

**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD DIARIES OF  
SYLVANUS GRISWOLD MORLEY:  
THE SPY YEARS, 1917–1918**

*The Morley Diary Project, Volume II*

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## PREFACE

In the mid 1980s, when we decided to undertake the editing and publication of the diaries of Sylvanus Morley, we realized the project would be monumental in scope. Over the course of his career, Morley wrote tens of thousands of pages of diary and field notes covering almost every year of the first half of the twentieth century. When we first launched the Morley Diary Project, we soon realized that the undertaking was too large for publication methods of the era: it would have been impossible to find a publisher willing to commit to not just multiple volumes, but multiple decades of commitment. Now, much later, the internet, unknown and unimagined back in those dark ages of primitive technology, offers us the opportunity to rekindle our fire and proceed with the project in the knowledge that there were online opportunities to present our work. Earlier this year, Joel Skidmore of Mesoweb.com accepted our first volume, *The Archaeological Field Diaries of Sylvanus Griswold Morley, 1914-1916* (Rice and Ward 2021) and was encouraging in his commitment to publish our project on an ongoing basis. Our progress on the diaries reminds one of the great composer Johannes Brahms and his decades-long struggle to compose his first symphony: after years of delay his great Symphony No. 1 (Op. 68) was premiered to universal acclaim. Just a short time later he followed with a quickly finished Symphony No. 2 (Op. 73), and he was off and running. Similarly, although our first volume of the Morley Diaries took decades to bring to completion, we are now able to present the second volume covering the years 1917-1918 just a few months after the first. This quick turn-around was partly possible because it was our original intention to include 1917 in our first volume, but the sheer size of the text, and its content, suggested that it be incorporated into the second volume along with 1918.

The question of how much introductory material should be included in this second volume presented us with a challenge. Some readers interested in particular topics unique to 1917-1918 may not wish to go to Volume 1 to read basic foundational materials, such as an outline of Morley's career and his place in the history of Maya studies, the role of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in Mesoamerican studies, the basics of Maya calendrics, etc. And yet, to replicate all of this information in a second volume (and in future volumes to come) would not be an ideal solution. In lieu of repeating ourselves, we encourage readers to consult Part One of our 1914-1916 volume, which covers the following topics (taken from the table of contents):

1. The life and career of Sylvanus Griswold Morley
2. The Carnegie Institution and Early Maya Archaeology I: Conflicts
3. The Carnegie Institution and Early Maya Archaeology II: Fieldwork
4. Morley and Carnegie in Historical Perspective
5. Counting: Bar-and-Dot Numbers
6. Two Main Calendars
7. The Long Count
8. The Calendar Correlation problem.

Having covered more general information in our earlier volume, the introductory materials we present for 1917-1918 deal specifically with topics related to the diaries of these two years.

The editing of the 1917-1918 diaries presented challenges different from the diaries of 1914-1916, specifically in terms of content. Whereas most of Morley's diaries directly touch upon archaeology, those of 1917 in particular only peripherally deal with such matters. As is discussed in Chapter 1, Morley's career took a sidestep during World War I when he joined the Office of Naval Intelligence and organized an espionage ring to keep tabs on any German activities in Central America. Rather than visits to archaeological sites, Morley spent most of his time traveling along the coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua, reporting on the people, places, and things he observed. As we began the edit of 1917 we considered including only the few pages that focused on archaeology—after all, our project is under the rubric “The *Archaeological* Field Diaries of Sylvanus G. Morley,” emphasis added. We soon realized, however, that his travelogue-like observations of Central America were so rich in content that excluding them was not an option. For example, his eyewitness accounts of the historic earthquakes in Guatemala City are among the few first-hand accounts available, and his detailed descriptions of the Bay Islands and the Caribbean and Mosquito Coasts offer rare snapshots of these areas during the heyday of fruit company dominance. In the former, one is taken aback by the heartbreak of refugees in the aftermath of a massive natural disaster, and in the latter the grinding poverty and primitive living conditions of the inhabitants of the small islands and coastal settlements paint a vivid picture of life at the edge of modern civilization in the early years of the twentieth century.

In 1918, Morley, still employed as a spy, was able to conduct archaeological work along the wild coast of Quintana Roo, on the eastern side of the Yucatan Peninsula, and in central Yucatan state in the north. Sadly, the diary for 1918 ends after his Quintana Roo trip, but we have been able to piece together the outlines of his visits to the Yucatan sites from other sources (see Chapter 29).

In short, Morley's diaries for this period, though different in character from his entries in earlier and later years, are both interesting and insightful and, like listening to a Brahms symphony, we have enjoyed them.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of numerous individuals in helping us with this project at various stages, particularly Victoria Swerdlow, of the Tozzer Library at the Peabody Museum, who oversaw copying of the diaries and mailing them to us, and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, then-Director of the Peabody Museum, for permission to publish the diaries. At the Peabody Museum, Cynthia Mackey has been especially gracious in promptly handling our numerous image requests. Paul Sutherland at the American Philosophical Society has been instrumental in providing copies of the typescript versions of Morley's diaries held in their collection. We appreciate the assistance of Meghan Finch of the Detroit Institute of Arts, who helped us secure permission to publish the several John Held Jr. watercolors held in their collection.

Our thanks also go to Rosemary Joyce, who provided analysis of the artwork on several of the pottery illustrations made by the artist John Held Jr. Greg Smith kindly provided information

on Morley's brief 1918 visit to Ichmul de Morley.

Keith Merwin of the Institute of Maya Studies (and a descendant of archaeologist Raymond Merwin) kindly worked with us to determine if Merwin had visited Tulum before Morley's visit and shared insights into Merwin's travels along the Quintana Roo coast.

Special thanks to Don Rice for assistance with illustrations and preparation of the numerous maps that appear in these pages.

Finally, we thank Joel Skidmore of Mesoweb.com, our publisher. We are grateful for his encouragement and support, which have made the continuation of this project possible.



Morley's official ONI photograph taken in Spring, 1917.

# PART I. INTRODUCTION AND THE 1917 DIARY

## CHAPTER 1

### MORLEY IN 1917

Sylvanus Griswold Morley (1883–1948) was an intrepid and colorful Maya archaeologist and explorer in the first half of the twentieth-century. Harvard-educated but lacking a doctoral degree, he worked for the prestigious Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) for most of his career<sup>1</sup> Braving (and cursing) the heat, insects, rains, mules, muddy trails, and other aggravating features of the Central American rainforests, he recorded places he visited, the people he met, and the ups and downs of his travels in daily journal entries. At first, for example in 1914, these entries were only terse jottings about times and places—and especially food (Rice and Ward 2021: part II). Over time, however, as Morley became enamored of the idea of publishing his accounts, his writing changed. The entries evolved from the strictly archaeological—brief descriptions and maps of sites and their carved monuments—and became long, verbose, and with more detail about anything and everything that captured his interest (still food), sometimes several pages per day. The prose style also changed, becoming self-conscious and pretentious, after the manner of the times. The Spanglish virtually disappeared.

These stylistic changes are particularly evident in Morley’s late 1917 and 1918 field diaries, which are published here for the first time. The pages are filled with observations less about archaeology and inscriptions, and more about the people and situations he encountered during his travels, sharply contrasting with his journals from earlier and later years. This was partly because he did little archaeology during this period (almost none in 1917), his time being devoted to his espionage duties for the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) as part of the U.S. effort in World War I. Morley paints a vivid picture of the Caribbean coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua in the late 1910s, including descriptions of the people and places related to the activities of the several American fruit-export companies (Chapters 4–21). Also presented are colorful accounts of the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Coast and the people who lived there. His detailed coverage of the great Central American earthquakes of December 1917 and January 1918 (Chapters 22–23) offers a rare eyewitness account of these tragic events. Finally, in 1918, he

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<sup>1</sup> For a biography and summary of Morley’s CIW work, see Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 1.



travelled up the Quintana Roo coast, crossed into the central Yucatan Peninsula, and undertook important archaeological work at the sites of the northern lowlands (Chapters 24–29).

### **Morley and the ONI**

**M**orley, an ardent patriot, revealed his strong feelings about what we now know as World War I in his 1916 journal entries (Rice and Ward 2021: part IV) and, not surprisingly, he joined the war effort through the U.S. Navy—an odd choice of service for someone who loathed sea voyages as much as he did. He envisioned a scheme whereby espionage could be undertaken under the cover of archaeological exploration and approached the ONI in March, 1917, with a list of archaeologists who had agreed to join this ambitious spy ring. The ONI thought the project had merit and Morley was commissioned on April 7 as an ensign in the Navy (Harris and Sadler 2003: 46). The objectives of the espionage were: to reconnoiter the Central American coastline for potential sites for German U-boat (submarine) bases; to make a general census and assessment of Germans living in the area; to describe in detail economic activities throughout the region; and, on occasion, to undertake diplomatic activity aimed at keeping the Central American republics firmly in the Allied corner.

The perceived danger of German activity in Mexico and Central America, particularly along the coasts, was very real, especially after the publication of the notorious Zimmermann Telegram. This was a communication from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to Mexican authorities offering a military alliance in the event the United States entered the war, with Mexico to receive Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico as recompense. Extensive German settlement in Latin America, especially in Brazil and the “southern cone” (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) but also in Mexico and Central America, created a general sense that the region was ripe for German malfeasance.

In this endeavor, Morley served the lead role as one of several archaeologists commissioned to undertake intelligence-gathering while ostensibly carrying out their own scientific studies. Because the area was teeming with archaeological expeditions, hiring Morley and his colleagues gave the spy ring legitimate cover. Morley supervised these widely deployed agents, including Herbert J. (Joe) Spinden, who worked in Honduras, Samuel K. Lothrop in Costa Rica, and Thomas Gann in British Honduras (Figure 1.1). All were sworn to secrecy.

In addition to his fellow archaeologist agents, Morley recruited local merchants and officials to be his eyes and ears covering specific parts of the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts, and our annotations to the diaries expand information on these individual sub-agents and informants. Most of his regular contacts in Central America likely knew about his undercover work, and the CIW knew and approved as well: they provided him with the customary credentials and paid part of his salary.

Morley traveled widely in 1917 and 1918, visiting Honduras, Nicaragua, Yucatan, Chiapas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala, and British Honduras (Belize), accompanied by well-known commercial artist John Held, Jr., who served as the artist and cartographer for the mission. We learn little of Morley’s purposes in visiting these locations, however: he took his oath seriously and not a word of his spy role appears in his diaries. The only hints come from a few cryptic references to his dispatches sent with great ceremony to Washington and to

meetings and conversations—which he always calls “conferences”—with certain people whom he often names but doesn’t identify by occupation. The endings of these are typically described as “we all understood each other” or reached “satisfactory understandings”: for example, on December 5, in Puerto Cortés, Honduras, “our conference was most satisfactory and I imagine we all understood each other perfectly definitely.” One wonders if these are code phrases, like “no hay molasses” (see entry for October 11).

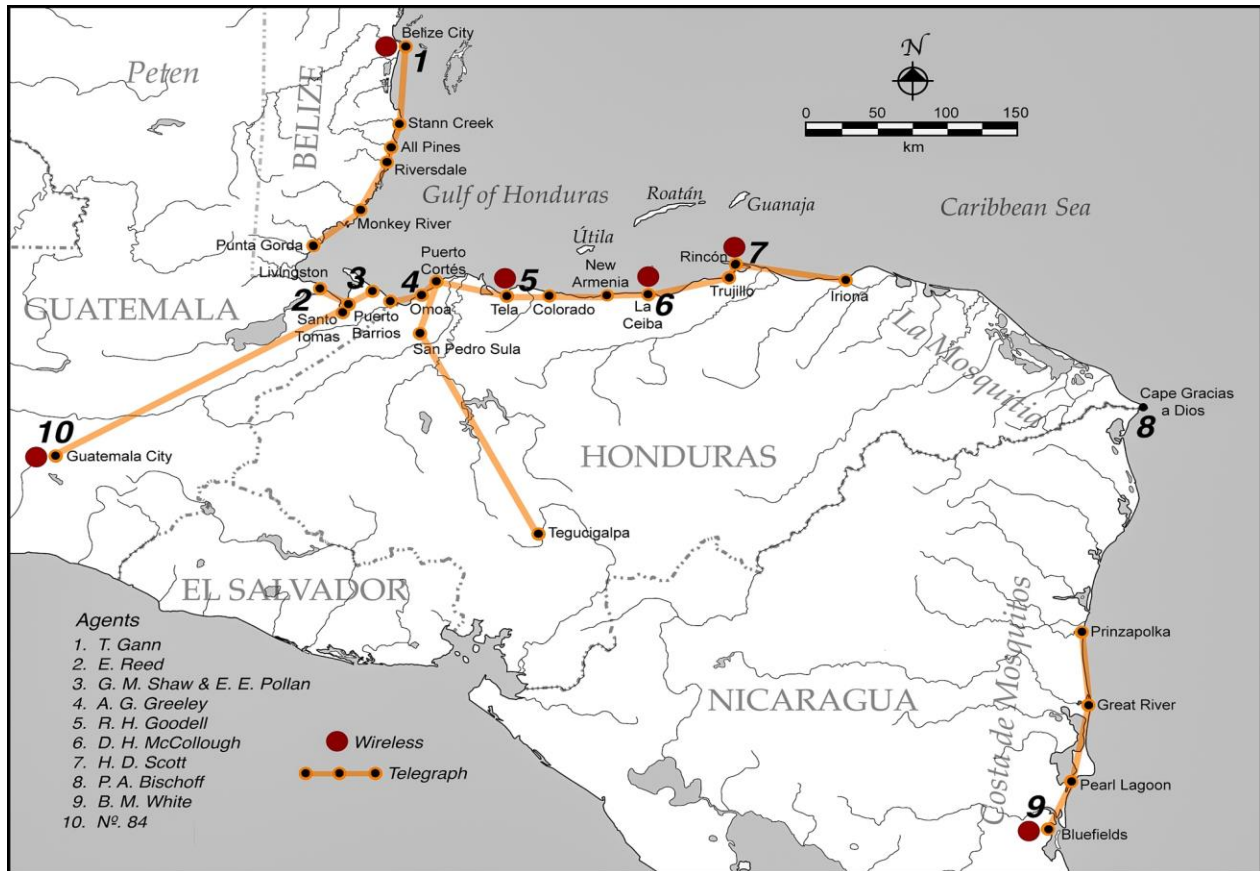


Figure 1.1. The locations of the principal agents in Morley’s spy ring.

Several periods of Morley’s work as a field agent are represented by what he calls “lacunae” in his diaries, often accompanied by a simple itinerary listing where he was on each entry-less date. During these periods he wrote just as prolifically, but rather than make entries into his journals, he wrote extensive reports back to ONI headquarters—indeed, during his two-year period of service he penned over 10,000 pages. Three of these reports, now held in the National Archives, are reprinted as appendices in *The Archaeologist was a Spy* (Harris and Sadler 2003: 318–369).<sup>2</sup> Morley’s dedication made him “arguably the finest American spy of World War I” (Harris and Sadler 2003: xiii).

<sup>2</sup> Morley’s “Report no. 11” (Harris and Sadler 2003: Appendix I) is a “List of rivers, bays, and lagoons on the Mosquito coast [of Nicaragua] from Trujillo to Bluefields,” giving depths, channels and bars, details of nearby settlements, and the like. Another, “Detailed report of a

Between missions for the ONI, Morley conducted short archaeological expeditions, if only to maintain his cover. Such expeditions—his journey to Copan and its peripheral sites between May 17 and May 28 in 1917, and his trek along the Quintana Roo coast in 1918 (Chapters 26-28)—are detailed here. That same year he also visited the Puuc sites in central Yucatan and ventured as far as Palenque (Chapter 29).

Morley seems to have had a visceral hatred for Germans (see Rice and Ward 2021: 164) that preceded and doubtless prompted his role as an agent. Many of his reports back to the ONI were descriptions of German nationals in the region and what they were up to. He considered all of them to be potential foreign agents. His diaries frequently make disparaging, if not outwardly racist, comments about any German he encountered. For example, on October 7, 1917, after recounting an argument with a German about the Kaiser, Morley writes about Germans “What warped philosophy, what twisted logic, what vicious ideals they have!...We are fighting the whole German nation, not just the government...It may be necessary to kill off all the older ones...fed on German invincibility.”

### John Held, Jr.

**M**orley was accompanied in his 1917 travels by John Held, Jr. (Figure 1.2). Born in 1889 in Salt Lake City, Held became one of America’s most celebrated magazine illustrators, regularly featured in *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and *Life*. As a young artist, Held was fascinated by art history, particularly the art of the ancient Americas.

Held and Morley met through a mutual friend, archaeologist Herbert J. (“Joe”) Spinden. Held joined Morley as part of the top-secret U.S. Naval Intelligence survey of Central America as the team cartographer. His archaeological work for Morley included sketching structures and making site plans. Additionally, Held made drawings and paintings on an almost daily basis of the sights and people along the Caribbean coast. Many of these works have miraculously survived and are presented in this volume. After the war, Held never returned to the archaeological field, instead becoming a leading artist—earning the moniker “Artist of the Jazz Age” (Figure 1.3; see Armitage 1987). He made a fortune drawing flappers and members of high society in the 1920s,<sup>3</sup> ran (but lost) for Congress, lost a fortune in the 1930s, married four times, and had a nervous breakdown, but remained a celebrated artist the whole while. He died in 1958. The Smithsonian undertook a nationwide traveling exhibit from 1969 to 1972 called “The Art of John Held, Jr.”

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coast reconnaissance of the peninsula of Yucatan from Xcalac, Quintana Roo, to Champoton, Campeche,” gives similar information plus names of local officials, lighthouses, distances, populations, and other details. The book’s appendices include other information, such as a list of ONI agents names and their numerical designations, and a list of “general instructions,” such as the Delphic “always have a good reason for being anywhere” (Harris and Sadler 2003: 382).

<sup>3</sup> See [https://www.google.com/search?q=john+held+jr&client=firefox-b-1-e&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjZzfe68PPtAhWoAZ0JHe\\_hB7UQ\\_AUoAnoECAwQBA&biw=1452&bih=1219#imgrc=BIOW1oMHluCiYM](https://www.google.com/search?q=john+held+jr&client=firefox-b-1-e&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjZzfe68PPtAhWoAZ0JHe_hB7UQ_AUoAnoECAwQBA&biw=1452&bih=1219#imgrc=BIOW1oMHluCiYM)



Figure 1.2. John Held, Jr.



Figure 1.3. Works by John Held Jr. Left: *Life* magazine cover, December 1925. Right: Held's cover for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tales of the Jazz Age*.

Morley and Held traveled the customary route from the U.S., leaving New Orleans in late April on a United Fruit Company steamship to Belize. From there, they traveled to Guatemala, spending the first half of May in the highlands, chiefly in Guatemala City, apparently on spy duty, before visiting Copan, Honduras. Additional travels took them to San Salvador, Honduras (Tegucigalpa, north coast, Bay Islands), Nicaragua, and British Honduras (Belize) (Figure 1.4). Then, in January 1918, accompanied by Thomas Gann, they set off for the Quintana Roo coast, the central Yucatan Peninsula, Campeche, and, ultimately, Palenque.

In general, the two men got along well, though Morley notes that in 1917 they had two major fights. This is not surprising, considering that they were in such close and difficult quarters for almost a full year without a break. Morley was often irritated by Held's mannerisms and idiosyncrasies, many of which he attributed to Held's laziness (sleeping late) and failure to push through assaults on his creature comforts. Held was an avid hunter and took every opportunity to go hunting, though rarely bagging anything more than a bird or two. Morley truly admired Held's artistic ability and often pens compliments in his diaries. There is no evidence that Morley and Held stayed in communication during later years, probably the best evidence that these were just two very different sorts of men (Harris and Sadler 2003: 294).

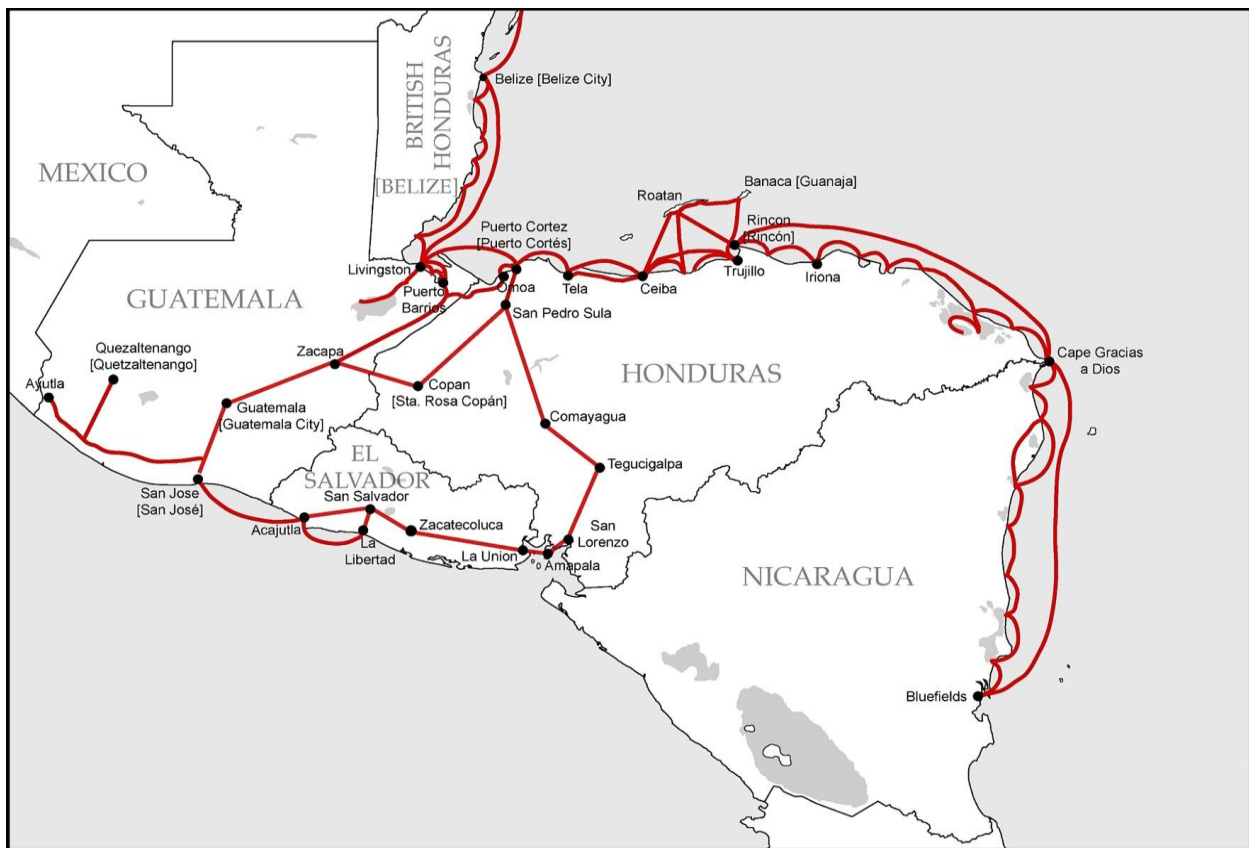


Figure 1.4. Morley and Held's travels in 1917.

When Morley hired Held to accompany him on his ONI adventures, he had other motives. As noted, Held was ostensibly hired to be the official cartographer for the spy network, specifically charged with drawing detailed maps of the Central American coastlines for the

purpose of identifying potential rivers and lagoons that could be exploited by the Germans as U-Boat bases. Having a talented artist by his side, Morley put Held to work drawing site plans, painting watercolors of ruins and locales, and, in several instances, making detailed drawings of Maya artifacts, especially polychrome ceramics. Although Held painted several pots in Tegucigalpa and one in San Pedro Sula (Chapter 4) his largest corpus of such drawings was made in San Salvador in July and August 1917, when he was given access to the private collection of antiquities of Justo Armas.

The strange story of Justo Armas is fascinating enough to warrant a digression. Armas was one of the leading figures in San Salvador society at the turn of the twentieth century, having arrived in El Salvador under mysterious circumstances sometime in the late nineteenth century (see Lamperti 2004). Once in San Salvador, Armas, a well-educated Austrian of excellent manners and aristocratic poise, established a catering service that gained him access to the upper crust of Salvadoran society (such as it was, given its small size). Armas' distinguished air, together with his large collection of elegant china and sterling silver, and his social graces, made him a well-loved fixture at nearly every social event. It did not take long for him to transform himself from caterer to luminary. Although always impeccably dressed in the finest clothing, he curiously lived his life permanently barefoot and is never known to have worn a shoe.

The question "Who was Justo Armas?" caused much speculation, especially as it relates to the Austrian Hapsburgs. Two theories have bounced around over the years, both of which, although highly improbable, have followers to this day. One theory is that Armas was Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, disguised in exile. Emperor Maximilian was executed by firing squad in Querétaro in 1867; of that there is little dispute. However, when his embalmed body was viewed in Vienna his mother famously proclaimed "This is not my son!" and indeed photos of the corpse don't well resemble the former emperor. Nonetheless, the similarity in facial features between Armas and Maximilian fueled rumors and imagination. The fact that Armas had numerous objects known to have been the property of Maximilian at his home, and secretive visits by high-ranking Austrian diplomats over the decades, further burnished the story.

The second theory is that Armas was actually Crown Prince Rudolph, the only son of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph. Rudolph died by suicide in 1889 as a consequence of an illicit affair. As the theory goes, the emperor faked Rudolph's death and allowed him to leave Austria and live forever in exile under an assumed name. Rudolph/Armas supposedly sailed from Hamburg to points west, a voyage that was interrupted by shipwreck in the Straits of Magellan. Armas was the only survivor, having clung to flotsam until he reached shore. When his feet stepped on dry land, he vowed never to wear shoes again. Interestingly, his descendants today are the major proponents of the Rudolph theory (Lardé 1994).

Whatever his origins and whatever his reasons for avoiding shoes, Armas amassed great wealth and built a significant collection of Mesoamerican artifacts, many items of which were donated to the Museo Nacional de Antropología David J. Guzmán in San Salvador upon his death in 1936. However, in 1918 some items were purchased by Joe Spinden for the American Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, where they reside today. Of the vases painted by Held (Figures 1.5 and 1.6), two are in the latter's collection, and photographs (Figure 1.7) are available online ([anthro.amnh.org](http://anthro.amnh.org): cat. no. 30.0/4331 and 30.0/439). Spinden counted Armas' collection as among four significant private collections in El Salvador (Spinden 1915: 451).



Figure 1.5. "Plate No. 6, Vase E," drawing by John Held Jr. Rosemary Joyce (pers. comm., 8/23/21) describes this vase: "Salua Polychrome (AD 750–850) depicting four figures: two hold incense bags, one holds an unknown object, one is a figure seated at ground level. The seated figure has features (the netted cap) that align it with 'God N' from Maya lowland polychromes of Petén; this image (a head wearing a netted cap) appears on Ulua Polychromes as a band of glyphs. The God N glyph is one sign that can be used on its own as a dedicatory text on lowland Maya polychromes, and its use in that way in northern Honduras is grounds to argue that Lenca potters understood the linguistic effect of that sign."

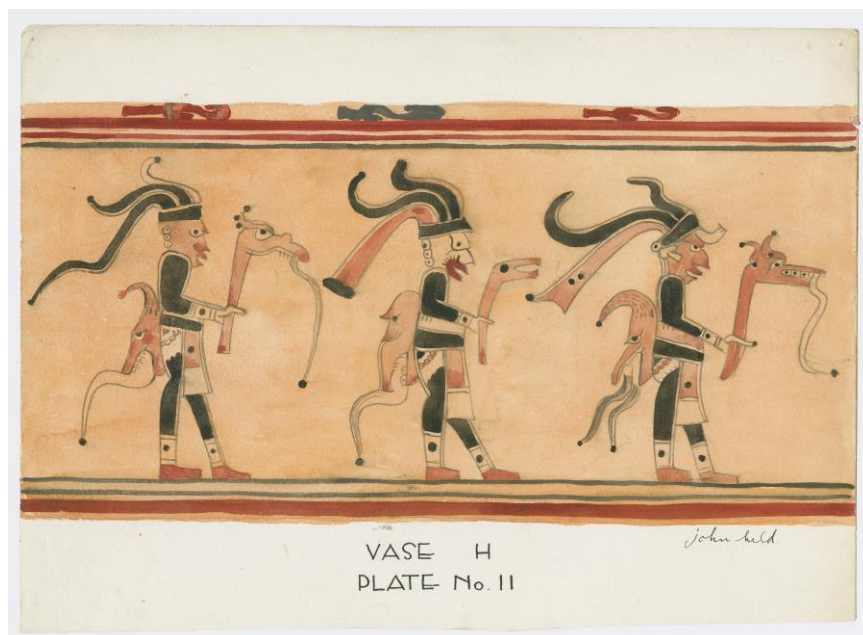


Figure 1.6. "Plate No. 11, Vase H," drawing by John Held Jr. Again, Joyce (pers. comm., 8/23/21) offers commentary: "Salua Polychrome, equivalent of Selva group Ulua, dates approximately 700–800. The S-motifs that look like \$ on the lip are absolutely diagnostic, as is the flaring shape. If I had this vessel in Honduras, I would think it was a badly drawn local Selva . . . . Held was able to perceive

that the back of the belt of each figure was an animal head—these are what I have discussed as crests. The assimilation of the carried objects—which in proper Selva vessels would be musical instruments—to the lowland Maya serpent-headed staff tracks something I see overall in El Salvador—either more awareness of some specific Maya imagery, or more interest in representing the figures as Mayanized, than is seen in Honduras.”



Figure 1.7. “Vase E” of the Armas collection. Compare with Held’s drawings in Figure 1.5.

The individually signed Held drawings were done under the auspices of the CIW—they are mentioned specifically in the 1917 *CIW Yearbook* as one of the season’s accomplishments (Weeks and Hill 2006: 49). Interestingly, they were not part of the CIW archives donated to the Peabody Museum upon the closing of the Historical Division. Somehow, they ended up in the possession of archaeologist Samuel K. Lothrop, another member of Morley’s espionage ring who had a research interest in the southern periphery of the Maya heartland and beyond. It may be that Lothrop planned to publish all of these images—many of the drawings have labels indicating a plate number. At some point, they passed from Lothrop to John B. Glass (an archaeologist and a noted fox hunter), who then donated them to the Peabody Museum at his alma mater.



## Cameras and Other “Impedimenta”

Morley’s photographs are of almost uniformly poor quality by today’s standards, and also by comparison with those of Maler and Maudslay who preceded him. Part of the reason is doubtless the conditions of fieldwork: heat, humidity, and frequent dousing when the camera and related supplies accidentally fell into bodies of water—rivers, lakes, or seas—on Morley’s journeys. An inevitable question concerns what type of camera Morley used. Maler and Maudslay, whose travels through the bush were months-long expeditions involving a dozen or more pack mules, used fragile glass plates, 4 x 5 or 5 x 7 inches in size. The plates, coated with an emulsion of silver halide suspended in gelatin, give high-quality pictures because they are more sensitive to light and stable (compared to film), but also very slow in exposure time.

The type of camera Morley used in 1914–1916 was not mentioned in his diaries, although it used film (Rice and Ward 2021: 121, 194). He evidently intended to use glass plates in 1917, as his proposed list of photographic expenses for that expedition totaled \$153 in 1916 dollars; slightly under \$3800 today (Rice and Ward 2021: 244). Items included a “camera box” and 600 glass plates, plus holders and cases for them. One third of the total (\$50 or about \$1200) was for “chemicals,”<sup>4</sup> presumably for developing the exposures.

The actual camera Morley mentions in his 1917 journals, however, is a Kodak brand, model unknown, that used film. Rolled film began to be used in Kodak cameras in 1888, but it was not until around 1908 that safe (earlier film was made of flammable cellulose nitrate), transparent, flexible, celluloid (cellulose acetate) rolled film was introduced. Morley mentions a “tank developer” that was evidently part of the equipment the project carried along, and they developed film in hotel rooms as they traveled (e.g., San Pedro Sula).

Morley referred to the non-personal items that accompanied them on their travels as “impedimenta,” emphasizing their bulk and weight. These included eight “kayaks” (trunks for equipment, rather than watercraft), two folding cots and bedding, at least one typewriter, a record player (“gramophone”), pots and pans for cooking, and a lot of canned food. On June 13, waiting for a boat to take them from Guatemala to El Salvador, he notes that they had 16 pieces of baggage.

## Morley’s Racism

We were shocked to encounter Morley’s racism in his 1917–1918 journals. Although we had had hints of it in the 1914–1916 diaries (Rice and Ward 2021: 30), his statements in 1917 are blatant and highly offensive. One has to remind oneself that when Morley referred to a “boy” he did not mean a child but rather an adult Black male, and he referred to the owner/chef of a Chinese restaurant as “Chink.” At least, he never wrote the “N” word. Morley’s statements were made during his travels on the Caribbean coast of Honduras and Nicaragua, and

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<sup>4</sup> Chemicals used today include: “salted collodion,” silver nitrate, developer, “fixer,” nitric acid, plus others like a bonding agent, glass cleaner, and so on. One can only imagine the difficulties these would have caused in going through customs.

referenced Blacks, Black Caribs,<sup>5</sup> and Asians he encountered. He appears to have taken some of his opinions from geographer Ellsworth Huntington (1914), with whom Morley corresponded and who published disparaging remarks about the tropics and economic development (Rice and Ward 2021: 187n116).

