Colony, which had some 90,000 people in 1960 and at the most 120,000 in 1966, the proportions of one-in-ninety and one-in-forty speaking for themselves. The Kleine Gemeinde group have settled at Shipyard in Cayo District, ten miles from where the Amish live, near Santa Elena, and the Altkolonier have two major settlements at Blue Creek and Shipyard and a small group at Richmond Hill, all in Orange Walk District. "At the time the Mennonites acquired them, all these lands were inhabited by only a few Maya Indians subsisting on small milpa (slash-and-burn) farms and on the gathering of chicle, wild pepper and other natural products, and a few Negro squatters."22
trucks overland through Mexico. The initial trip took ten days but one year was required to get completely moved and settled. Poor roads, no roads at all, and jungle were the main obstacles. Once arrived in British Honduras there were the general problems of clearing the land, building houses, and starting agricultural production.\textsuperscript{23}

The Blue Creek settlers were better prepared than their neighbours, having had some accommodation prepared for their arrival. Their Shipyard companions had to shelter in the settlements of Orange Walk and Maskall for some time after their arrival, until the conditions were suitable for the colonisation of their new lands. In that this provided an introduction of the Mennonites to the British Hondurans at an early point, it may not have been an altogether unfortunate affair.

Hurricane Hattie, a disaster for so much of British Honduras, proved to be somewhat of a godsend for the colonies. The effect of this phenomenon was felt most at Spanish Lookout but was not without importance to the settlements in Orange Walk District. It enabled the settlers to make considerable financial gain out of both timber and manufactured goods, as well as some agricultural produce. It also provided a source of cheap tractors to the Mennonites. These vehicles were commandeered by the British Army from the dealers to help in the crisis and were sold at a relatively cheap price at a later date.
"That the Altkolonier did not generally respond in the same degree or along comparable lines may be attributed in large part to their narrower horizons (a product of their more insular history and the language gap) and their greater individualism in economic matters."²⁴

The impact of the Mennonites. The Mennonites have had a number of important effects upon the cultural geography of the country. They add another individual cultural group to an already plural society. Their settlement patterns and place names are very distinctive, as are their house types, and their settlements appear as distinct cultural enclaves within the largely untamed countryside of the Colony. They have also had considerable economic and cultural influence upon the country, and probably more so upon their closest neighbours. They have boosted the internal agricultural production of the country and have increased international trade. Their influence upon the country even at this early stage of their existence appears to have been as great as any of the other minority groups,²⁵ and may prove to be as important as that of the larger cultural groups of the Colony.

The Altkolonier, although superficially one group, have at a number of times broken their veneer of togetherness, and such a break occurred soon after the decision to migrate to the country, because of a differ-
ence of opinion over the attractions of Blue Creek, one faction entering into an agreement for the purchase of Shipyard, another timber property, fifteen-odd miles to the south-east. As pointed out above, this group is a conservative Mennonite element, and the isolation of the land chosen demonstrates this factor. Both settlements were unconnected by road with the 'outside world' at the inception of the colonies, and have had to build roads in order to be able to market their goods and obtain needed imports.

"At the three colonies in Orange Walk District ... , the individual families generally market their own produce. In Richmond Hill being only five miles from Orange Walk Town, all farmers market on a wholesale basis in the town. Shipyard farmers sell 50 per cent in the town and the remainder within their own colony. At Blue Creek truckers from Orange Walk arrive twice weekly to purchase produce which they, in turn, sell in Orange Walk or Corozal." There is also some direct marketing by the members of this colony in Orange Walk Town. "The Blue Creek farmers also sell to Mexican traders at the Hondo River."29

Ideological differences amongst the Altkolonier have at times threatened to disrupt the whole area of settlement, but some solutions have been found to the problems, and some compromises, and the problem no longer seems to
be so great. It has resulted in considerable movement of people away from Blue Creek, to Shipyard, which settlement is now becoming overcrowded, and also apparently has led to a number of Mennonites returning to Mexico rather than run the risk of excommunication. This latter method of segregation is by no way perfect. As it involves total lack of involvement between the offender and his peers, it precludes the former from moving away to a more amenable atmosphere, as he has no way of communicating with his ex-Church in order to transfer lands, etc. A number of attempts have been made to transfer lands from one settlement to the other, and although the Belize Estate Company, the owner, has agreed, the problem of inter-group communication has led to a breakdown.

Other differences between the two groups have since become noticeable, and have some importance as they effect the amount of influence exerted by the Mennonites upon the other cultural groups of the country. For instance, Shipyard allows no tractors with rubber wheels, and some of the component settlements of Blue Creek have a similar ban. Stemming from 1916, when in Canada a decision to arrest technology and ban the automobile was made, this has significant results in agriculture. Not so much land can be developed, and more difficult land cannot be ploughed, using the iron wheeled tractors preferred by these conservative elements. Marketing is
also made more difficult, as only horses and carts are used for this purpose. "Horses, however, are severely limited in their capacity to work in the heat and humidity which prevail throughout most of the year, particularly since they can rarely if ever be given any high-energy ration such as grain," a commodity of which there is little surplus in the Colony. "As a result, then, much of the Altkolonier's arable land is in a very indifferent state of cultivation."³⁰

Some farmers at Blue Creek have managed to avoid the ban on rubber wheels (one group even broke away and formed their own brand of the Mennonite church in order to gain a freer life) but at times these are discriminated against by the more conservative elements. At Blue Creek there is a Papaya factory (established by Butland & Co., the Canadian Mennonite firm) which receives produce from the farmers and processes it. On one occasion papaya were refused as the owner brought it in on a cart drawn by a tractor with rubber wheels. The factory officials refused to accept it in this form and rather than give in the owner of the fruit dumped it by the side of the road. An enterprising Mennonite had filled his horse drawn cart up with the same fruit and sold it to the factory, the owners of which being fully aware of what he had done, but being more concerned about the form of transport than about the original ownership.
Despite this, the products marketed by the Mennonites have had great influence upon the country, particularly the production of eggs and chickens. The Colony no longer imports these products and even exports some to Mexico. There is also some export to Canada by way of a Canadian Mennonite company. In most spheres it is not certain how much effect these colonies have had upon the people, but the figures for consumption of poultry products indicate a definite change of tastes within the country, and a survey of the number of British Hondurans now keeping chickens indicates that this method of supplementing diet and increasing income has been recognized in more ways than one. The towns of Orange Walk and Belize have Mennonite Marketing Centres which facilitate the sale of the surplus produce, and also the manufactured goods produced by the Mennonites. The Altkolonier have not responded in this latter sphere to the same extent as have the Kleine Gemeinde.

Settlement patterns. The conservative nature of the Mennonites of Orange Walk District is also shown in the form of settlement pattern employed by the colonists. "The Altkolonier laid out their colonies in Strassendorfer and Gewannfluren along the lines of the medieval open field village, wherein residence is in the village and each farmer's land, normally consisting of several plots or koerls, is so situated on the Gewannflur as to achieve
a fair distribution of soil quality and journey to work. One feature of this system, the communal pasture, still is lacking apparently for the reason that to date the number of cattle kept by the Altkolonier is very small."^31

Smith has shown that the Altkolonier have not always adapted this pattern of settlement, but that where some other pattern, such as nucleated villages, was the typical example, there was always an outside variable involved. For instance in Russia there was the danger of attack and persecution by the other inhabitants of the area and the traditional plans were felt to be unsafe.

The resultant patterns in British Honduras make the designations "Blue Creek Village" and "Shipyard Village" misnomers, the former being well spread over 112,000 acres (only a small part of which is cultivated) and the latter consisting of twenty-two villages, each with its own name. It is more correct to refer to the settlements as colonies.

The Place names and house types of the Mennonites of Orange Walk District, as well as their settlement patterns reflect their cultural history as well as being good examples of cultural retention. A study of historical records, and the photographs and sketches they contain indicates that the houses built by the Mennonites in this part of British Honduras are very similar to those built
by them in other parts of the world. In Canada the similarity is even more striking, as there the houses were also made of wood, and the similarity is also evident with those found in Mexico, despite the fact that here the Mennonites were forced to build their dwellings of adobe. These buildings are one or two storeys, with the latter preferred, of balloon-frame construction, and usually with a full verandah which extends around more than one side of the house if the owner is wealthy enough. The slow rate of change which the Mennonites sometimes exhibit is shown here, for they have failed to guard against termite infestation and a number of the houses have rapidly deteriorated as a result. Many of the Mennonite houses are built on low stilts, but in their case it seems to be an economic measure, for they would rather have a solid concrete base, but make do with wooden piles as it is a much cheaper method of building and most of the Mennonites were quite poor upon arrival in the Colony.

Although the 'villages' retain the names of the timber estates that they are founded upon, the camp names are those which have a strong tradition for the Mennonites, and can be seen to be of Dutch or German origin. Thus there are camps called Gruenfeld, Hochtaedt and Rosenfeld, at Shipyard, and Reinland, Schoenfeld and Bachfeld at Blue Creek. A number of names are shared by both colonies,
such as Reinland, Blumenfeld and Neustaedt. The retention of such names is not so surprising as it might at first seem, for the Mennonites of Orange Walk also speak a form of German between themselves, only those from Canada speaking some English and not a great number of them speaking Spanish despite their sojourn in Mexico.

General administration of the colonies. "Since the colonies are self administrating, they render levies upon their members to meet real-estate taxes (which are delivered in a lump sum) and pay for necessary internal functions such as the maintainance of schools and public works. In addition they exact statute labour for the maintainance of roads. Because of their strong tradition of engagement in commercial agriculture, market roads have always -- in Canada, Mexico and now in British Honduras -- been a prime concern of even the most conservative Mennonites, even though they tend to diminish the cultural isolation which they otherwise seek."32

"Property deeds to all colony lands are held in the name of the respective church groups, plus, usually, two named individuals who act as custodians. Individual ownership rests on colony registry only. Colony authorities can therefore specify who may own land (members only) and to whom it may be sold (members only, in good standing with the church). The system of land ownership is thus not only a powerful instrument for the maintenance of an
exclusive society, but also for the exaction of individual compliance with established rules of conformity."

More will be said about Mennonite practices in the chapter on Cayo, but enough has been said to show that in Orange Walk their influence has been impressive. They settled in areas which traditionally had little or no agriculture and where few people lived. After an early period of trials when they were adjusting to a new environment, the Mennonites have succeeded in influencing all aspects of the country's life, both social and economic, and all indications are that these effects will continue to grow.
NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE


4 See Historical section in Romney, D.H. (ed.), *Land in British Honduras* (British Honduras Land Use Survey Team, London, H.M.S.O., 1958). See also Fig. 2.

5 Caiger, *op. cit.,* p. 133.

6 Carr and Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 142.

7 The present Government Rest House stands on the ruins of the British fort, and some of its remains, containing gun slits, etc., can still be seen.

8 Latin American Review, *op. cit.,* p. 28.

9 Gann, T., *Maya Cities* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 64.

10 Bradley, *op. cit.*


12 Gann, *op. cit.,* p. 44.

13 Caiger, *op. cit.,* p. 143.


15 Waddell, *op. cit.,* p. 61.

16 Carr and Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 130.

17 Bradley, *op. cit.*

18 Sawatsky, H.L., "Mennonite Settlement in British Honduras," Department of Geography, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. *Report on Field Work Carried out under ONR contract Nonr 3656 (03), Project NR 388067, Department of*
Minority groups here means the members of groups other than the three major groups (in numbers) of the Creoles, Maya and Mestizos.

The colony has now more or less been absorbed by that at Shipyard.

These are non-Mennonites who have taken advantage of the values and customs of this religious group.
Cayo District is in some ways comparable to the northern districts, for it can be easily divided into two sections on a topographical basis. The resulting divisions are, however, very different from those in the north, and the historical development of these areas has also been different.

It is the largest district in the country, and has been so since 1954 when 330 square miles were transferred from Toledo District in order to make both areas better 'geographical units', with the crestline of the Maya Mountains now forming the boundary between the two regions. Toledo had previously been the largest district, but now comes third after Cayo and Orange Walk (see Appendix III).

Its boundaries are partly 'natural', but also partly artificial, for the greatest stretch of boundary in this district runs in almost a straight line from the Mexican border (in Orange Walk) south to the point where the Toledo District joins Guatemala. This boundary to a large extent cuts off the district from its natural hinterland in the Peten. The latter region is largely cut off from
the rest of Guatemala both economically and physically. It is an area of extensive and potentially profitable woodland, but its chances of exploitation seem to lie in exporting its forest products through the Colony. At present the political situation precludes such a trade. This is the most disputed boundary in the Colony and it is also the wildest and least explored, running for about seventy miles through virtually uninhabited country.

WESTERN DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

Roadside Observations.

Cayo District abuts onto all the other districts but Corozal, but can only be reached by road from Stann Creek Town and Belize City. These two routes join up near the village of Roaring Creek, near the new capital site.

The two routeways have markedly different characters, which reflect their different histories. That from Stann Creek Town runs through areas which are relatively undeveloped, having only been opened up by this road since World War II. It is a well surfaced road for most of its length, the narrow black top band being a sign of its modernity, but also of its relative lack of use. Within Stann Creek District, the road is well travelled, but before it reaches the Cayo boundary most of the traffic
has terminated or turned around, and only people travelling
to Cayo or Belize City use the stretch of road in Cayo
District. About seven miles before Roaring Creek, what
conveyed the impression of being a quiet country lane,
suddenly changes character and becomes a pot-holed strip
of continually-used tarmac, which gives every indication
of being a centre of a modern traffic plan. The reason
for the change is in a way topographic, for at this point
a limestone hill was found to be suitable for quarrying,
and at present it is being ripped to pieces to supply
building materials for the Colony's new capital. There
are a number of estates along this stretch of the Humming-
bird Highway, from Roaring Creek to Over-the-Top-Camp, but
none of them is large. They produce citrus fruit and cacao
but still only on a small scale, employing few labourers.
At Caves Branch, a cacao plantation, the chief attractions
are not the drying beans, but the caves which give the
camp its name, one of which has been rigged up with electric
lights, and also Blue Hole, a sunken feature in the lime-
stone, through which a tributary of the Caves Branch River
can be seen to flow. It too is spasmodically exploited
as a tourist attraction.

The road from Belize City is wide and dusty and is
reminiscent of the roads in the north of the Colony.
Except for the small village of Cotton Tree, the road-
sides are virtually deserted between Roaring Creek and the
Belize District boundary, but west of Roaring Creek, there is almost continual linear settlement to the Guatemalan border. The reason for this anomalous situation lies in the historic settlement pattern, geared to the Belize River. When the road was put through to Cayo, the villagers on the river moved up the banks to meet it, but at Roaring Creek the river and road part company and the old river villages have remained or died out. The maps show a number of villages between Orange Walk plantation and St. Pauls in Belize District, but only Never Delay is now of any remarkable size, and even this settlement is declining in population.

West of Roaring Creek it becomes difficult to discern the boundaries between villages, and even the name itself is somewhat anomalous. That known as Camalote has a community centre, one of the signs of village life within the Colony, and yet there is no form of clustering around this building. The settlement stretches for the best part of five miles between Roaring Creek and Teakettle with houses and farms occurring at periodic intervals. A number of these villages are new names on the map, such as Ontario which used to be Warrie Head, and Unitedville, and Georgeville (named after the premier, George Price) which was until recently known as San Diego. Others have a more lengthy history, and more interesting names, such as Blackman Eddy, Mount Hope and Teakettle, and can
be traced back in the historical documents and accounts of a hundred years ago.

Central Farm, just west of Georgéville, is the central farm run by the government in the country. Designed as a model teaching unit to promote agriculture in the Colony, it appears to currently function as an employment centre for part of the area's surplus population, and a market for the sales of agricultural produce. It is located on the site of the old Baking Pot estate, made famous by Willey who has investigated the plentiful Mayan remains in the region.

Past Esperanza lies the settlement known as Cayo. More properly this is two villages, or towns, known as Santa Elena and San Ignacio, the collective name being a result of the ancient belief that the Eastern and Western Branches of the Belize River, which separate near Cayo, rejoined farther upstream, leaving the land in between as an island. El Cayo de San Ignacio y Santa Elena was for many years considered as one settlement, although split by the Eastern Branch, but recently each town has been trying to exert its autonomy and re-establish its separate identity.

The road continues past El Cayo to Benque Viejo, last British settlement before Guatemala, and where the road to the west loses itself in the lanes of the border
town. The border crossing, once discovered, is found to be near the Mopan River, the name locally given to the Western Branch of the Belize River, and the British border post is then found to be a hole in the ground, and the tourist has to return to Benque Viejo to report to the police post. It seems remarkable that after a century or more this much-disputed border has not been better marked and policed, and that even the border post itself is still 'under construction'. It is not surprising that Guatemalan guerilla bands (the last just in 1966) have been able to cross into the Colony and cause international embarrassment, of temporary significance.

The Guatemalans are not nearly as lax. Their frontier post is a superb stone structure, well guarded by heavily armed soldiers, and backed up, across a magnificent bridge, by a garrison of additional military personnel. The reasons for this elaboration, and for the location of a modern hospital in Fallabon, the Guatemalan border village, are not difficult to find. The Guatemalan authorities wish to convince the Belizeans that the good life lies on their side of the Mopan River, and even give medical attention in their hospital to the people from the Colony in order to enforce this point. In the event of a referendum in the Colony such tactics might well pay off, for in Benque Viejo at least, there appear to be greater contacts and affiliations with the Republic than with the
(XLiv) A river bank village near Cayo. Despite its proximity to the administrative centre Santa Familia has little contact with the town, and its inhabitants are asking the government for a bridge. At present they have to dorey (canoe) everything across the river to the road.
Colony. This greater contact is reflected in the ease with which villagers from Benque Viejo cross the border, compared with the difficulties often encountered by other Belizeans. Indeed these villagers often by-pass the border post and take a short cut across the Mopan River to Melchor de Mencos.

The Belize River Valley.

This part of the district is geared to the Belize River, although historically it has also had some connection with the southern areas of the Orange Walk District which have their focus at Orange Walk Town. A series of small tributary rivers such as Callar Creek, Garbutt Creek, and Roaring Creek have some historical importance, but today only the Eastern and Western Branches have any great significance.

Of these two the Eastern Branch is the least important, despite being the site for part of its length, of the district capital. Other villages of importance on this water-way are Cristo Rey and Macaw Bank, and on one of its tributaries lies the isolated village of San Antonio, which is located at the edge of this region. In a similar position are Santa Familla, and Duck Run on the main river. They are all small farming settlements, mostly producing truck crops for the Cayo and Belize Markets, but some such as San Antonio and Santa Familla are Mopanero Mayan villages, and the inhabitants are chiefly milpa-subsistence farmers. On the Western Branch there
is a similar selection of villages, with greater emphasis on the Mayan element, and the settlements of San Jose Soccoths, Bullet Tree Falls, Arenal and Benque Viejo del Carmen are all dominated by subsistence agriculture.

East of Central Farm, the villages on both river and road become increasingly Creole in character and content. These people produce some crops for sale, but are more often living on a subsistence basis, picking up money for seasonal work wherever possible.

Interspersed with these small farming communities are one or two larger specialist concerns, which are trying to produce beef cattle for the home market which currently lives on pork, poultry and odd wild animals. In many ways Cayo District is the most hopeful area for the production of cattle, for it is in this area that the attempts to produce herds of good condition have been tried the longest. Toledo District is being advocated as a cattle raising area, and Belize District has some herds, but Cayo District, and particularly the western parts of the District, appear to have the best chances of success in the near future. The cattle spreads are usually run by ranchers from the United States.

The origin of the settlement pattern of this area is easily seen, and its contemporary status is also understandable. The anomalies, such as Roaring Creek which
is so large and San Jose Soccoths which is larger, are explained by their functions and their history. Roaring Creek is more than a typical roadside community. It is a road-junction town, and more recently has taken on an added importance as the new capital site is being constructed nearby. San Jose Soccoths is one of the oldest villages in the area. It has great traditions and a long history, and may have been the site of permanent settlement for over a thousand years. A mile or so away across the Mopan River lies the ancient ceremonial centre of Xunantunich, "Maiden of the Rocks," which was a centre of Mayan Civilisation in Classic times.

In earlier times this was an area of logwood cutting, and later it gained even more importance as a mahogany cutting centre (most of the settlements on the Belize River such as Mount Hope and Beaver Dam were originally woodcutting camps) and an area of chicle bleeding. Now there is little or none of this in the river valley, and the wood industries are to be found spasmodically operating in the more mountainous section of the district. The economic base of most of Cayo District is agriculture, made up of both subsistence farming and commercial agriculture, which is practised on a scattered basis. Central Farm, the ranches which produce cattle, and the few fruit estates are the only large-scale economic concerns, other than rum-making. Many of the inhabitants commute daily,
(xlv) San Ignacio, Cayo District, one of the most picturesque settlements in the Colony.
or weekly, by truck to Stann Creek District to work on the estates as fruit pickers, and to a lesser extent in the processing factories and canning works. How the people of Cayo District survive, and more particularly those in El Cayo Town, is somewhat of a mystery.

The place names indicate the mixed ethnic pattern of former times which is still present in a slightly different form today. Along the Western Highway as far as Mount Hope the appearance is similar to that of Belize District, and the place names are distinctly British. West and north of this point the Spanish names preferred by the Mopanero Mayans and the few Mestizos preponderate (there is no evidence of Indian nomenclature), although there is still a scattering of names of British origin, such as Macaw Bank, Duffy Bank and Big Eddy. The names of Spanish origin are less inspiring, but a few such as El Cayo and Benque Viejo try to capture an image of the area. Those of British origin once again show the aspects of the physical and cultural and economic environments, and the echoes of the prayers of the early settlers, as well as their fears. Thus there is a Roaring Creek, a Black Man Eddy, and a Banana Bank; also found are Mount Hope, Happy Home, and the more ominous Spanish Lookout. Beaver Dam was so called because a certain point of the river resembled beavers' dams; there are no beavers in the country.¹

The town known as El Cayo is one of the more pleasing
Most of the buildings in San Ignacio are made of boards and have galvanised roofs. This one is currently being built about the old, more traditional dwelling; a novel way of solving the problem of the transitional period of house-moving.
to the eye within the bounds of the Colony. It is set on a series of hills above the river, and the view is everywhere pleasant, being of a series of diverse environments. It is divided into two parts, Santa Elena and San Ignacio by the Eastern Branch of the Belize River. The river is spanned by the Hawkesworth Bridge, the only suspension bridge in the country, named after Governor Edward Gerald Hawkesworth "who, it is said, speeded up and personally supervised the completion of the Cayo road, and the building of this bridge."\(^2\) El Cayo is a predominantly Spanish town, indexes of this being the mediocre selection of English reading material outside the local library, and the predominant use of Spanish by the inhabitants. El Cayo is a centre of the Syrian population of the country. They are chiefly merchants, but also own two large sawmills, and the district's rum distillery, as well as a number of agricultural estates. Other than their names and their looks, they blend into the population of the town, and do not form a geographically separate group. The housing of El Cayo is more akin to that of the Creole areas of the country, and there is only a scattering of thatched huts in the town. It seems to be a feature of the country that board houses and zinc roofs are found in the administrative centres, whatever their cultural origins, and despite the fact that in the surrounding country-side the native houses are the norm. Whether it is an economic question, and the more rural housing
(xlvii) Once again, not all the houses in San Ignacio are in good condition. "Cabbage-wood is again the building material."
will eventually follow the lead of that in the towns, or whether the townsmen are more acquainted with the Belizean way of life, it is difficult to say, and indeed it might be a combination of these and other reasons. A large percentage of the single-storey dwellings are also to be found on stilts and although in some cases these may be simply a form of compensation for the slope of the land on which they are situated, this is not always the case.

The settlements along the Western Highway to Belize, largely populated by Creoles, have similar styles of housing, also raised above ground level. The Mayan villages are characterised by thatched huts, once again often with plastered walls, and firmly placed upon the earth.

Benque Viejo is a small town, which is something of an exception within the Colony. Both politically and culturally it looks more towards Guatemala, and this outlook is reflected in its housing. Although only about one third of the houses are of traditional type, most of the rest being similar to those of the Creole areas, the difference is seen in the location of most of the dwellings on the ground. Over the river in Fallabon and Melchor de Mencos there is barely a house with stilts, and in Benque Viejo less than one eighth of the houses are built on the posts so commonly found elsewhere. Even discounting the Mayan-type houses, under one fifth of the total are built
above ground level. In San Ignacio, over half of the buildings are on posts, and discounting the Mayan houses, the proportion is nearer three fifths. In Santa Elena over three fifths of the houses are on posts and without the thatched-roof housing the proportion is nearly three quarters. If such factors are a true indication of cultural unity, then this most western town in the country may be said to be the least integrated within the Colony's predominantly British structure. [In Corozal, the most 'Mexican' of the country's settlements, nearly three fifths of the buildings are on posts, and in Orange Walk, itself built on very well drained land, and possessing a predominantly Spanish-speaking population, over one third of the houses (made of boards) are to be found on posts. It would appear that Mexican influence is different, in this respect at least, from that of Guatemala.]

Other than the Indians, Creoles, and Syrians, there are a few individuals from other cultural groups, such as the Caribs, and Chinese, but the only other segment of the 'lowland' population which is important both culturally, economically and numerically consists of two settlements of Mennonites, at Spanish Lookout, and in a small valley between Santa Elena and Cristo Rey, as yet unnamed. The largest settlement numerically, and by far the most important, is that at Spanish Lookout. The latter is relatively recent, and quite small, and its
inhabitants have a very different history.