Morley was a product of his times, and his times were highly racist. Race is now known, through the work of anthropologists, sociologists, and geneticists, to be a social construct rather than a biological fact. Its roots lie in the rise of capitalism, which depended on the labor of enslaved Africans by Europeans (Roediger n.d.: unpaginated): Blacks were considered “property” and the contrast between the dark-skinned slaves and their wealthy “white”-skinned owners fostered a sense that the latter were generally superior. By the mid-1700s in North America and the Caribbean, skin color and place of origin were the basis of social distinctions with associated rights and privileges. These were formalized by laws creating a social and legal “hierarchy based on ‘race’.”

In the early nineteenth century, Dr. Samuel Morton (1799–1851) compared dimensions of human crania across populations, concluding that Caucasians had the biggest brains and Negroes the smallest, and therefore were not as intelligent (Morton 1839). This opinion was echoed by scholars in multiple disciplines who, mired in the Biblical explanations for human variation current at the time, were debating whether God created humans once (monogenism) or multiple times (polygenism), the latter in several races or species. Morton’s conclusions favored polygenism and “the Negro” was thought to be inherently inferior and so low on the newly envisioned evolutionary scale (see Darwin 1859), and probably also Medieval Christian and Aristotelian “great chain of being” philosophy, as to possibly be a different species—a “missing link”: a monkey. (Note the simian-like faces in John Held’s sketch of the Belizean crew of the ship *Lilian Y*; Figure 25.3.)

After the U.S. Civil War, white supremacy—specifically that of wealthy, white males—became entrenched through the widespread passage of enabling legislation restricting the rights of Blacks. New scholarly trends, especially in anthropology, such as “scientific racism” and social Darwinism upheld these practices. Social Darwinism refers to a suite of controversial late nineteenth-century theories applying Darwinian concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest to human society. These supported racism—the subtitle of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* is *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggles for Life*—by purporting to justify both white superiority, power, and wealth, and also Black inferiority and impoverishment.

- At the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition, an exhibit displayed people “in various arrangements of progress and reinforcing to the general and visiting public the racial hierarchy of the time” (Roediger n.d.: unpaginated).
- An 1896 book on “race traits” (Hoffman 1896) described Blacks as “healthy in body and cheerful in mind,” but noted that the 1890 census predicted their “gradual extinction” owing to “natural immoralities and a propensity for diseases.”

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<sup>5</sup> “Black Carib” refers to descendants of indigenous Caribs and African slaves brought to St. Vincent Island to work sugar plantations in the seventeenth century. The continuous arrival of slaves, intermarriage with natives, and diaspora has meant that populations spread throughout the Caribbean.

- Eugenics became a popular idea, including as a way to solve “the Negro problem,” and “from 1905 to 1910 eugenics was the second most common subject discussed in general circulation magazines” (Lombard 1999:30).

Anthropology, and indeed most of the sciences, not only mirrored attitudes of the era, they justified them by providing an intellectual foundation for racism at all levels of society. And not just in the United States: the noted British archaeologist Thomas Athol Joyce, of the British Museum, is remembered for blatantly racist articles he wrote for the 1915 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. One entry, entitled “Negro,” included the statement “Mentally the Negro is inferior to the white” (Joyce 1915: 344). Tellingly, this attitude did not have any detrimental impact on his highly lauded career.

Popular culture also reflected the racist climate: D. W. Griffith’s racially-charged *The Birth of a Nation* (originally entitled *The Clansman*) appeared in 1915, becoming a landmark in film history, and was even screened—with much adulation—by Woodrow Wilson at the White House. The film helped propel the “Lost Cause” narrative that glorified the South, vilified African-Americans, and fostered decades of lynchings, erection of Confederate monuments, Jim Crow laws, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan to new heights. Attitudes solidified in the next decades, and if Griffith’s film served as one “Lost Cause” cultural bookend, then 1939’s *Gone with the Wind* served as the other. It was not until the civil rights movement of the 1950s–1960s that attitudes began to shift significantly.

Morley’s racism was also an offshoot of the concept of “the white man’s burden,” an aspect of colonialism that justified the European—and, after the Spanish American War, American—conquest of the tropics under the guise of civilizing lesser races, but with the ultimate goal of dominance in service to economic exploitation. American “colonialism” in Central America manifested itself along traditional lines in Panama with the Canal Zone colony, but in the areas covered under this study, colonialism had a uniquely free-enterprise twist: rather than direct government involvement, American colonialism came in the form of activities by the several fruit companies—particularly United Fruit, but also the Vaccaro brothers’ Standard Fruit, and the Cuyamel Fruit Company—that operated out of New Orleans. The largest of these by far, the United Fruit Company was virtually an empire unto its own. It maintained extensive operations along the entire Central American coast, including segregated compounds for white employees to separate them from local inhabitants and from the many Black West Indian laborers imported to cultivate the banana fields (Colby 206, 2011). The fact that many fruit company employees were southerners (mainly from Louisiana) exacerbated a version of Jim Crow in the tropics. Morley frequently references his view that the United Fruit Company operations were a beacon of civilization in an otherwise decadent landscape filled with Blacks and, ironically, the sorry descendants of his glorified Maya civilization.

United Fruit functioned almost as if it were an autonomous government, exerting so much influence in Guatemala that it even took over operation of the rail system and ran the entire postal system. The several regional fruit companies combined accounted for most of the Guatemalan economy and nearly all of its international commercial activity including direct control over all oceanic shipping and transportation in and out of the region. The United Fruit Company steamship service was the largest serving Latin America and was not coincidentally called “The Great White Fleet,” ostensibly named after Roosevelt’s Great White Fleet of white-

painted warships that circled the globe on a propaganda tour between 1907 and 1909, but the racial implications of the name are obvious: these ships were vessels of welcome civilization.

Morley had no issue with the United States exerting its influence in Central America, especially insofar as the war effort was concerned. Indeed, as discussed above, his role during the war years was specifically to support the war effort, but his attitude concerning northern nations' role in the tropics goes one step beyond any wartime consideration: he states specifically that it is the duty of civilized nations to step in and maintain law and order if local authorities cannot protect foreign interests (see entry for August 22), an attitude that lingers still in some political quarters even into the twenty-first century.

This was the environment into which Sylvanus Morley was born, educated, and lived.

## Earthquakes

One of the most interesting subjects in Morley's 1917–1918 diaries is his experience with the devastating earthquake swarm that shook Guatemala City between December 25th and January 24th. Morley witnessed the quakes of December 25th, December 29th, and January 3rd; he was in Belize City when the final temblor occurred on January 24th. Months before the Guatemala City quakes, Morley traveled to San Salvador in June, 1917, arriving just days after a major tremor and volcanic eruption nearly destroyed that city.

## Seismicity and Plate Tectonics

Together, Guatemala and El Salvador represent one of the most active seismic regions of the western arc of the Pacific "Ring of Fire." Three tectonic plates converge here, creating stresses that are relieved via frequent earthquakes. One major fault complex lies near Puerto Barrios and Lake Izabal in eastern Guatemala, where the North American and Caribbean plates meet in an extension of the Cayman Trench in the Caribbean Sea. The Motagua fault (now occupied by the Motagua River), extends east–west from this point into the highlands around Quetzaltenango. Immediately to the north, the parallel Chixoy-Polochic fault (also named for rivers) ends in Chiapas, Mexico. To the west, just off the Pacific coast, the Cocos plate slides under the Caribbean plate, creating a subduction zone associated with the 2,750 km-long Middle American Trench (Cáceres Calix 2003: 5). Most of the major earthquakes in the region occur at this zone (Figure 1.8; Cáceres Calix 2003: 6; White et al. 2004), their severe consequences sometimes worsened by subsequent eruption of one of the many volcanoes in the region.

As can be seen in Figure 1.8, the frequency of major earthquakes in western Guatemala and El Salvador is remarkable. The largest quakes can register as high as 8 on the Richter scale, and are frequent between 6.0 and 7.0; those between 5 and 6 are almost too numerous to count (Cáceres Calix 2003: 6). The several quakes witnessed by Morley grew in intensity, with the December 25th tremor estimated to have registered 5.6, whereas the January 3 quake registered 6.0. By way of comparison, the 1976 Guatemala City earthquake registered a devastating 7.5 and took some 23,000 lives (Wikipedia: list of earthquakes in Guatemala). The 1917 San Salvador temblor, which Morley did not witness directly but saw its immediate aftermath, is estimated to have registered 6.4 (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente: sismología website).

## Morley's Accounts

Morley's published account of the Guatemala earthquakes in the *American Museum Journal* (1918a) is one of only a few contemporaneous published descriptions of the event which, like the 1717 Antigua and the 1976 Guatemala City quakes, reshaped the course of Guatemalan history. Indeed, the devastation of 1917–1918 was so complete that the entire capital city was effectively destroyed.

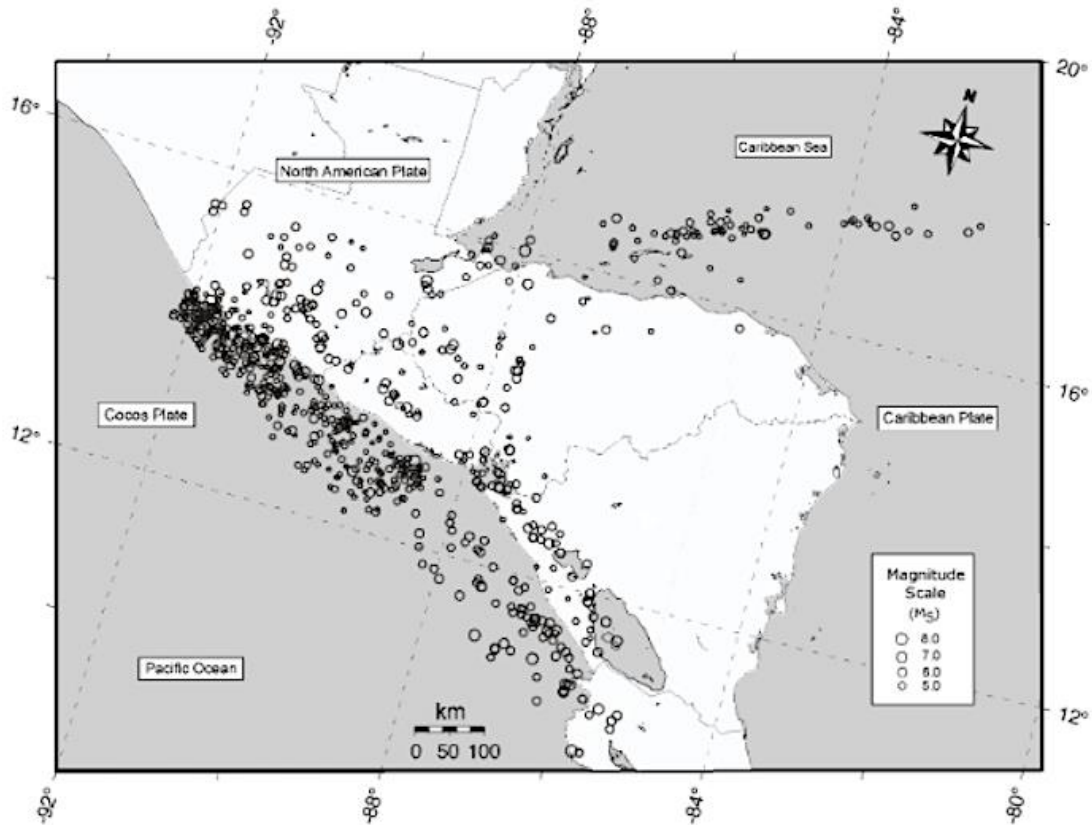


Figure 1.8. Distribution of Central American earthquakes 1900–2002 with magnitudes larger than 5.

As always, Morley maintained a detailed diary and the story of the earthquakes unfolds on his pages in vivid and heartbreaking detail, the publication of which is presented in this volume for the first time. It is, to the best of our knowledge, one of only a few eyewitness accounts of the events. The other major account was written by Marshal Saville, but he cites Morley's published article as a source. In 1919, Morley's fellow archaeologist-spy, Joe Spinden, offered a summary of both the San Salvador and Guatemala City tremors in his article "Shattered Capitals of Central America," which appeared in *National Geographic Magazine*. Spinden himself witnessed the final earthquake on January 24, having arrived in town two hours before the temblor hit (Spinden 1919: 202). Another first-hand account by an unknown author was

published in *Pan American Magazine* (Anon. 1918) which offers commentary as vivid as Morley's. At least one reference to this piece posits Morley as the writer, but the details of time and place differ sharply from Morley's account. A final primary source for information can be found in the daily issues of the *Diario de Centro América*, the semi-official newspaper partly owned by Guatemalan President Estrada Cabrera.

Morley also took photographs (Figure 1.9), which were published in his *American Museum Journal* article. Here, we positioned these images directly into the diary text (Chapter 22) where Morley mentions taking them with his trusty Kodak—an opportunity that offers us the ability to place ourselves in his shoes and visualize the scenes he vividly describes.



Figure 1.9. A photo taken by Morley in Guatemala City in the days immediately after the Christmas earthquake of 1917.

### **Earthquakes and the Maya Lowlands**

Although earthquakes do not originate in the limestone plateau of Petén, tremors may be felt there today-- Rice was awakened by one of the 1978–1979 Guatemala earthquakes when she was in Flores for fieldwork—and doubtless were also experienced by the ancient Maya. Some have their epicenters in the Motagua-Chixoy-Polochic fault complex, which roughly separates Petén from the eastern highlands of Guatemala.

An earthquake was proposed as one cause, or a contributing cause, of the southern lowland Maya Classic “collapse.” Euan MacKie (1961), excavating at the site of Benque Viejo (Xunantunich), in far western Belize near the border with Petén, proposed that the “relatively sudden” collapse of the masonry vault and walls of Structure A-11, probably a palace, and also A-15, had been triggered by an earthquake. The Maya had attempted to clear out the rubble, but never rebuilt the structure. One of two small “humps” in Plaza B, in front of A-11, was excavated by Thomas Gann, who thought it was a house mound, but both were heaps of removed debris. The shattered remains of 17 pottery vessels in A-11, mostly storage jars, pointed to a date around the late eighth century. MacKie extrapolated from this finding to

suggest that more tremors had occurred throughout the lowlands and were responsible for the collapse, but this proposition was rejected (Adams 1973: 27; Andrews 1973: 260).

New data from paleoseismological analyses of sediments and cores are giving credence to MacKie's proposition. Cores taken from Lake Chichón, about 3 km north of the Polochic/Chixoy fault, revealed four major earthquakes that impacted the Maya heartland between cal AD 840 and 910, the Terminal Classic period of the Classic Maya collapse (Brocard et al. 2016). Quirigua, lying atop the Motagua fault, is of particular interest, and has been extensively studied from a seismic perspective. This research indicates that "earthquakes were a continuing problem for the seventh-to ninth-century Maya" in that city (Kovach 2004: 84).

Morley excavated at Quirigua in 1919, where his work in Structure 1B-3 of the Acropolis uncovered a human skull fragment; he proposed it had been crushed by a falling stone lintel (diary entry for May 16, 1919). Later discovery of the skeleton of a crushed child under a fallen wall in Structure 1B-18, dating to the late ninth century, led to speculation that a massive earthquake may have contributed to Quirigua's demise (Ashmore and Sharer 2007: 48; Kovach 2004; Kovach and Garcia 2001). Morley's work also revealed major repairs to buildings and the addition of support buttresses in ancient times, particularly on the west side of the Acropolis. Interestingly, in the case of Structures 1B-3 and 1B-4, the many buttresses are of much finer construction than the original building (Morley diary, May 9, 1919). Their number suggested that "the ancient priests must have felt great fear that their Temple would fall at this end to have prompted them to such heroic measures to prop it up" (Morley diary, May 10, 1919). Later, Morley's findings were confirmed by the University of Pennsylvania's Quirigua project, with speculation that damage to these structures may have been caused by earthquakes (Sharer et al. 1979: 50–53). The severe 1976 earthquake that killed 23,000 people in Guatemala damaged structures at the site, including the Acropolis (Bevan and Sharer 1983). Observation of this damage offers seismologists an opportunity to speculate about the specific motion and strength of pre-Columbian events.

Additional evidence of Classic-period earthquakes has been identified at Seibal, Altar de Sacrificios, Xutilha, and Pusilha (see Kovach 2004: 78–109), and Copan's "slumped Hieroglyphic Stairway" may be the result of an undated but powerful earthquake (Stuart 2001: 3).

Nonetheless, an idea of the comparative rarity of lowland temblors comes from the seeming lack of a hieroglyph for "earthquake." David Stuart (2001) proposed that a sign reading *yuk-(u)l-aj kab* reads "the earth was shaken," in a stucco inscription in the sanctuary of Temple XVIII at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. This can be related to the colonial Yucatec *yukba*, meaning earthquake. And the names and concepts of the seventeenth of the twenty day-names in Mesoamerican 260-day (ritual) calendars refers to quake or earthquake (Edmonson 1988: 176–177). Among the Aztecs this day-name is Ollin, meaning movement or quake; the lowland Maya equivalent day-name is Kaban, derived from the sign for *kab*, earth. A recent study of the post-conquest Aztec codex Telleriano-Remensis identified glyphic signs that could be read as earthquake, referencing 12 that occurred between 1460 and 1542 in central and western Mexico (Suárez and García-Acosta 2021). The Zapotec glyph for earthquake is carved on San José Mogote (Oaxaca) Monument 3, possibly the name of a human prisoner who was sacrificed (Marcus 1980: 55).

Morley himself addressed the issue of earthquakes in his *Inscriptions at Copan* (1920), specifically in the context of a discussion of the Classic Maya “collapse.” He minimized their impact on Maya society, pointing out that the destruction of a city (or cities) as the result of a specific earthquake event would probably not have led to the abandonment of the entire region. And in terms of the condition of the ruins in the early twentieth century, he (Morley 1920: 442) dismisses earthquakes as contributing to the collapse of structures and displacement of monuments, arguing instead that “a personal examination of all the larger Maya cities known... has convinced [me] that the luxuriant tropical vegetation in which every one is now buried, or was when first discovered, is alone responsible for the appalling destruction wrought.” Earthquakes are not even mentioned in his 1946 *The Ancient Maya*.

### Maya Dating

**M**orley’s primary objectives in his early years of exploring the Maya area for the CIW were to record “Initial Series” dates carved in stone. The Maya dating system is complex, with two calendars, bar and dot numbers, counts of elapsed days since a starting date in 3114 BC, complexities of correlation with the Western/Christian calendar, and so forth.

The most immediate point of understanding is that of correlating Western and Maya calendars. The Initial Series dates he excitedly reports are recorded by archaeologists in a shorthand sequence of five numbers, for example 9.7.10.6.3, representing five units of time. Morley transliterated the Maya dates he found to Western calendars, using an old correlation that is no longer valid. Today, archaeologists use the Goodman-Martínez-Thompson (GMT) correlation, which gives dates later (more recent) than Morley’s calculations. We follow the incorrect dates he gives in his diaries with the GMT date in brackets.

We refer readers to Chapter 2 in volume 1 of the Morley diaries (Rice and Ward 2021) for an illustrated discussion of these issues.



## CHAPTER 2

### COPAN, RÍO AMARILLO, AND LOS HIGOS

**April 26, Thursday**

**New Orleans**

Packed before breakfast, a not inconsiderable achievement in all the welter of impedimenta scattered about my room. Breakfasted with an interesting companion, whom I shall probably never see again. One of those swiftly passing encounters over almost before commenced, which in the aggregate make up the sum total of our lives.

After 6, there were the last few inevitable errands, tooth-brush and the other etceteras. I got back to the St. Charles [hotel] just before 10, hot and perspiring. Already New Orleans is that way, the native sons swear by their summer climate.

Kidd came in for a few minutes, and Stephanie and Lucia at ten in the car. We were all minded of the same occasion last year.

#### Itinerary during Lacuna, April 26 – May 16

April 26 T.	United Fruit Co. <i>Suriname</i> between New Orleans and Belize
“ 27 F.	“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “
“ 28 S.	“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “
“ 29 S.	Belize Hospital
“ 30 M.	United Fruit Co. <i>Suriname</i> between Belize and [Puerto] Barrios
May 1 T.	Guatemala City, Hotel Imperial
May 2 W.	“ “ “ “
May 3 T.	“ “ “ “
May 4 F.	“ “ “ “
May 5 S.	“ “ “ “
May 6 S.	“ “ “ “
May 7 M.	“ “ “ “
May 8 T.	“ “ “ “
May 9 W.	“ “ “ “
May 10 T.	“ “ “ “
May 11 F.	“ “ “ “
May 12 S.	“ “ “ “
May 13 S.	Zacapa
May 14 M.	“
May 15 T.	Jocotan
May 16 W.	Copan

**May 17, Thursday**

**Copan**

Sometime after midnight hell broke out in the plaza. There was a terrific explosion and I thought it was a revolution at first—but followed by a burst of music? And then by a martial roll prolonged to the point of despair, and climaxed by more music. Investigation disclosed it was the mustering in of the *chapulín*<sup>6</sup> army. A plague of grasshoppers is devastating the valley, eating the new corn, beans, tobacco—in fact everything. All this hubbub was incitement to the fight against them: the explosions the tocsin of war, the music the rally. They go this early to catch the grasshoppers asleep and thus kill more than would be possible in the daytime.

Presently the army was underway, and we turned over to finish the night. But not so, all nature was awake, the frogs in the patio behind were croaking their heads off. Divers dogs were barking madly at the outgoing army. The birds in the large ceiba were chirping and twittering in excitement. Some cow lady had lost her offspring and was lamenting the same, and finally the famous Copan roosters were faithfully calling the hour in a thousand different and disharmonic keys. This undesired symphony discouraged slumber and we were all glad to get up at six when Hebard<sup>7</sup> routed us out. Before breakfast he discovered his *mozo* [waiter, helper, young man] had on patent leather shoes, which moved him to profane amazement. This boy has all the accoutrements of a gentleman. A 35 Colt, a stiletto, a patent leather book, and scented hair.

We set out for the ruins early. The *alcalde* tried to stop me to read a telegram from Tegucigalpa, but when I explained our haste—Hebard and Joe [Spinden] leave this afternoon—thought noon would do.

I think the monuments bowled both John [Held] and Hebard over. The latter, a hard-headed engineer, waxed almost poetic under their magic spell, and he said he wouldn't have missed seeing them for a great deal. The reaction on John was no less pronounced, though more to have been anticipated. He felt the glamor of the past, and, like the rest of us tried to reconstruct not what is but what had been. Hebard and I crawled through the drain out to the wall overhanging the river. A spot of wild and vivid beauty. The vast engineering skill displayed excited him particularly, as of course it would *tanta gente* [many people]. To me it means organized society, highly trained artisans, accumulated wealth, and efficient administration, in short, civilization.

After lunch, Joe and Hebard prepared to go. Nicolás, the gentleman *mozo*, entertained some fears about entering Salvador but was finally heartened sufficiently to start. Doña Julia prepared a fowl, and soon all was ready. It was hard to let them go. They are both the kind to rough it well, and weather all hazards of the road with unruffled spirits.

Hebard led and Joe followed. Such an ungainly figure, his feet all but dragging on the ground; his little white horse manfully set off. Joe is 2 *quintales* [200 pounds] and the little white horse had a load. The rear elevation of Joe towering above his little animal is a sight not readily

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<sup>6</sup> *Chapulín*, from Nahuatl “grasshopper.”

<sup>7</sup> R.W. Hebard, a New York-based railroad engineer who supervised construction projects across Central America, especially in Panama.

forgotten. He waved an adios and swept around his corner out of sight. About 10 minutes after they had gone, we discovered Joe's canteen and camera, which we sent after them by Damian, who met them returning for these important articles. John painted all afternoon and I drew Stela 24 [Figure 2.1].

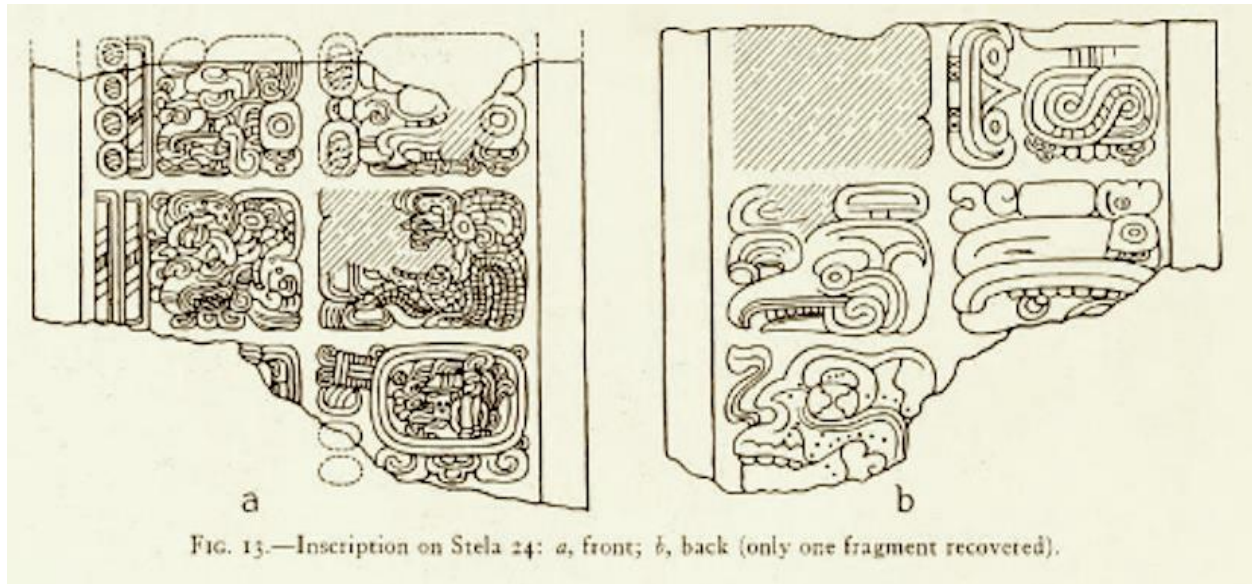


Figure 2.1. Morley's drawing of fragments of Copan Stela 24.

About four, Chico and Ramón took me to see their new monuments. On our way we met the *chapulín* fighters returning. There was an army of them. They straggled along the road from the village to the ruins. I understood in part the reason for the noise last night. Such a bedraggled multitude there was. I can hardly say their fight was successful, however, as we met hordes of grasshoppers literally darkening the sky.

The new monument is a little gem of an altar of the Great Period [Late Classic period, ca. AD 600–830] in a small court on the west bank of the river, about a kilometer east of the Main Structure. It has glyphs on one side at least, but is so deeply buried in the earlier earth that we could not get it out with the only tool we had amongst us, a case knife belonging to Chico, which illustrates the folly of our going anywhere down here without a machete. It was an important find, and I paid Chico and Ramón two dollars (silver) each, though I think the Peabody Museum photographed the front without having dug it out, however. I also paid don Clementino for having found the important Stela 24 in his backyard. He gave me some data as to its discovery.

Don Rafael came in after supper and we had a pleasant visit. He left early. Being Thursday, the band played. It seemed to me they had improved. I never shall forget my first experience with them five years ago in this very building, where I lay ill with malaria and for one mortal week they practiced nothing but [George Frederic Handel's] Dead March from *Saul* for the coming Good Friday exercises. I thought I would die there surely.

We went to bed early, in fact, while the band concert was still in progress.

## May 18, Friday

Again, we were awakened by explosions, this time *sans* music. After interminable conversations and the usual hammering and general noise and confusion, the *chapulín* hunters got off. We had breakfast somewhere near seven, and six strong—John, Andrew, Chico, Ramón, and a weak sister named Gollo—we set out for the monument I had seen yesterday. This was buried about 18" in a rich black soil in the center of a small plaza near the west bank of the river. It wasn't long before we had it out and I was soon able to decipher the date as 9.17.5.0.0 6 Ajaw 13 Kayab, about 505 AD [775 GMT]. I drew the date of this, and about 11 sent Andrew back to Stela 5 to move the large new piece of the east altar, which was found since I was here last year.



Figure 2.2. Morley (seated) and his crew, drawing and photographing a stela inscription at Copan.

We heard the *chapulín* fighters off to the northeast. Poor devils, exorcising the devil was more efficacious than their feeble efforts. With noise and revolvers and bugles, the battle went on, surely a losing one for the defenders. On our way back, I noticed Andrew had brought up the missing piece of the east altar, but had placed it upside-down.

In the afternoon, we tried out the tank developer [for film], or rather John and Andrew did. The results were hardly the bright and snappy affairs promised by the directions. The heat plus personal equations with a capital P are probably responsible. Out of four films developed, two showed up fairly well.

I drew Stela 24 in the afternoon until about 4, when Andrew, with Damian and a *mozo* and myself, went out to Stela 5 and righted the poor inverted altar. Coming back to the village, I returned to work on Stela 24. I was at this when a great commotion broke out at the northeastern corner of the plaza. Enter the *chapulín* fighters, close onto 300 strong, preceded by

their cavalry. Round the plaza, they marched two by two, armed with machetes and flares. I was so busy drawing that the cavalry nearly ran me down before I noticed what was afoot.

The plaza contains more than an acre but the army was sufficient to form a hollow square. In the center was a *carreta* [cart] and nearby stood the leaders: the *comandante*, don Juan, don Ramón, and others. [Comandante] Porfirio Villamil mounted the *carreta* and, to our amazement, read a presidential *decreto* [decree] affecting our own country not remotely: no less than the official notification that Honduras yesterday severed diplomatic relations with Germany, endorsing thereby us. The *decreto* in fact stated the action of our own government [in declaring war on April 6]. The scene was of intense interest. The *mozo* army: barefooted for the most part, cotton pantalooned and shirted, straw hatted, armed with machetes. The horsemen *muy caballero*. The *carreta* and Porfirio very much the muse of unfortune, and two dirty unkempt gringos in khaki, their new allies.

Fortunately, we could rise to the occasion. I hurried into the room and brought out Winthrop Saville's gift—the stars and stripes, which we hastily tied to an improvised pole, and lashed it to the portal. “¡Somos aliados!” [“We're allies!”] we heard on all sides as we shook hands with the leaders. It looked good to see Old Glory flying in this out of the way little place and to realize that all the world, great and small, is lining up in the fight for civilization.

In the evening, the *comandante* brought the decree over for me to read, and it proved an unqualified endorsement of our action. After an Egyptian cigarette and a social chat, he left. A telegram from Pedro Meléndez says he will be here tomorrow. A man from here who went to Santa Rita today carried a message to him; he sent back word he was waiting for his child to die, which event would surely take place not later than tomorrow, and he would then come *sin falta* [without fail].

Doña Julia sent over for some *medicina*, any old kind. The fact she is taking it is what counts with her, not the medicine. I fixed up a half dozen quinine pills with elaborate directions. She loves her illnesses.

We played the gramophone until nine, with many small boys tucked into every corner. They watch us rise, dress, eat, work, play, and go to bed. John shaved and before turning in anointed himself with iodine. Between the fleas and *garrapatas* [ticks], he looks positively leprous.

## May 19, Saturday

One explosion and no music called the *chapulineros* together this morning, so we fell [back] asleep readily enough. John was lazy and wouldn't get up till breakfast was on the table. Work lay together this morning, and we started off four strong, John, Andrew, myself, and a *mozo*. On our way out to the new altar, which we have christened W', we passed the *chapulín* fighters scattered over the hills this side of the ruins. The ground is all cleared now, and in their white pajamas they loomed like beacons on every hillside. If noise would kill, the *chapulines* were exterminated long ere this.

When we reached Altar W', John drew the front and then left with Andrew for the main structures to draw the faces of the monuments there. I spent the rest of the morning drawing the inscription [Figure 2.3]. Before drawing, I photographed it again [Figure 2.4], as the film I took yesterday was one of the two that were spoiled. On my way back, the *chapulín* fighters

were resting, eating their tortillas and *frijoles* by the wayside. Don Juan reported a great holocaust, but the air still appeared full of his enemy.

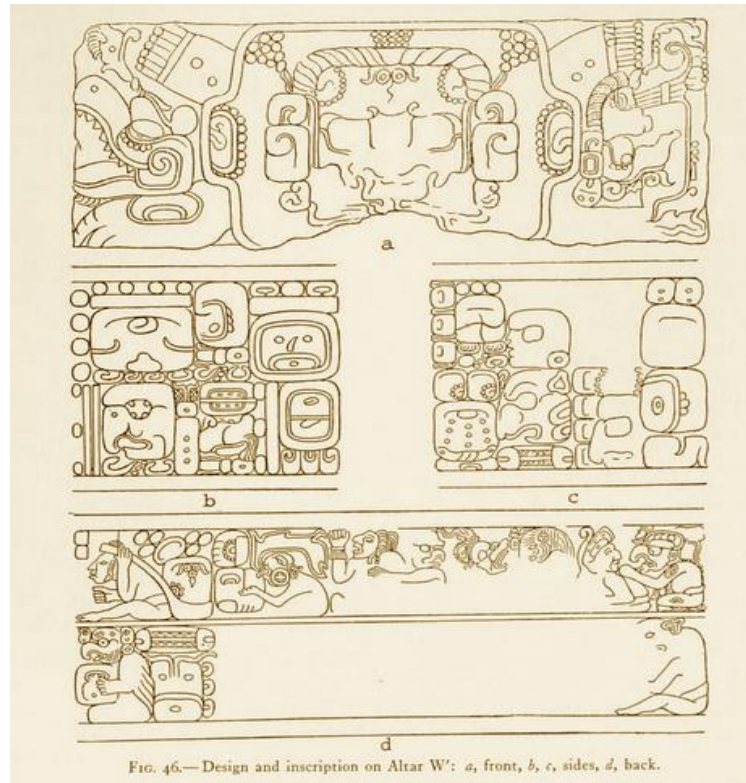


FIG. 46.— Design and inscription on Altar W': a, front, b, c, sides, d, back.