**The Mennonites.** The Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites at Spanish Lookout have settled on about 19,000 acres of land, just across another of the traditional lifelines of the Colony (the Belize River) from Baking Pot. "At the time the Mennonites acquired them, all these lands were inhabited by only a few Maya Indians subsisting on small milpa (slash-and-burn) farms and on the gathering of chicle, wild pepper and other natural products, and a few Negro squatters."³

This group had moved to Mexico at a later date than those settling in Orange Walk District, most of them coming from south-eastern Manitoba (see p. 209). "They brought with them, on the average, more capital, and their institutions of mutual assistance were better organized and articulated."⁴ In addition they arrived with a better knowledge of the English language than their counterparts, which proved useful, and their location near Central Farm gave them accessibility to a ready store of environmental information. "One man was appointed to maintain continuous contact with the Central Farm, so that a flow of communication and ideas might be maintained."⁵

As with the Altkolonier Mennonites, a number of initial mistakes were made in agriculture and marketing, but these errors were fairly rapidly overcome. The Mennonite
Central Committee, the relief arm of the Mennonite churches of North America, established a sales and information centre in Belize City in 1960. The Kleine Gemeinde immediately took advantage of this service which markets a large proportion of their produce.

Hurricane Hattie was a turning point in this colony also, more so in fact than for those in the northern district, and sales increased considerably. Another factor which helped them was that they had no aversion to the use of machinery and today own numerous trucks, jeeps, and farm machines, and even repair vehicles for outsiders, most significantly for the government motor-pool at Central Farm. The success of the colony at Spanish Lookout is to be explained in large part by their "permissiveness -- and, indeed, encouragement -- in regard to ongoing adjustments, particularly as regards technology."6

The settlement pattern of Spanish Lookout is considerably different to that of the Mennonites of Orange Walk. They have "preferred to perpetuate the occupancy system employed by them in Mexico, with compact farms spaced along a network of main roads."7 Once again roads are of prime concern to the colonists, as marketing is all important, and the colony spends at least $30,000 a year in road construction and maintenance. An index of their desire to succeed, and a measure of their con-
fidence is the fact that they are willing to pay up to $100 per acre for improved land. 8

The method of house construction in Spanish Lookout is less rigid than that in Shipyard or Blue Creek, but the same basic styles can be recognised, although the porches are not seen to be as important or essential as in the Altkolonier settlements. Because of the difference in settlement type, no comparison can be made on the basis of place names, but other evidence suggests that the ancient names would not be so strongly adhered to.

Although the Kleine Gemeinde are 'progressive' and 'modern' in many ways, they do not mix with the populace of the country-side, outside of their own settlement. Any influence they have had, has been largely coincidental, and certainly not deliberate. They may have begun the tradition of milk and poultry in the country, the former on a small basis and the latter more successfully; and also they have a Mennonite Store at Spanish Lookout which is patronized by other inhabitants of Cayo District to a certain extent, but in general their influence has been less than that of Central Farm.

The colonists who settled near Santa Elena number around one hundred, made up of thirteen families, all from the U.S.A. or Canada 9 who decided that the ways of
At the country, the roof and the guttering system help. The water tank is filled by the copious rainfall basins, although sometimes are forced to hire additional The menonites usually build their own houses in a family An Amish-menonite house near Santa Elena, Cayo district.
the industrial world were not for them. It is a mixed group of Amish and Old Order Mennonites, with a variety of backgrounds, but united by their English language and their common faith. They own some 4,000 acres, and cultivate some 300 of these on farmsteads which are scattered throughout the area on a disjointed linear pattern.

They would appear to be determined to survive on their own, and do not plan to be absorbed by the Spanish Lookout colony, which because of its worldly ways is regarded as something less than true Mennonite. Horses and carts are the mode of transport, as this group is as or more culturally inflexible than the members of the Shipyard colony.

As the colony is so small, 'native' helpers were hired to clear the land. These colonists have also adopted one or two children from the surrounding area, apparently more as a humanitarian measure than as a method of gaining increased followers. They sell their surplus produce in San Ignacio, and this factor, coupled with the others mentioned suggests that they will get along better with their neighbours, whilst retaining their cultural identity, than has been the case with the other Mennonite groups. This may indeed be the deciding factor as to whether this small group survives in such an unusual and hostile environment.
This 'lowland' area of Cayo District is a region of many different characters, and many different histories, being originally united by the Belize River, and contemporarily connected together by the Western Highway. To the south, up a road which meets the Highway at Georgeville is the second part of the district, of different character and history, and consisting of the areas known as the Vaca Plateau and Mountain Pine Ridge.

The upland areas of Cayo District.

This region is bounded by the Maya Mountains on the east and south, and by the Belize River lowlands to the north, but slopes gently into Guatemala with no 'natural' boundary to the west. The area is physically a mosaic, albeit one consisting of large pieces, the main constituents of which are limestone and granite, but much of it has had a common history. Its drainage is of the radial type, the waters flowing chiefly to the Eastern Branch of the Belize River.

The Vaca Plateau area, consisting largely of limestone, is the region which has had the greatest contact with the 'outside world,' and most of the following remarks pertain to it. Mountain Pine Ridge has often had envious eyes cast upon it, but its difficult terrain, and lack of accessibility have told against it in the past. Much of this area rises above 3000 feet, and it contains few
route ways, either natural or man-made. The map shows only one trail across it, passing eastward from Augustine through the Baldy Beacon area and emerging on the Hummingbird Highway near Sibun Camp (see Fig. 1). It is not a well frequented pathway and most people who have seen Mountain Pine Ridge have done so from afar, or from the air. It is interesting to note that this trail closely approximates to one of the routes which Romney feels might have been an east-west trade route of the Ancient Mayas (see Fig. 2).

The Vaca Plateau region has a history of Maya occupation of considerable density and importance, as Lundell and Thompson have shown, but as far as the contemporary Colony is concerned, its story began with the coming of the British, although its remoteness meant that this story began later than those in other parts of the Colony.

"No agricultural settlements now exist south of Vaca and Arenal; hence disturbance of the forest by man is limited primarily to the exploiters of chicle and mahogany."10 "Apart from Augustine, the only other permanent population is at San Luis, a sawmill and camp to which go both the pine logs and the mahogany from the Chequbul Forest."11 But the settlement was not always so sparse, as a glance at the map shows, although the majority of the past settlements were simply temporary camps. Isolation, the sparsity of water in some parts, and the quality of the
Mountain Pine Ridge near Augustine. Much of the wood has been removed by loggers and little planting has taken place. Natural regeneration is the cause of the present wooded areas. Note the dense pattern of logging tracks.
soil in others all combined to prevent large scale colonization of the area on an agricultural basis after the Mayans pulled out.

Yet despite this, much of the upland region has been explored and exploited on a large scale. Mahogany and Chicle were the first 'crops' but later pine became important, and now more of this commodity than of the other two is removed from the area. At least one of the saw mills which exploits the uplands only removes mahogany when it is in the way of the pine cutters, and then it has to receive permission from the landowners, the Belize Estate Company, and have a forest worker from Augustine check the validity of the job.

The Vaca Plateau area, and the westerly part of Mountain Pine Ridge are laced with a network of logging roads, now largely defunct, and mostly impassable during the wet season. The system was once so good that parts of Guatemala were connected to the economy of the region and it was possible to reach Toledo District, over the crest of the Maya Mountains, with relative ease.

"The chicle of the (limestone) plateau is regarded as inferior to that of the sections of the peninsula to the north, although the unadulterated gum comes from the same species." Consequently, with the slump in the chicle market, this area has suffered the most, and as
Not all of the upland area of Cayo District has been denuded. This river is one of the headwaters of the Belize River.
a result, El Cayo has lost a considerable amount of seasonal traffic, as it used to be the base for all operations into the area.

Mahogany has also had a very intermittent life, in the economic sense, although the quality of the wood here is as good as elsewhere. There is hope that in the future the trade may be revived, as mahogany appears to be regenerating better than other woods in the wake of Hurricane Hattie -- it prefers open conditions and the hurricane wrecked a large swath of forest in the Pine Ridge area.

Pine is the other economic constituent of the area, although as in the rest of the country it has largely been logged out. The mill at San Luis produces all forms of lumber but pine is still dominant. The forest station at Augustine is now helping greatly in the regeneration of the forests. Although it does not engage in planting, it is active in fire prevention, a factor which in the past has succeeded in destroying much of the forest cover. An account by Lundell, written in 1940, has been made out of date, to a certain extent, by such protective policies, but is worth while recounting as it shows a number of problems that had to be contended with.

"Forest destruction by fire usually follows the avenues of logging operations. In the area exploited longest, from Vaca to Cohune Ridge, complete denudation has resulted. . . . In 1928 high advanced
forest covered the hills; in 1936 only a few scattered tree skeletons remained to tower above the rank second growth. Some hilltops and steep unterraced slopes were even washed clean of soil and completely barren, a result of fire devastation and subsequent erosion. Firing of the areas has been blamed on the railway (which once ran from Vaca to Cohune Ridge), hunters, loggers, and chicleros. Doubtless all have been responsible. Chicleros, as well as hunters, make a practice of burning all camps no longer inhabitable, and hunters do not hesitate to burn out areas to facilitate hunting. Such fires, started during a dry season, sweep felled forest around camps or along roadsides, and eat along the ground through adjacent stands. Rank second growth, the older stages usually grassy, burn during subsequent seasons; each fire sweeps farther, and devastation results.

Regardless of the responsibility for setting the fires, whether deliberate, a result of carelessness, or accidental, large areas have been repeatedly swept by fire during the past decade to leave nothing but desolation in the wake.\[13\]

The upland area of Cayo may never have been well developed, but it has certainly been well exploited.

The climate and physical appearance of this area, particularly the Mountain Pine Ridge section, have been called excellent by a number of authors, and in the past centuries it was suggested as a site for a recuperation centre, along the lines of the (East) Indian Hill Stations, for white men who could no longer stand Belize. At present it has been relatively unexploited for such tourist possibilities, although the British Army has a rest and training camp in the area, but some tourist facilities are now being constructed, under government supervision,
to the north of the Augustine Forest Station. In addition to the pleasant scenery and climate, which are reminiscent of parts of upland Britain, there are a number of caves, eroded in the limestone, which could prove to be tourist attractions.

There are no real inhabitants of this upland region, as it has not proved too hospitable to agriculture, and the place names simply reflect the pattern which is common in other areas of the Colony where woodcutting has been dominant, although the number of Spanish-origin names reveal that here the temporary settlers were largely taken from different cultural groups than were those found in the rest of the Colony. The rivers in particular show this influence although there are a number with an Anglicized origin. The Chiquibul is one such river with a British background, and the road from Georgeville also takes this name, as do the forestlands of part of the upland area.

"The name of this river is spelled Chequbul on Owen's map (1927) and Checubiul by Thompson (1931). Locally the name is pronounced and spelled Chiquibul. It probably is a corruption of 'chicle bull,' the local name for the inferior chicle obtained on the plateau."

The camp and settlement names are of a more evenly mixed origin, representing both British and Spanish backgrounds. They are scattered throughout the region in a somewhat haphazard manner, and the only comment that may
be made on their pattern is that in general they are found on the limestone plateau area and not in the Mountain Pine Ridge region, which has been exploited to a lesser extent than the neighbouring area. This is partly due to the more difficult terrain and partly due to the fact that until recently the Vaca plateau has always been sufficient to supply the needs of its inhabitants.

The normal sort of names occur, describing the terrain, the water supply, and the economy, and very few deserve more than a passing reference. One more interesting reference might be made to the camp of Mountain Cow, which is the Creole name for tapir, but the story as related by Thompson does not end with so simple a statement, and helps to reveal some of the cultural confusion that has gone on in the Colony.

"The origin of the word is probably to be sought in Maya. The Maya word for the tapir was tzimin. On the introduction of the horse to the New World, the Mayas extended this word to cover the horse, since the tapir among the animals they knew most resembled the horse. Later, to avoid confusion, the termination che or kax was added to the tapir. By this time the horse was commoner than the tapir, and the word tzimin conveyed the picture of a horse more than that of a tapir. The words che or kax meant 'wood' or 'forest', so that the word meant 'horse of the forest.' Translated into Spanish that became el caballo de la montana. The word was next translated into English, the word montana, however, being wrongly translated 'mountain'. The horse became 'cow' either in Spanish or in English, probably because the tapir resembles a cow more than it does a horse. The Spanish word, however, for the
tapir is danta, and the modern Creole word was probably borrowed originally from Spanish-speaking Mayas.  

Thus by a complex process of culture and language mix Mountain Cow was conceived. If such a complicated process lies behind many place names, it is doubtful that the origins of many would be discovered. Fortunately most are more simple, such as Fio Frio, or Cold River, and anyone who has experienced this water-way would be able to justify the nomenclature.

The highland area of Cayo District is one of the most sparsely settled regions of the Colony. Indeed, the prospects for future settlement are also of a dubious and intermittent nature. It cannot be denied, however, that the history of the region, as reflected in the present landscape, is as colourful as much of that of the rest of British Honduras.
NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

1 Bradley, op. cit.
2 Ibid.
3 Sawatsky, op. cit., p. 9.
4 Ibid., p. 11.
5 Ibid., p. 16.
6 Ibid., p. 33.
7 Ibid., p. 29.
8 Ibid., p. 30.
9 They have come from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arkansas and Ontario.
10 Lundell, op. cit., p. 12.
11 Carr and Thorpe, op. cit., p. 74.
12 Lundell, op. cit., p. 12.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., p. 3.
15 Thompson, op. cit., p. 226.
Location of Stann Creek.

Stann Creek is reached from the north by the Hummingbird Highway, a post World War II black-top road, or by sea along the traditional pathways which have been in use for at least two centuries. From the south it is occasionally accessible by land, along a wide dusty stretch of track which has been termed the Southern Highway. This route forms the inland backbone of the district, running north to meet the Hummingbird Highway about seven miles out of Stann Creek Town. Water is a traditional means of access to the southern part of the district also, and once provided the main means of travel within the area, before the completion of the Highway.

The district consists of two sections, the mainland and the cays, but the latter have only some historical significance, although a few of the islands near Stann Creek Town are the sites of weekend and holiday houses for the more affluent people of the district. The mainland area is bounded on the west by the main divide of the Maya Mountains, and slopes down eastward to meet the
sea twenty-five miles away. About one third of this area is of low elevation, interlaced with a vast network of streams, and having a coastline consisting of swamps, lagoons and mangroves. In the rainy season the Southern Highway which crosses this lowland area is often made impassable by streams of water despite the efforts of the Public Works Department to combat the menace.

Patterns of economic activity.

Historically the story of the district has been one of underdevelopment, and sparsity of population. Although it has been periodically exploited for its timber resources, chiefly mahogany and pine, and the higher lands of the district are dotted with abandoned wood-cutting camps, most of the permanent settlement, until recently, has been on the coast.

The coastlands were the location of the once very successful banana plantations. Monkey River in the Toledo District was important in this context, and in Stann Creek District, the Mullins River valley and the Stann Creek valley were the major centres although the fruit was also grown at a number of smaller spots along the coast such as Sittee River and South Stann Creek. "As early as 1880, 9,000 stems of bananas were exported. In 1891, half a million stems were exported, mainly on the American market through the United Fruit Company
The Hummingbird Highway. This is one of the original (railway) bridges and the lines of the tracks are still evident.
who provided the chief channel of transportation linking Belize with the American consumers. Production was at first mainly derived from small holdings but larger estates soon became interested in banana culture, more especially because the labour force involved was small and, since employment spread through the year, fairly permanent. With seasonal crops, the more useful active labourers generally took alternative employment in the forest and often failed to return in time for the next harvest season.²

Production began to decline in the twentieth century, however, with the arrival of Panama disease, marketing difficulties, diminishing returns on poor soils, and a poor production system contributing to the downfall. With this decline the settlements which had depended upon such production began to enter a period of slump.³

It was somewhat ironic that the major decline in production came just after the completion of a twenty-five mile stretch of railway, built from Stann Creek up the valley to Middlesex at great cost and under great difficulty, to open up what was felt to be a tract of land with great potential for the growing of bananas.⁴ In conjunction with this project a new pier of reinforced concrete was completed at Commerce Bight (an area a mile south of Stann Creek Town, not the village of the same name).

Banana production is today once again on the increase,
Hercules Company, once of Independence.

Live in these houses, purchased for 5000 $, from the
Alabama, once known as Waha Beet Camp. The banana cutters

(14)
in both large estates such as Alabama, and small ones such as Cowpen. But the road to success is by no means an easy one, especially in British Honduras, and a number of estates such as that at South Stann Creek, have experienced problems in management and marketing. By far the greatest success has been the estate at Waha Leaf, better known as Alabama. In the early 1960's the Greene and Atkins Company, based in Alabama (whence comes the settlement's popular name), began production of the fruit. (The company was later taken over by Brewer and Dough of New York, but the change in ownership brought no significant changes to the production area.) "Since the entrance of Greene and Atkins, two other banana growing firms ... have gone into operation, also using the Panama disease-resistant variety. Acreage under bananas is continually being increased. Over 200,000 stems of bananas were exported in 1966 -- mostly from Belize City's port -- and in 1967 the figure will go even higher." Production is, however, still a long way from its previous level of fifty years ago.

Stann Creek Town was saved from disaster after the collapse of the banana industry, by the discovery that citrus fruits, and at first particularly grapefruit, could be a commercial success in the area. The Stann Creek Valley is now the centre of this industry, although there are small estates on the Southern Highway, such as Kendal,
In a number of cases the 'Hercules' houses have been adapted. Here a shop has been made by joining two of them together.
and in Cayo District. "The chief export was first fresh fruit but the development of canned citrus products followed the discovery that nearly 40% of the fruit grown were too large to be acceptable for the export market." 6

Today the district is very much supported by citrus crops. The railway, since removed to run between Gallon Jug and Hill Bank, has been replaced by a motor road which forms one stretch of the Hummingbird Highway. There are now two large canneries, at Pomona and Alta Vista, and in addition there are labour camps at these places and also at Middlesex. But the chief effect has been on a much different scale. From Middlesex to Stann Creek Town, the roadsides are lined with over 250 small farms, which produce both subsistence crops and citrus fruit which is sold to the canneries as a cash crop. During the picking season the valley is a hive of industry; the roads are full of tractors with trailers and trucks full of fruit making their way to the processing factories. In 1960 the population of Stann Creek District was under 6,000 but today it is much nearer 8,000 (estimate). This does not seem such a great increase until it is noted that in 1960 there was also a centre of population in the south of the district (near Mango Creek); today it is nearly all in the north. Citrus has been an invaluable addition to the economy of this part of a district which previously contributed little to the finance of the Colony.
Cultural Groups.

The fruit is grown and picked chiefly by Creoles and Jamaicans, the latter who have been entering the country in quite large numbers and most of whom are found in the Stann Creek valley, excluding the town of Stann Creek. "The Jamaicans came primarily to work on the banana plantations and on railway construction at the beginning of the present century," and the Stann Creek Valley has continued to be their hearthland, although the descendants of the early immigrants can now be found throughout the country. The Jamaicans were from the beginning none too popular, as they took well paying jobs, and came from a country which has never had very amicable relations with the Colony; "on a different level, Jamaicans (have) at times been appointed to senior posts in government service . . . on account of the lack of professionally qualified British Hondurans, and their taking of the best jobs (has) been much resented."

Creoles are also found in the Valley, in the town of Stann Creek, and at a number of other settlements in the district, such as Mullins River, Silk Grass, Sittee River, Placentia, and the area around Mango Creek. They are the second most populous group in the district, but are not so united as in other Creole areas in the Colony.

In addition there are some Amerindians who are chiefly
to be found in the southern part of the district, and most particularly at Alabama, where they are preferred by the management as steady dependable workers, being lured up from the southern part of the Toledo District. But the most important cultural group in the district is that consisting of the Carib Indians. They are to be found dotted along the coast in fishing villages such as Seine Bight and Hopkins, but their 'capital' is the administrative centre of the district, the second largest town in the Colony, Stann Creek.

"The Carib is perhaps the race which has made least attempt to merge with the rest of the country. Many Caribs stick firmly to their customs and have retained their own language; one which cannot readily be learned by outsiders. They seldom marry outside their own race. The Caribs came to British Honduras at the beginning of the 19th Century, the endpoint of the exploring and foraging voyages of a hybrid race which had long been established further south on the western shores of the Caribbean Sea. The ancestors of this race were probably Carib Indians from the Orinoco delta and the Guiana coastlands. Prior to the Spanish Conquest, they had spread to the islands of the Antilles and to other parts of the West Indies. They resisted the Spanish invaders bitterly but were killed off on all but the island of St. Vincent, in the Winward group. On this island in 1675 was wrecked a vessel with some hundred of West African slaves who joined with the Carib Indians in fighting the French and British who were themselves disputing the ownership of the island. More than a century later, in 1796, some 5,000 'black' caribs were rounded up and deported to the islands of Roatan and Bonacca and the Central America mainland for taking part in a rebellion against the British. In due course they travelled up the coast to the Bay of Honduras, settling first near Punta Gorda and subsequently at Stann Creek."
Most of the Caribs of the district follow their traditional pursuits of fishing and farming on a subsistence basis, although some farm produce and handcrafts are sold on the open market, such as that at Stann Creek Town. The men chiefly engage in fishing, although they do some work in the fields, but this latter pursuit is chiefly the realm of the women who grow most of the vegetable produce and also do the housework. A long broken line of Carib women, returning from the fields outside of town, with bundles and baskets of vegetables precariously perched on their heads, is a familiar early morning sight in Stann Creek Town. Most of the members of the Carib communities of the district appear to be quite content with their way of life, although it is called lazy or at least lethargic by outsiders, and the Caribs have gained a reputation for indolence.

A number of Caribs have broken away from this traditional pattern and have become successful school-teachers, lawyers, doctors, and business men, as well as supplying a relatively large number of recruits to the police force of the Colony.

Settlement patterns of northern Stann Creek.

Although the Caribs are usually found in coastal villages, with their houses often built on sandy beaches, there are two communities found in the interior of the
(Liv) Georgetown, the only inland Carib village in the Colony. Its houses were built on an aided self-help basis and are the cheapest design possible. They allow for expansion, however, and that in the foreground exhibits such endeavour in an additional back section.
district, one of which is totally of Carib composition and the other which has a fairly large proportion made up of this cultural group. Both of these are a direct result of Hurricane Hattie, being resettlement areas promoted by the government to help the suffering villagers.

Georgetown is located between the Southern Highway and Alabama (Waha Leaf) village. It has the distinction of being the only permanent inland agricultural Carib village in the country. Begun after Hurricane Hattie, it was built on an aided self-help plan, the government supplying the material and the people the labour. Most of the villagers originated from Seine Bight village. The government stipulated the house style, but it is one which can be added to over time on a piecemeal basis as the householders get more funds. The village has forty-six buildings, all but two of which are dwellings, with one shop and the ubiquitous community centre/cum/school. All but seven of the houses are built of wood, but there has been some experimentation with concrete blocks. The villagers seem happy with their lot in life, as agriculturalists, and profess to have no desire to return to their traditional patterns.

Silk Grass Village, on the Southern Highway, fifteen miles from the Hummingbird junction, was set up as a sort of 'southern Hattieville'. It was paid for as a relief project largely by the Jamaican Government, and originally
Silk Grass, financed by the Jamaican government, was built as a relief project after Hurricane Hattie, but now half of its barrack-like huts stand empty, their inhabitants having returned to their former homes, or left to seek their fortunes elsewhere.
housed 125 families whose homes had been wrecked in Mullins River Town, Stann Creek Town, Hopkins, and Sittee River. Today fifty-eight of the houses are empty, and much of the barracks-like village is deserted, the temporary inhabitants having returned to their former homes. The village was a success as a relief measure, but the surrounding area offered little to many of its former Carib inhabitants and there was no strong policy of the government to prevent them from leaving.

Hopkins and the Sittee River settlement recovered from the hurricane fairly quickly, and no longer show the scars, but Mullins River Town, much nearer the eye of the storm, has never fully recovered from the almost total destruction it suffered. In 1960 it was a thriving town of 300 people, although much smaller than it had been in its hey-day when the banana trade was more important. Today there are two Mullins Rivers. One is a desolate overgrown area on the coast, where the old town used to be. It consists of twenty-four broken shacks, the old church, since restored, and the house of one of the biggest landowners of the area, now standing alone in its own grounds, some distance from the other buildings. Less than half of these houses are now occupied, and the impression is that before long the village will be completely devoid of life.

New Mullins River village is about a mile inland.
Mullins River (Old) Town after Hurricane Hattie. The eye of the storm passed through this once thriving settlement which has since all but died.
There is a large area of cleared land, containing a modern school, seventeen concrete houses and seven well built wooden houses on high posts. Once again built on a self-help housing basis, it gives the impression of being a sterile place. Within the area of the village few trees grow, and there are not many people to give it life. Mullins River, more than any other settlement in the country, died with the 1961 hurricane.

Although it must be considered as the hardest hit because it was the larger, Mullins River was not the only settlement to have much of its vigour rudely terminated by Hurricane Hattie. Commerce Bight, once an important coconut growing settlement, was also wrecked by the storm, and what was a thriving village now consists of seven houses, existing in a largely overgrown environment on the landward route to Hopkins.