Figure 2.3. Morley's drawing of the front (top) and inscriptions on Copan Altar W'.



Figure 2.4. Morley's photo of the front side of Copan Altar W' depicting a "personified" *winal* head (a frog) on the left and God B/Chaak/rain god on the right. The *winal* frog is the *wo*, associated with the coming of the rains.

After leaving the fighters and nearer town, I made out a great crowd of women and girls coming down the road. Presently when they had drawn nearer, I made out a *santo* [figure of a saint] gaily decked out in tinsel, paper flowers, etc., and carried on a litter made of a chair strapped to two poles. The litter-bearers were a couple of old women clothed in the inevitable black shawls. This Panagia [reference to symbols of the Virgin Mary] of the Grasshoppers was being escorted to the field of battle to give victory. It was medieval and picturesque and sublimely futile. The stragglers toddled along behind, reaching almost to the village.

After lunch, John and Andrew developed the film I took this morning. It came out only so so. While they were doing this, Pedro Meléndez, my man from Santa Rita, showed up. The child had not yet died so he came along anyhow. He knows of at least three monuments at Río Amarillo and will take me thither Monday. We arranged his honorarium to our mutual satisfaction, and he left, promising to meet us Monday at Santa Rita.

After writing in this book, about four o'clock I began to draw again, and before dinner time I finished both sides of Stela 24 and the little fragment containing the 9.17.12.?? Initial Series photographed by Maudslay in 1885 under Altar T, and since missing. The schoolmaster told me yesterday of a fragment in a foundation on the south side of the plaza. I put Chico and his cohorts to work, and they presently unearthed this important piece, which has been missing for the last 30 years, i.e., since Maudslay's visit in '85. This and Stela 24 are now the earliest and latest Initial Series known from Copan, and both are or will be in the *cabildo* when I go [Figure 2.5]. I wonder for how long.



Figure 2.5. Moving the fragment of Stela 24 to the Copan *cabildo* for safe-keeping.

The *chapulineros* didn't get back until 6:30. Bugles announced their approach to the plaza, and they filed in like Noah's animals, two by two. They extended around more than two sides

of the plaza. There was no *decreto* tonight; instead, they divided into two groups—those from the village and those from the surrounding country—and urged all to show up for the final fight tomorrow, the last of a seven-day's battle.

We closed our doors for the first time tonight so that we could eat in peace. After supper, Carlos Martínez came in and I made final arrangement with him about the Río Amarillo trip. I am to see don Juan about a horse for him tomorrow. He left early, and we are going to turn in the same way. As I write these few closing lines, John is inking-in some of his pencil sketches of the day and scratching his innumerable bites.

## May 20, Sunday

One explosion only served to summon the *chapulineros* this morning, and they got off quietly enough by comparison. After breakfast, we set out for the ruins, John, myself, and the young boy I had yesterday, a fairly good one. We met don Juan returning to his village for breakfast and he said I might take Carlos Martínez with me to look for the quarries.

Our first work was at Stela 5, where I drew the glyphs on the new fragment [Figure 2.6]. These are glyphs E, D, and C of the Supplemental Series.<sup>8</sup> This consumed about an hour and by the time we got to the *chapulineros*, don Juan was back and the fray about to start. They all lined up along the road, the men in a long line with the leaders *montado* [on horseback] in the foreground, and I took three snapshots.

With Carlos and the boy, we left the road and, crossing the bare, cleared lower stretches of the foothills, we made up through the thick underbrush toward the vertical cliffs, which are the quarries. The ground was literally strewn with dead grasshoppers and there were still many times more flitting hither and thither amongst the tender young shoots of corn. Carlos led us up almost straight. It was a hard, hot climb to the cliffs, and we were glad when it was over. The cliff is exposed in many places and the surface seems artificially worked. We did not find any blocks actually squared, but in skirting the cliff for a quarter of a mile to the northeast we passed directly south of the Great Plaza. As we viewed the easy descent and close proximity to the main structure, we had no difficulty in believing that the quarries were at our feet. The view from the top of the ridge was good, and gives an excellent view of the extent of the valley, including the area of most intense occupation. We clambered down the hill just north of the main structure and, striking the main road, returned to the village.

After lunch, John developed the films I took in the morning, and they turned out alright. I went over to Clementino López's to get a little further information as to the finding of Stela 24, and Clementino himself gave me the data I was after.<sup>9</sup> There seems little doubt but that the

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<sup>8</sup> Stela 5, in fragments, was incorporated into a modern stone wall in the village. Spinden found several fragments in 1912, including one with an Initial Series date of 9.13.15.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Pax.

<sup>9</sup> Morley recounts this discovery in his *Inscriptions at Copan* (1920: 78): "During the early part of the summer of 1916, Clementino López, living near the southwestern corner of the village plaza, was digging a well in the yard behind his house and required some stone with which to line it. In the middle of this yard was a low mound of earth and stone. López had dug into this mound for stone to line his well, and at a depth of about half a meter below the surface he found a *pila*, or cylindrical altar.... Just below the altar he found the fragment of Stela 24."



stone foundation slab uncovered with it was the foundation of Stela 7. Clementino says that when Stela 7 was found it was only about 5 feet from this stone, and was simply uprooted, at that time not even broken; further, that in removing it to its present place it was broken deliberately to make the work easier! The fact that Stela 24 was reused in the foundations of Stela 7 is interesting because it is the earliest example of the re-use of earlier sculptures in later constructions, and shows that this practice prevailed as early as the close of the Early Period—the date of Stela 7 being 9.9.0.0 [AD 613 GMT, the beginning of the Late Classic period].

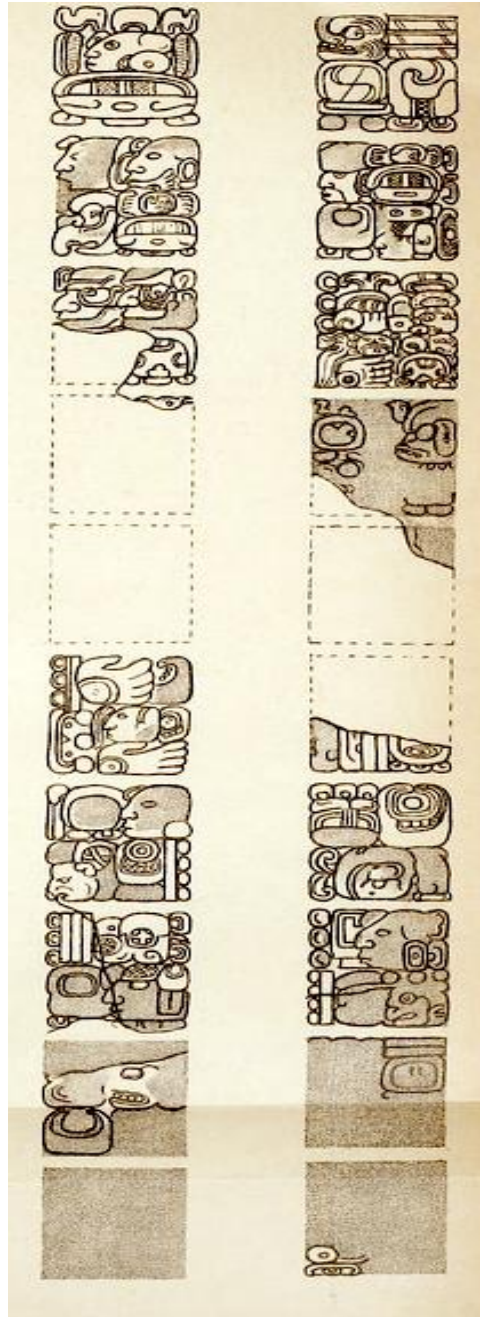


Figure 2.6. Morley's drawing of Copan Stela 5.

At two, I went to see Rafael Villamil's brother, José, who has been sick for 26 days with a fever, which has every symptom of typhoid. He is very thin, of course, but his eyes retain a clear bright look, and as the fever has left him, he seems to be on the road to recovery.

I packed in the afternoon. About four, John and I went down to the ruins simply to sentimentalize. We stopped a moment by [John] Owens' grave [Figure 2.7; Rice and Ward 2021: 208n127], saw several stelae, and wound up in the Court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway, that scene of utter desolation. I bid goodbye to it all with more regret than before. It is to me the most wonderful site in the Maya area, and I never leave it without intense regret that the hour of goodbye has at last come.



Figure 2.7. John Owens' grave in 1918. Morley paid homage to the grave site on each of his visits to Copan.

We had a shower bath on returning to the *cabildo* and felt correspondingly at peace with the world. After dinner, I was indeed *muy ocupado* [very busy] paying my bills. Doña Julia sent around her *cuenta* [bill; account] by Andrew, as also the Turco and don Rafael. I myself looked up don Tobias, the *alcalde*, who called don Jacobo, the *tesorero* [treasurer], and the three of us went into executive session in the *cabildo*, and sat down to arrange my account.

It was the annual ceremony, and we all played up to our respective parts *con amore*. Don Jacobo fetched the tome of regulations, and read how strangers visiting the ruins were to pay

ten dollars (silver) per visit. Then my scientific character was urged in my behalf, and finally a compromise was effected. This year I paid \$25.00 gold for the privilege of visiting the ruins, and in addition gave a gift of \$10.00 toward the completion of the new church, which is now all roofed in and only awaiting the interior finish. The flickering lantern on the white-washed wall, old don Tobias reading through his gold specs, don Jacobo sagely wagging his head, and a single, bright-eyed, dirty, little waif of four or five who had strayed in to see the proceedings, made a weird picture, of which I, in my dirty khaki, unshaven and unshorn, was not the least incongruous element.

By this time, I owed a great deal in silver—more than I had, so we all repaired to don Rafael's store, where he changed some of my gold into silver and liquidated my several obligations. After this, we held an open reception at our end of the *cabildo*, and the room was full of people, examining our books and things. Poor Carlos Martínez was there, inebriated to the point of incoherency. He was full of talk, but alas! The words would not come, and all he could do was to roll his eyes and wave his arms in a most melancholy manner. I fear he will be too under the weather to accompany us tomorrow.

Just before bedtime, I bought a beautiful painted vase, with conventionalized glyphs and heads of God D. It was cheap at five pesos, though I probably could have had it cheaper. We were getting very tired with the din and odors and confusion, and as it was close on to ten, we finally shooed them all out, closed our doors, and went to bed.

## Monday, May 21

John was aroused with difficulty as usual, but I finally got him up and we had breakfast. We were all ready, except Carlos Martínez, whom no one had seen. It was nearly eight, and so we finally got off without him. We felt he must be sleeping off the effects of his potations of the night before, somewhere. He was not home, as I had already gone up there.

John and I set out ahead, with instructions to Andrew to follow with the *mulada* and Carlos, if the latter could be found. Our road lay up the Copan Valley, a succession of low hills in the valley floor. Great festoons of Spanish moss garlanded the trees, and now and then bursts of fragrance swept over the road.

Moving along with some speed, we reached Santa Rita in about two hours and found the village *en fiesta*. The plaza was filled with little tent-booths and wooden stands, at which a variety of objects were being exposed for sale: pink *refrescos* [soft drinks], white *refrescos*, red *refrescos*, tortillas, frijoles, meat very freshly killed, things to wear—lace, *rebolsas* [shawls] of silk and terrific color—pottery, candy, honey, even an instantaneous photograph gallery.

The fiesta was just opening, so the excitement had not reached the point of drunkenness. I asked about Pedro Meléndez<sup>10</sup> from the *alcalde*, who turned out to be his father-in-law, don Jacinto. He told us the moribund child was no more—whooping cough—and that they were then on the point of burying it and that Pedro could not go until the next day. This ill-suited our more or less hurried schedule, so I thought even in the face of death I would intrude myself at least so far as to find out if we could not get off in the late afternoon.

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<sup>10</sup> Morley often refers to Pedro Meléndez and Pedro Meléndrez; we have standardized this name as Meléndez.

The house of death was filled with people and several musicians tuning up guitars and mandolins. The coffin, a tiny pink box of suggestive shade, stood in the corner of the room under a canopy of pale blue silk with candles burning in front. There was little of the appearance of grief usual to the occasion at home, no lowering of the voice or sadness of expression. Perhaps all regarded it as a relief from greater suffering.

Seeing that nothing was to be done then—indeed, the interment was about to take place—I drifted over to the church, a large and commodious new construction, reflecting the general prosperity of the region. It was as yet bare inside, but cool and dark and a relief against the blinding light outside. Two old Indian virgins were preparing a canopy for the Virgin, and differed considerably over the form the decorations should take—whether yellow, blue, or pink cheesecloth. The matter was finally adjusted only when they discovered there was only enough of the yellow to go ‘round.

But there was work for me to do, so I did not stay long. When I was here last year, I discovered and drew Stela 23, all but one side, which I now found time to do [Figure 2.8]. Last year I had paid the city fathers to carry the several pieces of the monument into the *cabildo*, but I found it in the road, just where I had left it last year.

I drew the glyphs on the remaining side and made a few notes on the front, which is unique for Copan in having the principal human figure shown in side presentation. While I was doing this, Andrew and Damian came up with the pack mules, but no Carlos Martínez. I had Andrew send a telegram to don Tobias at Copan to send Carlos on immediately if he could be found.

I again returned to Pedro’s house after I finished my drawing. The funeral was over and the house approaching its normal condition. Pedro would go about one o’clock, i.e., after breakfast, which he said we could take at his house. It was then getting on for noon, and while it was being got ready, John and I return to don Jacinto’s, where we found Carlos, who apparently had dropped from the sky and was not the worse for his debauch of last night. Also at don Jacinto’s were two pretty *señoritas*, the school mistress of the village and a friend. The former struck my eye, the latter John’s. The *maestra* had a well-shod foot, a noticeable point in the land of sandals, and a well-turned ankle, to say nothing of other attractions. Some line of her ancestry had crossed to Africa, but the *tout-ensemble* was remote from that particular forbear.

After Andrew and Damian had breakfast, we sent them ahead with Carlos and the pack-train, and we followed with Pedro about an hour later. Bidding goodbye to don Jacinto and the two attractive *señoritas*, we set off with Pedro about one.

At first, the road lay in the valley; presently, however, it began to climb among the foothills and, after two hours going, we climbed around a fairly high mountain and had reached the *finca* of San Felipe, the property of Pedro Meléndez’ father-in-law. Indeed, we found later the latter owned most of the upper reaches of the Copan valley. San Felipe was an unhappy place. Two toothless old hags appeared to preside over its doubtful destinies, and when questioned as to corn, beans, *zacate*, fruit, tortillas, returned on unvarying answer: “*no hay*.” Of course, Pedro wanted to stop here [so he] painted the ruins as destitute of everything, but so was San Felipe also, and at length we prevailed upon him to go on.

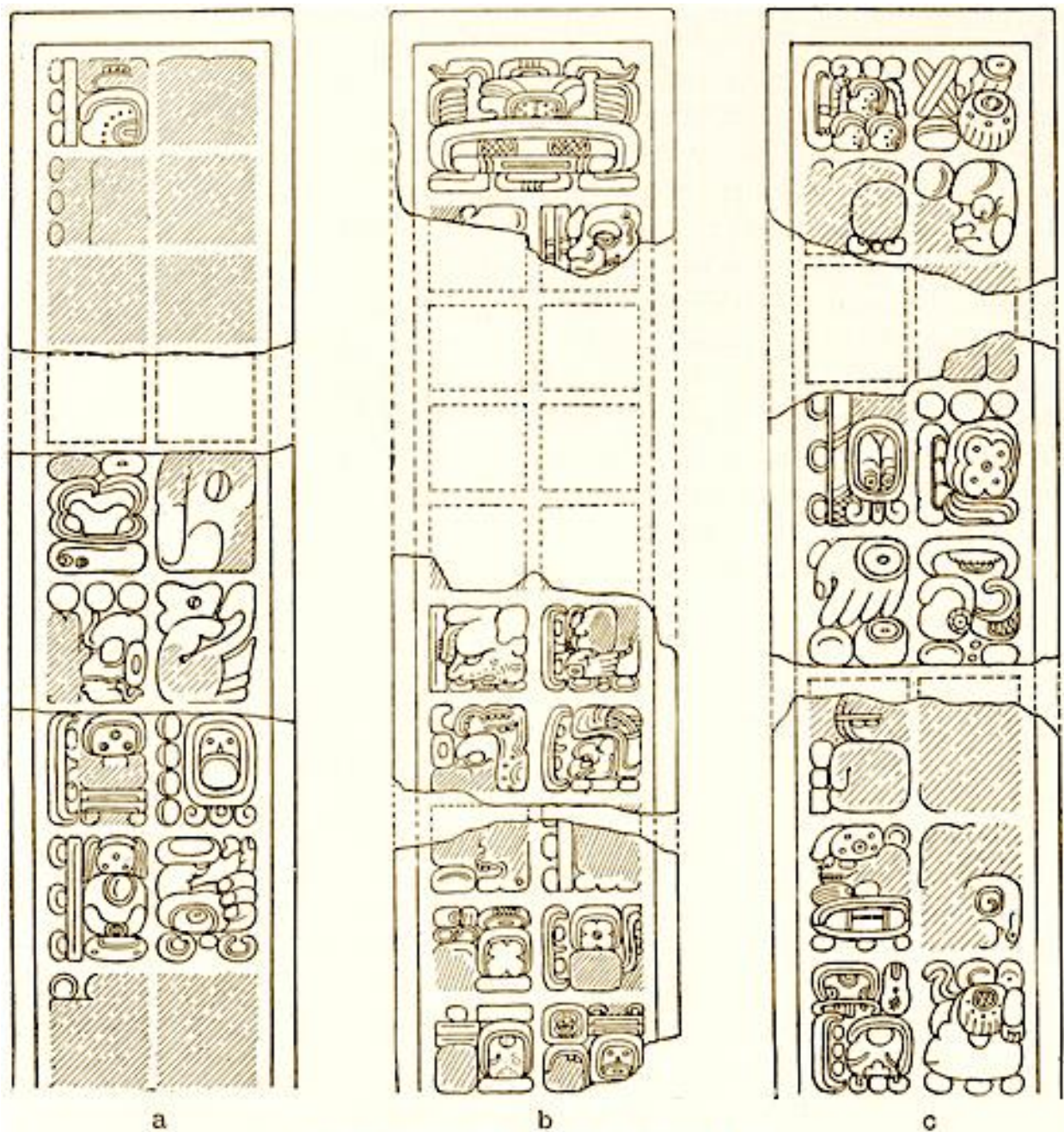


FIG. 26.—Inscription on Stela 23: *a*, *c*, sides; *b*, back.

Figure 2.8. Morley's drawing of Copan Stela 23.

The ruins [of Río Amarillo] lay about a league beyond. We first descended the mountain and then wound through the Copan valley in a second-growth thicket. After a league of this, we emerged at the river once more and prepared camp on the banks of a small tributary.

While Andrew and Damian were preparing camp, John, Carlos, Pedro, and I crossed the

river and explored the ruins, which are located at the foot of a hill facing west.<sup>11</sup> They guided me to an artificial terrace facing the river and there on the slope lay a part of an altar with glyphs on two alternate faces [Río Amarillo Altar 2]. These were covered with velvety green moss and carried me back to Quirigua days, when those tall shafts of stone, intricately carved, were covered with a pall of emerald green velvet. Unfortunately, of the three glyphs present, none records a date, although the first is the day Ajaw.

The other altar they showed me is almost perfect, about 2½ feet square and a foot high with glyphs on all four sides [Río Amarillo Altar 1]. The sun was already throwing long, slanting shadows through the forest when we reached this, and in the limited time before dusk fell, I was unable to find a date. Indeed, I fear there is none. The importance of the discovery cannot be overestimated in spite of this lack, however, as Río Amarillo is a new Maya city, and in a new place. Theoretically, ever since the identification of Paraíso as a Maya site, its existence may be said to have been anticipated, but today brings actual discovery.<sup>12</sup> While I was rubbing the moss off the glyphs, John tramped over the hill behind, returning full of stories and ticks.

We returned to camp at dusk and found Andrew had dinner ready. Camp is in an ideal location in a half-open savanna on the bank of a small stream. Opposite, two graceful clumps of bamboo give almost a stagey tropical setting. Because of thunder, we put up the tarp after dinner, under which we all slept but Damian. There were many bulls in the savanna, and we rather expected visitors, but we were too tired to stay awake for them, and after anointing our several bites with iodine, John and I turned in. The boys were already rolled in their blankets, and the crickets in the bush croaked us to sleep.

## Tuesday, May 22

It didn't rain, of course, because we had the tarp up. Andrew fried some good, smelly, honest-to-God, American bacon, as much a delight to nostril as to palate, and we breakfasted like kings. The boys saddled the horses, and we set out for the ruins, everybody but Andrew, who stayed to clean up camp.

My work was cut out for me, drawing the inscriptions on the two altars. Damian stayed with me to scrub the faces of these two monuments, whilst Carlos and Pedro set off to look for others. I had offered an additional *premio* [prize, award] of 5 pesos per monument for every one they found, and they were keen for the chase. John, who was going to make a sketch map of the site (Figure 2.9), went off to do some preliminary looking about.

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<sup>11</sup> Río Amarillo lies at the foot of Cerro Canteado in one of two alluvial pockets of the upper Río Copán (known as Río Amarillo), north-northeast of the main Copán ruins. Recent excavations revealed that it was not a Late Classic colony of Copan but rather an "early contemporary," with a "strong tendency toward emulating Copán architectural sculpture style, motifs, and ideology at the highest social stratum" (Saturno 2000: 90).

<sup>12</sup> Morley's mention of Paraíso here is to place Río Amarillo in the context of the extensive secondary sites in the vicinity of Copan, effectively distant "suburbs." Unfortunately, unlike Río Amarillo, Paraíso has largely been destroyed by a modern town built directly atop the ruins.

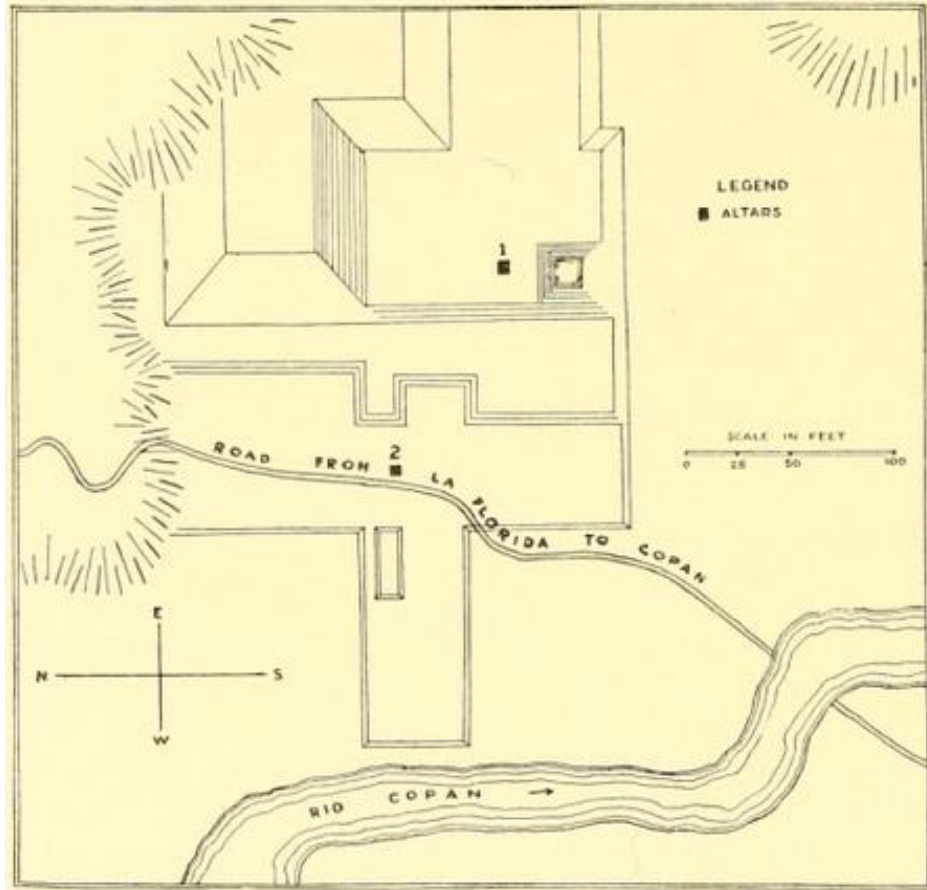


Figure 2.9. Morley’s (Held’s) map of Río Amarillo showing the location of the two altars. The site is much larger than Morley—whose interest was largely confined to inscriptions—saw and mapped, with seven plazas featuring monumental construction of dressed stone and cobbles, vaulted masonry, and a mosaic mask (Saturno 2000). Commoner settlement was surprisingly low, found primarily east of the ruins. Today, Río Amarillo is a small archaeological park.

I squatted down among the *garrapatas*, ants, and what not and started work [Figure 2.10]. I can account for myself best by saying here I squatted for the next five hours, drawing the inscriptions on the three best preserved faces of the altars. There are three glyph blocks on a side and four glyphs to a glyph block, so I did 36 glyphs in all before lunch. During the course of the morning, Carlos and Pedro returned very much crestfallen, reporting *no hay más*. They sat around and slept for the rest of the morning. When John was ready to make his map, he sent Damian over for Andrew to come and help him, as he is the only one of our entourage who speaks English besides ourselves.

I didn’t finish the third side of my altar [Figure 2.11] until a quarter of one, when John and I returned to camp whither all the others had preceded us.

Camp was struck, the kayaks packed, the mules saddled, all waiting for us to eat and depart. I did this hastily as I had more work to do at the ruins before leaving them. I paid off Carlos Martínez, who with many expressions of goodwill, godspeeds, and the thousand felicitations these Latins know so well how to wish one, he finally got off.

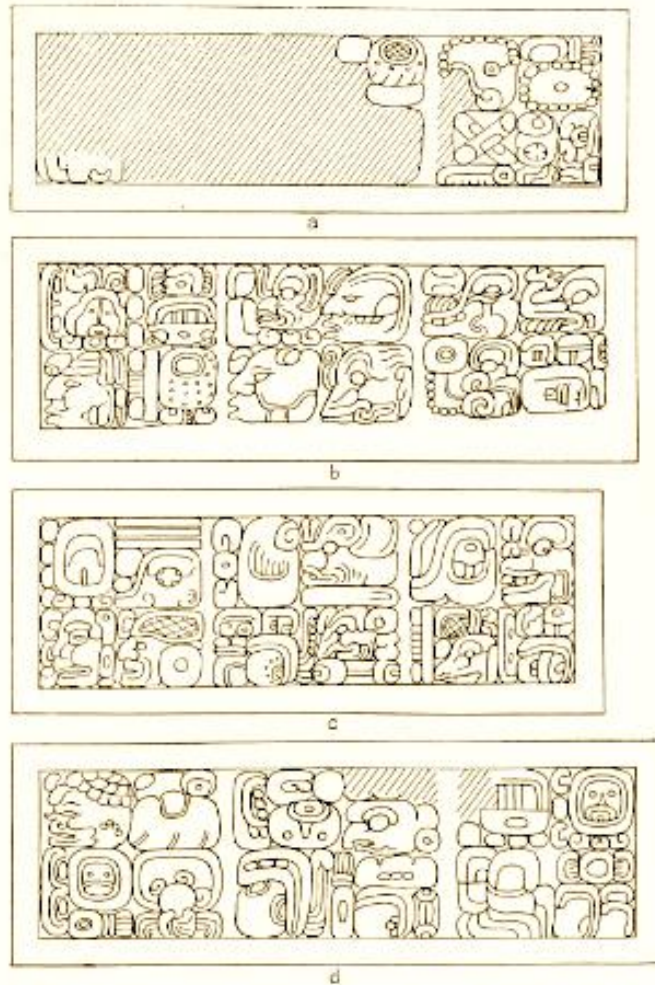


FIG. 59.—Inscription on four sides of Altar 1 at Río Amarillo.

Figure 2.10. Morley's drawing of Río Amarillo Altar 1.



Figure 2.11. Río Amarillo Altar 1 with John Held or Morley sitting on the side.



I retained Pedro to guide us to Río Amarillo, a league farther on, where our backwoods trail joined the *camino real* [lit. royal road] with which Damian was familiar. He picked up a *paisano*, however, who undertook to put us on the *camino real*, so I paid Pedro off and gave him the parting injunction to keep his eye peeled for ruins and *pedras dibujadas* [carved stones]. I hurried over to the ruins and had finished drawing the fourth side of my altar and started on the fragment of the other before the *mulada* came up. I held them for a few minutes only, and soon we all set off.

The ruins are about a league from the *camino real*, our *picado* [trail] leading through second-growth thickets and cattle *potreros* [pastures]. At the *camino real* our impromptu guide left us and, turning west, we commenced to ascend. Up, up, up we went, sometimes we would drop over a ridge and lose a few hundred feet, but always on the other side we would more than make it up. We could see that we were beginning to cross the divide between the Motagua and Chamelecón<sup>13</sup> [river] drainages, and that it was a matter of several thousands of feet.

The trail for the most part disdained zig-zagging up these steep slopes, but we took them like good old southern gentlemen—straight. If we saw a ridge ahead, all we had to do was to look for the highest peak, and presently find our trail heading straight therefor. The reason for this apparent defiance of the laws of gravity is due to the fact that circling or zig-zagging trails wash out during the rains, and the only kind that last are those that go straight up. Another interesting point was the fact that as we went higher we passed out of the zone of pines and evergreens into a dense tropical jungle. The only way I could explain this was that the higher parts of the divide condense more moisture and have a greater precipitation.

Many wonderful fragrances were with us all afternoon, and in the cool forest depths it was like another world, the kind of wood Red Riding Hood met wolves in. Steep as were these higher slopes of the divide, we found them cultivated to their very summits. *Milpas* and tobacco fields clung to the steep hillsides by capillary attraction—nothing less would have held them. Our objective for the night was a place called Las Mesas, owned by one Eleuterio Chacón, to whom Pedro Meléndez had given me a very laconic letter of recommendation: “My dear friend, this will recommend to you Señor Silvano Morley. Health. P. Meléndez.”

Toward the close of the afternoon, some 4½ leagues going, we toiled over a particularly high ridge and, rounding an elbow of the range, spied Eleuterio’s place perched upon a little mesa. The house itself stood on the summit of this little bench, from which the land sloped on every side save one, that on which our trail for the morrow led up. Don Eleuterio’s daughter met us at the door, and told us her father was ill with the toothache, but that I could go in. The don lay on a bed of poles, his head swathed in a checkered shawl. I made myself known to him and handed him Pedro’s letter, which he read with many groans. He wore a drooping moustache, scraggly beard, and was lop-sided as to his face at the time. His eyes, poor devil, looked sleepless and he punctuated every remark with a sepulchral groan. His house, such as it was, was ours, but I immediately elected to sleep outside though the sky appeared threatening.

Every moment new children and new animals appeared to boil out of the house, and the

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<sup>13</sup> The Río Chamelecón is a 200 km-long river in northern Honduras, paralleling the Motagua in Guatemala but separated from it by mountains. Originating near Copan, it flows northeastward to the Caribbean Sea, its lower floodplain susceptible to heavy flooding during the rainy season.

Ark could have contained no more numerous or heterogeneous a collection. If all of these were to find shelter within, it was the without for mine. John was with me here, so we had the boys put up our cots and the table outside. Here we disputed with cattle, pigs, mules, dogs, chickens, and ducks for standing room. It was a noisome spot over-cluttered with the offal of these creatures, though thank God, the view was beautiful.

Supper under these conditions was rather trying. The table was rooted in manure, and I felt sure bumper crops could have been raised anywhere on the knob without further intensive cultivation than sowing. We ate in haste and disgust, glad when the more immediate pangs of hunger were appeased to postpone satisfying the rest. By this time the sky had grown so threatening that rain before morning was at even money. Mosquitoes and other vermin were 100 to 1 against the field, so we put up our *pabellones*—hot, close affairs, but comparatively bug proof. After iodine ablutions to ward off [indistinct] in the toenails, we crawled under the *pabellones* to reflect and itch and scratch.

Don Eleuterio groaned dismally from time to time, and cattle munching and pigs grunching—the word is based on onomatopoeia—effectively prevented sleep until long into the night.

### **Wednesday, May 23**

Early, about 4:30, John was awakened by grunching pigs and, soon after, Damian came up to say one of the mules had broken his tie and escaped. He saddled one of the riding animals and went off in the dark. I was just preparing to snatch a few minutes sleep when the rain began to fall quite suddenly and earnestly. John, who was more out in the open than myself, felt it first and was soon drenched. His lamentations were scarcely begun when a small lake forming in the middle of my bed aroused me to a sense of my own discomfort. Crouching under the eaves, I began to dress and was soon well drenched. The *mesa* and house, by this time, presented a forlorn appearance. All around us and below were gray drizzling clouds, the knoll was awash, muddy and filthy, whilst the house continued to debouch more animals and children, new ones apparently made over night. Cats, several litters, and pigeons were now added to the menagerie.

Andrew had moved the table under the portal, which leaked badly, and here amongst the livestock, we ate breakfast. Don Eleuterio, swathed in his checkered shawl, appeared and ventured the opinion that it would rain all day. Though he was suffering acutely from an ulcerated tooth, he stood around in bare feet on the muddy floor of the portal. I gave him a stiff *trago* of Johnny Walker [scotch whisky] and advised him to go around shod. Meanwhile, Damian had returned with the strayed mule and had commenced to load. The rain abated a little, and we set off.