Stann Creek Town has also suffered in hurricanes, both in 1941 and 1961. In 1941 parts of the town and the deep water pier, built in the first decade of the century to help the banana trade, were destroyed, and the latter was not rebuilt; much of the produce of the district is now exported via the pier at Commerce Bight. Great damage was also done to the administrative centre by the 1961 hurricane, but the town has recovered well. Two thirds of the houses were damaged or demolished in 1961, and 835 applications for aid were made by the inhabitants.
(Lvii) Mullins River (Old) Town was devastated by the eye of Hurricane Hattie, and was never rebuilt. Today the bush is slowly reclaiming the area.
$290,776 were given as grants, and nearly $400,000 as loans after the tragedy, and today the population has risen from around the 5,000 mark in 1960 to nearer 8,000. The town itself is an unusual shape, being about a mile long, but only a few hundred yards wide. It is dominated by its main street which is the commercial centre and main axis of the settlement. The town is divided into three parts by the Havana Creek and the North Stann Creek and is bounded by mangrove swamps to the west and the sea to the east. Expansion is taking place by a process of swamp reclamation to the north, the south, and also the west. Unusually, the area between the main street and the sea, which varies from about fifty to a hundred and fifty yards wide, is practically unsettled. All of the other waterfront settlements in the country come much closer to the sea-shore. These unused lands are now being laid out largely for housing and administrative facilities. There are also a soccer field and an airfield in this strip of ground, although the latter is destined to be moved farther north at a future date. The housing of the town is once again reminiscent of that of Belize. The Caribs do not appear to practise any indigenous form of building, but seem to copy that of their nearest neighbours. Thus in Toledo District, their houses resemble those of the Kekchi, as well as those of the Creoles, and in the other settlements such a mixture is also noticeable.
(Lviii) Mullins River (New) Town was constructed on an aided self-help basis after Hattie, but the life and vigour of the settlement, once the eighth largest in the Colony, was snuffed out by the hurricane and the present village is a shadow of its former self.
The place names of the northern part of Stann Creek District, and of Stann Creek Town, follow many of the trends already noted in the country, and the Caribs do not seem to have applied their own nomenclature in any way. Thus Stann Creek itself got its name from being an early trading post or "Stand", and Hopkins apparently refers to one of the original British settlers rather than commemorating a Carib personality. Silk Grass, Sittee River and Commerce Bight are all relatively simple descriptions of the physical environment. The cays off shore, as in the case of the islands of Belize District, show aspects of the history of the Colony, as well as describing their morphology. "Tobacco Cay gained its name from the fact that tobacco was sorted here before being shipped to England when the first English settlement was established at Stann Creek in the seventeenth century." Round Cay, Channel Cay and Twin Cays would fall into the latter class.

The street names of Stann Creek town compare with some of those of Belize City. The older names are more genuine, with regard to history, being called St. Vincent St., Church St., etc. The names given to the newer areas are chosen from aspects of the history and the physical environment which have association with this part of the Colony. Thus there are a Coconut road, a Grapefruit road, a Rice St., and a Melinda Road. They have a ring
(Lix) Stann Creek Town, Carib capital of the Colony. Once again the buildings are similar to those of Belize City.
of authenticity, but not of age, mostly commemorating comparatively recent events.

Southern Stann Creek District.

Between the Hummingbird Highway and the Toledo border, the district is largely deserted, although there are a few villagers at South Stann Creek and Kendal, as well as at Silk Grass. In addition there are the Caribs at Georgetown and the banana pickers at Alabama. As far as the settled part of Toledo District, this somewhat desolate landscape is the norm, and it comes as something of a surprise to see a collection of settlements in the centre of such an unpicturesque and unpopulated region. The centre of this population nucleus has traditionally been Mango Creek, but Independence, Big Creek, and Placentia have some importance, as well as the nearby Carib village of Seine Bight.

Placentia is a Creole fishing village, but it is very different from most Creole villages. The inhabitants have a much lighter complexion, which reflects their isolation from much of the negro element in the country, and other present-day centres of Creole population. These people are necessarily more independent than many other groups in the Colony, for until recently the communications of the area were bad, and even now they are not good. Regular boat services only reach the village twice
Unusually, the sea-front area of Stann Creek Town is presently little developed, although housing is now being located in this district.
a week, there is no road route to the settlement and no airstrip.

The village is located on a beach, in much the same way as the Carib villages and those on the northern cays. It is beginning to promote itself as a tourist resort, and if communications improve, it will have a good chance of being successful. An American is building a number of tourist houses nearby, and the villagers are very interested in promoting the charms of their settlement.

It is perhaps appropriate to mention here a new settlement which has had little effect at present upon the area. At Maya Beach, A Vancouver, B.C. company is trying to promote and sell an area of the spit to Canadians as a retirement home. Within the context of the environment, they are doing a fair job, and about a dozen houses have been completed, a hotel is being built and Placentia Lagoon is being promoted as a marina. The development still has a lot to do before it is completed, however, as it can only be reached by road during the dry season, and then with some difficulty and the use of a specially built ferry. The usual means of access is by air or sea, and neither is frequented very much at present. Although the area still looks like a building site rather than a tropical paradise, if it is improved along the lines of the company's sales talk it could have a very important effect
Stann Creek Town after Hurricane Hattie. The town suffered great damage but has recovered well and now supports a population of 8,000, 3,000 more than in 1961.
upon the economy of the region and perhaps of the Colony as a whole.

Mango Creek has always owed its existence to its sawmill, which has been run by the Belize Estate Company. The wood for the mill came from the wide hinterland of the settlement, and most of the roads in existence in this part of the country had their initial raison d'être as logging tracks. Indeed, parts of what is now the Southern Highway run along these alignments. Although it still retains ownership of the land, in the early 1960's the Company decided to close down the town's mill, which was no longer an economic proposition, and in doing so, closed off the life from the area. Savannah Forest Station is the only other employer of labour in the area at present, and it cannot possibly absorb the unemployed population. A small private sawmill is all that exists, other than the rotting skeleton of the B.E.C. property, to show the past economy and way of life of the settlement.

Mango Creek was built by the Company, and the architecture reflects this fact. The buildings are quite large, but predominantly uniform in design, and built in the cheapest possible way, with unfinished lumber which is fixed in vertical strips to the sides of the houses, the gaps being covered with thinner pieces of rough wood. There are still nearly a hundred of these buildings in
Commerce Bight village was once a thriving coconut plantation about ten miles south-west of Stann Creek Town. Today the village is deserted and overgrown, and only a handful of people live in the area.
existence, although not all are now lived in, and the desolate appearance of the area is heightened by these empty houses and the overgrown biotic environment. The people no longer care about the appearance of their town.

But if Mango Creek is desolate, Independence and Big Creek are worse. Huxley feels that British Honduras is the end of the earth, and he may be right, but Independence is an end within an end, and Big Creek is its outport. Originally, in the early '60's, the Hercules Company built Independence as a town to house its workers who would work in the Big Creek processing plant and in the outlying rural areas. The plans were to extract resin from the pine stumps, but after one year of operation, the company closed down. The town had consisted of over 200 specially constructed houses and more than fifty custom-made houses, built by people who staked everything on the success of the project. Big Creek contained the plant, the storage vats, the export wharf, and the housing and offices for the company officials.

Now most of the 200 workers' houses have been sold and removed. The majority went to Alabama, and some more went to Stann Creek Town, where H.T.A. Bowen is rebuilding twenty-five of them into Bowman Square, a personal monument and a housing area for poor people. A few of the other houses can be seen around the country-side, given away by their characteristic shape. Indeed they
(Lxiii) Seine Bight village is a Carib fishing settlement on Placentia spit. Most of the houses, built on sand in a similar way to those on the northern cays, are made of boards and have zinc roofs, although some are made of thatch in traditional style.
make a good buy, for their second-hand price is only $200 and their original cost was greater than this. The rest lie near the Mango Creek/Independence border, and at the wharf at Big Creek, slowly rotting away in a country that is crying out for more housing.

With such a great capital expenditure, it seems unlikely that the Hercules Company made any profit out of their venture, although they are reported to have extracted twenty-eight million pounds of resin during their stay.

At night the scene of desolation is complete in this part of the district. Mango Creek has some electric lighting, albeit rather poor, but Independence and Big Creek never reached this advanced stage of life, and in the dark the area gives the impression of being an urban graveyard, which is slowly being reclaimed by the secondary vegetation. The only hope for the area seems new industry, and some of this may be supplied in the near future. An American entrepreneur is developing land near Mango Creek in the hope of producing an exportable quantity of tomatoes. If he is successful, the area may yet survive until the pine regenerates and the mill starts working once again.

The nomenclature of the southern section of Stann Creek District adds little to the story begun in the north.
A bridge is out on the Southern Highway. When this occurs all traffic has to be re-routed along old logging roads through the Belize Estate lands to the east. Approaching drivers have little warning, apart from the half oil drums strategically placed one hundred yards from the bridge. They have to back-track two miles to the detour.
The logging camps were named in such a way as to be typical of those throughout the country. The origin of Alabama has already been pointed out, and the Waha Leaf that it is replacing was a corruption of 'Water Leaf', a name given to a local riverside plant. Maya Beach is a misnomer dreamed up by the development company as an advertising gimmick to help sell its houses. As Romney has shown, there is no evidence of Maya activity in this part of the Colony. Independence was originally called Hercules, after the company that conceived the settlement, but was renamed in a burst of nationalistic fervour.

Stann Creek is much more of a physical unit than most of the other districts, but this has not led to any uniformity in patterns of development and the majority of the district remains under or totally unpopulated. Only in the north is there successful permanent settlement, the centre being practically devoid of life, and the south having vitality only in scattered patches. If this latter area does not revive, most of the area between the Stann Creek valley and the Rio Grande may revert to its position of several hundred years ago, although its resources of that time will have been exploited and worked out. If this were to happen, Toledo would be even more cut off than is now the case.
(Lxxv) Independence, truly the end of the end of the earth. In the foreground there were once numerous houses built by the Hercules Company, many of which are now located at Alabama (Waha Leaf).
TOLEDO DISTRICT -- THE DEEP SOUTH

The situation of the area.

South from Mango Creek area leads a dirt-track-cum-road which boasts the name 'Southern Highway' as does its more northerly counterpart. The fact that this route is only passable at some stages during the Dry Season makes the nomenclature all the more puzzling, but a survey of the district which it has 'opened up' makes the situation more clear. The Toledo District is not called the Deep South for nothing.

As recently as 1961, Carr wrote, "The only communication with the rest of British Honduras is by a small, three seater aeroplane, or by the (S.S.) Heron which visits the town twice a week, bringing its weekly supply of provisions and some passengers and collecting beans, pigs, mail and passengers for transport to Belize." The situation has changed little, of late. Nowadays two boats ply the route from Belize, one continuing on to Puerto Barrios in Guatemala, but these two ancient craft only make the (occasionally) perilous voyage once a week each, and the National holidays cut further into the service. For the towns in the Stann Creek District this contact is no longer essential, but for the settlers at Monkey River and Punta Negra it is the only visible sign of the outside world. For the inhabitants of Punta Gorda,
the Administrative capital, the arrival of the boats
is also a major event, and this is not surprising for it
is a moment of excitement in an otherwise tedious existence.
In comparison with most of Toledo, British Honduras is a
well developed, thriving land.

This might seem an unusual state of affairs, parti-
cularly so as the Latin American Report predicts that
"the greatest agricultural development (of British Hon-
duras) is expected through utilization of lands in the
southern Toledo District" and bases this upon the Land
Use Survey team report that more than half the 325,000
acres of land, "readily adaptable to farming" was located
in the Toledo District. Once again the pages of the
history books must be looked at to find some semblance
of an answer to this problem.

From the early days of the Colony, most of the wood-
cutting had gone on in the northern districts and Belize
District, because it was here that the logwood, which
grows in marshy areas, was found. When there came the
change-over to mahogany, these areas were the first used
once again, but the woodcutters were ambitious and in-
creasing in numbers, and the practices of replanting areas
were not used. Indeed they would not have been seen as
useful, as a mahogany tree takes at least 80 years to
reach maturity, and no Bayman would look this far into
the future.
"The accessible mahogany in the area between the Hondo and the Sibun, assigned to the settlers by the treaty of 1786, was soon cut out, for it was not practicable to go more than a short distance from a river down which the logs could be floated to the sea for export. Almost immediately the settlers started to go beyond the limits laid down by the treaty, and in the first years of the nineteenth century were expanding both further inland than before, and to new coastal areas south of the Sibun. By 1806 they were cutting on the Rio Grande, by 1814 they had reached the Moho, and a few years later the Sarstoon. The precise date at which the settlers began operations on the Sarstoon has never been ascertained, but it is clear that by 1826 this river was regarded as the southern boundary of the settlement. By this time the settlement was some three or four times the area of the 1786 concession, and it had reached its practicable limits of extension. Further expansion would have brought the settlers into occupied land, whereas the areas into which they had been moving had been, if inhabited at all, inhabited only by Amerindians completely out of touch with any Spanish colonial authority."

In 1856 the Dallas-Clarendon Treaty recognised British occupation to the Sarstoon, and in the Anglo-Guatemalan Treaty of 1859 this boundary was confirmed (at least in the minds of some) and the western boundary also fixed, from the Gracias a Dios falls towards Garbutts Falls on the Belize River.

These lines indicate two facts; that the primary reason for annexation was exploitation of forest resources, a fact much in keeping with those of the rest of the Colony; and secondly that the area was virtually uninhabited. Once again this must be kept in context, and it must be
pointed out that an area described as uninhabited within the Colony is truly sparsely settled. All the facts indicate that to all intents and purposes, nobody lived in this area.

This had not, once again, always been the case, for during an earlier period, the Maya Indians had had some areas at least of dense settlement within the Colony, and the ruins of Lubaantun near San Pedro Colombia attest to this fact. But, as before, these agriculturalists had been long gone, and probably a thousand years had elapsed between the two periods of exploitation.

Toledo District lies on the south-eastern slopes of the Maya Mountains, with the crestline of this range dividing the district from that of Cayo. The slopes of these mountains give rise to a number of waterways which have proved both a blessing and an unwelcome factor to the fortunes of the district. To the woodcutters, and to the agriculturalists, they are useful for transportation, communication, and a water supply, but for the administrator trying to 'open up' the area, they have proved a problem, as the cost of road building rises sharply when flooding has to be so consistently taken into account.

The 166 inches of rainfall around Punta Gorda, which decreases to 92 inches at Stann Creek Town, gives the majority of the rivers relatively regular regimes, although less water flows during the "dry" season.
Contact can be made through the Mountain Pine Ridge area, but this is no easy matter, and it is not altogether surprising that the means of access to this part of the Colony have been rather limited in the past, and probably will continue to be into at least the near future.

Settlement Patterns.

The result of this has been that in the past only two areas of settlement have grown up, one in the north of the district and one in the south, with a sparsely settled area in between. The former area has now more or less closed down, since the decline of pine and mahogany, as the settlement was mainly in the form of woodcutters' camps. This was part of the hinterland of the Mango Creek sawmill. There was never any large scale agricultural settlements in the north (once again using the term in its local context) except in the vicinity of Monkey River, about which more will be said later. This activity is also now all but finished, at least for the present time, although there are signs that agriculture may someday revive in this region.

In the southern part of Toledo District, there are two types of settlement. The first is of little significance in the area, and as the policies of the present government are pursued, its importance will continue to
decline. It consists of geographically isolated villages of Kekchi Indians who have entered the Colony from the neighbouring republic of Guatemala. Since their arrival these people have been almost continually on the move; using their system of shifting agriculture, but many of them are beginning to form permanent settlements, a policy encouraged by the government, the majority of these villages being in the less isolated areas near San Antonio and Punta Gorda. Once again, the urban industrial type of civilization is changing the ways of a less sophisticated native population.

Punta Gorda and San Antonio, respectively the administrative capital and the largest village in the Colony, form the ends of a belt of settlement that stretches, with a few exceptions, along the road which connects the two, and most of these settlers are East Indian in origin. At the seaward end, there is a predominance of Carib Indians and at the landward end, a predominance of Amerindians. San Antonio is itself a Mopanero Maya settlement, but it forms the focus for a number of partly Maya but chiefly Kekchi villages such as San Pedro, San Miguel, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo and Blue Creek village. In addition, nearer to Punta Gorda, along this axis, lies the village of Laguna, a newly settled community, which for reasons that will be explained later does not fit in with this pattern. Another settlement
which does not completely fit the pattern is the village of Barranco. This is a Carib village, de facto with only maritime connections, although de jure with a trail leading inland. It fits with the almost ubiquitous pattern of Carib villages in that it has such a maritime outlook, and can be regarded as similar to Punta Gorda in some ways.

It must be pointed out that this settlement pattern may, in itself, be very recent, for although there has been contact between San Antonio and Punta Gorda for many years, the "new road" that connects the two has only been in existence since 1938. It is not certain whether or not the pattern of East Indian settlement has been in existence for more than this period of time.

Cultural Groups.

Despite the countless natural barriers to settlement and successful exploitation, a wide variety of cultural groups have tried their luck in Toledo, and most of them have found it worthwhile to stay. In addition to the sprinkling of people of British and Spanish background, there are also important groups of Kekchi Indians, East Indians, Carib Indians, and a small but significant group of settlers who fled the U.S. during the Civil War Years. There are also some Mopanero Mayas, Chinese and Syrian merchants. In fact, practically the whole
spectrum of the population of British Honduras can be found in this remote and isolated district, and it is necessary, as well as interesting, to investigate the diverse reasons which lie behind their arrival, and the reasons for their location, wherever this might be possible.

The Caribs. The story of the Carib Indians has already been told in some detail, and their usual pattern of settlement has been described. In the Toledo District, they follow their normal maritime way of life, with villages at Barranco and Punta Gorda and other settlements at Punta Ycacos, Punta Negra, and to a small extent, at Monkey River.

Monkey River has been described as a Carib settlement and indeed its location would appear to support this supposition. Very likely the original settlers were Caribs, but today they no longer predominate. Since the latter part of the nineteenth Century, the area has been producing bananas for export, first for the Walize Fruit Company and later for the United Fruit Company, and Morris' account indicates the potential of this area for the production of bananas. But the boom did not last long, and as at Stann Creek, the plantations fell to the ravages of Panama disease, towards the end of the First World War. Unlike the Stann Creek area, the Toledo District has not recovered in this economic sphere. It is one of the many mysteries of British Honduras that Monkey River
has survived at all. Its inhabitants represent almost every cultural group, although there are only a few of the Carib Indians remaining, and these 500 or so people exist without a major source of income. Indeed the most important economic activity in the village is the repairing of outboard motors. These machines are brought from as far away as Guatemala to be put to rights. The village has no landward contact, although Morris advocated such a link back in 1883, and the sea passage is reckoned to be one of the most dangerous in the Colony: the only safe landing spot is within the river's shelter and this is made hazardous by a shifting sand bar. When an east wind blows only the most knowledgeable and skillful will try their luck. But the settlement survives, although it is dwindling in size, and such is the history of the Colony that it may even make a come-back.

Punta Ycacos was a coconut plantation in the times when Morris passed by, but this function is secondary now to that of subsistence; Punta Negra is in a similar position with apparently as limited a future. Only a few people still live in these isolated areas.

Barranco is one of the most important Carib settlements in the Colony, and justifies this position by being almost totally Carib in composition, and in being the nearest village to Guatemala, which fact leads to a certain freedom of movement across the border that is
rarely experienced elsewhere. The Caribs again follow
their traditional way of life, with the men looking mainly
towards the sea and the women looking chiefly inland.

This village is as large as Monkey River, and it
appears to be still growing in size, at least this is the
indication given by the population figures. It is not,
however, the impression given to the visitor. Where Monkey
River was dying, but in a respectable way, with tidiness
and pride, Barranco seems to be growing in an almost
sneaky fashion. Many of the houses and 'gardens' are
almost totally hidden by the dense undergrowth, and a
guide is a necessity if one wishes to avoid getting lost.
The high rainfall, fertility of the soil and lack of a
cash crop might be part of the answer, but to a large
extent, the lack of vigour of the inhabitants, coupled
with the propensity to consume local rum like it was
going out of style may also be contributory factors.
Romney has pointed out that the "Caribs seem to fall
neatly into one of two categories: the indolent or the
ambitious." This is nowhere more true than in the village
of Barranco; unfortunately here the latter category is
not apparent.

The other 'Carib village' of the district is the
administrative centre of Punta Gorda, which is in contrast
to the rest of the settlements of the district as it con-
veys an almost Belizean sense of bustle which is in sharp
contrast to the other Carib settlements and to the Indian villages of the area. "Punta Gorda, chief town of the Toledo district, was first settled by Carib immigrants from the Republic of Honduras in 1832, and, in 1845, a mission station was established there by Jesuit fathers which, according to the Handbook of British Honduras for 1927, gave a boost to the place and made it into a thriving settlement." Indeed, the first inter-town telephone was laid from Belize to Punta Gorda in 190317 indicating that the settlement held considerably more than its 300 inhabitants of 1861 or 400 of 1883 which were no mean amounts for the Colony in those times. But for some time the settlement has been dormant and it has not really been until the recent Government and International interest in the area that another important period of growth has been experienced. The town had 1789 people in 1961 and now has something over 2500 inhabitants.

There are probably more Caribs remaining in the town than many authors (Carr, Waddell) allow for, but the racial mixture of the country and of the district comes to a head in this settlement, which probably is the most picturesque and clean looking in the Colony, although as well as cleanliness the 170 inches of rain also contribute the usual British Honduras rusty "zinc" roofs. The Caribs are maintaining a steady eight per cent of the population, but the number of settlements which are of
One of the houses built by the Young family, a Confederate group from the Southern United States. This building is occupied by a descendent of the original settler. It was built around the turn of the century.
near pure Carib content is declining as the cosmopolitan nature of towns and villages becomes greater.

As in Belize City, Stann Creek and the northern provincial centres, there are a number of Chinese businessmen, who own "prosperous looking shops" and take care of a large part of the trade of the town. There are also a few Syrians who once again perform a similar function as merchant-men.

The Creoles of the area appear to have two major means of life support. They either work for the government, or they work in agriculture. The former group provide administrators, policemen, public works officials and workers, forestry employees, et., and the latter are mainly small farmers.

Immigrants from the Confederacy. During the mid-part of the nineteenth Century, there was great concern over the underdeveloped nature of the Colony, and the various British officials tried to bring greater benefits to this section of colonial America. Numerous attempts were made to promote trade, and some attempts were made to recruit immigrants into the country. But not all people were encouraged to immigrate, and the most popular choices varied from time to time as the government hoped it could pick people who would be of most use to the fledgling Colony. During the time of the American Civil War the
Governor tried to encourage the movement of freed American Slaves to the Colony, but this move was prevented by the paternalistic Union government of the time. More successful, although by no means entirely so, was a move to encourage white Confederates into settling in the Colony. Due to the land policies of the time, however, which put the price of land much too high, many of the potential immigrants were discouraged, but there were a number of Confederates who chose to make their new homes in British Honduras, and although a lot went back when life in their homeland had settled down, some remained. As Holdridge points out, "the history of the settlement is of great interest because, although it flourished for a time, its ultimate failure seems to have been due to economic and social factors rather than climatic ones." The Confederate settlement also has some interest because of its secondary effects upon the region. It was based on the land of Toledo and Company (from which the district gets its name) and the first settlement was to be found at Cattle Landing. In time it spread for two and a half miles north westward through the areas now known as Forest Home, Fairview and Rancho, following an abandoned mahogany cutters' trail, which led back from the shore. The original houses on the estates had been crude thatched buildings not particularly different from those used by the Caribs and Negroes, but the settlers in time built large houses, of the type they knew from their homeland,
and some of these remain today. They also tried to cultivate the crops they knew, such as cotton, but here they were unsuccessful. They turned to bananas, amongst other crops, before finding their most profitable line -- sugar production. Indeed sugar was as important here as in the north for some time, until the area around Corozal became a larger-scale more efficient producer, and production in Toledo declined to domestic (rum-producing) proportions. The growth of sugar was made possible by the use of East Indian labourers. "The settlers were almost all Methodists and were all from the former Confederacy. . . . The settlers had an aversion to the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol that amounted almost to fanaticism; and their determination that no colour mixture should come about among them approaches the same category."  
They were successful in both aims. With regard to the former aim, when the European beet-sugar production policies came into force in the latter part of the nineteenth Century, these settlers had nothing to fall back upon. It may be a reflection upon the morals of the settlers of Corozal District, or a reflection upon their canniness, for when the same trouble hit them, they at least had a well established local distilling industry to fall back upon, and this cushioned, at least in part, the economic blow, and enabled the sugar industry to continue at a much greater scale, a fact which may have had some effect at a later date when the north was chosen over the south
as the location of the factory. Such prohibitionist values were evidently changed, at least by some, at a later date, for at the present time, there are two rum distilleries in the Toledo District. One is run by a Portuguese family on the old Eldridge estate in the Rancho area, and the other is on the Young's estate at Fairview. The racial policies of their forebears was still strong, and although they had to use coloured labourers, they did not mix with the rest of the inhabitants.

"Because of the settlers' fear of absorption it became the custom to send the children to the United States for education, not, however, at school age, but at adolescence. Thus the supply of white labour was cut off at its source and, at the same time, increased coloured employment made necessary. The growth of the coloured settlement at Punta Gorda was ensured, and the stagnation of the white settlement at Toledo became inevitable." In fact if Clegern is right, the hey-day had not lasted for long: "By June 1869 . . . the United States commercial agent reported that Southern immigration to British Honduras, which had averaged fifty immigrants per month for the years 1867-69, had ceased. At this point more were returning to the United States than were arriving." This condition of stagnation has now reached the stage of there only being one family in permanent residence (the Youngs) and one in temporary residence (the Pearces)
The East Indians live along the roadside, often in poor quality housing, but with a lot of personal space for each family. The living quarters are in the middle-ground. The other buildings are cooking and storage spaces.
and little evidence remains of this period of settlement which might have done so much more good for the country, had it been given the right amount of encouragement and support in its earlier stages. But despite their short stay, and despite their anonymity amongst the present Toledo community, this group had some important effects, the most important of which concerned the East Indians. Although represented in other districts, notably the north, the East Indian group is most distinct in the Toledo area.

East Indian settlers. They arrived in the country during the middle of the nineteenth Century, their date of arrival being variously given as 1858, the 1860's and 1872. The reasons given for their settling so far from their homeland are just as varied, and the overall impression is that there has been more than one stage of settlement. Caiger takes his story from some entries in the Archives which indicate that "after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny (in India), Parliament transported 1000 Sepoy mutineers with their wives and families to the Colony (1858), where many hundreds of their descendents still remain."25 Waddell's version might fit well with this, as although he does not speculate as to their origins he states that "most of the East Indians are descended from those settled in the Toledo District by American sugar-planters in the 1860's."26
cation which documents their entry as 1872 does not seem so well founded.27

Whatever and whenever their origins, it is most certain that the Confederate refugees were the raison d'être for the East Indians, at least in the Toledo District. Today, however, the situation is different, as only a little sugar is grown, mostly to be used in the rum distilleries of the district. Many of the East Indians work on their own land, some work for the government, and others work at the Government Rice Station. The main axis of their settlement runs from Cattle Landing to Rancho, but there are also many to be found on the road to Toledo, at the settlements of Mafredi, Crique Trosa, Crique Arena, The Dump, Crique Cacao, and Hacinto, as well as in more scattered farmsteads along the highway to San Antonio.