The trail immediately started straight up the mountain and, with the rain, gave us all we could do to keep our animals from slipping. We now set about the conquest of the divide in earnest. Yesterday was nothing. The forest, dripping and dank, swallowed the trail, which was nothing but a thread of stones. We left below us many *milpas* and after an hour's stiff climbing, reached the summit, marked by a cross, and commenced to descend into the Chamelecón drainage. The rain stopped, and from the top we caught a wonderful view of succeeding blue ranges, stretching out toward the plains of the Chamelecón.

It was some little ride to the first settlement on the other side, Agua Mal, where I inquired the leagues to La Florida. A pretty girl of mixed parentage told me 3. By this time the sun had come out and began to shine fiercely. The country on this side of the divide is practically all cleared and under cultivation. We passed many little *aldeas* and gradually worked out of the high hills toward the valley of the Chamelecón, now spreading before us.

When we were a league out of La Florida, about one, John and I decided to go on ahead. We left the boys behind and came on more rapidly. The trail forked presently, and taking the left branch, by far the better travelled, we went astray. After going for a mile straight down, a man overtook us, sent on by the thoughtful Andrew, who told us we were on the road to San Antonio, about a league off from La Florida. It was either a question of climbing back up to the fork or going on with a detour. We chose the latter. The *mozo* offered to guide us and we continued down the mountain and across the Chamelecón, here a small stream.

We wound up the other side and for nearly an hour wandered through low foothills over impossible rim-rock trails, little more than cattle runs. Suddenly these parted and we saw La Florida just before us, a lovely little village of white houses and red-tiled roofs, spread over a grassy savanna where many well-nourished cattle were quietly browsing. The usual *barranca* separated us from the town, however, and we had to wind down its steep sides and back up beyond before we rode into the plaza.

Our first question was for don Carlos Cosman, a Dutch Jew to whom Sam [Lothrop?] had given me a letter. He invited us into his general store, introduced his wife and one child, a little girl of five, and presently to the other, 3 years old, who was ill with scarlet fever at the moment. We were ushered into the sick room and all sat down to pass the time of day. Sam had told me Mrs. C. wore the trousers, and it seemed rather so. They offered us their spare room and corridor, but we felt we'd better have a room to ourselves elsewhere. After resting a little, we went over to the *cabildo*. On the way thither, a kindly carpenter divested us of our spurs and pistols, to have carried which into the sacred precincts of the *cabildo* would have entailed a fine. I had quite forgotten this point, although I paid a fine of 5 pesos for the same offense at Copan three years ago.

At the *cabildo* our relations were pleasantly established. Owing to the severance of relations with Germany, Honduras is now in a state of martial law, and our passports were requested. Having established our identity and honorability of intentions, they sent a telegram to the capital and gave us the freedom of the place. I asked if they could give us a room to sleep in, and they gave us one half of the school for girls, requesting quiet when the school was in session. The *cabildo mozo* took us thither, and soon the boys had the mules unpacked and our effects stored inside. The room had a tiled floor, high tiled roof, several windows, and three outside doors. Fresh pine needles were strewn about the floor, and we were very comfortable.

In the late afternoon, Carlos Cosman took us down to the Chamelecón for a bath. The river is just over a low hill from the town, and its cool, clear water was very soothing to our burning bodies. Our posteriors are suffering from a complication of complaints including saddle sores, hemorrhoids, *garrapata*, flea, and other bites.

Not forgetting the business in hand, I asked Carlos C. about Booth's<sup>14</sup> alleged stela at Los

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<sup>14</sup> Basil Booth, a mahogany contractor based in Guatemala.

Higos, and he said he would accompany us thither himself tomorrow. He knows a man there, Felipe Contreras, who worked for Booth, and Booth himself suggested my getting one of his old workmen. The outlook is encouraging, always providing Booth would recognize a hieroglyphic inscription if he saw one.

The *señora* opposite our *casa* is cooking our meals for us. Her provender, plus the supplies we brought with us and a few things we gathered in at Carlos', are very satisfactory. We opened three different kinds of pickles in a vinegar debauch. Things that bite the palate are almost a necessity in this land of starch diet, rice, corn, beans.

After supper, in spite of our caller, Carlos Cosman, I fell off to sleep promptly. About eight o'clock I awoke with a second wind, came out and spelled John, who turned in for the balance of the night. Later, Melesias Caravel, the engineer from Santa Rosa whom I met at Copan two years ago, came in, and we talked over the ruins until after ten.

### Thursday, May 24

An eventful, surprising, and extremely satisfying day! We were up early. Damian had the mules up and saddled, and Carlos C. was ready by 7:30. Our road lay to the northeast across the Chamelecón valley. The savannas are covered with rich thick grass and all the cattle we saw were fat. A German, don Guillermo, owned the first *finca* though which we passed, La Jigua, and if the duty on beef is ever removed at home, he stands to make a bonanza.

After four miles of this savanna going, our trail wound up into the foothills, where for another four miles we crossed many little, low, volcanic ridges composed of volcanic tuff. It was about nine when we espied the little village of La Entrada perched on the crest of one such [ridge] among the pines, and ten when we finally reached there.

The Contreras "boy," really a man, recalled the sculptured stone perfectly and said he could lead us right to it. It was really too much luck and I feared either he was lying, a not remote possibility in these parts, or else the monument really did not contain a hieroglyphic inscription. He seemed very definite about its having "*letras atras*," however. The lands of the village were being distributed and he was on duty, but Carlos knew the *alcalde* and secured his release for the day. We had some very strong coffee, sweet biscuit, and jelly at the village, and then started for the monument, which the guide said was about a league distant.

La Entrada is in the foothills on the east side of the valley. Our trail led down to the river almost directly, passing the old *finca* of Los Higos. The land has all probably been cleared of the virgin forest, but it has grown up now in high second-growth bush. Passing north of the *finca*, we came to the Chamelecón, forded it, and continued bearing somewhat downstream on the left, i.e., west bank. The west bank is all cleared and it must have been a quarter of a mile before the forest growth began. Into this we turned, near a tobacco field with a thatched hut at one side, and after another quarter mile came out on a *milpa* at the back of which you could see a row of mounds surmounting a terrace. The trail led over these, and the guide said the stone was just behind the high pyramid on our right as we faced the hills. We clambered over the terrace made of the same water-worn pebbles as at Quirigua, plunged into the dense bush, and not one hundred feet from the edge of the clearing was the monument.

I was beside myself. An instant's glance told me I had a beautiful example of Maya art of the Great Period, and a hurried study of the date in the next few minutes showed me that it

dated from K'atun 17 (approximately 500 to 520 AD) [AD 751–771 GMT; Los Higos Stela 1]. Such a slender clue culminating so unexpectedly—for I had hardly dared to hope Booth could be right—was too much good luck, and in spite of the heat and insects and other discomforts of the moment, my satisfaction was complete. Here was a good half a day's work cut out for me drawing the inscription [Figure 2.12], and I could lose no time.

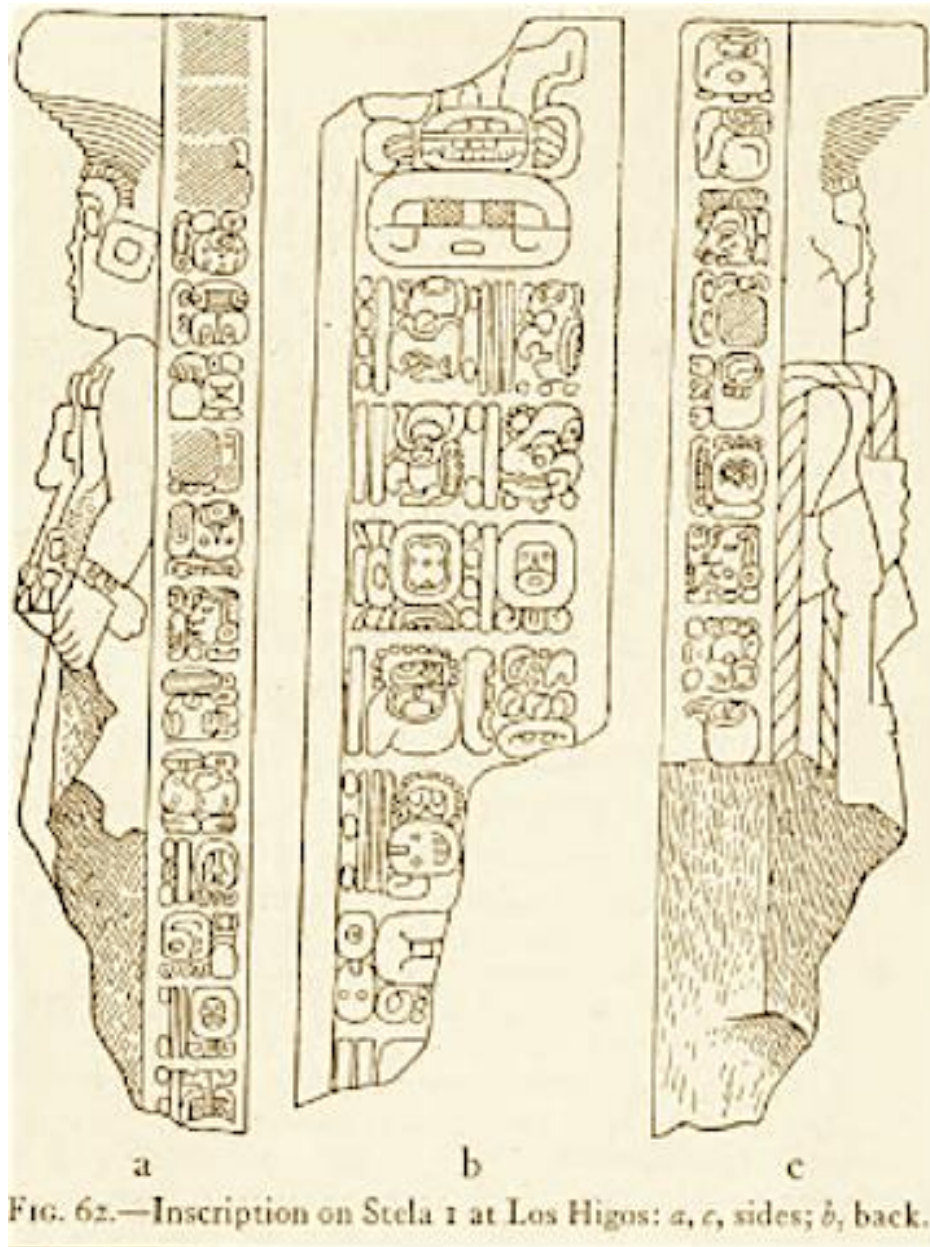


FIG. 62.—Inscription on Stela 1 at Los Higos: a, c, sides; b, back.

Figure 2.12. Morley's drawing of Los Higos Stela 1.

John set out with Carlos to look for other monuments, and I squatted among the *garrapatas* to draw this one. The initial Series date is 9.17.10.7.0 9 Ajaw (3 Tzek), the month being on the still missing bottom fragment. The contemporaneous date of the stela, however, is 9.17.10.0.0 12

Ajaw 8 Pax, just 100 days earlier. This corresponds to 510 A.D. [30 November AD 780 GMT]. There is a human figure on the front and glyphs on the back and sides. The figure has a turban-like headdress like the one on Stela B at Copan, and the glyph execution is free and round, and the relief deep like that of Stelae C, F, H, and 4 at Copan. Indeed, this monument dates from only 2 years earlier than F, H, and 4. The source of inspiration was clearly Copan, and the sculptors who did this monument were clearly under the artistic influence of the group who made the middle of K'atun 17 the richest period of art at Copan.

John shouted through the bush that he'd found something. I hurried over to where he was and he showed me a good torso, the head and arms being broken off. It was rough on back as though it had been tenoned into the wall. He was making his sketch map of the group [Figure 2.13] and I returned to the stela.

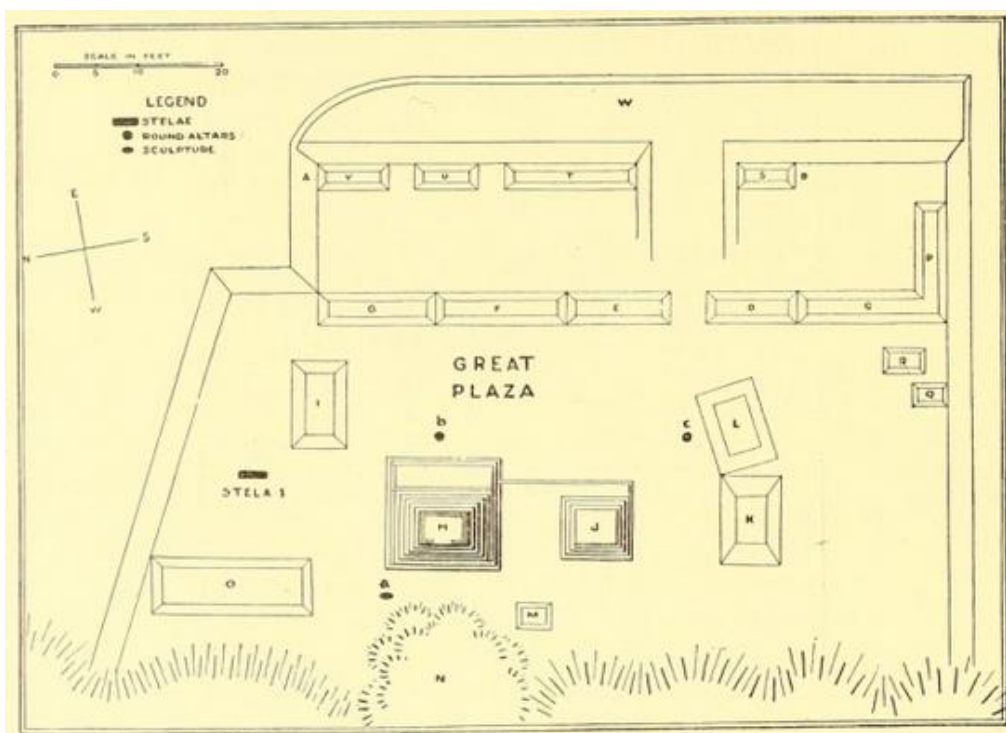


Figure 2.13. Held's map of Los Higos showing the location of Stela 1.

The salt bees, or flies,<sup>15</sup> were the worst I had ever seen. They swarm all over one for the NaCl in the perspiration. Death has no terrors for them and they stick until they are killed. These swarmed all over my hands, neck and face, wherever skin was exposed, and I could only draw by having the son of our guide, who had come along for the trip, wave a palm branch over my head. Very eastern potentately it sounds, but God knows it was different. No balsam of Araby or Nautch girls there, only *garrapatas*, heat, perspiration, and the maddening salt seekers.

Drawing under these circumstances was difficult. It could be accomplished, however, with

<sup>15</sup> More commonly known as "sweat bees," these are members of the family Halictidae, attracted to salt and found all over the world.

the aid of profanity and a patience that stripped one's nerves. John finished his sketch-map long before I did the glyphs, and he then drew the figure on the front of the monument. I commenced work at 11:40 and finished at four.

I photographed the inscription [Figure 2.14], but the heat was so intense that I doubt whether the result will be satisfactory. Carlos, in the meantime, had been searching for other monuments, but found none.



Figure 2.14. Los Higos Stela 1, with Carlos Cosman seated to the right.

We were at last ready to leave the city, which we called Los Higos after the old *finca* across the river of the same name. It was high time we were going if we were to get back to La Florida before dark. The shadows in the bush were lengthening, and the white light of the middle day already replaced by the golden glow of the late afternoon.

The archaeological importance of our discovery is not inconsiderable. It adds another link to the chain of cities on the eastern Maya frontier: Copan, Santa Rita, Rio Amarillo, Paraíso. And more important than any other of these save Copan and its suburb Santa Rita, it gives a date which makes possible its coordination with other old Empire sites.

By the date on this stela, we can see that the city was at its height during the height of the Great Period. Indeed, since Quirigua is also a Great Period site, we may perhaps venture the suggestion that this whole eastern region was colonized from Copan [but see note 11] about the end of the Middle Period, 9.15.0.0.0 or 460 A.D. [731 GMT].

Although it is perhaps premature to venture sweeping generalizations, I feel confident that a thorough exploration of the region east of the line joining Copan and Quirigua, as far perhaps as San Pedro Sula, would result in the discovery of new dateable Maya cities, which will be found to date chiefly, if not exclusively, from the Great Period.

We made our way back to the mules and, after crossing the river, paid off the guide. He put us on a short cut to La Florida, which left La Entrada to one side, so we did not again see that village. The ride back in the cool of the day was delightful and we got to the village just after dusk. After supper, I went up to Cosman's to pay my bill and arrange for a guide for the trip to San Pedro, and also a mule for Damian. He hurt his toe, cut it on a stone yesterday morning at Las Mesas chasing the straying mule, and we were afraid the long walk to Sula would lame him.

Don Melesio came in. Carlos opened some beer, John came down, and we spent a very pleasant evening. Don Melesio gave me lots of interesting points about Copan. It was a long day, but the archaeological results were so unexpected and so satisfactory that I lay awake on my cot for a long time speculating upon this new material and its possible relations to larger problems.

### **Friday, May 25**

#### **8¾ hours on the way**

We rose at 5 o'clock sharp, anticipating an early start against the thirty-mile day ahead of us into Chiquila. Instead, we got off at 8:30, the latest start we've yet made—a good example of how plans as well as men often "gang aglae" in the tropics.<sup>16</sup> The delay was due to recalcitrancy on the part of our mules, which refused to be caught when Damian went to the *potrero* for them. We bade goodbye to all our friends, including the little scarlet fever lady, and set off over the same trail as yesterday. This did not continue for more than a league, for instead of passing into the foothills, our trail kept down in the valley bottom, and finally, at two leagues from La Florida, we crossed the bridge over the Chamelecón and turned into the foothills.

At first this was pleasant going, big pine trees with grassy stretches beneath, but later we had climbed out of this zone into one of bare blistering rock that burned in the white heat until one reeled in the saddle. There was a great deal of this until we came to Piedra Pintada, when we began to descend a valley buried deep in tropical vegetation, where parrot, macaw, and monkey abounded. When we finally were out of this valley into the main valley of the Chamelecón, we had done 6 out of 10 leagues and were at La Colina, where we thought to eat breakfast.

The valley is wide and well cleared here, and the house rises from the summit of a low hill, hence the name. The building has two stories, porches on both, and a corrugated iron roof. It was cut, moreover, on quasi-American lines and created the feeling in us of boundless hospitality. Our chagrin, therefore, was all the greater when the woman told us there was nothing we could buy. An English-speaking Honduran carpenter told us the foreman was absent and the woman in the kitchen dared sell us nothing. With his help, however, we got a cup of coffee presently, and this, with our crackers and cheese, made our frugal repast. And José Villamil had recommended me to stop at La Colina over night!

We got off as soon as I'd paid for the coffee. At first, the road led through the valley plain, but later we went up into heavy, jungle-covered hills. Many *milpas* had been cleared on these

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<sup>16</sup> A term popularized by Robert Burns in his poem, *To A Mouse*: "The best-laid plans of mice an' men / Gang aft agley," meaning that plans have gone awry.



steep slopes, some of which were still burning as we passed by. Evidently the trail here is subjected to great washing, as elaborate care has been taken to build it in with rock laid between poles. After 8¼ hours in the saddle, not counting the half hour out for lunch at La Colina, we reached Chiquila, a straggling *aldea* of some 15 or 20 houses.

The woman who usually puts up travellers had just rented her house to a newcomer, to whom she referred us. This one appeared to be at least half white, if German descent on the male side can be called that. She had two sisters who also looked Teutonic. In spite of this heavy drawback, however, we were able to make satisfactory arrangements for supper and breakfast. After these important preliminaries were over, John and I went down to the river to bathe. Río de Oro, I think they called it. Anyhow, it was a reddish gold in color now because of recent rains. I selected a pleasant stone on the bank and was half way undressed when some women began washing about 100 feet from me. John, more modest than I, beat a hasty retreat. It seemed to me that I had prior rights. The ladies saw me in the semi-altogether and did not see fit to retire, so I went on and bathed. The operation, so far as I could judge at the distance, causing no other than great levity, certainly not embarrassment.

I dropped my revolver in the water too, for which I was sorry. Supper was ready when we returned to the village. And such a *comida* [meal]. I've never tasted such delicious pickled onions. As usual, we disputed our right to eat it with chickens, dogs, and pigs.

Our outfit was put under a *galerón* [shed-like roof], but it was so full of pigs, *garrapatas*, chickens, fleas, dogs, itinerant mules, and cows that John and I elected to sleep outside. It was a lovely night, the new moon a perfect water-holding crescent with no signs of rain. Andrew spread the ground cloth between the two cots.

In the evening, we gave a gramophone concert in the open air, to which I should judge the entire village turned out *en masse*. We only have six records, fortunately all double-faced, and these we played over twice until our landlady sent out about a dozen more. To our surprise, Sousa's "Washington Post"<sup>17</sup> was among them. John and I took turns operating the machine until Andrew finally worked into the game. It was picturesque. The little sardine box of our Columbia [record player] resting on the table, and perhaps 30 people, men, women, and children, clustered around seated on the ground. All—men, women, and children—smoked big, fat cigars. It looked like a bank of fireflies as they puffed and puffed in the dark. One of the boys had worked for me at Copan two years before, and he brought me a present of cigars and said he would return with me to Copan whenever I wanted him.

The concert was finally over and the audience dispersed. John and I undressed in the light of the stars, and after giving ourselves the once over with the electric lamp and touching up the new places with iodine, we turned in. The munching of our mules and the occasional altercations of pigs in the immediate vicinity were not soporific, and it was some time before I finally dozed off.

## **Saturday, May 26**

### **8¼ hours on the way**

We arose early. John reported little sleep. To begin with, a mule lay down at the top of his cot

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<sup>17</sup> The *Washington Post March*, composed by John Philip Sousa in 1889.

and commenced to scratching his back against the cot. This awakened John, who awakened me with his profanity. He accused the mule of canine parentage on the distaff side, and when this commotion had subsided, a pig tried to eat his hair or something and he waxed profane again. Altogether it was hardly a peaceful night, and I was glad to get up in the early morning.

Our nice Germanic Honduran hostesses had a good *desayuno* [breakfast] and we got an early start. John and I tarried for a few moments to photograph the house and family. Our road had to wind itself out of the foothills which it took a long time doing, all morning in fact. Soon after we had started, Angel killed a snake. By the shape of its head I judged it to be one of the pit vipers, Lachesis family. He said it was *muy mala*.

A well-favored Honduran overtook us later in the morning, whom I engaged in conversations. He was from Gracias and was on his way to visit his brother-in-law, the *jefe político* and governor at San Pedro Sula, Department of Cortés. We talked of the war, of his home, of ruins, and the country in general. He claims Gracias is older than Antigua, Guatemala, but I doubt it somehow. The point is easily verifiable, no doubt.<sup>18</sup>

The road continued very hot and a little dusty, winding over interminable foothills of sparse pine, and the sun growing whiter and whiter and whiter. Toward noon we began to climb a lowish range of hills, and on the other side saw a broad, broad valley, which we judged to be that of our long lost Chamelecón.

About one—John and I were ahead—we espied a village in the center of the plain, which was Quimistán. There was a delightful old church with a tiled roof and stucco façade of the Colonial period, which I photographed and then went to the *cabildo*. We showed our passports, which were approved in due course, and then went in search of a belated lunch. We were supposed to have done six leagues, which had taken us a little over 5 hours.

The lunch house was a store. The wife of the owner informed me in a deep masculine voice that she was the mother of 10 children, to which one could see an eleventh was very presently to be added. We ate our own food here—sardines, deviled ham, and crackers. The *señora* gave us some hot water and fed the boys, for which she charged the enormous sum of 4 *sols*, a truly extravagant price for the service rendered.

The heat here at Quimistán was quite the hottest I have seen it. The sun shone white and heat waves vibrated all over the plain. The light was blinding, cruel in its intensity, and there was not a breath of air stirring. Out of Quimistán, the road led across this white, dusty plain following the telegraph lines. Beyond, perhaps a league, we could see the hill that we had to climb and, after crossing two streams, the road began to go up. The ascent was gradual but long continued. After reaching one crest, we would find another beyond, and so it went. It is called four leagues from Quimistán to Santa Cruz, and we did it in shortly over three hours. After we had finally got up, the road wound down the other side and about five we reached Santa Cruz, our stopping place for the night.

We had heard of the fame of the Casa Tabla ever since leaving La Florida, and found it not exaggerated, comparatively considered. The house is raised from the ground, built of sawed lumber and sheet-iron roofed. We could have dinner, breakfast, night's lodging, and there was a bathable stream not far off. We extracted towels and soap and clean clothes from the kayaks

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<sup>18</sup> Gracias (Honduras) was founded in 1536; Antigua, Guatemala, in 1524.

and made off to the last mentioned. The stream was pretty *pobre*, but someone had dammed it at a narrow point and made a shallow, dirty bathing pool. We removed some dirt here, between the attacks of mosquitoes and an army of ants who were on the move. Poor as the bath was, it left us greatly refreshed, and we returned to the Casa Tabla at peace with the world and ready for a good dinner, which we found waiting for us.

In the evening I wrote and enjoyed the moonlight. We put our cots side by side on the porch. John's is in the last stages of disintegration, but with luck this should be the last night he has to use it. We turned in early against the long day—something between 11 and 12 leagues ahead of us tomorrow.

## **Sunday, May 27**

### **9 hours**

Five leagues to Cofradía, four leagues to Chamelecón, two leagues to San Pedro [Sula]—that was our *jornada* today. We got an early start at 6:30 a.m. and, in the cool of the morning, moved out onto the plain. Our hostess did not want to accept our American money, but as the *enceinte* [pregnant] *señora* at Quimistán yesterday had cleaned us out of the rest of our silver, she had to. The road was now a veritable *camino real*, with as many as 15 individual trails running side by side though the grass of the plain.

We passed many houses or little *aldeatas* and before noon passed through Cofradía, a straggling *aldea* the authorities of which did not ask to see our passports. Just beyond the village, the boys stopped for 15 minutes to adjust the cargo. The road now led across a broad valley overgrown for the most part with bush. We passed through the old Spanish town of Naco, a league beyond Cofradía, the same old Naco, or rather very near the Naco of [Hernán] Cortés's time, to which he came at the conclusion of that long and arduous trip from Mexico to the Gulf of Honduras.

The road wound up over some hills, and clinging to the side of a steep hill, finally rounded the same and we saw first the railroad bridge across the Chamelecón, later the Chamelecón itself, and knew we were again near civilization. Four leagues it had been since Cofradía.

The town is built of wood with corrugated iron roofs, and for the most part is unattractive. We finally succeeded in locating a *fonda* [inn], and sent Andrew out for some pineapples. The *fonda* was cool and a party of young people of both sexes was on the point of returning to San Pedro Sula. The train came in while we were eating, but we decided to finish the two remaining leagues on mule back. We did not wait for the boys to finish their lunch, but pushed on ahead of them into San Pedro. These last two leagues were through a beautiful valley, rich grazing land, where well-fed cattle fed to the point of corpulency. Our road was even shaded by a line of trees making a semi-arch overhead, and in the cool of this we rode slowly into San Pedro.

Just outside of town we met a shining new little Ford, the vehicle ubiquitous, and we knew then civilization—the world outside—must be just around the corner. The road developed into the principal business street of town, and we passed many wooden houses. In fact, almost all San Pedro is wood and corrugated iron, in which respect and also on account of its second story balconies, it reminded me of Belize not a little.

We were at first undecided just where to stop. Everyone said the International was the leading hotel, but that Bennett's, the American place, was better. We passed the International

and it looked very Latin America—filthy tables in the cantina, many bottles and beer signs, a general air of dirt and discomfort.

We retraced our steps to Bennett's Cantina, which we had passed first—we saw no signs of the hotel—and went in there for a cold limeade and information. A middle-aged American woman waited on us. I couldn't make out whether the cantina had a hotel attached or not, and she was very reticent about it. Later, it transpired she thought we were sort of tropical tramps. Heaven knows, I looked it—unshaven, dirty trousers and shirt. We got our limeade, however, and it was nectar, ambrosia, anything wonderful you want to call it. Imagine three iceless, fruitless weeks in a hot, alkali, dusty environment. Finally, she rented us two rooms, dark *triste* inside affairs. Said her son-in-law was out at a baseball game and would be back presently.

When she had gone downstairs, I began nosing around myself and located two empty outside corner rooms all screened in. I went back to the cantina and asked her if we could have them, and she replied doubtfully that they cost more money. I thought the tariff was probably not too steep, hardly a bridal or royal suite at the Plaza anyhow, and on being assured it was only 6 *sols* a day, we took the new rooms.

By this time the boys had arrived, our baggage was unpacked, taken up to our rooms, and everything arranged. John and I took a shower, got real clean, and he changed into purple and fine linen, the same for me being only exceedingly dirty khaki, and then sallied forth to see the town. I found out where Doctor Duarte lived and went up there. It was the same old Doctor, shaved now, a little thinner, but laughing and speaking his unspeakable English. His wife was a little fatter and a little more slatternly, but happier apparently. They had a long tale of woe to tell about Copan. Apparently, the doctor had been engaged in contraband, Rafael Villamil had "peached" on him, the local authorities had hauled him up, and though only dismissed with a reprimand, his little graft was gone. He was a competitor of Rafael's, hence the information. The wily little doctor didn't tell me all this himself; I only surmised the parts in which he figured to less advantage. For the most part he blackguarded Rafael roundly for his treachery and breach of friendship. *El hizo me muy mal* [he did me very bad]. We stayed late, until dusk, anyhow and then came back to the hotel for dinner.

Afterward, John and I walked up to the Plaza to hear the band concert. The music was a symphony of discords. The clarinet carried the air intermittently and at favored passages, particularly in the Poet and Peasant Overtures—the soloist *dacapoed*<sup>19</sup> his parts to taste.

We watched the crowd circling about the plaza, very mediocre for the most part, and after three numbers returned to the hotel to develop films. This was indeed a job. We had to mix developer, dry the tank, each time, wash the films, etc., etc. Toward the end our fixer grew very weak, indeed petered out altogether, and we had to let the last film go undeveloped. Some of the exposures came out great, particularly those of the Los Higos stela, which were the most important of all. Bennett's gave us some ice, otherwise it wouldn't have been possible at all. As it was, the emulsion is very soft and in some cases has even run some. I am only hoping that it will harden in drying without undue injury to the negatives.

I didn't get to bed until nearly one.

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<sup>19</sup> Da capo is an Italian opera term meaning "from the beginning," and often refers to a soloist performing with an orchestra.

## Monday, May 28

The first thing I did after breakfast was to find if there were any telegrams for me at Bennaton's, but *no hay*. The next was to change a draft and pay off Angel and Damian so they could start home. There is some scarcity of American money in the town, so we had to take *sols* in part. The boys were paid off as per agreement, and after many interchanges of good will, they set off with half cargoes of beer and oil for don Carlos Cosman at La Florida.

We searched for some of the fine Santa Barbara Panamas [hats], but couldn't find any. John bought a fairly good one for 9 *sols*, about 4 dollars, but it was not first class. We saw no others except two for 45 *sols* apiece, which was too high for the quality of the hat.

The American consul here is an old Doctor Mitchell who is reputed to have been in the country a thousand years. One of the first things he said was we'd have to have a permit from the Minister of War at Tegucigalpa before we could leave the country owing to the *estado de sitio*. We went over to the telegraph office, therefore, and wired in for the permits, and I also sent a telegram to Sánchez at the [Hotel] Imperial—Mrs. Craik not have been heard from—to send our baggage without fail.

Mitchell took us over to see the *jefe político*, a handsome young *Hondureño*, the brother-in-law of our friend of the road. We were ushered into the inevitable official chamber with rococo decorations. He was interested in the antiquities of his country and wished we were going to stay long enough for a thorough exploration of the region. We promised to make a drawing of his birthday glyph and bring it back in the afternoon. As the business of state was waiting, we did not tarry long, and I was glad to get away. These official calls are very heavy going: stilted Spanish, time-worn platitudes, and general atmosphere of unease.

After lunch I drew the *gobernador's* birthday glyph, and John got it up deluxe. It really looked very handsome. The lines were black and the background was a warm buff. Below the glyph was a little descriptive matter telling what it was. We took it over to him, and he seemed very pleased. After a brief stiff call, we bid them goodbye and came away. We spent the rest of the afternoon writing and drawing. Toward dinner, I went up to Doctor Duarte's to say goodbye. The little doctor himself was out, but the *señora* invited me in, and we had a long visit. Mostly a tale of woe on her part—how the doctor had really conferred a benefit on Zacapa by killing the lawyer whom he ambushed and for whose death he was then a fugitive from his native land. She described the brutality of the president not to extend him a pardon; how she was an only child and how her father pined for her. How her Tobias had lost only 2 cases out of 2,000 stricken with yellow fever, in short what an outrage it was to keep him out of his own home because of this trifling murder.

After this and much more, I was on the point of going when the doctor came in, and I had to stay on for a *limonada*. He wants me to get him permission to practice in Belize, hence all this lavish show of affection. I told him I would do what I could, but that I had no influence in the matter. I bid him goodbye and returned to the Bennett where my gourmandizing companion, no longer able to contain himself, had already commenced dinner.