They form a very distinct cultural group in the area, although intermarriage is by no means unknown. Many of these people still feel a great sense of identity with their homeland, although they do not speak any of the languages of the Indian sub-continent, appear to hold no similar religious beliefs to the people from their homeland, and apparently have no form of caste system in their community. Many have a desire to at least visit their homeland, although it is beyond the means of the vast majority of the group.
San Antonio, Toledo District, the largest village in the country. This picture is atypical, as most of the 220 buildings are thatched huts.
The Amerindian Groups. There are two groups of Mayan Indians in this part of the Colony. Most of these are Kekchi Maya, but there are some Mopanero Maya. This latter group are mostly to be found in the village of San Antonio (reputedly the largest village in the country), and in closely neighbouring settlements. San Antonio was founded by Indians who moved southwards from Cayo District, and its date of first settlement is given as 1883 (Caiger) and 1891 (Waddell). This confusion may have arisen as the original settlers lived at the village now called Pueblo Viejo, but identified as San Antonio Viejo on older maps, and still containing a high proportion of Mopanero Mayas. They came from the town of Dolores and moved through San Luis (in the Mountain Pine Ridge area of the Colony) reputedly bringing religious artifacts from their hometown church. After a skirmish over possession of these artifacts with their erstwhile neighbours they were happy to call upon the British for protection and at this stage of its existence the colonial government was quite content to help these settlers. Whatever the true account of their origins, it is significant that San Antonio (Nuevo?) is almost totally Mopanero in its composition; the villages of Pueblo Viejo and San Pedro Colombia have mixed populations, but the rest of the Indian villages are almost totally Kekchi. Although the way of life of San Antonio, San Pedro Colombia, and one or two other villages is generally more cosmopolitan than that of their neigh-
Kekchi Indians at Laguna village, building a hut, using traditional methods and collective labour. This building was to be a Cabildo; the Alcalde's (headman's) courtroom and a public meeting place. They use bushwood often brought several miles and thatch the roof with cohune palm.
bours, in essence there is not too much divergence, and what may be said for one group, generally applies to the other. This is even true for the Kekchi who are cut off in the south west corner of the Colony, although some reservations must be made here.

The Kekchi Maya come "originally from a village near Coban, in the southern foothills of Guatemala, (and) they began to settle in the south-west corner of British Honduras some 60-70 years ago. They spread out thinly, establishing villages more to the east and north until they met the fringe of the Carib settlements on the coast and the Mopan Maya in the north." It is not certain why they came from Guatemala, and although their natural propensity to wander may have been a contributory factor, it is likely that restrictive Guatemalan practices also had their effect upon these rural decision makers. "Much of the Kekchi migration has been very recent, and it is probable that several hundreds have come across the border" in recent years.

The Colony has made great efforts in the past few years to assimilate these Indians, both as a social and a political measure, for they might be possible future providers of agricultural produce to the rest of the country as well as providing a better claim for the Colony to this area of land, in its dispute with Guatemala. The possible consequences of such an assimilation process, as well as
(Lxx) A Kekchi hut in Toledo District. The walls are not air-tight but are apparently water-proof. The overhanging roof greatly adds to the weatherproofing at the hut.
the present way of life have been shown by Carr, and it remains to bring out a few further details of the district.

The assimilation process has to a large extent been successful in the northern part of the "Kekchi Country," which is that area as far south as the villages of Pueblo Viejo and Blue Creek. The numerous inhabitants of this belt of villages now have fairly good road access to San Antonio and Punta Gorda, for at least part of the year. This has been a very recent phenomenon, however, and the pre-contact habits of the natives are still in evidence, particularly their shyness. In the milpa clearing and burning season it is possible to drive through an apparently deserted set of villages: the men are out at work, and the women hide in the huts when they hear the engine of the approaching vehicle. This situation is even more true for the more isolated villages such as San Jose and Pueblo Viejo than it is for San Antonio and San Pedro Colombia. A mixed response is found at such villages, and also at the village of Laguna. This settlement, about fourteen miles from Punta Gorda but only about three from the main road, was promoted by the government to help settle the wandering Kekchi. Some of its inhabitants come from the nearby Indian villages such as San Miguel, but many also come from those further south, such as Crique Sarco, and a few directly from Guatemala.
Passing through the village of Blue Creek, there is a new road which the government is building to open up those areas of the country which are at present inaccessible to all but those on foot or in a canoe, except in very exceptional years. Crique Sarco used to be the 'capital' of this region, and to a great extent it has retained this function today, but on a greatly reduced scale. It is the rapid de-population of this already underpopulated region that has led to the renewed vigour on the part of the government. At the height of the woodcutting era, it was possible to travel throughout this region by track, and even into parts of Guatemala, but this has been impossible for some time now, although the government hopes to rectify this situation in the future. Thus, in one sense at least, they are turning the clock back.

The effects of civilisation upon the Indians of Toledo have not been so great as elsewhere in the country, despite the appointment of a Kekchi Liaison Officer to live among them. The Land Use Survey indicates, however, that the Kekchi "are progressive farmers, quick to see and adopt useful ideas," and to a large extent this is true. The new accessibility to market has led to the marketing by the villages of surpluses which were before either non-existent or would have gone to waste. Their adaptability is also shown in the proud boast of the Agricultural Ministry that many of the Indians are using
weedkillers in their fields. To a certain extent this is true, although usually only the rice fields are felt to be worthy of such treatment.

The opening up of the area has had other notable effects, such as a change in health standards. As late as 1960, the nurse visited most villages only once a year, and some undoubtedly on a less frequent basis. This situation has now been changed, partly by the better roads, and partly by the better medical services, and also partly by the northward movement of many of the once more isolated Indians. In any case, most of the Indians of the district can now see a medical officer at least once a month. The new hospital at Punta Gorda has also been of great help to the district in this respect.

Toledo District is at last sharing in the changes that are coming to the country, indeed if the propaganda is to be believed, it will get more than its share in the years to come. It is to be hoped that this increased influence of urban industrial civilisation continues to be of help to the Kekchi, one of the least worldly Indian groups to be found in Central America today.

Southern Housing.

The housing styles to be found in the Deep South do not show all the signs of the isolation which has been
(Lxxi) The houses of the Caribs in Punta Gorda vary in style, but a large number are made of pimento wood and have thatch roofs. The roof style in the south of the Colony is very different to that of the north.
the story of Toledo District, but do reflect some aspects of this factor.

There are three types of housing in the district, which can be classified on an almost areal basis as coastal, middle, and interior styles, although there is some overlap. The 'interior' style is that of the Amerindians, and this is very different from the native styles of the centre and north of the Colony. The roofs are of thatch, but in Toledo the overhangs are greater, and the roof comes nearer to the ground. The walls of the houses are made of split wood, roughly joined together, but not plastered as in the north. As the siding used is made of rough, unfinished wood, these dwellings are by no means airtight. The roof might be taken as an adaption to the wetter climate, especially as the Mopanero Mayans also use this method of construction. The walls would appear to indicate that the inhabitants prefer to keep cool at all times, even if this means that at times the houses are much more draughty than those of the north. It might be a shortage of white marl that prevents the Indians from obtaining a similar finish to their northern relatives, but it seems unlikely that there is no material present in the district that would adequately fill the gaps in the walls.

The coastal styles are those which are similar to Belize, with zinc roofs and well-made board walls. Some
A Carib house in Punta Gorda, this shows considerable expertise in construction, and features of both Indian and 'Belizean' character. The stilts are popular even on houses of 'native' style, and the roof is typically southern.
of these houses are found elsewhere in the district, but they are found mostly in Punta Gorda, Barrancho, and Monkey River. In addition to this type of house, there are a number of thatched huts, with similar roofs to those of the Amerindians' houses, but with walls which are made of wild cane or palmetos wood. In Punta Gorda, three quarters of the houses are made in Belize-type architectural styles, and nearly sixty per cent of these board buildings are on stilts. In Barrancho, where only thirty per cent of the houses are built in Belizean style, two thirds of these are on stilts. In Monkey River, connected to Belize City for many years by the banana trade, all but eight buildings out of 112 are to be found on posts, and there is no thatched housing in the town. Once again the strength of the connection between Belize City and the outlying areas seems to be critical in the style of housing.

The housing of the East Indians is a compromise between the two types already described. Most of the houses between the Toledo Rice Station and Punta Gorda, that is the houses which are closest geographically to the coast, are also closest architecturally, usually having zinc roofs, and board walls. These walls are different from those of Punta Gorda, however, and are more reminiscent of those to be found at Mango Creek. The planks are vertical, and have smaller strips of wood tacked over the gaps. This
is partly a reflection of the fact that the local sawmills do not produce finished wood, and partly a reflection of the economic status of the early East Indians, but many of these people are now quite wealthy, and still build their houses in this style, and thus there seems to have been at least some cultural adaption involved. In the villages which are on the stretch of road from the Toledo Rice Station to San Antonio, the houses are mostly made of thatch and rough boards, in a similar way to those of the Amerindians, but the board houses which are in existence are invariably made in the same style as those of the other East Indian dwellings, nearer to Punta Gorda.

Place Names in the Deep South.

The place names of the area contribute little to the story already told for other parts of the Colony. In the north there are the woodcutters' camps' names, such as Logans Bank and Teakettle, and in the south the Indian villages reflect their Catholic heritage. The settlements in the extreme south occasionally have names of Kekchi derivation, such as Otoxha and Xpicilha, but also reflect the British influence in Graham Creek. The settlements begun by the Americans near Punta Gorda reflect their background, but without secondary knowledge would be indistinguishable from those named by the British. Monkey River is named because "all species of the tribe haunt
its banks. . . . "35 the howls of the animals being "demoniacal" and sufficient to scare anyone "hearing them for the first time, in the middle of the night." Barranco is a Spanish word meaning 'gully'. The village of Barranco nestles on a cliff-edge and some of the original settlers were Spanish-speaking.

Toledo District is the least developed of all the areas in the Colony, and the isolation which caused this lack of development is reflected in its cultural and physical landscapes. The schemes at present in hand will bring many changes to the district in the future, if they come to fruition, but at present the area is still the Deep South of the Colony.
NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

1. This road was opened in 1954.

2. Romney, op. cit., p. 118.

3. Ibid., p. 119.

4. The railway was opened in 1908. For a full account of the problems involved in its construction, see Swayne, op. cit., pp. 171-172.


8. Ibid., p. 118.

9. Romney, op. cit., p. 35.


15. Carr and Thorpe, op. cit., p. 52. Monkey River today contains only one or two Carib families. The majority of the population consists of Creoles and East Indians. An East Indian is current head of the village council.

16. Ibid., p. 119.

17. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 62.


19. Carr and Thorpe, op. cit., p. 120.

20. Cleghern, op. cit., p. 38 et seq.

Other early estates in this Toledo settlement area were called Refuge, Mount Hope, Mount Royal, Forest House and Forest Cottage. Most of these names have now dropped out of usage, although either of the latter two may refer to the present name of Forest Home. See also Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

24 Clegern, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
27 H.M.S.O., *op. cit.*, #61, p. 219.
30 Waddell, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
32 Waddell, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
33 Carr and Thorpe, *op. cit.*, Chapter 12.
34 Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
35 Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
EPILOGUE

British Honduras is a Colony which was born by accident, for it was only one of numerous settlements of the British along this stretch of the Central American coast. In time, however, all the others were whittled away by the military action of the Spanish, or the diplomatic action of the British, and as Imperial influence elsewhere in the western Caribbean waned, in the Belize area it grew. The motto on the Arms of the Colony is "sub umbra floreo," "when things are at their blackest, I am at my best," and the Belizeans have most certainly lived up to this saying. They have seen the collapse of most of their industries, and the destruction of most of their settlements, only to witness the repair of the buildings and the growth of new economic development.

Today the Colony is an anachronism within its geographical area. It is the only English-speaking nation on the Central American mainland, and even its native Spanish and Mayan speakers know a few words of the creolized language. And yet the Spanish influences, and the Amerindian influences within the Colony are so great that it cannot be called part of the Caribbean. There are other settlements in the Western Caribbean which show some aspects of a similar developmental pattern as is typified in
British Honduras. But only on the Mosquito Coast was the
cultural mixture as great as in the Colony, and here the
length of British influence, and its importance, was con-
siderably less. Even in such comparable areas, the British
influence is anachronistic, more so in fact than within
British Honduras.