I was very sleepy immediately afterward and went up to bed, but the children made so

much noise playing pussy-want-a-corner, that I came down again to see them.<sup>20</sup> The little boy is a young ruffian of four, already stronger than his sister of seven. His voice, though babyish, is husky and he is the personification of huskiness. He slid corners like a hardened base stealer and was as agile as a cat. His propensity for straying from his corner continually landed him in the center of the enclosure, but his speed and agility, actually a marvelous thing, quickly won him a corner.

We watched this until the children went to bed, and then, after a *limonada*, turned in ourselves.

### Itinerary during Lacuna, May 29–June 12

May 29, T.	Puerto Cortés, Hotel Palma
May 30, W.	U.F. Co. <i>Marowijne</i> between Cortés and Barrios
May 31, T.	“ “ “ Barrios and Belize
June 1, F.	Belize, Hospital
June 2, S.	“ “
June 3, S.	“ “
June 4, M.	U.F. Co. <i>Suriname</i> between Belize and Barrios
June 5, T.	Quirigua
June 6, W.	“
June 7, T.	Puerto Barrios. The Salvador earthquake.
June 8, F.	Guatemala City, Hotel Imperial
June 9, S.	“ “ “ “
June 10, S.	“ “ “ “
June 11, M.	“ “ “ “
June 12, T.	“ “ “ “

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<sup>20</sup> A variation on musical chairs, using the corners of a room as “seats.” The “out” player stands in the center of the room while the others occupy the corners. Upon a signal, each player must quickly move to another corner while the “out” player must try to capture a corner. The player without a corner becomes the new “out” player.

## CHAPTER 3

### TO EL SALVADOR

**June 13, Wednesday**

**Guatemala City**

I didn't sleep long or well. Awoke at 4:30 and dozed until 5:00. Rose then and finished packing. Went in and wakened John, who pled, almost tearfully, for another few minutes of slumber, which he got. The boy at the door was up betimes and presently the rattle of a *carreta* over the cobbles below warned me that our baggage must be ready. Wakened John again and this time persuaded him to get up. About this time the *panadería* horn began to sound, and for once, at least, we were not disturbed by that Gabriel's trumpet.

All parts of the [Hotel] Imperial machinery began to work together to expedite our departure, a condition almost without precedent in the history of the establishment. Breakfast was ready, the baggage got off, a *coche* to take up to the [railroad] station was at the door, and finally, in a blaze of largesse, we climbed into the last, and bidding goodbye to everybody, rattled off down to the station. Smith was there, and bid us goodbye. The baggage had been checked, and after laying in some month-old magazines and periodicals, we boarded the train.

After getting over the [southern] edge of the valley in which the capital stands, one begins to slide down rapidly past the volcanoes, past Lake Amatitlán until Escuintla, on the edge of the *tierra caliente*, very hot and humid. We had a three-hours wait here, which we put in at the Hotel Metropole. Lunch here, with *aguacates* [avocados] and pineapples, was not half bad. The heat was very white by 1:40 and we tried to arrange ourselves comfortably in the first class coach, but it was almost impossible. Two native babies shrieking, sometimes antiphonally, sometimes simulti-phonally, but always in different keys, no harmony close or otherwise there, kept the car in an uproar. There is a nice chap, Wilson, a Scotsman representing the Singer Sewing Machine Co., who is making the trip to Salvador with us, and we talked a great part of the way down. Also met some American *finqueros* and *monteros*, who asked me down to their place near Obispo.

San José<sup>21</sup> hasn't changed since seven years ago when I first saw it and Guatemala [City]: the same pounding surf, the same wooden ramshackle buildings leaning crazily this way and that, the same unhealthy backwater, and the same rickety pier. Here we had a hell of a time. First, we plucked a *mozo* out of the mob at the station, and put him guarding our baggage while we went to the *comandancia* for the necessary permits to leave. Here was more confusion, everybody wanted to be first, and the *comandante* waxed wrathful. One poor Salvadoreña had no passport and was in consequence denied, "Ay Dios mío, etc." Later she got by, *quien sabe* how.

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<sup>21</sup> San José is a port city on the Pacific coast of Guatemala.

Next, we went out to the wharf to put our baggage through. John did this while I went ashore to send his wife a birthday cable. This could not be accepted until OK'ed from Guatemala [City] and as we were leaving soon we couldn't wait. When I got back to the end of the pier, John was in the throes of opening our 16 pieces of baggage. Manly sweat mantled his brow. The lighter in which we were to put off was rising and falling, to speak conservatively, fully 20 feet on the heaving bosom of the calm Pacific. Many were embarking for Salvador as we were the first steamer to leave since the earthquake going south. Particularly, many natives hastened back to devastated homes.<sup>22</sup> Wisely, the gringos allowed the natives to go first. No sooner had these, particularly the women and children, hit that twisting, turning, rising, falling, heaving tub than all fell to throwing up. Long before I was lowered down in the lift, the bottom of the lighter was a shambles. The baggage had been put across one end of the lighter, and behind this I tried to hide myself from the sights and sounds of food-stuffs going the wrong way. When it seemed that my own lunch and breakfast were on the point of going the same way, the tug made us fast to her, the hawsers<sup>23</sup> were thrown off, and we were towed out to the *San Juan* [Figure 3.1].

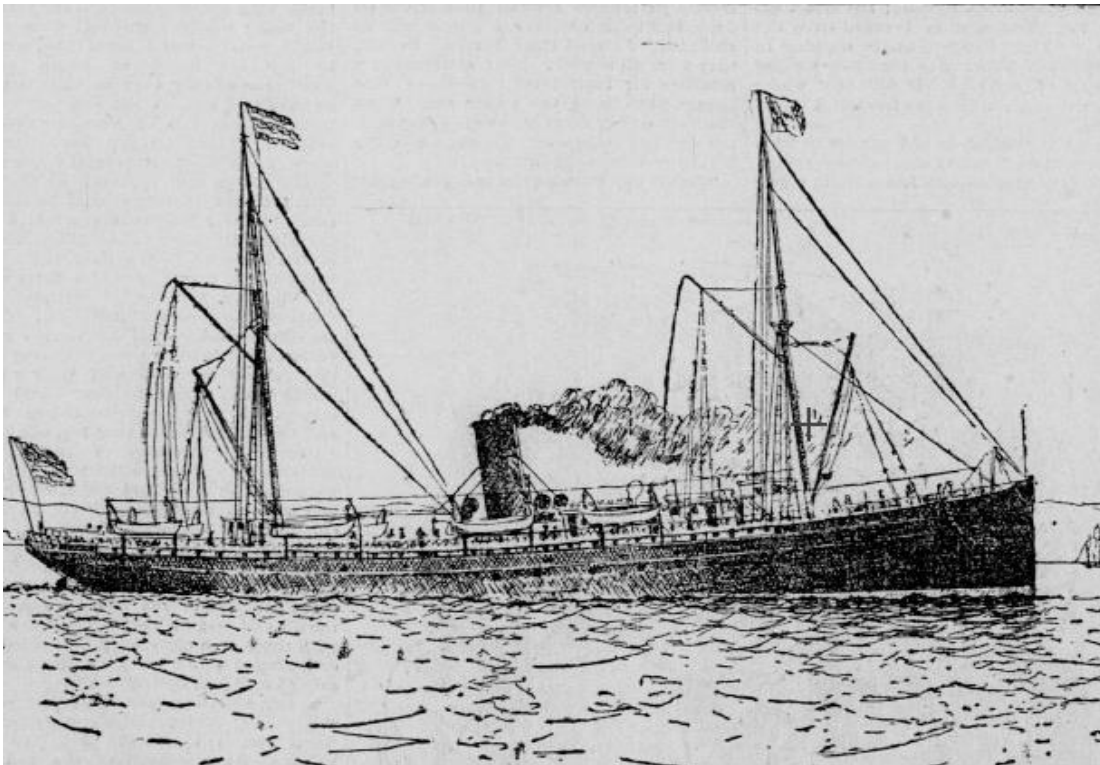


Figure 3.1. The *San Juan* as it appeared in the *San Francisco Call* newspaper in 1885.

We had previously subsidized a *jefe*-something baggage steward to hasten aboard and secure us a stateroom against the crowd. This one, at imminent risk of life, clambered up a rope

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<sup>22</sup> The June 7 San Salvador earthquake, registering 6.2–6.5 Richter, caused massive destruction and was followed two hours later by the eruption of nearby Volcán Boquerón (Kumar 1957).

<sup>23</sup> A hawser is a thick rope or cable used to moor a ship to a wharf, or to tow a ship.



ladder before we were properly made fast, and presently wig-wagged me from above that a room had been clinched. I was glad enough to leave the lighter; it was women first now, and with necessity. The native ones were in a dreadful state of gastronomic collapse. The bawling children were too ill to do other than make ghastly suggestive sounds, and all were hurried aboard the steamer.

As quickly as we were assigned to our state-room, we washed and went down to a whacking good dinner. The food was better than on the Fruit Co. boats and the Jap waiter seemed more efficient. In fact, the whole spirit of the boat was different. It was quite of the West. After dinner, as the old *San Juan* herself was rocking some, I went to our stateroom and lay down.<sup>24</sup> The next thing I remember it was nine o'clock and John was dragging me downstairs to have a late lunch before turning in. With Wilson and a Doctor Bailey from Berkeley, we had some White Rock<sup>25</sup> and sandwiches and a few discs of popular music, and then turned in, uncertain still whether we can best get up [to San Salvador] from Acajutla or La Libertad.

### June 14, Thursday

We were anchored off Acajutla when I woke up. A snuffy steward stuck his head in the door and said that if we didn't want to be in quarantine to be on deck in 15 minutes. We tumbled out and dressed hastily. I didn't wash and John didn't quit his lavender pajamas. This perfunctory medical inspection over—I wonder if a real live epidemic were on whether they would do more—we tried to find out whether we could get up from Acajutla. Wilson was of the opinion that we could, but no one who came out could tell us anything. Anyhow, the matter was more or less solved for us by our baggage going ashore, and we followed. The cage in which we were raised to the wharf was less secure than at San José, but the sea was calmer and we effected a landing in good form.

Here, the inevitable complication over baggage arose. We wanted to leave most of it behind in bond, taking only what we really needed to San Salvador. For some reason this would not do, and a long harangue followed. When they finally discovered that we were going on down the coast eventually and wanted to leave the baggage there until we came back out, the matter smoothed itself out, and the Inspector of Customs said we might leave it right out there on the pier, which we finally did. We took two kayaks, two suitcases, and a small bag with us, leaving the rest. In the hasty transfer of stuff from one to the other, at the last I feel sure important things were left behind, but it could not be helped. Our Salvador baggage was loaded on to a truck and sent to the station. We had a goodish wait here, indeed a costly wait it proved before the end of the day.

Acajutla in no way differs from San José, only more so. We went down to a rickety hotel; there were two hotels—Look-at-the-Sea [probably Miramar] and Hotel English. We chose the latter as probably more pro-ally, and along the beach had some lemonade. At ten our train

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<sup>24</sup> The *San Juan*, built in 1882, was operated by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. The ship remained in service until August 29, 1929, when she collided with an oil tanker, capsizing and sinking three minutes later, killing 65 passengers and crew.

<sup>25</sup> A popular club soda still produced today under the same name.

started. On shore we had found out this much: we could go as far as Ateos by rail, Kilometer 56, and then, after a 5-league walk to Santa Tecla, would be in rail communication with the capital, which didn't sound bad. We stopped an hour at Sonsonate for breakfast and here, for the first time, we saw some effects of the earthquake in fallen plaster, cracked walls and the like, but nothing serious.

A curious coincidence developed here. The Doctor Bailey I mentioned yesterday said he lived in Berkeley, and I was telling him of Griswold's<sup>26</sup> living there, and then he said he'd heard a lecture in Frisco last Fall about my work. He first asked me if I had written any article describing it recently. Then he recalled that he had been at the Art Institute last Fall when I gave my lecture there. Such a coincidence. Think of the circuitous chain of circumstances which brought us together again. How easily we might have never met. One is almost converted thereby to the fatalist's creed: "What will be, will be." He was leaving us here, but thinks he'll get on to the city before he goes back to Guatemala.

After leaving Sonsonate we began to get into the zone of damage. A Mr. Moisant, brother of the daredevil aviator who was killed in New Orleans several years ago,<sup>27</sup> was on the train going up to Armenia, a pueblo which suffered most heavily. In fact, he was in charge of the relief work and showed us a telegram from the president [Carlos Meléndez Ramírez] giving him carte-blanche to do as he saw fit. He left us at Armenia. The town is almost entirely destroyed: walls fallen down, roofs caved in, window sashes and doors bulging, cracked plaster. Nothing plumb. Nothing right.

We left the train at Ateos, the last regular station, and sought for animals to take us the remaining 5 leagues to Santa Tecla, but we found none. We came back to the station again hoping to find animals being given up by people going from the capital to Sonsonate, and indeed found two of our travelling companions had found such. These I must describe. They were a bride and groom, she Mexican, he American. Neither spoke the other's language. They had come down on the *San Juan* from San Francisco, had fallen in love, albeit he weighs 200 and is another John Bunny for looks.<sup>28</sup> The lady herself had left the first flush of youth behind her some time since, but love had obliterated these prosaic factors and the linguistic barrier, and at Mazatlan they were married. They had secured two horses and were about to push on.

Here a lucky stroke overtook us. A Mr. Wilson, the master-mechanic of the road, was taking a construction train 9 kilometers farther on to a broken bridge and offered to give us that much of a lift toward the capital. We climbed into the caboose, or on a trailer, and set off. Beside the bride and groom, Held, myself, and Wilson of the Singer Co., there were perhaps half a

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<sup>26</sup> This is Morley's older cousin, also named Sylvanus Griswold Morley, a professor of Spanish literature at UC Berkeley.

<sup>27</sup> John Moisant, one of the best-known aviators of his day, had ties to El Salvador, having led two coup attempts in 1907 and 1909. He died after ejecting from his plane while competing for the Michelin Cup outside New Orleans in 1910. Until it was renamed for Louis Armstrong in 2001, the New Orleans International Airport was known as Moisant Field and is still code-identified as MSY (Moisant Stock Yards).

<sup>28</sup> Bunny was a big (fat) and boisterous silent film star who made over 100 comedy shorts for Vitagraph Studios. He was one of the most popular draws for early nickelodeon audiences.

dozen Salvadoreños including two women who had come from Guatemala. One was the “*ay Dios mío*” lady, who wept copiously on every possible occasion. At Kilometer 65 we stopped and surveyed the broken bridge. The earthquake had shaken down one of the massive concrete supports and the other was 22 inches out of the perpendicular. Here we were able to pick up two *mozos* to carry four pieces of our baggage, and Held, Wilson, and myself each shouldered a grip and walked the 3 kilometers into La Ceiba, where we found mules.

It was now getting on for five and the man who was renting us the animals did not wish to start, saying it would take an hour to get the mules ready and that the *camino* was *muy peregloso* [sic.; *peligroso*: dangerous]. We could not conceive of sufficient peril, however, to hold us in his filthy hovel so we spurred him on to leaving that night. Finally, he said he would and set off for the animals. We arranged with the women of his house to give us coffee and tortillas and that, with what was left of a chicken we had purchased earlier in the day, tasted very appetizing. Several of our Salvadoreño friends passed us on foot for the capital, including the “*ay Dios mio*” lady. One Indian girl with a suckling baby wept at the gate because she could not get a mule to go on. We had coffee at six, and just before seven the six mules arrived. All were good, I must say, but there was endless discussion about the packs incidental to these occasions, so it was well after seven when we finally left La Ceiba.

After dropping down to a little stream, we climbed a paved road and passed through the village of La Colón at dusk. Soldiers were patrolling the road and all was quiet. We had seen enough in the failing light, however, to make us fearful—large slides of earth across the road, massive rocks tossed hither and thither like pebbles, giant ceibas uprooted and broken into kindling, great sections of hillsides hanging ready to crash down at even a small shock. After leaving La Colón, dark fell swiftly. Slowly we felt our way along the road. Sometimes great slides had obliterated it, and new footpaths wound up over the debris and precipitously dropped over the other side.

We were climbing one such place when confusion broke out ahead. The guide was first, next the two pack animals, next Wilson, then John, and I brought up the rear. Suddenly—on top of a slide of this sort, with a steep perpendicular drop to the bottom of the *barranca* on one side and an overhang mass of rock and earth seemingly hanging only by the imagination on the other—the cargo of the first mule fell under its belly and it began to kick and plunge in the most perilous spot. It forced the second one back, which in turn backed into Wilson’s mule. Wilson indeed only saved himself from catastrophe by leaping on to a higher rock and out of the tangle of plunging mules and falling cargoes, all so dangerously near the precipice. Fortunately, John and I were far enough behind to avoid the debacle.

We were in a serious predicament. It was pitch dark and we had no lantern. It was lightning and thundering, a rain was obviously imminent, and the spot the most dangerous we had seen. We all realized a slight rain or earthquake shock might, indeed doubtless would, hurl down hundreds of tons of rock and earth. A hurried counsel of war was held, and it was decided we would re-load the animal and push on to the next house, which the guide said was nearby, and put up there for the night. It was clearly a matter of grave peril, worse folly to attempt to push on in the darkness. I came forward and held Wilson’s horse. John held my mule while Wilson helped the guide load the cargo animal. This seemed an interminable task. It was now pitch dark and all the passing of ropes over and above the animal had to be done by

feeling. Several false hitches were the inevitable result. Finally, when it seemed that the bottom must fall out of the skies in another instant, the load was pronounced *arreglado* [arranged, fixed up] and we crawled on.

About half a mile on we came to the house, but it was entirely deserted by the owners who had fled from the terror-stricken region. And not without reason—the walls had fallen in several places. The guide unloaded and we sat around building a fire. We had the proverbial and always dramatic one match of the shipwrecked sailor, and literally no more. Gladly had we traded the drama for more lucifers, but as our Latin American brethren love to say, *no hay*. John, I must say, rose to the occasion manfully and soon had a cheery blaze going. In the light of our fire we saw we were in the corridor of a carpenter's shop, perched on the side of a *barranca*. There was plenty of wood there for the fire, and plenty of dry places to sleep. The house itself had been locked before leaving, but there were gaps in the walls through which we could have entered. However, all we borrowed was the corridor. There was a two-wheeled cart drawn up under this, and here John and I decided to sleep. Wilson chose the saddles. One bit of luxury I fortunately had with me: my air pillow. This, with a saddle blanket to prop up the small of my back and a slicker for a cover, constituted my bedding. We propped up the cart to prevent rush of blood to the feet and, bidding each other goodnight, were soon asleep.

Shortly after we had turned in it rained heavily and we were thankful we were out from under that perilous overhanging mass of rock and earth. Later there was a sharp shaking of the earth, which wakened us with a gasp and all but shook the cart downhill. Again, we were thankful that we were not back on the road. The night passed without further incident, save that the guide got up at 1:30 and started to harness the mules, but I shoed him back to bed again until 3:30.

## June 15, Friday

At this hour, all got up but me, who slept until the mules were loaded. At 4:30 we were underway in the obscurity of a clouded moon. Wilson says the guide pulled a good one when he was loading the cargo animals this morning. One kept plunging and jumping about after the manner of their kind until finally the *práctico* cursed him or her—it was too dark to see really—[calling it] a *babosa bailerina*, which can best be rendered as a slobbering dancer. As quickly as it grew light enough to distinguish anything, the wisdom of stopping for the night, or better yet the folly of having started at all at night, was evident. In places the road was obliterated. Masses of fallen earth and stone covered it in places to a depth of many feet. Again, great cracks down the middle or side indicated such places would soon fall into the *barranca*. In one place in particular, the overhanging rocks were seemingly so lightly poised that we spoke in whispers. Stones of many tons in weight strewed the road and travel, even by day, was difficult as well as dangerous.

Finally, we wound up out of this Canyon of Peril and came out onto the plain of Santa Tecla. We met many people leaving the stricken city. We heard it estimated later that from one-third to one-half of the inhabitants of the capital have abandoned it. The last half league before Santa Tecla led across a level plain through coffee plantations. About six in the morning, we rode into the town, indeed a sorry sight. Many houses were fallen down outright. The pink and blue and yellow and green and what-not colored plaster is cracked off in great irregular

patches. Doors and windows bulge, iron grills are twisted out of shape, tiles strew the sidewalks. In the streets are piles of mud, the plaster from interiors. As we passed through the plaza we saw many temporary shelters—corrugated sheet-iron roofing, *petates* [plaited mat], signboards, cloth, anything in fact that would keep out the rain. People in various stages of undress, engaged in the more or less intimate details of daily life, were to be seen on every side, and at one corner a service with candles was going forward.

We were directed to a *fonda*, rode in through the front door, back through several patios to a stable at the rear, where we left the animals. The *dueña*, a capable woman, gave us water and soon we were seated before a delicious breakfast. Oranges, pineapples, scrambled eggs—my eye, how good they were—coffee, and rolls. It quite bucked us up. After breakfast, we went down to the station. The train from the capital was just in and hordes of people with all their earthly possessions were swarming off it. The women carried big bundles or baskets of clothes and the larger children carried the smaller ones. The men helped with the heavier impedimenta.

On the train, Wilson introduced us to a Salvadoreña *señora*, a large landowner with her daughter and two half and half nieces, the latter from San Francisco. We heard more of the earthquake from these. The lady thinks not only this year's crop, but all the [coffee] trees are lost. It didn't look like it to me, but then I'm not an expert.

I thought Joe [Spinden] might meet us at the station in [San] Salvador, but he did not, so we went to his hotel, the Nuevo Mundo [Figure 3.2]. He was registered, but not in. We sat around with Wilson for a while and then went out for a *paseo* on the plaza, and here we surprised Joe. It certainly was some reunion after leaving him a month ago in Copan. He's scarcely thinner, and seems to have thrived immensely.



Figure 3.2. Postcard of Morley's (and Spinden's) hotel during his stay in San Salvador.

Wilson had some errands to do, so the three gringos went up to the Legation. Met Boas<sup>29</sup> and the consul, Saks. Boas looks about done up: thin, a rotten color, and dead tired out. He's obviously burning the candle at both ends. We heard more of the Big Quake, and saw plenty of damage at the Legation, the front part of which has to be propped up to be kept from falling. Carpenters were about and order was being restored. Long tells me the damage is far more serious than appears on the outside, that the interiors of practically all of the houses are ruined.

A mail goes off to the States by way of Santa Ana, Zacapa, and Puerto Barrios at three, so we cut short the amenities of the situation to get to writing. I wrote to Doctor Woodward and mother. Fortunately, the latter did not know I was coming to Salvador, so she didn't worry over the quake so far as I was concerned.

We had lunch at the Legation and then more writing until two, when the mail closed for the States. About three, an automobile came around and Boas, Joe, John, and I rode around the town examining the extent of the damage [Figure 3.3] and looking for suitable places to start temporary shelter. Boas has cabled Washington for authority to erect some houses. Such a step would do more to put us in right here than reams of Pan-American Union bull. It would be the utmost help possible to a sorely stricken city. The need is imperative. The rainy season is well underway and over half the city is sleeping in temporary constructions outside. The best of these are as yet but an inadequate protection against the tremendous rains that are now falling, and will fall for the next six months, and unless the population is gotten into weatherproof structures very soon, serious sickness will inevitably result.



Figure 3.3. Postcard showing earthquake damage in San Salvador.

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<sup>29</sup> Boas Long, who Morley had met in 1907, was the U.S. minister to El Salvador from 1914 to 1917. He continued his State Department service until 1943.

Boas took us to the houses of several friends and then it became apparent that the maximum damage had been sustained interiorly, not exteriorly. Houses that appeared all right from the outside, or only slightly damaged, on closer examination proved to be literally gutted. Furniture, clothing, books, and all the paraphernalia that goes into make up the inanimate side of a home is buried in many cases beneath tons of mud plaster or tiles and fallen roof timbers. I think a conservative estimate would place nine-tenths of the houses as unsafe or uninhabitable. Even our own Legation, though standing, is far from safe.

At the end of the inspection, we drove to some municipal baths on the edge of the city and all went in, even including the car driver. The bath was a warm sulphur, pleasant to the skin but rather debilitating, I thought. At least it made me feel decidedly louny. A heavy rain threatened so we hastened it, more or less. We dropped Joe at his lodgings and then John and I left at the hotel. After resting a bit and cleaning up it was time for dinner, and after dinner we were both so tired we turned in early; indeed it was only 8:30 when I went to bed.

John slept in all his clothes, including his shoes, and I only half undressed. We left the light on and the door open, all ready for a quick getaway. The tremors are really not over yet. While we were writing in the back room of the Legation this morning, there was a decided tremor. John cleared a chair in one high record jump and made the patio, and I was only a lap behind him. Everybody else, however, was so blasé that the typewriter never even missed a stroke. We, being newcomers, haven't yet achieved that lofty plane of equanimity.

## **June 16, Saturday**

There was one slight tremor in the night, but beyond arousing us from our beds it did nothing more. We're getting a bit blasé ourselves and don't rise now at every upheaval. More discomfiting was the young Niagara which poured through our ceiling. The roof of the room above is gone, and all outdoors flooded in. This came on down to lower levels after the well-known property of water, and drenched us on the way. We moved our beds all around our really huge room trying in vain to dodge the waterfalls, but with indifferent success. Indeed, it was not until we were huddled in one corner that we effected a partial immunity. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that we slept late. It was eight when we finally got up and nine before we had breakfast.

After breakfast, Wilson took us up to a tobacco store and from there we went up to the Legation. How the morning slipped away here I really cannot say. I again offered my services to Boas and he put John and me to work putting up another tank to catch rainwater from the roof. It seems that in the early days of the quake, water was a real problem, the city water mains having been entirely put out of commission. By the time we had our tank rigged up, a gasoline barrel, it was lunchtime, and we ate at the Legation. In the morning before going up to the Legation, we'd bought a couple of hats, real Guayaquil Panamas, beautiful ones for \$25.00 (gold) apiece. These we'd left to be blocked. After lunch we returned to the *sombrerería* to get them, and found John's not ready. He wears a huge hat, something beyond an 8, a supersize hat doesn't come, something like a 19 collar, or crib-hand. In fact, before the hat he bought could be made to fit him we all had to wrestle with the stretcher. The hat was soaked and re-soaked, vamped and re-vamped, stretched and re-stretched, until it seemed as though the fiber must

permanently part company. Finally, we got it so it would fit some, though John declared it was as a band of steel were oppressing him. We selected two natty blue and white bands. Yes, very natty indeed, and sallied forth.

By this time, I knew I must write you up, my good daily chronicle, so repaired to our rooms at the New World to catch up with the calendar. We had dinner with Wilson, and after a short *paseo* in the Plaza we returned to the hotel and passed the evening in playing Slough. Of course, I'd seen it played in Santa Fe a lot, but it always struck me as singularly stupid and I never learned. Better late than never, however, and Wilson and I were initiated into the mysteries tonight. We learned to frog and solo, etc., etc., and acquitted ourselves with honor. I won the first game, in fact, through a reversal in form on the part of the two adepts present.

John partially undressed tonight, and I went all the way. The only untoward event of the night was a repetition of last night's deluge, which this time searched out our last remaining corner and dripped on us. John caught it worse than me, in fact awakened me by his profanity. This was the last night for this room—No. 23.

### Itinerary during Lacuna, June 17 – August 17

June 17, S.	San Salvador, Hotel Nuevo Mundo
June 18, M.	" " " "
June 19, T.	" " " "
June 20, W.	" " " "
June 21, T.	" " " "
June 22, F.	" " " "
June 23, S.	" " " "
June 24, S.	" " " "
June 25, M.	S. S. <i>Para</i> , off La Libertad
June 26, T.	between Libertad and San José
June 27, W.	Guatemala City, Hotel Imperial
June 28, T.	" " " "
June 29, F.	" " " "
June 30, S.	" " " "
July 1, S.	" " " "
July 2, M.	" " " "
July 3, T.	" " " "
July 4, W.	" " " "
July 5, T.	" " " "
July 6, F.	" " " "
July 7, S.	" " " "
July 8, S.	" " " "



July 9, M.	“	“	“	“
July 10, T.	“	“	“	“
July 11, W.	“	“	“	“
July 12, T.	“	“	“	“
July 13, F.	“	“	“	“
July 14, S.	San José de Guatemala			
July 15, S.	S. S. <i>Para</i> between San José and Acajutla [El Salvador]			
July 16, M.	San Salvador			
July 17, T.	“			
July 18, W.	“			
July 19, T.	“			
July 20, F.	“			
July 21, S.	“			
July 22, S.	“			
July 23, M.	Zacatecaluca			
July 24, T.	Amapala, Bay of Fonseca [Honduras]			
July 25, W.	San Lorenzo			
July 26, T.	Tegucigalpa, Honduras			
July 27 F.	“			
July 28 S.	“			
July 29 S.	“			
July 30 M.	“			
July 31 T.	“			
Aug 1 W.	“			
Aug 2 T.	“			
Aug 3 F.	“			
Aug 4 S.	“			
Aug 5 S.	“			
Aug 6 M.	“			
Aug 7 T.	“			
Aug 8 W.	“			
Aug 9 T.	“			
Aug 10 F.	“			
Aug 11 S.	“			
Aug 12 S.	“			
Aug 13 M.	“			
Aug 14 T.	“			
Aug 15 W.	“			
Aug 16 T.	“			
Aug 17 F.	“			

Editors' Note:

This section of Morley's diary omits reference to the foolish error by ONI that blew their cover in El Salvador, leading to their departure on July 22 (Harris and Sadler 2003: 79–81). Morley received a letter from ONI, dated June 25, ordering him (and Held) to go to the north coast of Honduras to gather political intelligence. This letter had been read by Salvadoran government censors, exposing the true nature of their activities in the country. El Salvador, at that time, was fairly anti-American in general.

So, they set out for Honduras via the Bay of Fonseca, arriving in the capital, Tegucigalpa, two days later. During their three weeks in that city, Morley met the minister of foreign relations, Dr. Mariano Vázquez, and the two became friendly. Vázquez introduced Morley to the Honduran president, Francisco Bertrand, who was persuaded into giving Morley a letter of introduction to be shown to the *comandantes* in the various ports and towns that he and Held would be visiting as part of their archaeological activities. "Given the infinite capacity of petty officialdom for being obstinate and insufferable," Morley now had a presidential "open sesame" to the country that he could (and did) wave around as necessary, and that secured the team's cover story (Harris and Sadler 2003: 85–86).

## CHAPTER 4

### HONDURAS: OVERLAND, THEN ALONG THE NORTH COAST

**Saturday, August 18**

**10½ Hours**

I awakened [in Tegucigalpa] at three, three-fifteen, and three-thirty, and finally got up at a quarter of four and roused John. Our dressing was soon over and we were just finishing when Dean<sup>30</sup> came in the Marmon.<sup>31</sup>

We awakened Jack Belt<sup>32</sup> enough to bid him goodbye and were off. We called first for the doctor, who kept us waiting for about ten minutes, and then to Carlos Fiallos, who was ready. It was 4:30 when we crossed the bridge to Comeagueta [Comayagua]<sup>33</sup> and turned off into the hills.

I was cold and sleepy, the former in spite of the fact that I had on two coats. I seem to remember that the road wound up through many hills, and the next thing it was broad daylight. We reached the end of the *carretera*, or rather, where the first bridge had washed out--kilometer 34--and here we found a *mozo* and our saddle animals were working in front of a little unpainted shack, for all the world like some disreputable old railroad lean-to at home.

Carlos Fiallos had brought something to eat, as had we, and sitting on the running board of the car, we munched and enjoyed breakfast. Our animals, in the parlance of the country, are only *regular*, and my saddle was a thing to weep and swear at, even the stirrups were not mates: one appeared to have done former service as a barrel hoop.

Bidding goodbye to Doctor Davis, whom we had grown to like so well, we mounted our *Bucephali*<sup>34</sup> and, crossing the stream at the broken bridge, set off at a goodish trot on our *jornada* which, as near as I can make it, must have been slightly over thirty miles, 31, or 32 perhaps. Enough anyhow.

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<sup>30</sup> It is unclear who this is. Morley frequently references individuals by first or last names, probably individuals he encountered during his "lacunae," but gives no further information.

<sup>31</sup> The Marmon was an automobile produced by the Marmon Motor Car Company of Indianapolis from 1902 to 1933. High-priced and touted for its "advanced engineering," surviving Marmons may sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars today. That one was in Honduras in 1917 is a surprise, and it may have been a U.S. government vehicle.

<sup>32</sup> Jack (John) Belt, secretary of the American Legation in Tegucigalpa, took over the duties of the American Ambassador, Robert Ewing, in 1917 when he was unable to perform his duties owing to chronic alcoholism and dementia (Harris and Sadler 2003: 82).

<sup>33</sup> Comayagua, in west-central Honduras, is the old colonial capital of the country.

<sup>34</sup> Bucephalus was Alexander the Great's legendary horse.

At first the road lay in a large valley, but finally worked up and out at one end through a narrow pass. In this dark and gloomy defile, Carlos drew his revolver to be “*listo*” [ready] and told of former hold-ups and murder. We came through all right and, three hours out, passed over the crest at La Protección, which has an evil reputation in spite of its assuring name.

After more ups and downs, we began to climb in dead earnest. By and by, we reached the top of the *cumbre* [hill] and saw the Comayagua valley at our feet, a dusty level plain with a haze of heat waves dancing over it, and distant blue mountains, their tops swathed in clouds.

The descent was—to me—the most tiresome part of the day as the trail was a jumble of flint-like rocks and boulders. It was impossible to make any kind of time here, and we even did not do the league an hour usually admitted by the most pessimistic. Then, too, I was near to falling off my mule with sleepiness, owing to Jack Belt’s keeping me up until after one last night. The sun was hot, and altogether it wore on me more than most of the rides do in this country.

Just after noon, we came out into the valley and turned down to the right. We reached Flores at 1:45, 7½ hours on our way. Here we lunched, overtaking our baggage, which had gone on the day before. It was here also that John conceived the happy idea of using our air pillows on the saddles, as a sort of buffer, as it were, between the unyielding leather of the saddle and the more delicate tissues of our seats—shock absorbers, in short. I did not make the experiment myself, but he reported it so successful I surely will tomorrow. We stopped just an hour here, having what the Belize mulatto calls a so-so meal: tortillas, frijoles, chicken, native cheese, and a sour cream concoction called butter, and coffee. We were fairly well fagged out when we reached Flores, but the rest and food restored our flagging spirits, and we resumed our journey at three in great good humor.

About an hour out we met several baggage mules, and just behind them two very dispirited riders with black glasses. Imagine our amazement at discovering these were Carlos Cordero and Landon from Guatemala City, about three weeks out. They’d come via Zacapa, Santa Rosa, etc., and both looked, and were, very much the worse for wear. When I asked Landon how he was making it he said, “Well, I’m still living,” and he scarcely looked more. He’d cut his hand with a razor, he was all burned from the sun, and exhaled a general atmosphere of sadness tempered with disgust.

We asked after our Guatemala City friends, Gladys Shehan and, more guardedly, the Roaches, not knowing just the status quo of the latter affair. But neither party could tarry, and bidding goodbye we started off, and soon lost sight of each other.

I now took the lead with my little black mule, and though I had to work my passage all the way, I managed to maintain a 5-mile gait. Our way was as level as a table top, and the six leagues between Flores and Comayagua were the easiest of the day. This riding was really delightful. The valley is beautiful and, with the shade trees along the *camino real* and the late afternoon sun, it was lovely.

We spied the famous old Spanish church of Comayagua a long way off, and quickened our jaded animals as the end was near. A heavy thunderstorm, accompanied by one of the most beautiful double rainbows I have ever seen, was sweeping out of the mountains at the right and trying to cut us off before we reached the town. In fact, a fine rain was falling as we entered.

There is an old Spanish church on a hill just outside of town, but a far more beautiful one fronts the plaza [Figure 4.1].<sup>35</sup>



Figure 4.1. The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at Comayagua.

We thought we were going to stop at the Hotel Colón, but our message had been delivered to the Central, and thither we went. This was on the plaza, and they gave us a room that commanded a view of the lovely old church. We were satisfied.

We were all very stiff. I had great difficulty in lugging John over to see the church after he had once taken root in a chair. The interior is not as good as the exterior. It is messed up with its choir in the nave, which always distracts from the dignity of the columns. The *reredos*,<sup>36</sup> particularly on the two side aisles, are very good, some nice old painted carved wooden panels showing the Stations of the Cross. There is a fine old carved wooden pulpit, but the rest of the furniture I saw is very mediocre.

After a little rest, we had dinner. Before I came down this year, Mr. Hesseltine of Brookline advised me to try the local wine, Marinon. This is sweet and heavy, a little going a long way, not so much because of the alcoholic content as because of its sweetness.

I retired at eight o'clock, sore and weary, and John was before me. Carlos' mother keeps a

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<sup>35</sup> The Catedral de la Inmaculada Concepción was completed in 1715, one of several preserved colonial buildings around the plaza.

<sup>36</sup> A *reredo* is an ornamental screen that covers the back of an altar. Morley was keenly interested in colonial art. Eventually he built a significant collection that he donated to the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe in 1945.

drug store in Tegucigalpa, and he came well provided against the hazards of the road—Parisian perfume, scented soap, powder, alcohol, face brush, etc., etc., after the manner of the land. In hopes some of these ingredients would allay the diabolical itching of my flea bites, I anointed myself freely, but could get no satisfactory reaction other than an olfactory one.

## Sunday, August 19

### 7¼ hours

We were up at five, but did not get off until after eight. It was one of those mornings everything goes wrong. One mule went lame, they brought another that was not ours from the *potrero* and didn't discover the mistake until they had loaded it. Then there was a delay finding our own animal, the man in whose *potrero* it had been put could not be found with his key, etc., etc. In fact, we didn't get off until 8:15.

While I was writing up my diary in the corridor, I heard a commotion—a mule jumping about and kicking. I rushed out to find its front leg ablaze. It seems it was lame and Carlos had poured some alcohol on it and rubbed in some *dulce* [?] and set it off. These drastic measures were confidently expected to cure lameness, and I must admit our mule bucked up considerably after this heroic treatment.

A high mass was going on in the fine old church as we left—there was a fairly good pipe organ assisted by several violins. Through the large front doors, I saw the congregation, tapers in hand, escorting the Holy Eucharist around the church.

We set off together as we were told there were many roads in the valley floor, and that it is easy to lose oneself. A fifteen-minute ride brought us to the banks of the Humulla [Humuya River]. Everyone who was not at church was down here doing the week's washing. Many friendly directions were given us as to the location of the ford. Carlos plunged in and we all followed. The water, though swift, was not deep, and we all passed over dry. One incident of this ford remains in my mind, that of a *mozo* leading his wife across by the hand, whilst she carried in the arms a small baby. A young son manfully went ahead to feel out the holes.

At first, for a matter of three leagues, the road led through the valley bottom. A small growth gave sufficient shade to protect us from the sun, and we rode comfortably enough, albeit very slowly at not three miles an hour.

One of the boys, Marcial, was sick and we dosed him up with 10 grains of aspirin. Later in the day, this took effect; he perspired and was better. We crossed one other goodish-sized stream, the Selguapa, before leaving the valley floor. Here the boys held quite a consultation before taking to the water. A man appeared on the other side, however, undressed and came half way over, and our boys finally went in. We all followed. These crossings are a serious business sometimes, and we were all glad when this swift, swollen torrent was behind us.

Shortly after crossing the Selguapa, we began to climb out of the valley. Some winding in the foothills finally brought us to a little *aldea* called Agua Salada, which was our lunch place; we were six hours on the road and it was nearly two when we got there. All these little places and the huts composing them are the same: mud walls and floors, tiled roofs, low table, very low raw-hide seat chairs or stools, and a bed. Our meal here was as everywhere—tortillas, frijoles, and a coffee strong enough to walk, and with reason, since it was almost pure *essencia*.

After Agua Salada, the road started up the hill in earnest. The grade was fairly good, but we literally climbed to the very clouds. A rainstorm swept the Comayagua valley below us, and drove the clouds against the high range we were climbing. We overtook the boys before we reached the summit—they had not stopped at Agua Salada. The effect on the summit was remarkable. Clouds driven by a high wind swept by us. The valley was shrouded in gray, and a fine mist fell between us. The view from the summit must be beautiful on a clear day, but we saw nothing but a sea of gray.

Having at last reached the top, we left the cargo mules behind and pushed on ahead. The range we were passing over must have been a large one, as we traversed a number of high *ciegas*, or interior parks [?], with fine long grass, plenty of springs and brooks, groves of evergreen; in short, a wonderful cattle country.

The rain continued, and as the afternoon drew to a close, the dusk came on apace. Fortunately, we made the crest of the hill overlooking the Siguatepeque valley and saw the village itself before it grew too dark to distinguish in the gray shadows below.

At a sharp pace, we hurried down the hill, and after fording a last little rivulet swollen temporarily to torrential proportions, we came into the town. Carlos finally located the widow with whom we were to stop for the night, doña Natividad Leiva, and in a downpour of rain we took possession of her front room. Among other progeny too numerous to mention, and I fear of different fathers after the casual practices of the country, there were two pretty daughters, Sara, aged 20, and Zoila, 15.

My two companions fell a-flirting with these instantly. Indeed, Carlos had provided himself with a bottle of some costly French perfume for the elder. He had stopped here before. John tried the wiles of that unspeakable potato flute<sup>37</sup> he mal-uses. The girl appeared to enjoy it no more than did the rest of us, indeed the only one who profits by this diversion is John himself, and even he feels sad after a session of it.

By this time, it was seven and dinner was ready at another *casa*, so thither we set out in the rain, guided by a small boy. Only a few lights flickered here and there, and after slipping around in the mud, turning many corners, we at last reached the place.

The supper was only so-so; the bill of fare contained no unfamiliar viands save a can of butter that Carlos contributed and the coffee was as thick as molasses and was as strong as sheep dip.<sup>38</sup> We arranged for breakfast and for our boys to eat there.

Not long after returning to the widow's house, the boys came in with the cargos. I am afraid our boys are pretty good-for-nothing. Santos is too old, and too short for that matter, to venture into deep water. Marcial is sick or has some superstition about getting wet as he always rides

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<sup>37</sup> This is an ocarina, a rounded wind instrument with multiple finger holes to produce different sounds. It is not unlike the simple pottery flutes used by the ancient Maya that were often zoomorphic forms.

<sup>38</sup> Sheep dip is a liquid blend of insecticides and fungicides used by sheep farmers against external parasites. Sheep Dip is also the name of a blended scotch malt whisky. In U.S. espionage circles, the term refers to the invention of an alternate (civilian) identity and occupation of a military or intelligence officer to enable them to serve as a covert agent. Morley and Held came into the Navy with that identity ready-made.

behind one of the packs in fording, and Samuel is plan loco, nuts, bug-house. The only time he moved swifter than a turtle was when Marcial dislodged a stone on the big *cuesta* [hilltop] and it hurtled downward towards him. He stepped high and lively then.

The evening was given over to getting ready for bed. John swung a hammock, Carlos another, and I had a bed covered with a straw matting. The last time I slept on one of these was 5 years ago at Jocotán [Guatemala], and it was alive with B.B. [bedbugs?], which has nothing to do with a briar pipe. The ladies were cleared from the room about nine, and we turned in shortly after.

## Monday, August 20

### 7 hours

Carlos and I were up at 3:45 against an early start, but retired again. We finally rose at 5:15 and found our boys had already gone to the *potrero*. We were eating breakfast at six and were off by 7:30. The widow would accept no remuneration for the use of her *casa*, but we gave her some native wine and butter, which with Carlos' French perfume, more than turned the trick.

The location of the town is picturesque, something like Guatemala City on a smaller scale. We crossed a grassy plain and then made up into the foothills. The country we traversed was delightful: small ranges covered with pine as well as other growth, with small cup-shaped interior valleys. These were filled with long succulent green sward, and we both felt that someday this region is destined to become a great cattle country.

We left the cargo mules behind earlier, as Carlos was sure he knew the way—God save his ignorance—and we again pushed on ahead. After noon we found we had lost our way, though fortunately we were not badly off the way, and turned aside to climb a small hill to a little *rancho* on the top, where we had lunch. This was in every respect a red-letter meal. First, we had a jar of dried beef of our own, then some of our own tea, and for dessert a tin of sliced peaches that were delicious. The *señora* of the rancho furnished tortillas, frijoles, cheese, *aguacate*, and the sour cream butter and “some roasting ears.” We had great difficulty in getting these last cooked rightly—for they never eat corn on the cob as we do, but after spoiling one batch, the second came out all right.

Although we were here only an hour, we quickly found out it was too long. The afternoon rain had been working itself up, and with a clap of thunder warned us it was ahead of us, and on the crest of the Colabrina, our biggest hill, it began to fall. The descent to the village of Pueblo Nuevo was very precipitous, and with the rain, somewhat perilous. Carlos reached the village first, about ten minutes later myself, and John last of all. During the descent I contrived to lose my air-pillow. After John's remarkable success in saving his seat, I used this all day yesterday and today with telling effect, only to lose it when matters are approaching a climax.

We pushed on the scant league from Pueblo Nuevo to Miamba [Meambar] in a pouring rain. Carlos had telegraphed ahead to the *comandante*, and we looked him up as soon as we got in. In fact, we went first to the *comandancia*. I used my letter from the president [see page 59], and it secured us the town. We were quartered with a woman at the corner of the plaza. We had the whole front of the house, that is, with the livestock and family. We got in at 3:30 and our boys at 6:30. Poor devils, they were wet through and, in addition, Marcial had a return of fever.



We had tea when we first got in and a real good evening meal at seven. The turning-in process was fairly well complicated. We had our cots out for the first time since May 26th, when we used them at Santa Cruz, our last *jornada* before reaching San Pedro Sula. We had an electric lamp and one flickering candle, by the lights of which nine people retired. John, Carlos, and I slept in cots, Marcial in a hammock, Samuel and Santos on the floor. A man, his wife, and a little girl slept on a bed. An old hen with a brood of 15 small chickens had appropriated our every corner early in the evening, and what with a few stray cats and the thousands of fleas, we were a full house.

It was just eight when I turned in. About one, Marcial had a terrific chill. His teeth chattered, the hammock shook, his breath came in quick, sobbing catches. He was in a bad way. I tumbled out and got Santos up. Of course, it was malaria, and quinine was indicated. I waked John up to find out where it was packed—in one of the trays. It was in No. 6, which had been roped first and to stay. The rain had shrunk the ropes and Santos was unable to untie the knots, so we had to cut them out. Fortunately, the pills were where they should be. I quickly had them out and two of them, 5 grains each, down him. I gave these at 12:45, another 5 grains at 2:45, and another at 4:45. By morning his fever was almost gone. A cup of hot tea and a dose of Epsom salts closed his treatment to this writing.

## **Tuesday, August 21**

### **8¼ hours**

The day started at 4:45. Santos and Samuel went for the mules, and we got up shortly after and commenced packing. Four of the kayaks and the bed-bag had been opened for one thing or another and we found plenty to do. Marcial had a slight fever and was very weak, so he lay abed until the latest possible moment. About six, the old hen with her brood left us in high disgust, unable to endure the confusion any longer. Shortly after we breakfasted, I got the *comandante* to lend us a soldier to help Santos and Samuel load the mules, and with the combined efforts of all three, we got off at seven-thirty.

Just as we were leaving the place, a pig set up an appalling squealing somewhere nearby, and suddenly there was projected into the street first a chair and then a pig, unwillingly caught therein. He had somehow caught his head and forelegs between two rungs and was carrying the chair off bodily, squealing terrifically all the while. A man was trying to drag him out by the hind legs, and what with his squeals and thrashings about, the street was bedlam. Finally, with the assistance of our guide, he was extricated, and the squealing stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

The much touted and greatly feared Río Maragua lies about a league beyond Miamba. When we reached its banks our special guide told us it was low—to me it looked like the gorge at Niagara. A *mozo* and his woman were waiting to cross over, and with our impedimenta, we formed quite a group. Just before crossing, Marcial came to me and said that he could go no further; that the fever had completely burned him out. I saw that it was so, and paid him off. He trailed along a couple of leagues farther to the house of a friend to wait Santos's return four days hence, but to go back to the ford. The guide took two of the cargo animals, went upstream a short distance, and then crossed. The water was very swift and came up above the mules'

bellies, but the cargo did not get wet. I crossed next myself, then Samuel, with two more cargo mules, then John, and lastly Santos with the last two. Santos then took a horse back for Marcial, and in returning, fell in the water and was soaked.

But the Maragua was behind us and we felt we had gotten off very cheaply indeed. A few inches higher and it would have been un-fordable. After leaving the river, the road led straight up for perhaps a league, where the guide left us. We were here on the crest of a very high hill with another even higher one facing us—the latter the Rosario hill, the biggest of the *jornada*.

Even to start the ascent of this latter, however, we had to descend to the bottom of the intervening ravine—it seemed to me down to sea level, if not below—but this was nothing to the Rosario hill. The latter is very steep and the road goes straight up—indeed, my mule burned out about three-quarters of the way up, and I had to get off and walk. This must be a big mountain as we were the better part of an hour crossing the summit alone, a succession of lovely little swales, rich grasses, pine groves, and a view for leagues on every side.

The descent on the north side was very different. Whereas the south side is precipitous to the point of being vertical, the northern face of the mountain is a gentle slope all the way down to the Río Yuri, which runs out of Lake Yojoa [Yojoa].<sup>39</sup>

About this time, although we had only done half of our *jornada*, John began to cry and whine for lunch. But it was two against one, Carlos and I both voting to go on farther before eating. The wisdom of this course was amply demonstrated later.

The Yuri was not high, although my mule nearly ruined me by stepping into a hole, wetting my leg in consequence. At two we lunched at a little *rancho* near the summit of the Santa Cruz hill. The *señora* of the *casa* demurred at first, but when we told her we only wanted tortillas, frijoles, and cheese, we were made welcome. Her twelve-year old daughter was suffering from malaria, so I left some quinine pills, 2½ grains, and Sal Hepatica,<sup>40</sup> with directions as to how and when.

At 2:45 we started our last climb of the day, and again it was high time we were moving. Heavy, though still distant, crashes of thunder indicated the approaching rain, and we wanted to be in Santa Cruz before the cork was pulled. The view from the top of the Santa Cruz *cuesta* looking north must under any conditions be fine, but as we saw it with two different rains converging toward us in the late afternoon light, it was magnificent. To the right, black angry clouds were already belching forth a torrent of rain, which was approaching nearer and nearer. Indeed, as we watched, it darkened the sun on the plain ahead of us. Off to the left, somewhere near what we judged was the position of Lake Yojoa, another storm was creeping up on us. In front of us lay the plain, a succession of lovely rolling hills covered with rich meadow grass, and here and there spotted with little groves, bathed in the sunlight of the late afternoon. Even as we watched this smiling landscape, the sun was suddenly obscured by the advance guard of the rain, and a few big drops of water, accompanied by gusty bursts of wind, warned that it was time to get into our raincoats.

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<sup>39</sup> Lake Yojoa, lying in a volcanic depression, is the largest body of water in Honduras, covering 79 square miles.

<sup>40</sup> A mineral salt (sodium)-based laxative, beneficial to the liver and taken for various digestive disorders.

The last hour of the *jornada* was done in a drenching rain. We trotted along Indian file, each trying to take up as little room as possible. The trail was muddy and the mules slipped constantly. By and by, we came to the edge of this grassy plain—it was almost like an English countryside—and then down a long gentle slope to Santa Cruz. Here, on this decline, we suffered the worst rain of all. The valley was completely hidden from us, and the trail was a torrent of muddy water. Down this we slipped and slid and skidded into Santa Cruz at four-thirty after nine hours on the trail.

Carlos' landlady lives on the outskirts of the town, and we rode directly to her house, a comfortable-enough shack with a wooden floor. Again, we took possession of the front room. She only had one other lodger at the time, a young Bolivian, Pereira, selling life insurance; he knew Peccorini, Adrian Recinos, Fernando Cruz, in fact everyone we knew in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and Guatemala. But I have left us wet, and in this condition John and I stayed as our dry clothes were back with the cargo animals, which, I might add here, did not get in at all. Carlos was lucky enough to change into the clothes of our landlady's son, and appeared at supper "fair as a lily and sweeter than any rose," if one was to judge by his odor.

After supper, we sat around hoping against hope that the cargo mules would show up, but no such luck. It had stopped raining, but was pitch black and their arrival—knowing our mules, as we knew them—looked extremely improbable, so we turned in about eight and were not awakened by the arrival of the *mulada* [mule train] during the entire night.

## August 22, Wednesday

### 5½ hours

No signs of our boys when we arose. The sun was out fair and strong with little or no indications, in the sky at least, of last night's tempest. We sent the small boy of the house to the *potrero* for our saddle animals against the possible arrival of the pack train and engaged an extra pack animal to replace the lame one, which we feared had caused the delay. Pereira, in the meantime, urged us against going on by ourselves. He had tales of hold-ups, torture, etc., with other embellishments, but his yarns were all spun on Munchausian looms and we did not pay over-much attention to them.<sup>41</sup>

About a quarter of ten, our long overdue boys arrived looking very *triste* [unhappy] and tired out. They said the rain had caught them before they reached the Yuni, and that they were only able to make the top of the hill beyond where we had eaten, at the little village of La Vittoria. Now all was bustle. We told them that they must make Potrerillos that night—and added the inducement of a contingent *premio* [reward] of ten pesos for so doing. We went on ahead after seeing that our cargo was all right, and the lame mule, which was completely burned out, was exchanged for the one we had hired.

The country after leaving Santa Cruz is a delightful rolling plain, which extends toward the west as far as the valley of the Río Blanco, like the Humuya, one of the rivers which flows into the Ulúa. Descending a sharp decline, though not long, we found ourselves in the valley of the Río Blanco. It was very warm and humid. The sun came down dazzlingly white, and a heavy

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<sup>41</sup> Fanciful, after Baron Munchausen, a fictional German nobleman. Munchausen syndrome refers to a mental disorder in which a person, to gain attention, claims illness in another person.

blanket of moisture, heavy though invisible, seemed to envelop everything. We had at last reached the coastal plain. For about two leagues the road was very good, level and dry. As we got nearer the center of the valley into the flood plain of the river, it grew worse—long stretches of mud holes, and finally we found ourselves on a narrow causeway built of sharp flint-like stones. This, of course, prevented the mules from slipping and slathering around in the mud, but it also impeded their progress—they had to place each foot with such care—that we made scarcely more than two miles an hour. In the meantime, I was literally burning up with prickly heat<sup>42</sup> and a maddening itch. Really, the suffering I endure from this infantile ailment begs description, and the sun was coming down straight.

At 2:15, after 3½ hours' ride, we reached the end of this stone road and came to the Río Blanco. There is a hut on this side where we had some food, a little hot tea, crackers, sardines, and tongue, and then down to the river. Our host of the little *casita* was also the ferryman, and when we got down to the bank, he told us to send our animals across first. We took the saddles off first, and then by forming a hostile chain along the bank we finally drove them into the water.

We followed in the *canoa*. Carlos appeared about done up with the heat, which was terrific, and indeed we all were perspiring at every pore. Just as we were saddled and ready to start, John discovered that he had left his precious air-pillow on the other side, and it was necessary for the ferryman to return and fetch it. My own, I believe I noted earlier, was lost the day before yesterday in a rain storm on the summit of the Culebrita hill, and John's is very dispirited, in fact is dying of a leaky valve. Every time he blows it up now it only lasts for fifteen minutes. His seat has suffered correspondingly.

After leaving the river, there is a stretch of a sharp stone causeway before the road finally gets away from the floodplain. This last 3½ leagues we did in two hours, the road is level and dry and the last 1½ league is along the right-of-way of the railroad, which, however, is not yet built. This is to be our last mule-going for a long time in all probability, and neither of us regretted it. In addition to my burning up with prickly heat, I was sore and stiff with other troubles, and the end was very welcome. It has been a pleasant trip, remarkable in many ways, but hardly to be recommended as a pleasure jaunt to those of tender feet.

We reached Potrerillos at quarter to five and promptly drowned our troubles in an iced orangeade. The town's only claim to distinction is that it is the end of the railroad; when the line passes on, it will be deservedly forgotten of man. Such a pest-hole for mosquitoes I have never seen. Our boys didn't arrive in the evening, though a heavy rain came on after dinner. I talked until bedtime with a Georgian in the mahogany business. The subject of our deliberations was lugubrious enough, no less the frequent lynchings which convulsed his state. He knew many cases, some which even come under his personal observation, and he recited the gruesome details. I gathered without any difficulty that he was much in conceit of lynch-law; indeed, he defended the lynching of Frank with great earnestness.<sup>43</sup> When I deplored that violation of law and order, he said it was only because I did not know the inside, etc., etc.

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<sup>42</sup> "Prickly heat" or heat rash (*miliaria rubra*), an itchy rash of red bumps or blisters appearing in hot, humid weather, especially in children, is caused by perspiration trapped under the skin.

<sup>43</sup> The lynching of Leo Frank in August, 1915, attracted national attention. Frank, a Jew, was

I turned in early but not to sleep, so intolerable was my itching. I got up finally and bathed myself with some of Carlos' Mount Vernon Whiskey. It at least smarted, and by counter-irritation gave me some relief. At midnight, Santos scratched on the door to say he was in with his cargo animals. I had to get his electric lantern out for him, and then they nearly shook the flimsy hotel down by dumping the kayaks on the porch.

### **August 23, Thursday**

We were up before five, and the boys started to carry the baggage over to the station. I saw to the shipping of it, and after a mediocre breakfast we boarded the train which left at 6:15. An old friend got on at Pimienta, where the railroad crosses the UIúa River, no less a one than my fat little murderer friend Doctor Duarte.<sup>44</sup> He was prostrated with joy at seeing me, etc., etc., and proved it by putting his arms around me and showing his gold teeth. He wanted to know whether the English would let him practice in Belize, and I was forced to sugar coat Gann's brusque dismissal of the case—"Certainly not, we've enough of these damn bounders as it is." He was reconciled to staying in San Pedro [Sula], however, he told me, as his practice is picking up, ever since having plucked some local celebrity from the jaws of death by a masterly operation on the liver.

Presently, we passed through Chamelecón [Figure 4.2], thus completing a tremendous grand tour, which encircled at least a very grand territory, practically all of El Salvador, much of Guatemala, and the western third of Honduras. We passed through here before on May 27th. San Pedro [Sula; Figure 4.3] had not changed during these three months, although the weather has. The heat is now intense and the humidity high. In fact, of all the years I've been coming to the tropics, the August heat here is the hottest I seem to remember.

Carlos's cousin, Marco Soto, met him at the train and brought me up in his machine. John had started on ahead, though I passed him before he reached the hotel. Bennett is ill with the malaria, and also his little girl. Indeed, there seems to be much of it about, and John and I started our quinine several days ago. Our first concern was a shower, and when I really got undressed to the skin, I was a sight to provoke tears. My whole body, from tip to toe was ablaze with prickly heat. I rubbed myself with alcohol, but that only seemed to spread the conflagration. Talcum powder gave me the greatest relief.

At lunch we saw Cowie and his secretary or something, a chap named Harkey, whom we met at Belize at the Craiks'. Cowie says the United Fruit Co. steamers have cut Belize out. There was some trouble over the Otis line getting too much freight, and they retaliated with this knockout. I fancy Belize is pretty bitter. They cuss out the U.F. Co. all the time, but it really was a weekly and regular service. Now they only have the monthly Mobile boat and chance tramps.

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convicted of the 1913 murder of a 13-year-old girl from Marietta, Georgia. After numerous appeals as high as the Supreme Court, his death sentence was commuted to life in prison, which caused anti-Semitic outrage. He was kidnapped from prison and lynched by Marietta's leading citizens. Modern consensus is that Frank was innocent. The lynching was unusual in that the victim was Jewish rather than African-American. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo\\_Frank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Frank)

<sup>44</sup> See diary entry for May 27, 1917.



Figure 4.2. The main street at Chamelecon on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula.



Figure 4.3. The main commercial street in San Pedro Sula, circa 1920.

We were also introduced to two chaps, Soots and Reil, en route to San Jacinto. The latter, though an American citizen, was born in Germany and is of doubtful loyalty. Certainly, he is a much better German-American than American. We threw the fear of God into them about the

trail between here and Tegucigalpa. Indeed, we but told the truth about it, though only that was enough.

In the afternoon I took a siesta while John talked to Soots. He is from Colorado and has mined a lot. Seemed very nice. Made a few purchases in the late afternoon, an Ingersoll watch,<sup>45</sup> and a few odds and ends. It rained heavily about five, though not for long. In the evening, Carlos came down and we all walked over to the Plaza to the band concert [Figure 4.4]. The music was unusually awful, even for the San Pedro band, and we only stayed [for] one piece. I went to bed as quickly as I got back to the hotel. I only write the truth when I say I am suffering greatly with this devilish heat rash.

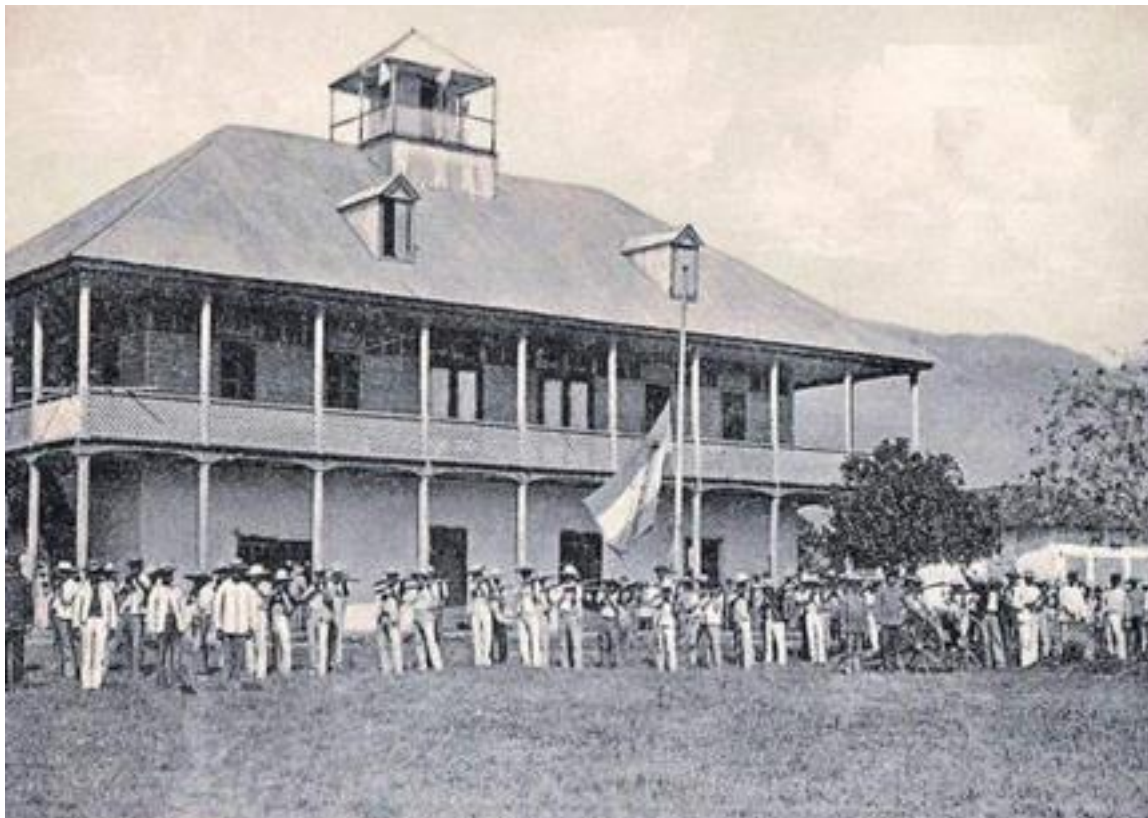


Figure 4.4. The band on the Plaza at San Pedro Sula.

### **August 24, Friday**

I tried to devote the day conscientiously to writing but did not get very far owing to the confusion: Reil and Soots packing for the trip inland. Our admonitions of last night resulted in a

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<sup>45</sup> The Ingersoll Watch Company, beginning as a mail order business, began making watches in 1892. The first, called Universal, was sold to dealers and then directly to the public. The second, the Yankee, cost \$1 and millions were sold. In the 1930s, Ingersoll manufactured the first Mickey Mouse watches. Eventually, through bankruptcies and sales, the company became Ingersoll-Waterbury and then in 1944 it became part of what is now the Timex Group.

most wonderful costume on the part of the former. He had a huge revolver strapped to his leg after the most approved movie fashion for Western “bad men,” a rough, flannel, khaki shirt, open at the neck and turned up to the elbow to court the ardent sun as it were—puttees,<sup>46</sup> the only thing I envied him, were worn to such a rich dark color—and a big gun in a native holster to be strapped to the pommel of his saddle. It would not have been impertinent to have suggested that his saddle might not have a pommel, mine didn’t, but I passed the observation up. He’s riding for a fall in other directions anyhow. His gun bag was of native leather and smelled after the manner of its kind to high heaven. If it gets wet, he won’t be able to live with it. Before leaving, he sighted his gun for me and modestly admitted he was a very fair shot. But enough of him. Soots was a very good sort on the other hand. Knew he knew nothing about the country and frankly admitted it. He even could laugh at himself, one of the hardest things in the world to do well and an almost infallible indication that such a one will be in at the finish.

At lunch, I gave them data on the road, number of houses in each *jornada*; number and condition of hills and rivers; best places to stop, etc., etc., etc. But there’s no royal road to Tegoosie [Tegucigalpa] even via the *camino real*, and they will have to undergo a lot of punishment any way they take it. There’s no dodging “them hills” or “them rivers.”

In the afternoon, I spent the time either in writing, scratching, or bathing my prickly heat, the itching of which is well-nigh intolerable. In the afternoon, I went with Dr. Mitchell—our vice-consul—to see an archaeological collection at the home of a Doctor Waller. The doctor was out, but his nephew, a chap by the name of Seeds, showed me the collection. There are only a few interesting pieces, one a handsome polychrome cylindrical vase from the Ulloa [valley] below Pimienta, from Playa del Muerto, in fact. This shows Old Empire influence, but the design has become much conventionalized, the value of open space is lost in an over-crowding of the motives, and the firing is uneven. Withal, however, the specimen is a beautiful one and would make a fine museum piece.

In the evening, I watched a very interesting game of cards in the cantina. Nobody playing was of sufficient simplicity or complexity to pique further investigation, and I came upstairs and turned in.