It is by no means easy to analyze the character and
personality of such a country. A number of authors have
attempted to do this with the neighbours of British Hon-
duras, but by the very nature of the Colony their results
cannot be transposed except in partial form. Sauer has
looked at the personality of Mexico, but his work reveals
the isolation of the Caribbean coastlands, and particularly
the area of the Yucatan. The personality of British Hon-
duras has been built in part by Mexican influence, but it
is as true to say that the personality of the south-eastern
Yucatan has been built by Belizean influence. The process
has been a reciprocal one.

Sauer feels that the personality of "The South" of
Mexico "still shows its aboriginal fundament of patient,
steady toil done by apt craftsmen, who can create things
of remarkable beauty if they have the chance." Although
to a great extent this conclusion could also be reached
of the people of British Honduras, it is the "sociocultural
diversity" of the country which is its most striking
feature. Lowenthal's numerous works on the islands of the
Caribbean have contributed more to the analysis of the Colony, because the social structure of the latter area is much more akin to that of the islands than it is to that of the neighbouring mainland areas.  

The people of British Honduras mostly regard themselves as British Hondurans, and not as West Indians, or Central Americans. An association with the Colony is very likely the broadest allegiance they know, and yet within its boundaries there is a considerable amount of pluralistic circumstance.  

The country possesses a greater quantity of diverse cultural elements than most, and the impact of this is more striking when an allowance is made for the very small total population. These groups are all living in the Colony because they find it the most convenient place to follow their way of life, and for most of these people it is a home to which they owe fervent loyalty. Despite numerous entreaties and minor expeditionary forces from Guatemala, the people show no inclination to join this country, and even less desire to unite with Mexico. The government and many of the people want independence from Britain, and are pursuing this end by both overt and hidden means, and yet it is likely that a large number of the inhabitants of the country, particularly the older generations who remember closer imperial ties, are not fully convinced by the prospects of an independent existence.
Despite, however, the geographical setting of the Colony within the mainland of Central America, it cannot be simply considered as a Caribbean society. Parsons has demonstrated the cultural particularism of the many English speaking settlements of the Western Caribbean, and it is within this context of isolation that British Honduras must ultimately fall. There has been sporadic but continued contact between Belize and its mainland and Caribbean neighbours, but this has never engendered such cultural unity as exists between the British footholds in Central America. Parsons plays down the part played by Belize in the development of cultural persistence amongst these far-flung, long forgotten outposts of British Imperialism, but in reality the Colony has in many ways been the spiritual leader of them all. When danger threatened, these settlements best showed their unity, and one always welcomed the refugees from another. Since the battle of St. George's Cay Belize has always been the stabilizing influence, the last refuge in times of trouble, and the British settlers in other parts of the Western Caribbean have not been slow to take advantage of this state of affairs. British Honduras in some ways has a character of its own; in some ways its personality is that of a Caribbean island; but in most ways it is an anachronism like its English-speaking neighbours, created largely by accident, "and preserved through isolation and the persistence of the human spirit."
The cultural groups have taken advantage of their environments in very different ways, effectively demonstrating the possibilities of pluralism within a society. As was pointed out above (p. 17), within the Colony there is a considerable range and diversity of landscapes. The inhabitants of the country have taken advantage of these landscapes to demonstrate and maintain their cultural identities. The result has been that to a great extent the cultural groups in the Colony can be compartmentalized on a geographical as well as a cultural basis. It is only in recent years that there has been a significant breakup of this regional pattern.

The Mayans in the north have retained their language and customs despite a radical change in their basic way of life. Their villages, houses, and family spaces (such as the cooking area and its immediate neighbourhood) have changed little as of yet, and even the villages most integrated into the industrial economy have retained their cultural integrity.

The Mestizos, by their very origins, are a much more integrated group, within the more urban context of the Colony than are the Mayan Indians. This greater degree of integration is reflected in the higher proportions of Mestizos in the towns and larger villages, and in the admin-
istrative and service jobs. Their different heritage is thus reflected in both social and geographical patterns.

The Creoles have in many ways maintained their identity, but in many other ways, by the very nature of their culture, have changed the most. The Creole culture is that which has had its origins in British Honduras, and has grown from a number of very different cultures into one distinct way of life. It is still, however, not very certain what the determinants of this are, for the chief distinguishing feature of the Creole appears to be that he is different from his neighbours. The Creole culture is undergoing a process of formation rather than one of change.

The Mennonites have maintained their identity, by a series of long-range moves and protective covenants, and by their very different customs and individual language. They have, as much as any of the cultural groups, stamped their identity onto the landscape, in distinctive forms of field pattern, settlement morphology and house type, as well as partially distinctive crop and livestock holdings. It seems likely that if their identity were threatened, as it was in Russia, Canada, and Mexico before, many of them would move on to pastures anew, if anywhere more isolated could be found. Such an event would undoubtedly be a great loss to the new Belize.

The Kekchi Indians have also protected their heritage
to a great extent, but much of this protection has been
due to isolation, and those members of this group which
have come into persistent contact with the more urbanized
world have shown no great desire to remain apart. Although
the Kekchi villages, and agricultural mode of life, still
demonstrate a degree of difference which is found nowhere
in the Colony, their farming practices (e.g., the use of
fertilizers) marketing systems, and cultural patterns are
increasingly showing the influence of the 'outside world'.

This is also true of the Carib Indians, only in their
case the process of change has gone much farther, and they
have been much more integrated, albeit with a lack of
willingness on their part, with Belizean society as a whole,
with a consequent loss of some of their Carib identity.
The East Indians have also experienced cultural change.
To the north of the Colony they are virtually indistinguish-
able in house types, settlement patterns, and even cultural
practices from their neighbours, and in the South the iden-
tity of the group has only been preserved by isolation.
Even here the identity is barely recognisable as East Indian,
for the dominant features and cultural norms of East Indian
society have been forgotten.

The minority groups such as the Chinese and the Syrians,
have left no mark upon the landscape, and the Jamaicans
have left little more than a propensity to farm,13 and this
is by no means an obvious cultural feature.
A number of authors have spoken of the beginnings of an ethnic group of British Hondurans, and whilst on some levels this might be desirable, and good for the country, there are some negative aspects to the proposition. For in a number of ways it is the cultural pluralism of today, as much as the history of the Colony, which contributes to the unique character of the country. The place names reflect this diversity to some extent, but there are important exceptions, for often historical events named a location before the coming of the present inhabitants, who did not bother to change the nomenclature.

House types are perhaps a better index. Although there are a number of styles which are unique to one cultural group, there are certain features which recur throughout the country and which might truly be termed Belizean. Thus a number of photographs might be taken in Punta Gorda which would be nearly identical to other pictures from the other administrative towns and many of the villages. Even in Benque Viejo del Carmen, the houses made of boards are styled in a similar way to those found in many other parts of the country. The most distinctive styles of Indian housing are still persisting, but even in the villages with most tradition and the greatest isolation, the Belizean houses are beginning to appear. Stores and Post Offices and Police Stations usually start the trend,
with the private dwellings following soon after. If house types are any indication of cultural trends, then a race of British Hondurans might indeed be emerging. There is still much diversity within the architecture of the Colony, and some of this is on a cultural basis, but the house styles that are becoming most popular are very different from those which can be found in the neighbouring Republics. It is to be hoped that any British Honduran feeling which arises will transcend the cultural and regional divisions which are presently so important within the Colony, whilst at the same time retaining the identities of the constituent cultural groups.

What happens to the Colony in future years will have a great bearing upon its culture. If historical precedents are followed it will become an independent nation, but its economy is such that for a number of years it will be dependent upon hand-outs from richer nations. In the past the chief benefactor has been Great Britain. In the future it seems likely that it will be the U.S.A. It is to be hoped that the Colony's phoenix-like qualities, immortalised in its motto, will enable it to be soon rid of such economic problems. It is appropriate to repeat the Creole saying, "Time longer dan rope," the Belizeans are quite content to wait for things to get better.

Huxley felt that British Honduras was the end of the
earth in 1936, and in 1969 his statement still has a ring of validity, for in much of the Colony, the landscape is indeed desolate and ill used and forbidding. But it is easy to be scathing about underdeveloped countries, without seeing their virtues. He saw the country as a small and insignificant nation, and he was right about its size; but it is insignificant only to outsiders who do not get to know it. To its inhabitants and people who know it longer, it is something more than insignificant. To paraphrase Leas' comments of one hundred years ago, people who visit the country may leave it sadder and poorer than when they arrived, but "many of them profess to being quite reconstructed. Some are but will not admit it. I think a residence of a year or two on this coast well calculated to produce that effect." Even an end of the earth has some use in life, and few people pass through British Honduras without it having had an effect upon them. This would not be a bad epitaph for any place.
NOTES ON THE EPILOGUE


3 Sauer, op. cit., p. 117.


6 See the Introduction to this work.

7 Lowenthal, D., The Range and Variation of Caribbean Societies, p. 188.

8 Cain, Ernest E., Cyclone "Hattie" (Ilfracombe, Devon: Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1963), closing chapters.

9 Lowenthal, D., The Range and Variation of Caribbean Societies, p. 188 (paraphrase of).


11 Ibid., p. 9, p. 11.

12 Ibid., p. 15.

13 Parsons, op. cit., p. 12.

14 See footnote 48, Chapter Three.

15 Leas C.A. (U.S. Commercial Agent) to Seward, F.W. (Assistant Secretary of State), April 10, 1863. Quoted in Clegern, op. cit., p. 44.
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APPENDICES
Appendix I

Census Populations 1810 - 1969 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>3,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>4,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>5,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>4,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>4,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>2,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>25,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>24,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>27,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>31,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>37,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>40,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>45,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>51,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>59,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>90,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969*</td>
<td>118,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* author's estimate
### Appendix II

**Populations of Towns and Districts in British Honduras**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1946*</th>
<th>1960*</th>
<th>1969 (author's estimate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belize City</td>
<td>21,886</td>
<td>32,867</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Side</td>
<td>n.a.**</td>
<td>19,188</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Side</td>
<td>n.a.**</td>
<td>13,679</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize Rural</td>
<td>4,895</td>
<td>7,217</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corozal Town</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>3,171</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corozal Rural</td>
<td>4,583</td>
<td>6,559</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Walk Town</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>2,157</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Walk Rural</td>
<td>4,125</td>
<td>8,149</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayo Town***</td>
<td>1,548</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benque Viejo Town</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>1,607</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayo Rural</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>8,267</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek Town</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>5,287</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek Rural</td>
<td>2,959</td>
<td>5,619</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Gorda Town</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo Rural</td>
<td>5,028</td>
<td>5,926</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>59,220</td>
<td>90,343</td>
<td>118,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Taken from Census figures

** n.a. - not available

*** consists of San Ignacio and Santa Elena towns.
### Density of Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population 1960</th>
<th>Area (sq. m.)</th>
<th>Density (per sq.m.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>40,210</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>1,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corozal</td>
<td>9,791</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Walk</td>
<td>10,332</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek</td>
<td>10,635</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>7,686</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayo</td>
<td>11,689</td>
<td>12.95</td>
<td>2,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90,343</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,867</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number and Proportion of Persons of Each Race* (1946 Census) **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Proportion of Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>10,030</td>
<td>16.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2,329</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22,693</td>
<td>38.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiatic:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indian</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carib</td>
<td>4,112</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed***</td>
<td>18,360</td>
<td>31.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race not stated</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To these groups must now be added the Mennonites, who constitute the greatest single influx of a racial group into the population since 1946.

** These figures were not available in the 1960 census.

*** This classification is most unsatisfactory as it includes both Creoles and Mestizos; two very distinct cultural groups.
### Urban and Rural Proportions of Each Race (1946 Census)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Belize</th>
<th>Other Towns</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiatic:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indian</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carib</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>34.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed**</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>44.2</td>
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</table>

* These figures were not available in the 1960 census.

** See note under Appendix IV.
## Appendix VI

### Distribution of House-type Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of buildings sampled</th>
<th>Sample as % of total no. of buildings (est.)</th>
<th>% of buildings with zinc roofs (est.)</th>
<th>% of buildings with thatch roofs (est.)</th>
<th>% of zinc-roof-and-board siding buildings with stilts of 12 in. or more in. (est.)</th>
<th>% of buildings on ground of less than 12 in. (est.)</th>
<th>% of buildings with shutters (est.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belize City</td>
<td>5283</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51.50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>48.00</td>
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<td>South Side</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>49.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize Rural</td>
<td>1319</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>87.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>99.85</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<td>75.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<td>90.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>63.00</td>
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<td>35.00</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
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<td>77.50</td>
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<td>93.00</td>
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<td>25.00</td>
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<td>73.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>33.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Figures are given on a City, Town, and District basis only, and conceal internal differences within these areas.

2. Estimates are based upon field work conducted by the author.
### Appendix VII

**Deaths due to Hurricane Hattie**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belize City</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belize Rural</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soldier Cay</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calabash Cay</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull Cay</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turneffe and Berry Cay</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cay Corker</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nthrn Cays</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauger Cay</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rendezvous Cay</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gales Pt.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Creek Lagoon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cay Bokel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek Town</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek Rural</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sittee River</td>
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<td>Hopkins</td>
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<td>Mullins River</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair Athol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayo District</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From pp. 52-55 of *Cyclone "Hattie"*, Ernest E. Cain."