### **August 25, Saturday**

Spent the early part of the morning in writing, but about ten-thirty sallied out for some errands. I went first to the dentist, one Doctor José Zuñiga. He examined my filled tooth and told me I had no reason to apprehend the formation of an abscess—which I had apprehended in a most lively fashion. He painted the gum with iodine and during the day the soreness left. He was a nice little chap and wanted to accept nothing for his services, but of course I could not permit that, and I gave him a dollar. Next went over to the office of the American Chicle Co. to see if Cowie was ready to take me up to Doctor Waller’s. He was still busy so I continued my shopping. Foreseeing the end of this book of my diary before too long, perhaps before I return from the coast trip and certainly before I return home, I had in mind to look for some other blank books that might be used for this purpose. I was greatly surprised at the store of Luis

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<sup>46</sup> Puttees, worn by soldiers, are bandage-like strips of fabric wrapped over the lower legs, ankle to knee, for support (compression) and protection from scrapes, mud, and the like.



Caron to find the exact copy of this very book, and I promptly laid in three more. It was a unique experience in Central America to find the very thing you were looking for.

After leaving these purchases at the hotel, I returned to Cowie's office and found him ready. He said Dick Kevlin<sup>47</sup> was in and up at the Wallers', whither we went at once. I found I had met Waller when I was through here before and he was now kind enough to permit me to take his Ulloa valley vase over to the hotel for John to paint [Figure 4.5].

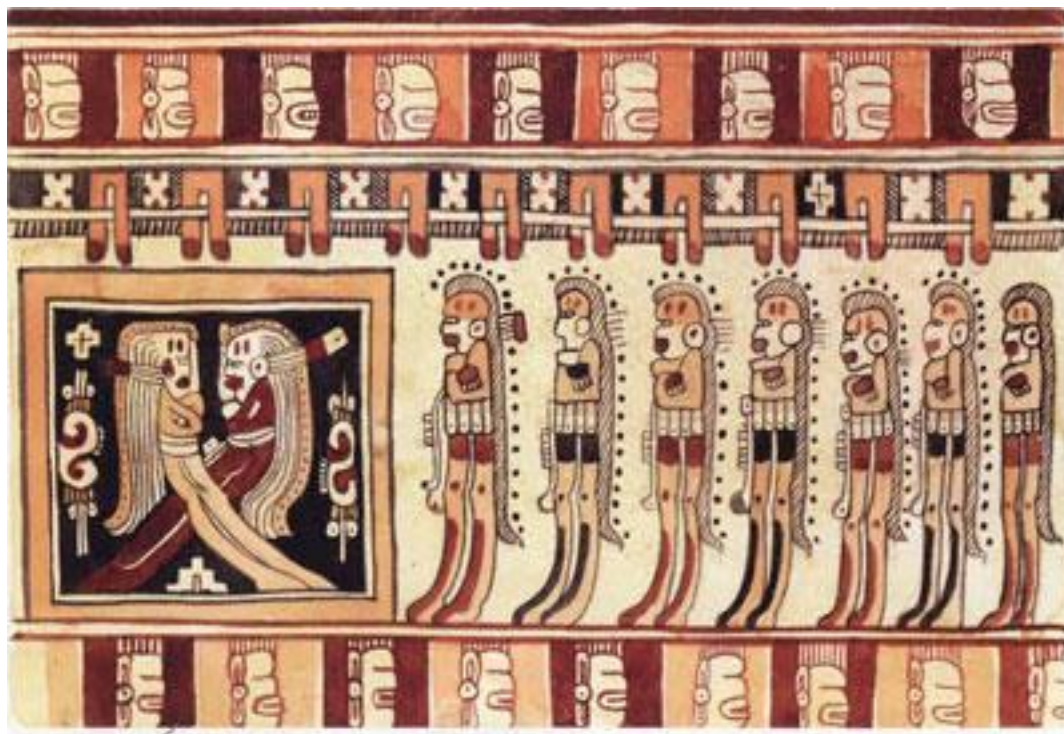


Figure 4.5. John Held's painting of the cylinder vase of Ulua Polychrome type, class Santa Rita, subclass Mellizo, owned by Dr. Waller, now held by Tulane University. This watercolor is in the Penn Museum collection. The vase is an example of Honduran Ulua Polychrome class Santa Rita, subclass Mellizo. Rosemary Joyce (pers. comm., 2019) has kindly interpreted the image on this cylinder vessel:

When I turn to the iconography of these pots, I begin with the observation that the figures are twinned, masculine, but do not equate them with the Maya twins. Twins are a staple of indigenous mythologies throughout the Americas. While the ethnographic research on Lenca communities is much more limited, we do know that some Lenca in Comayagua had a tradition of a founding culture hero, 'Flying Jaguar Woman,' who created the arts of civilized life. She left the social world to her two sons. The twinning would, in my view, refer back to this foundational myth.

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<sup>47</sup> Dick Kevlin (1891–1920) was a member of a large, New Orleans-based family of Kevlins who worked throughout Belize and coastal Honduras in the railroad and chicle industries. He was involved in the construction of the Tela railroad but spent most of his time leading chicleiros (Brunhouse 1971: 129; [Rootsweb.com/trees/124415/I058467/henryraphaeldickkevin/individual](https://www.rootsweb.com/~trees/124415/I058467/henryraphaeldickkevin/individual)).

However, more broadly, I argue that unlike the Maya lowland polychromes, these early Honduran polychromes (these date in context between 550 and 650 AD) depict not the myth, but the ritual enactment referencing the myth. The paired males are dancers. They wear a draped feline skin extending from the head down the back. Always portrayed in two colors, they represent two halves of the social whole, perhaps even moieties in the community.” (See Joyce, *Painted Pottery of Honduras*, 2017: 33–38).

After lunch, Dick Kevlin came up to our rooms, we got out our maps, and had a long *junta* [meeting] with him about our coming trip along the north coast. He thinks by far the best plan is for us to go direct to Utila and rent a boat there of a Mr. Hines, the *Gypsy*, a small sailing vessel of 12 or 14 tons. It is the one he used for his first trip to the Caratasca Lagoon and he says that Captain Hines is one of the best boys on the coast. The coast is bad this time of year anyhow, and we’ve got to have a good man, else we will come to grief. He thinks, moreover, it would be suicidal to attempt the trip in a Carib boat at any time, but particularly just now when the northern gales are commencing.<sup>48</sup> The advice sounded awfully good to me. Dick as a bush man is without peer, and his judgment on any subject is to be given careful consideration, so if I hear nothing to the contrary before we reach Ceiba, we will go across from there to Utila and look up Captain Hines’ boat. I took this occasion to get Dick’s opinion on the animal and vegetable life of the region. I read him the sections on the flora and fauna in the first chapter of my Copan report, and took notes on his observations about it.

After dinner, I looked up young Sosa, who has been of so much interest to different people. Cowie discharged him because he tried to peddle out confidential information to different merchants about town. I found him at the Belmenico Restaurant with two *paisanos*, Rosado of Belize and Dick. He appeared very *triste* and *disgusto*. I understand he cannot leave the country because of certain too pronounced pro-German utterances. Only stopped a short time, then came back to the hotel, talked a bit with Cowie and his Spanish foreman, and then to bed.

These San Pedro days are very monotonous reading, but believe me, gentle reader, John and I are doing some Recuperating, the “r” capitalized and the accent on the last two syllables.

### **August 26, Sunday**

I didn’t leave the hotel all morning, but wrote in my room. Cleared off some more letters, some more diary. Dick Kevlin left at 10:15. The next time we see him will probably be down on Caratasca Lagoon. Continual writing for the rest of the afternoon, and I am slowly catching up with my correspondence. In the evening, we all walked down to the Plaza to hear the band concert—John, myself, Cowie, Harkey, and two other fellows whose names I have forgotten, but we found that the band was in Chiloma.

Cowie suggested we go over to his office and listen to the victrola, always dependable, so we adjourned thither from the Plaza benches and heard some good music for the rest of the evening. Doctor Waller came over to listen, and he told me some interesting experiences of his practice here, particularly with reference to snake bite. The pit vipers are pretty bad hereabouts,

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<sup>48</sup> Morley frequently refers to “Carib boats” or “Carib crafts.” These are sailing vessels built by local Caribs and lack motorized propulsion.

locally called *barba-amarilla* ["yellow-beard"] or *tamagus*, and deaths, while infrequent, are by no means unknown.<sup>49</sup>

We went back to the hotel and turned in early.

### **August 27, Monday**

This was a busy day, as it was the last in San Pedro. I wrote a greater part of the morning and cleared off my correspondence. John and I went over to the photographer's to order another set of prints, and I wanted to take the two finished sets with me, and settle for all the work when we got the last set. But nothing doing: the suspicious old sinner said "you's better pay for the first two sets before you take them away!" We changed our mind forthwith about the third set, and paid him for the other two and left. Either we must look terribly crooked, or else this old blighter has had bitter experiences.

In the afternoon, I went with Mitchell over to see the governor, but he was out of town. However, we explained our errand to the secretary, a trim-looking individual, nicely starched and be-Filipinoed—and showed my letter from the president. He was volubility and agreeability personified, and said he'd call the matter to the governor's attention when he returned and to call again later in the afternoon. John and I bought some phonograph records just before noon, and also a shotgun. Later, I went back to the *jefatura* [offices of the chief or head], found Calix—the governor—in, presented my letter, etc., etc. He was cordial and told me to return tomorrow morning for my letters.

Spent the hour before dinner packing. John is going deer-hunting this evening with a chap name Fitts, and so we had an early dinner. Why John wants to be a Nimrod,<sup>50</sup> when he is feeling so miserable, is more than I can tell. He is almost certain to get wet, and possibly sick. My remonstrances fell on deaf ears, however, and he left at seven.

After dinner I walked up to Doctor Duarte's to bid him goodbye. Poor little exile. He wants to return to Guatemala and dare not with a murder charge hanging over his head. Another exile came in while I was there, a lawyer who had gotten into some scrape with the authorities out in Zacapa, and had to take French leave. They had a little hate-fest right there against the "blood despot" [Manuel Estrada Cabrera], etc., etc., etc., who was ruling Guatemala, and a few unkind words for Washington for holding him there. Freedom, Liberty, Justice were the catch words. I suggested our only interest in their country, in any of these countries, in fact, was the preservation of peace, law, and order, and that old Manuel seemed to be accomplishing these pretty effectually, but it was to no purpose: better revolution than such a despot, etc., etc. It was the same old questions the "outs" caviling at the "ins."

Their point of view, however, brings the whole Central American Mexican question down to a clean-cut issue. Have these countries the right to settle their own internal disturbances, which frequently—nay, usually—involve the loss of foreign property, by themselves, or have

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<sup>49</sup> *Bothrops asper*, more commonly known as the fer-de-lance, one of the deadliest snakes of Central America.

<sup>50</sup> Nimrod is a reference to a mighty man and hunter in the Book of Genesis. A great-grandson of Noah, he is associated with the Mesopotamian kingdoms and towns of Assyria, Akkad, and Nineveh, and also the Tower of Babel.

foreign nations the right to interfere with armed forces, if necessary, and prevent such disturbances? Fundamentally, most Latin-Americans firmly hold the former view, that of raising hell under their own vine and fig tree if they so desire, and bitterly resent any interference in their affairs as a mortal insult to their national pride and sovereign dignity, as though such brawling, cut-throat tactics could be so apotheosized. A larger and more international point of view, it appears to me, is that the world has gone beyond the stage of individualistic nations. If one nation runs amok today, the others league themselves together to chastise her. That is the purpose of the European war today. Germany and her allies are outlaws whom the rest of the world is seeking to capture and punish in order that order and justice and right may continue in the world.

And so it is with the Latin American nations. The time has gone by when they can bubble over in seething revolutions destroying foreign life and property. If they cannot or will not maintain order and decency within their several selves by themselves, we and other nations will have to do it for them by force of arms if necessary. This will be one of the first sequelae of the European war so far as Latin America is concerned. I strongly believe that those nations not having their houses in order when the war across the water is finally over, may confidently expect that it will be forcibly put in order for them. It is the right of the community over the individual, upon which rests the whole tissue of modern society.

Returning to the hotel, I was about to go up to bed, the mighty Nimrod still being out chasing the elusive deer—when Harkey asked me if I would play chess. I don't really play it knowing little more than the moves, but I took him on and was soundly beaten in consequence. Everything was going as "merry as the marriage bell" when quite suddenly and unexpectedly I lost my queen, and deprived of the distinguished services of that estimable lady I was quickly forced into a check-mate.

Did a little more packing, then turned in.

## **August 28, Tuesday**

Up before six and finished packing. Nimrod was snoring stentoriously, so I went down to breakfast without him. I didn't see any bleeding carcasses of deer lying around and concluded he would have no use for the Kodak. He had saved it out specially with several rolls of film so the spoils of war could be photographed.

I went over to Calix's just before eight and got three letters, to the *comandantes* of Ceiba, Trujillo, and Triona. These will no doubt be very helpful when we get down to the north coast. Bid everybody goodbye, paid our bills, and then sat around waiting for the train. At 10:30, we went down to the station and were told it would not leave before noon. Already, it was crowded. We had lots of friends on board. Cowie and Rosadas (the chicle people) were going down, Seymour Larick, our Singer Sewing Machine Co. friend, Carlos Fiallos—as far as Chiloma. When Carlos and I found the train wouldn't leave until noon, we hurried up town to get some lunch, first to his landlady's, next to Delmonico's, and finally to Bennetts', where we got something.

We got back just to the station as the train whistled. The journey down [north to Puerto Cortés] was very casual, the train stopped at everybody's back yard and no one was in a hurry anywhere. It cannot be helped, this lack of haste so irritating to the gringo; it's a racial

characteristic and has to be borne with, since it absolutely cannot be mended. Fortunately, I had a few *Saturday Evening Posts* with me, which I read from cover to cover before we finally reached the port about 3:30.

Only one incident of the journey made any particular impression on me. A young cadet in military uniform with a very clanking saber was just getting over the smallpox, and proudly displaying his scabby hands to a native girl, with whom I shared my seat. I quickly decamped leaving her to a solitary contemplation of these pathological phenomena. As soon as we got to the port, we went to the Palm Hotel and had a late lunch, which Craik had most considerately held for us. The building which houses this hostelry has fallen or risen in the social scale according to one's personal views. Formerly it was the headquarters of the Honduras Lottery, which was the child of our own famous Louisiana Lottery. Here, gold-decked Hondureño generals made drawings and the prizes were distributed. Richard Harding Davis in his *Three Gringos in Central America* [Figure 4.6] describes it.



Figure 4.6. Cover for *Three Gringos* [1903]. Harding Davis was a journalist, travel writer, and war correspondent, and the journey begins like Morley's: New Orleans to Belize, but then into Honduras and south to Panama.

Now, this is all done away with, and the large roomy building with broad verandas is a prosaic enough hotel [Figure 4.7]. Craik, a mulatto woman from Jamaica, the mistress of the

English consul, Hepburn, runs the place. She told me there was a lot of old lottery junk, wheels, etc., in one of the outhouses behind. Not two weeks before someone had taken some wheels and pulleys to repair a motorboat, and so the lofty are brought to naught and the mighty fallen.



Figure 4.7. Postcard for the Hotel Palma, Puerto Cortés, circa 1920.

We did not see our charming old southern friend, Major Burke, whose name has already appeared in these pages. We were only here for a few hours, and I did not find time to look him up. The other big celebrity of Puerto Cortés, as I mentioned when we were here before, has returned to the States to enlist. While we were eating lunch, a big ship was sighted; it turned out to be the *Coppename*<sup>51</sup> [Figure 4.8].

I left John at the hotel with his affinity Seymour, and went over to Consul Boyles with whom I had business. He told me that he had just received a telegram from Jack Belt to the effect that Janet Ewing had announced her engagement last night to Nachito Agurcia. I suppose I am not surprised. A combination of circumstances forced her to it. The desire to make a good match while the sun shone being perhaps the chiefest. I'd much rather think that than she is in love. How could she, a Southerner, fall in love with a man so obviously touched with the tar brush? It is a great blow to John (?).

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<sup>51</sup> The 340-foot long *Coppename* was built for the United Fruit Co. in 1908 and was one of the principal vessels sailing out of New Orleans. The ship was eventually sold to Italy in 1940.

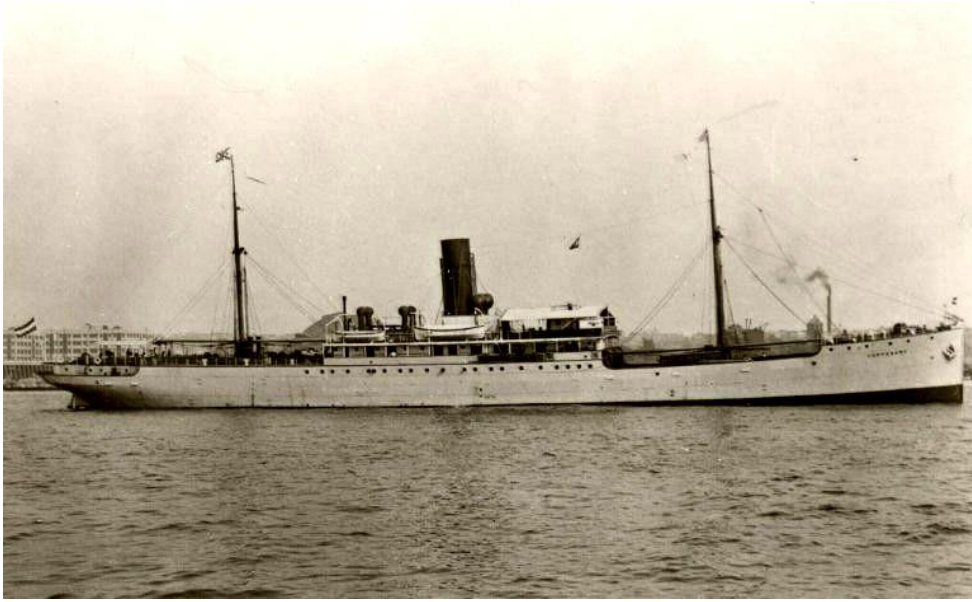


Figure 4.8. The United Fruit Co. steamer *Coppename*.

Boyle said he'd take me out to the *Coppename*—we wanted to mail our letters directly on board—and so I returned to the hotel to see if our baggage had yet come down from the station. Who should come walking down Cortés's single street but old Wilson, with his inevitable cane and courteous good humor. It was a very pleasant meeting. He's not getting off here but returning to Guatemala, whither he has not been since early in July, having left for Panama via New Orleans just before we left for Salvador the second time.

Boyle came along just then, and John and I went with him on board the *Coppename*. We had something to drink with Captain Widdin, then with Wilson, bought some cigarettes, mailed our letters, and finally had to leave. We saw some late wireless, which was good news except for the Russian situation, the weak link in our chain, all right. At the last minute, the *comandante* would not give Larick his passport, because he had not been in the port 24 hours before sailing, so he couldn't go on the *Coppename*. He will sail tomorrow or the next day by the Cuyamel [Fruit Co.] boat, the *Omoa*.

As we came off the steamer, we saw several sailing boats moored along the wharf. One was going to Belize that night, and I gave my letter to Gann to one of the passengers. Another, the *Beatrice Adele*, was going to Tela, about midnight, and we dickered with the captain, an eyebrow-less, watery-eyed, bleached out island-man, for passage in her.

He said it would first be necessary to get a special permit from the *comandante* to embark after six. I hastened down to the Hotel Lefebvre, where the *comandante* stops and, after presenting my letter from President Bertrand, was informed no further permit would be necessary. And so our baggage was brought out to the *Beatrice Adele* and stowed aboard, and arrangements made with the bleached old captain—his hair wasn't so white as it was faded yellow—to have a rowboat waiting for us at the Hotel Lefebvre wharf at ten that evening.

We returned to the hotel and had dinner, and then went back to the Consulate. There was an American there named Wilbur from Armenia, 20 miles below Trujillo, and I at once directed the conversation into shipping channels. He gave me much valuable information and we

discussed pro and con the question of a gasoline boat versus a sailboat. He thinks the latter possibly more feasible. After a while, these gentlemen left, and Boyle and I went to look up another possibility, no less a boat than one belonging to the local hero, Lee Christmas.<sup>52</sup> It was Lee's brother-in-law who had the boat in charge. This proved a blind lead as the boat is now being used by the Cuyamel people. We next looked up a boat belonging to the Belgravia Page firm, a gasoline launch named the *Masnoa*. Boyle is going to get more information about the boat, and send it to me in Ceiba.

By this time, it was going on for ten, so we returned from the hotel, meeting John, Seymour, and the boy with our bags on the way. The dory was waiting at the Lefebvre inlet, and we climbed aboard amidst the bags and raincoats. The fellows waved us their goodbyes and we slipped out into the harbor. The night was one to conjure with a nearly full moon riding high in the sky and sliding swiftly through the clouds, the water oily in its placidity, and the boys scarcely disturbing its calm as they propelled us rapidly toward our boat.

The *Beatrice Adele* was not far out and we soon brought up alongside her and climbed aboard. The captain and some of the crew were gambling, some card game with the silver 2 *real* pieces as stakes. In the fitful light of a lantern, with their unshaven faces and unkempt persons, it was all very buccaneery. But we had to look for a place to sleep, and finally picked out the roof of the cabin as less noisome and crowded. Here, indeed, was great danger of wetting; in fact, a few drops fell but we decided to stick it out. I had to dig into the hold for Kayak No. 5, which was of course the last one of the eight I investigated, to get out the blankets.

I shared my blanket with a Guatemalan medical student who was on his way back to Ceiba to try his luck and his profession there. He looked very much like Alfonso XIII,<sup>53</sup> long face, prominent nose, black eyes, and overhanging lower lip. I shared my blanket with him for it was cold. Didn't rest, the deck was too hard, and my khaki jacket but an indifferent soft pillow. Every time we shifted position, we waked each other, and altogether it was an uncomfortable business. At least I will buy a pillow in Tela.

## **True's Birthday**

### **August 29, Wednesday**

It was dawn when the dropping of the anchor [at Tela] awakened me, and when I saw the hour, I tried to drop off to sleep again, but unsuccessfully. The captain was shouting "All passengers ashore," and we had to pull ourselves together and get into the dory. There are two Telas, one on each side of a little stream: one Old Tela, dirty, squalid, native; the other New Tela, clean well-ordered, American. The contrast is complete. We landed on the beach of Old Tela [Figure 4.9] and showed our presidential letter to a barefooted soldier who was inspecting the passports. He barely glanced at it—certainly the presidential magnificence went clear over his head, and said "*sta bueno.*"

Fortunately, our friends were on the other side of the river, and I lost no time in looking up Walter Brown of the [United Fruit Co.] Guatemala Division, now acting manager at Tela in Goodell's absence. He was very surprised to see us. He introduced us to a charming chap from

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<sup>52</sup> See entries for December 10, 1917.

<sup>53</sup> King of Spain, 1886–1931.



Alabama named Beasley, who is also an archaeological fan, so we at once had a common meeting ground. He took us in tow, and after breakfast at the Fruit Co. mess, took us over to his house and put us up there. His wife is away and he himself is living with Brown, so we had the place to ourselves.



Figure 4.9. Postcard showing the Tela wharf.

After getting settled here, I returned to the office to write a birthday letter to True [his 8-year old daughter with ex-wife Alice], and in fact did write one, but by this time was feeling pretty rocky. Fever, back, leg, and head, all the familiar symptoms of an old friend—the malaria. In San Pedro, I felt chilly several times, but no fever. Now there was no mistaking the matter—I had a good fever and ached in every joint. I took 10 grains of quinine and tried to cure myself in the afternoon, but my fever grew worse and I felt so miserable all around that I, at five, walked up to the hospital—the last building along the beach.

It is a two-story rambling building covering considerable ground, and well screened in. Both doctors were out back playing tennis with Mr. Gooch and I went out to the courts. Mr. Gooch introduced them as Drs. Nutter and Whitaker. The former is the chief and with him I had converse. He wanted to take a blood test, but my ten grains of quinine had made that unfeasible for today. I am to take no quinine until tomorrow afternoon, when they are going to make a blood test. Before leaving the hospital, Nutter introduced me to a chap known locally as Red Henry, who had just come from a trip down the Mosquito Coast. I talked a bit with him and arranged to come back tomorrow.

In the evening, played auction with Beasley and a Mr. and Mrs. Oakes, whom I knew in Guatemala. I played with the lady, whose game is excellent, indeed I think she was the best

player at the table. We won by a satisfactory margin of seven hundred odd points. In spite of the fact that by this time I had a fairly high fever, I enjoyed the evening immensely.

I don't know what the itinerant archaeologist would do in these countries if it were not for the U. F. Co. Its establishments are the only places where you can really live as at home, and its employees almost the only congenial people to be met along the coast.

Turned in quickly, as I got home feeling rotten.

### **August 30, Thursday**

Had my fever all night. It's malarial all right. I recognize the symptoms too well to be mistaken. Spent the morning at the office writing up my diary. It was heavy going though and I felt so miserable that I abandoned my projected schedule for the afternoon, i.e., letter writing, in favor of a siesta. At two I went down to the hospital for a blood test, which, however, resulted negatively. Both Nutter and Whitaker agreed I probably had malaria—for my part I was certain of it—and I had a fever of 102, so a drastic quinine regime was prescribed: fifteen grains 3 times a day until the fever fell and then twice a day for 10 days.

Although it was three o'clock by this time, Nutter thought I'd better get in my 45 grains before bedtime, anyhow. Took my first 15, therefore, there. Talked for a couple of hours with Red Henry. He had many astonishing facts to tell of his trip down the coast, not the least of which was that it was taken for the express purpose of looking up possible German submarine bases down there. He had many anecdotes of the coast Indians and altogether I spent a very pleasant afternoon with him.

Before supper—just three hours later—I took my second 15 grains. This didn't take effect until the end of supper when suddenly everybody began to swim around: John and Mr. Gooch, engaged in an amiable discussion of Airendales, faded far off and I nearly, though not quite, gentle reader, fainted. John said I was as pale as the tablecloth, which, barring a certain obvious element of exaggeration, was not far from the truth. Suddenly the feeling departed as quickly as it came. Perspiration poured out of my skin, and I had relief. I had, moreover, the unusual feeling of feeling my fever go. I grew pleasantly cool all at once, my head no longer ached, and my body no longer burned. In fact, the fever was gone.

After the near faint, John, Gooch, and Beasley tried to persuade me to go to bed, but I was looking forward too much to one more game of auction with the Oakes before leaving, so I won't give in. Again Mrs. Oakes and I won, by a thousand-point margin. I am looking forward to some bridge with them when I get back.

After my experience at supper, I was afraid to take another 15 grains so quickly after the preceding dose, so I compromised on 7½ grains just before going to bed, i.e., 10:55.

I forgot to add in its proper place in the day's chronicle, i.e., right after lunch, that we engaged a man for cook and servant on the coast trip, a Jamaican named Campbell. Beasley recommended him as a good hunter and a reliable fellow, and he seemed a fairly trustworthy man when I talked to him. In addition, he had served fifteen years in Her Majesty's First West India Regiment and was, we felt, a responsible person. We took him on at 30 a month, and he starts work tomorrow.

## August 31, Friday

Rose early feeling fine. That drastic quinine treatment surely did the business and this morning I felt sure I had no fever. After a shower bath I almost felt myself except for the noise in my ears.<sup>54</sup> Noiseless quinine in the tropics would make a big hit with everybody, since everybody has malaria at one time or another. And while they are inventing a muffler attachment, they might as well make it tasteless. The liquid quinine I am taking is vile stuff. Think it is the most bitter thing I've ever tasted. It's as bitterer than the average bitter as saccharine is sweeter than sugar.

After breakfast we went up to the Hospital again, and this time I had no fever. Nutter said I was to go on with my quinine, however, as instructed yesterday.

There were many errands to do before we got off. I had to cash a couple of drafts, pay our bills, get passports from the *comandante*, and lay in a few supplies at the Fruit Co. commissary [Figure 4.10] and the *Kate Esau* left at eleven.



Figure 4.10. The United Fruit Co. commissary at Tela.

The getting off our passports was a pleasure indeed. The *comandante's* secretary was in charge, and when he saw the president's letter, he turned himself and his office inside out. We had a lunch at 10:30 and went down on the beach at eleven. A dory took us and our baggage

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<sup>54</sup> High doses of quinine can cause tinnitus, a ringing or buzzing in the ears, and reversible hearing loss by disrupting nerve cell function.

out to the *Kate Esau* [Figure 4.11], which we found loaded to the gunwales. Native baggage always includes numberless baskets, and these lay about everywhere. Several native women were in the triple tiers of bunks inside, and one American woman was in a deck chair. We arranged ourselves on the land side and made a feint at being *comfortable*. The *Kate Esau* has a gasoline engine, and small sails fore and aft. She's about 80 feet long, and does 6 or 7 miles an hour without the breeze, which was the way we made the trip.



Figure 4.11. The *Kate Esau*.

Discounting the smells, squalor, and obvious disreputability of most of our passengers, the 44-mile trip from Tela to Ceiba is attractive and at some points beautiful. We had scarcely started when our engine broke down and we were hung up for repairs for about half an hour. Presently, however, the *machinista* [mechanic] did something to the engine and it commenced to cough away again, with every now and then a choke in its voice. At first, the coastal plain is very broad, and the mountains scarcely to be seen in the distance. Later, as one gets nearer to Ceiba, they draw right down to the coast, leaving but a narrow plain. At one point we passed inside some large, jagged, tooth-like rocks, which in heavy seas must kick up a fine spray.

A fine rainstorm swept over the mountains in the middle of the afternoon, covering them completely in a mist of gray. Later, this lifted and resolved itself into layers of white clouds, which hung at different levels, according to their several densities, along the flanks of the mountains. The highest peak, an almost perfect point, persistently hid behind her white veil and it was only near sunset that it lifted and we caught for a few minutes the beauties of its configuration.

Just before six we sighted Ceiba; the sun was setting and, before we got in, dusk was changed into night. Twilight fades rapidly in the tropics, and it was not long before it was quite dark. Our boat did not dock, but anchored a short distance out. The natives all wanted to get into the first boat—no “women and children first” stuff here. Some women, however, more by accident than design got into the first boat. We went ashore in the third boat. First, looked up

the American vice-consul, a Mr. McCollough,<sup>55</sup> and after inquiring our way of an obliging Turk, who sent his boy with us, we found the house. In response to our inquiry for mail he said, “*no hay,*” a bitter blow indeed after all of our anticipation. There were, however, two telegrams, or rather one cable and one telegram.

Mr. McCollough walked down to the office with us to get them and then left us, as he had another engagement. We returned to the Gran Hotel Paris, where we had engaged rooms on the way down, and after reading our telegrams—John had a letter from Janet Ewing telling of her engagement—we went to dinner. The most important of our messages was a cable from Doctor Woodward notifying me that an additional allotment of \$1,500. had been made for my work. The other was from Jack Belt, Basil Corty, and Pecorino throwing a little *toro* our way. It requires an answer in kind, which it will have tomorrow.

After supper we came right up to our room and got undressed. It is very hot, and my evening 15 grains, making 45 for the day, made my head spin like a top. Laid awake for an hour with John talking over his symptoms, and then fell asleep with his voice sounding as far off as Egypt in my ears.

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<sup>55</sup> Darrill H. McCollough (1851–1937), an American and leading importer based in La Ceiba, was acting vice consul during Morley’s time, and vice consul from 1918 to 1929. He was also on the ONI payroll as one of Morley’s sub-agents. Morley always misspells his name McCollouch; we have corrected it in each instance.

## CHAPTER 5

### LA CEIBA AND THE BAY ISLANDS

#### September 1, Saturday

Autumn officially begins. Woke up before seven and did not lie abed. Campbell had our baggage at the door shortly—they would not allow it to be landed last night as we got [in] after six—and I got shaved and dressed. Campbell reported that the government boat was going to Ruatan<sup>56</sup> in the afternoon and would take no passengers. The presidential letter was clearly indicated in this emergency, so I went up to Mr. McCollough's to get him to take me up to the governor's. He was most obliging, left his work at once and took me up there. The governor was out of town, but his secretary, a pleasant chap, said I could go on the boat which would sail in the late afternoon or evening, and that if I returned in the afternoon he would tell me exactly.

I went back to Mr. McCollough's office, and then back to the hotel where I wrote until lunch time. After lunch, I ran into an old friend. I was in the ice cream parlor inquiring my way to the telegraph office when a voice—it sounded familiar—said, "down this street two blocks." The speaker turned out to be old Mr. Levi Pierce of Belize, now in the mahogany business down here. I had known of his whereabouts somewhere in Honduras, but at San Pedro Sula was told he had gone to southern California. He is a fine old Southern gentleman, one of the original group that came from the south to British Honduras at the close of the war to begin life anew.

For many years he has been a mahogany cutter, and was a member of the Legislative Council. When the war began, he became involved in trouble with the government of Guatemala about certain mahogany deals, and lost a great deal of money. He next came down to Honduras and in attempting to recoup, fell afoul the prevailing low prices since the beginning of the war, and lost more, in fact I heard he was very low financially. The present upward surge [in prices], he thinks, may pull him through, and I certainly hope so. He's been hard working, just dealing, and God-fearing, and has earned at least a small measure of earthly success. In bidding goodbye to each other, it was with mutual hope that we might see each other again in the near future.

Later in the afternoon, I went up to the *comandancia* again and found that the boat would sail about six, at which time I was to be down on the *playa* [beach]. I finished my packing and had an early dinner, and then went down to the beach with John. A high sea was running and all the ships were tugging at their moorings. As we watched, the *Kate Esau* pulled out to sea, rising and falling on the big swells like a cork. My own boat, the *Atlántida*, was pulling at her anchor and bobbing about, threatening to break loose.

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<sup>56</sup> Roatan Island was called Ruatan in Morley's day.

When I found the captain was not aboard, not might not be, I decided not to go on by myself until he came, preferring to postpone the sea-sick hour to the last minute possible. So, I left word with the boys to call me at the hotel when the captain was ready to go off and returned thither myself. John and our French landlady were greatly surprised at seeing me, imagining me adrift on the briny deep. I went up and slept until about nine, when I sent Campbell out to find out what was afoot. He brought back word that the ship would surely leave before midnight, so I decided to go aboard.

Again, Campbell and I tramped down to the beach, and presently a boat put off to take us on board. High waves were running, and we had to be spry in climbing aboard the *Atlántida*. The little after-deck was heaving up and down, back and forth, and I quickly saw that if I were to retain any of my supper, I would have to lie down at once. I fixed my pillow and blanket on one of the side benches and immediately lay down. Shortly afterward the captain came aboard and preparations for leaving were put into motion. The anchor was weighed, the sail hoisted, and the engine started.

At the same moment, the *Colón*, another government boat, was leaving for Armenia, and a race between the two became inevitable. Slowly we pulled away from the other boat, which wallowed more in the trough of the big waves than we did. Our whole crew, captain, *comandante*, *machinista*, and two *marineros* [sailors] assembled on the aft deck and hurled unspeakable insults at the other crew. As we drew away from them, the vituperation increased in violence until all were shouting and yelling a most obscene billingsgate. As ill as I was by this time, I had nevertheless raised myself to witness the race, a thrilling spectacle indeed. The bright moonlight cresting every wave with silver, the dark clouds, the high seas, and the pitching of boats, now plunged nose deep in the water and now rising high with bows pointed heavenward. As wild as it was, our barefoot crew gracefully draped around the after-deck. I became too ill to appreciate it further and lay down on my back promptly. Many times during the night I decided to let my evening meal go, but always hung on with the result that we finally got under the lee of Ruatan and the seas went down a bit and I fell asleep.

## September 2, Sunday

Awoke as we were coming into Ruatan harbor.<sup>57</sup> My first surprise was to find that the islands were hilly. I had imagined them as coral reefs with a few coconut [palms], and here were forested hills perhaps 500 or more feet in height. Ruatan is nothing much. The island people, an entirely different race of English descent from the people on the mainland, call it Coxswain's (Coxen) Hole [Figure 5.1]. It is a straggling little wooden town with corrugated iron roofs, a very unglorified and cheap imitation of Belize. The island people themselves are simple, kindly, seafaring folk of English and Negro mixture. The sea in one way or another gives them an easy living and there is neither wealth nor poverty, but more of this island people by and by.

As soon as I landed, I looked up a boat to take me over to Guanaja, called by the island people Bonacca—they have different names for everything—but this quickly proved impossible. In fact, all advised me to go on to Oak Ridge, twelve miles east, where I could secure boats in plenty from the Cooper family, the Capulets of that village. I found a small

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<sup>57</sup> For more information on the Bay Islands and its people see Chapter 13.

motorboat, the *Snake*, about to take several clerks thither for a Sunday outing and engaged passage thereon, but the captain of the *Atlántida* said he was going that way himself within the hour, and further said the *Atlántida* did 8 knots to the *Snake's* 5. I chose the former and went aboard her again.



Figure 5.1. The waterfront at Coxen Hole (Roatan) in 1920.

The *Snake* pulled out ahead of us, but we quickly overtook her. Again, the vituperative comment of the last night was repeated. The crew, headed by the captain, crowded to the rail and proceeded to hurl into the smaller craft a volley of insults. The legitimacy of its several occupants was freely impugned, and a variety of choice epithets, too lurid to reproduce here, were exchanged. This kept up until we had left them behind. Two miles before reaching Oak Ridge, we put in at a small bight [inlet] where there were perhaps half a dozen houses at which the *comandante* of the boat said he had official business.

Thursday morning, there had been a murder here, it seems; an Island man had killed a Hondureño who was annoying his daughter. The sympathy of the crew was clearly with the murderer and the hope was freely expressed that he would escape capture. The girl, an Island woman of 18 perhaps, had run away from her home and lived with this Hondureño for a time, and then, tiring of him, had returned to her parents who received her with open arms. The Hondureño had tried to get her back on several occasions, and on one at least had badly beaten up her father with a gun. Thursday, he broke into the girl's home and threatened to kill her if she did not return to his place. Some time that morning, her father got him unawares and with a machete chopped this young man's head off and fled to the bush nearby. Local sympathy, all



Islanders, was with him and they would not give the Hondureño soldier sent up from Ruatan any assistance whatsoever. The Islanders hate the Hondureños [see Chapter 13], and the crime was applauded rather than deplored. Matters were in this stage when we arrived this morning.

The inspector (Hondureño) with perhaps a dozen native soldiers had just arrived in two *canoas* from Ruatan as we got there. He had taken into custody the wife and two daughters of the murderer, and he wanted our *comandante* to take them back to Ruatan in the *Atlántida*, a perfectly reasonable request from one government official to another. This had all happened before I went ashore, the first dory load consisting of the captain and *comandante* and the two *marineros*. They promised to be gone only a few minutes, but they stayed so long that I decided to go ashore and see what was causing the delay.

As I have said, it was this clash of authority. The inspector wanted us to put back at once with the prisoners, while the crew of the *Atlántida*, all Oak Ridge boys, wanted to get home at once, particularly as they were only 2 miles off. It was, further, the old case of Islander against Hondureño, and the former didn't want to help the latter catch one of their people.

The *comandante* of the *Atlántida* was in a delicate position: though born on the mainland of Hondureño parentage, he had been raised from early childhood among the Islanders, and was married to an Island woman. His sympathy, it was easy to see, was Islander, but his birth and official position in command of the *Atlántida* clouded the issue for him. Finally, to complicate the matter, the captain had begun to tank up as soon as he got ashore, and by the time I got ashore he was very *bravo* [angry, aggressive] indeed, wanting to kill the inspector and all Hondureños in sight. When I arrived, both the inspector and captain were upbraiding the *comandante* for pusillanimity, and he was having a very uncomfortable time of it. At one time the inspector and captain nearly came to blows, but both were finally calmed and the former seeing there was nothing to be got out of the *Atlántida*, piled his men and prisoners into the two *canoas* and pulled out for Ruatan. We left shortly afterward for Oak Ridge. The captain was by this time in fine fettle, and nothing must do but that I come to his house for lunch.

We soon sighted Oak Ridge [Figure 5.2] and, doubling behind the outer key, we were in a pretty little land-locked harbor, quiet in the fiercest weather outside.



Figure 5.2. Oak Ridge today.

The Cooper brothers live on the outer key in a compound of houses in a pretty coconut grove. Over against these on the land side of the bay is their shipyard, in which most of the sailing vessels on the north coast have been built. Even now a spanking 3-master, 107 feet long, was on the stays in course of construction. I should have looked these people up first ordinarily, since they owned all the boats which could be rented, but the captain would hear nothing but that I come to his place for lunch. He lived in a little shack at the end of the lake, and thither he himself paddled me in a dory. His "old woman," I quote him, was surprised to see him and me, but he quickly browbeat her into getting lunch, though 'twas then three. I felt sorry for her but there was no gainsaying the captain then. Presently he disappeared—I suspected for more rum—and I took the occasion to slip away myself and go across the bay to see the Coopers about a boat for the Guanaja trip, promising the woman to return for lunch.

I met a Mr. Bob Cooper, the only one of the three brothers at home, and he proved most kind. He was, I should judge, about 50, an Islander, and had been building ships for 30 years, first under his father and, since the latter's death, associated with his two brothers. Kindly, unsophisticated, God-fearing, hard-working, just, upright was Mr. Bob Cooper, and during all the time I saw him and his family, I had nothing but kind treatment from any of them. He said he'd let me have a boat, the *Mozo*, to go to Guanaja tomorrow, and asked me to stop at his house. After promising to do so, I returned to the captain's for lunch.

The latter was looking everywhere for me and fancied I had deserted him. After lunch, I photographed him, and his family, and his man-servant, his maid-servant, his ox and his ass, and everything that was his, and then, feeling I had more than done my duty by the captain, I returned to the Cooper side of the bay. Meanwhile, many pretty girls had gathered from somewhere, all Coopers and all first cousins. Mr. Bob Cooper had 6 children, 3 girls and 3 boys, and Mr. Spurgeon Cooper, who was off cruising, had 8: 3 boys and 5 girls. I was introduced to these and photographed groups of them with many attentive young men, who had seemed to spring from the thin air, but were very flesh and blood in their attentions. And finally, by the time these affairs were all over, it was suppertime and Mr. Bob took me into his house.

After supper we sat out on some benches under the coconuts, looking at the sea, until meeting-time. Even here the innate courtesy of my hosts showed itself in a delicate attention. Although all had to dress for meeting, it was done by relays so I never was left alone for one moment. At one time there was a young Islander but from the Grand Cayman, MacTaggart, a youthful ship builder of 28. He had learned the trade—wooden shipbuilding—at 18, and had practiced it a year in Mobile. He is now about to come into his own with the great activity in all ship-building circles, and has very lately, in fact, received highly flattering offers from an uncle in the States.

At 6:30, all the clan Cooper set out for the meeting house. I was proud to be asked and prouder still to accept. The young women, each with her escort—and I could not but hope her special escort—went on ahead as also the smaller children. I walked with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper last. As we left their house, a magnificent moon came up out of the eastern sea. Never have I seen it larger, a great fiery ball of orange.

We were the last to enter the church and took our seats near the front on the right. All the Cooper girls were in the choir and sat facing us. It was a Baptist church, and the minister an earnest man, just over from Jamaica to teach school and preach. The service was simple songs,

prayers, offertory, and a short address. The dominie [pastor, clergyman] evidently believed every one of the old-fashioned ideas he was setting forth, and one had the feeling he was putting it over to his people. Indeed, earnestness characterized the service throughout.

After service we returned to the house, where the girls played and sang hymns. I went out to the *playa* and watched the moon for a while. The sea was like glass, and the moon burnished a silver road straight from me to the horizon. The dead calm brought many sand-flies out, and soon I was scratching myself all over. Under these conditions, further contemplation of the moon and the glassy sea became unbearable, and I went to bed, happy and at peace with these pleasant Island people.

### September 3, Monday

Got up at six and had breakfast with Mr. Bob Cooper at six-thirty. He said the motorboat *El Mozo* would be ready about eight. I finished packing, and Campbell carried the bags out and stowed them aboard. Going up were seven: John Cooper, a cousin of Mr. Bob's who was captain; Freddy, a small boy who worried with the cranky gasoline engine all the way; Campbell and myself; and a great big huge Gran Cayman, black as the ace of spades, and his two little sons, 4 and 6, Clifford and Wilton. His name was Wallace, and he lived on Helene Island off the east end of Ruatan, and wanted a lift as far as his place, 12 miles off.

I bid goodbye to the Coopers and told them, as was indeed the case, that I hoped earnestly I might meet them again sometime, and we were off. From the very first, the engine raised particular need [rude, ornery], indeed we'd scarcely cleared the harbor, when she choked up and died. Freddy, however, seemed to know what to do, and presently he had her coughing along again. The trouble seemed to lie in using kerosene, which is cheaper. Every time we switched from gasoline—on which she was always started—to kerosene, the engine tended to choke and die. I may add here, this proceeding kept up throughout the entire trip. The only two places where the engine worked well was crossing the open deep water between Guanaja and Barbarette [Barbareta] and back, a distance of some 10 or 12 miles.

We passed the ruins of old Port Royal and saw, on a key commanding the narrow channel into the bay, part of an old fort: masonry embrasures for mounting cannon. John Cooper himself had found an iron ball on the island, and its character as a fort was obvious.<sup>58</sup>

When we reached Wallace's place on Helene Island, he had decided to make the trip with us to Guanaja in search of a new woman. His affairs in this respect were rather tangled. He'd lived some ten or fifteen years with a woman, to whom he was married in fact, who had the misfortune of presenting him with no children. Having given her what he considered was ample time, he finally despaired of any issue with her, and promptly drove her out, taking in a younger wench. This one presented him with four sons in rapid succession, aged 6, 4, 2, and 9 months, all of course illegitimate. He quickly tired of her and she of him, but they could reach no agreement because each wanted all the offspring. It was finally taken to court where Wallace

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<sup>58</sup> The town was defended by two eighteenth-century forts, both defeated by Spanish forces in 1781. More recently, in 1928, four large chests of gold were supposedly discovered near the fort ruins by the notorious English adventurer Frederick Mitchell-Hedges, he of the famed Lubaantun crystal skull scandal [see chapter 24].

was given the two older boys and the woman the two younger ones. His immediate errand to Guanaja was to look up a new woman. He said to me “King, wait only ten minutes for Wallace and he’ll bring you out some fine watermelons.” It was nearer a half an hour, but oh how fine! He was arrayed in spotless white, had a colored silk handkerchief, and smelled like the lilies of the field. Purple and fine linen indeed. His two little pickaninnies, however, had not participated in this “furbishing up.” His watermelons were only so-so, though I must say I ate quite a bit of them.

The deep-water channel between Barbareta and Guanaja, 12 miles wide, was as still as a mill-pond, an unusual condition, all agreed. Guanaja has higher hills than either Ruatan or Utila and can be seen best from the mainland. It is supposed to have been the first land in North America upon which Columbus landed on his fourth and last voyage.<sup>59</sup> It is crescentic in shape, the concave side to the south, and in this shallow bay near the mainland are two keys on which the town of Bonacca [Figures 5.3, 5.4] is built—a little Venice in fact. The two keys are connected with boardwalks built on piles, and houses are built on each side of them. Thus, the whole intervening space between the two keys is built up with a maze of boardwalks and houses. I was to learn later that the two keys belonged the one to the Capulets and the other the Montagues of the place.<sup>60</sup>



Figure 5.3. Bonacca.

The *comandante* was down at the wharf when we landed, and wanted to see our passports. I had no local one of course, but the president’s letter again fixed everything for me. By chance, Stephen Haylock, the owner of the *Memory*, one of the boats recommended to me—was there on the dock also. We had a little talk, but as my letters were to Alfred Kirkconnell, I thought I had better present them first before closing any deal. Moreover, this placed me in the thick of the family feud. The northern key belongs to the Haylocks, the southern the Kirkconnells, and between the two there is feud. They are more or less intermarried, and of course this consanguinity heightens the intensity.

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<sup>59</sup> In 1502, Columbus landed, named the island *Islas de Los Pinos* (Guanaja was the original native name), and had the first European encounter with cacao. The island was nearly completely destroyed in 1998 by Hurricane Mitch.

<sup>60</sup> An analogy to the two feuding families of Romeo (Montague) and Juliet (Capulet) fame.

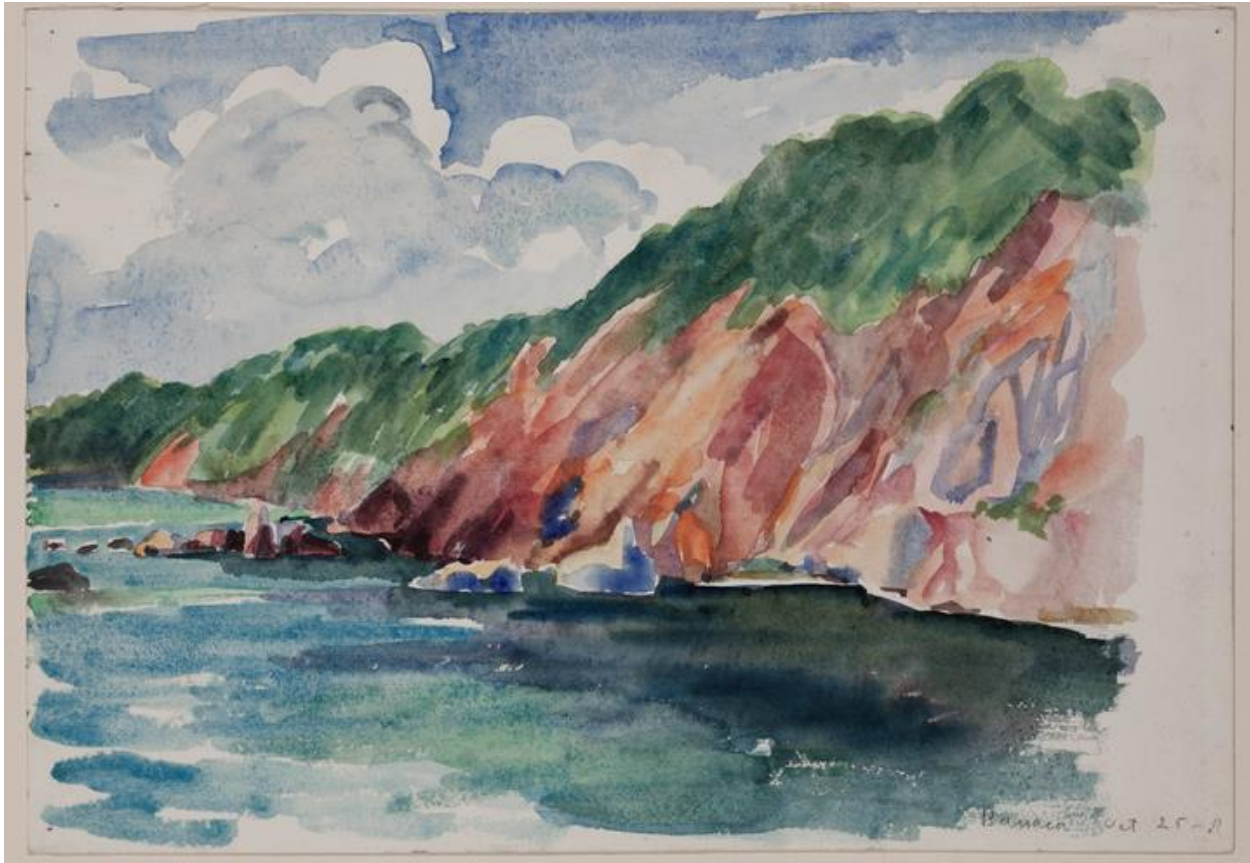


Figure 5.4. John Held's watercolor of the shore near Bonacca.

Well, I looked up Alfred Kirkconnell in his store, on no-man's land over the water between the two keys. He read my letter carefully and then said the best boat for me would be the *Lilly Elena*, but that unfortunately it had left the day before for Ruatan. The question was discussed from every angle, the kind of weather we may expect—which all agree is calm, for September at least—the comfort of the boat, draught—a very important point—and general feasibility.

Mr. Alfred Kirkconnell was of the opinion that for the work I want, dodging in and out of bays, rivers, etc., a powerboat was a necessity, and that the *Lilly Elena* was the very boat. The principal owner was his son-in-law, John Osgood, and he was summoned in, but at first fought shy of a decision. Meanwhile, Mr. Kirkconnell took me up to his brother's house, who owned a sailing vessel, known as the *Winton*. The captain of this, Stephen Wood, took me out to her, but frankly advised a powerboat at this time of year when protracted calms are to be anticipated. He undertook to talk to John Osgood, while I was at dinner with his father-in-law, Alfred Kirkconnell.

Mrs. Kirkconnell had a big dinner ready, it was then close to five, and since I had had nothing but watermelon and a few crackers since breakfast, I was hungry. After dinner John Osgood and I got down to brass tacks about his boat and it was finally agreed that I would pay \$275.00 gold a month for her, plus fuel and clearance charges. He was to furnish the boat and crew, and to find the latter. The captain is to be Stephen Wood, who knows that coast very well

even as far as Bluefields, and we took him back with us on the *Mozo*. All these matters being satisfactorily settled, we began to make preparations for returning immediately to Oak Ridge.

Stephen Haylock, poor chap, tried to persuade me that I had purchased a pig in a poke, but there was the fact of the September calms, and as fine a sailor as his boat, the *Memory*, undoubtedly is, she cannot go without a breeze, and crossing between the islands today there was literally "no hay." No, all things considered, I believe the best thing has been done. Wallace's prospective woman was down to see him off, a well-favored woman now living with another man. The rascal has a way with him. He was fiddling [playing violin] there to a great crowd on the dock, bandying words here and there, and even coming off the best of these rough and ready interchanges of popular wit. The girl was much impressed and urged him to stay over a few days. But none of this for Wallace, who said he must take his sons home.

Fully fifty people were down on the dock to see us off—a great press of all shades, ages, and sexes. The sun had set, and twilight was about over. A schooner, the *Despatch*, was just coming in from Colón. Wallace on the upper deck was fiddling us off, and amidst this hubbub we cast off, and Bonacca quickly became a blur of lights.

The sea was now like a mirror, literally not a ripple on the surface. Little lumps of phosphorescence skipped by us. We had a good chance to contemplate all this in the non-working intervals of our engine, which were not infrequent.

Finally, however, as we cleared the western point of Guanaja, she struck her stride, and hitting truly, carried us out over the deep water toward Barbareta. A little later the moon came from behind Guanaja, but the low bank of clouds obscured her for a while. I went to sleep on the upper deck after this, and didn't wake up until we were behind Barbareta and brought up with the *Isolde* lying here at anchor. Mr. Spurgeon Cooper was the master of this good ship, a two-masted schooner, and was off on a tour of the islands buying coconuts.

Wallace, who by means of assiduous attentions to a little brown bottle, was by this time some half seas over, went aboard her to look for some food and money. Mr. Spurgeon Cooper awakened, wanted to see me, so I went aboard and down into his dingy little galley dimly lighted by one lantern. Mr. Spurgeon has a big flowing moustache, and looked quite piratical. He was very anxious to have me test the excellence of a native rum of his own manufacture: pure Jamaica gin into which some native herbs had been put. This was pure fire, as I quickly found out, and I judged had been liberally tested by Captain Spurgeon and his crew long before we arrived.

On looking at my watch, it reminded Captain Spurgeon that he wanted to set his, so he looked for it in his handy box, but it wasn't there. Then there was a hubbub. Captain Spurgeon was positive he had left it here, and if it was not here it had to have been stolen. Hard words these, but followed by harder deeds. The crew was summoned in one by one and closely examined. Each protested innocence, and assured the worthy captain it was only misplaced, an explanation which made him snort with indignation. Truth was, the captain and crew were fairly well illuminated and no one knew anything about it. The crew were devoted to their skipper, any one could see that with half an eye—and they were earnest tho' befuddled in their search for the missing watch. Followed then the interesting spectacle of Uncle Spurgeon catechizing each, and each solemnly protesting innocence. Finally, at the height of the investigation, someone fished the timepiece out of Uncle Spurgeon's Sunday pants and the

incident closed in a gale of alcoholic laughter at his expense. Soon after this, we took our leave. In going, he played me an air he uses to call rabbits by. He is a real Nimrod, this one, having killed five wild hogs this morning.

We ran on to the reef after Barbareta Island, but fortunately there was no sea running, and the boys climbed overboard and shoved her off. We dropped Wallace and his two pickaninnies at Helena Island, and made Oak Ridge about two. John Cooper found out that Mr. Bob Cooper's guest room still had an empty bed, and also that Charley Osgood, half owner of the *Lilly Elena*, was in Oak Ridge, having come up today from Ruatan. For fear that he might return thither early in the morning before I got up, John Cooper paddled me across to the house where he was stopping and we got him out of bed. I made a date with him to return with him to Ruatan in the morning, and then crossed back to Mr. Bob Cooper's home, where I shared the guest room with his son-in-law.

### September 4, Tuesday

We were all up early, before six. Charley Osgood came over for breakfast, and I indicated further the nature of my business with his brother. Dournoft<sup>61</sup> Wood also had a letter for him from his brother, and it didn't take him long to get the details of the deal. I bid goodbye to the Coopers a second time, and shortly after eight we put off in the *Snake*, a smaller boat even than the *Mozo*. We had my roommate, Mr. Forky, and his wife and two children. She was Bob Cooper's oldest daughter, and quite pretty. One of her poor little boys was covered with prickly heat, and this formed a common ground of interest. They only went three miles below, where we put them ashore at Fork's place.

Our next stop was at French Harbor, where we overtook the inspector with the two loads of *soldados* and prisoners. He at once hailed us and asked if we could take him and the women along to Ruatan. So, these people crowded in the *Snake*. The young woman over whom the killing had taken place, herself bore a cut on her hand from the dead man's machete. She was comely enough as these people go, a gray eye and a curious red-blond hair, her features were quite Negroid, however. Her color was coffee. Her sister with a two months-old baby came along and the mother. These with the inspector and two assistants, plus ourselves, filled the little *Snake* to the point of discomfort.

We reached Ruatan just before noon and Charley took me to the house of a negress Rhoda, who prepared a good meal for me. It was very warm. After lunch, I went up to Charley's and met his father, mother, and brother. Then came back to Rhoda's and wrote my diary for the rest of the afternoon. Toward evening, I thought I would go of course to the key in front of the village and take a bath, but the boys were still tinkering with the *Lilly Elena*, which you can well believe I gave a good "once over" to, and I didn't get it (my bath) in.

The *Lilly Elena*, which is to be our home for some time to come, is 28 feet on the keel, 35 feet overall, 11-foot beam, 5-foot hold, and draws 3½ feet [Figure 5.5]. She is fitted out with an 18-horsepower Monarch engine which burns either gasoline or kerosene and carries a crew of three: Wood, the captain whose surname is Dournoft; Charley Osgood the *machinista*; and a third boy whom they expect to pick up at Guanaja. She's hardly a *Lusitania* for comfort, as the

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<sup>61</sup> The name is Peter Dournoft Wood, born in Guanaja.

hold and cabin are one, but I believe she's safe and we ought to be fairly well off in her. It isn't a pleasure trip we're taking, anyhow.



Figure 5.5. A drawing of a yawl-rigged vessel, similar to the *Lilly Elena*. A yawl differs from a ketch in that the mizzen mast is behind the steering mechanism and sticks out over the stern, whereas on a ketch the mast is forward of the steering.

After supper, which I again ate at Rhoda's, I came down to the wharf and went aboard. Dournoft got permits for Campbell and me to land at Ceiba tomorrow, and also cleared his boat. The evening was beautiful, and about nine the moon came up, now full. I went to bed on the deck. About midnight, when we were out some three hours, a heavy rain came up and I just got down into the hold in time to escape a thorough drenching. Dournoft and Charley both caught it. The hatches were all battened down and the ports closed. Campbell was in one bunk and I climbed into the other. We reached Ceiba about 4 o'clock, but did not go ashore until after six.

### **September 5, Wednesday**

I went directly to the hotel, waked John up out of sound slumber, [and] found a big mail had come during my absence. Letters and papers from everybody. This package of pleasure consumed the morning. I got every letter I expected to, in one or two cases even more, but one. One was conspicuous by its absence. Now over three months. Poor little True not being responsible for her omission.

The Carnegie Institution news was very satisfactory, confirming the \$1500.00, of which I had cable notice last Friday. Also, news that Wirt had bought for me two Liberty Bonds as requested. Lucia Miltonberger met Gladys Shehan in New Orleans as I arranged, and the letters from each of them told what hits they had made with each other. Lucia fell in love with Gladys,



or at least so she claimed, and Gladys said she regarded Lucia's as a home. Poor girl, I guess it looked good and real to her after 18 months in Central America.

A.D.J.<sup>62</sup> wrote from New Mexico and sent some *New Republics*. Her letter was the most interesting one I received. I've missed them so much. She always writes in such a happy, sophisticated vein. She met Stephanie on the train going out, also Frank Springer. Wallace is in the aviation corps and Ed wanting to go. Mr. Springer thinks his dear son can better serve things by staying behind and taking care of the family interests! After wading through this correspondence, it left me with a big debt of letters.

John suffered greatly during my absence at the islands. The medicine his old Texan physician gave him—I nearly wrote physican, for that's about all he seemed to have done him—was pure dynamite, and raised a fearful commotion inside. John thinks he was poisoned by it. It seems to have worked, though, like a gallon of seawater on Harrington's old Diegueño friend, and behold John rising from his ashes like a festive Phoenix. I indulged in the luxury of a bath this afternoon, read a bit like a gentleman, ate some ice-cream, and lolled about in idleness.

In the evening, I went over—by myself—to the McCollough's, John's distemper still being such as to confine him to the hotel and its immediate environs. Mrs. McCollough shed some light on the Bluefield trip, which she says is not too hard if you like that sort of thing!

Bid them an early goodnight, pleading my loss of sleep on the last three nights. What with the sandflies at the islands, the sea-misery en route, and the return engagement of the prickly heat, it was not an idle excuse either. John was reading. I turned in at once. It is very hot in our room and tomorrow will try to get a separate room.

### **September 6, Thursday**

The boys have decided to fix the boat at Bonacca and not take her over to Ruatan, so they are around, Jack ashore rather, though neither of them drink. I am busy writing. I got transferred to [hotel room] No. 10 next to John and spent almost the entire day writing my report for the *Yearbook*.<sup>63</sup> In between times tore around town with Mr. McCollough, buying oil for my ship. First tried the Vaccaro Bros., and then the government, but finally had to fall back on local dealers. In this way, I picked up 40 cases at 3 different shops, 150 gallons of gasoline, and 250 gallons of coal oil. They finished loading it in the morning. All told, it cost nearly 300 dollars gold, or nearly 75 cents a gallon. To meet this demand on our depleted exchequer it was necessary to telegraph Melhado and Sons at Trujillo to transfer some of our \$1125.00 silver letter of credit here. I did this through a Mr. Reynolds, the Banco Comercio's Ceiba representative. The money came through all right in due time, and I was enabled to meet the oil obligations mentioned above. We laid in enough for 1200 miles, to Bluefields and back and there again. Finished the *Yearbook* report and made arrangements for having it typewritten.

Also, met the third and last of the Cooper Brothers, Mr. Lemuel, who together with Earl, his nephew, are over here seeing to a shipment of goods from the States. I promised to send back by him some photographs of their Oak Ridge relations.

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<sup>62</sup> Alice Day Jackson, who Morley met on a field school led by F. W. Hodge.

<sup>63</sup> CIW 1917, published in February 1918.

Mr. Lemuel is a very solid citizen, and a fine man all around. Earl is the one married to a young American wife, who has just been, or is about to be divorced. Mrs. Bob, his mother, intimated to me that it was a case of too much interference from the American mother-in-law. A not improbable diagnosis of the trouble, it appeared to me. Went to bed early, pretty much tired out from writing and running about in the sun.

### September 7, Friday

Cap. [Stephen] Wood came to me early this A.M. and wanted to know if I had any objections to their taking the *comandante* of Ruatan over to his post. Of course, there was none, as we are not leaving until tomorrow and there is no harm in conciliating *los autoridades* at all times. So, the *Lilly Elena* slipped out in the morning.

I wrestled with the Corona [typewriter] all day. It's in a devilish humor, and John, with all his persuasive ways, was only able to coax it into temporary lapses from its recalcitrancy. I had taken my C.I. report over to the boy who promised to copy it in the morning, and in the rest of the day I struggled with another report for Washington.<sup>64</sup> Toward evening, the Corona became so balky that I had to abandon the attempt until morning.

I had planned on spending the evening with Mrs. McCollough, but found I was so behind in my letter writing that I would have to forego the pleasure and stick to my knitting.

At supper, that chap King showed up. I met him first when he was keeping the hotel at Puerto Barrios, about 15 months ago, then in May of this year and again in August at San Pedro Sula, and now he bobs up serenely here. He came over from Puerto Cortés on the *Kate Esau*, the same boat that brought us here a week ago. He claims to be looking up a patch of logwood on the Aguan River. The last time I saw him was in Puerto Cortés on August 28 trying to persuade Consul Boyle that he was an American citizen in good standing, and not getting very far with it. He sat at our table. Worked in the evening, as we leave tomorrow.

### September 8, Saturday

Another full day. Wrote two long letters before breakfast and finished my report of yesterday. While I was writing, a whistle blew and indicated the Fruit ship, the *Tegucigalpa*, was dropping her anchor. I had very strong hopes of another big mail, but these were dashed later in the day as I only got two letters: one a bill from the Archaeological Institute for my dues and another from—of all people—Andrew Silas, who has already figured in these pages.<sup>65</sup> It was from Brooklyn, whither he had gone to join Marius. He had been working in Cooperstown, N.Y., and wanted to get over Philadelphia way, and wanted me to give him a letter of recommendation. I wish he were with me now, I know. I will write Uncle George at Eddystone<sup>66</sup> and see if I can't land him a good munitions job.

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<sup>64</sup> Morley sent these reports (this was #10) every two to three weeks to his ONI case officer Charles Sheldon, code name "Taro." Morley, agent number 53, was code named "Dominus."

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Silas was a member of Morley's 1916 Uaxactun expedition. See Rice and Ward 2021: chapters 19–22.

<sup>66</sup> The Eddystone Arsenal, south of Philadelphia and north of Morley's alma mater, the

This collapse of our last mail possibility for six weeks brought general gloom. We had counted so strongly on those "last letters" before leaving, and to draw not one. Gladys Shehan had mentioned sending a photograph of herself, which didn't come either. So, it looks like we turn our heads down the Mosquito Coast without further word from home.

Wrote frantically all morning. About noon saw Mr. Lemuel Cooper and got a lot of dope from him about the possibilities of his ship-yard at Oak Ridge, i.e., what it could do under pressure with speeding up, etc. This information may or may not be of use to friends in Washington, but I wrote them of it. After lunch I got my C.I. report. It was full of errors, but these were checked up and corrected, and about two I finished writing the explanatory letter to Gilbert, and put the whole thing in a consular envelope and sent her off.

Dournoft and Charley got back in the *Lilly Elena* in the afternoon and set about getting their papers for the trip. Meanwhile my hands were full with last purchases, passports, permissions to embark after six, etc., etc. John and I also treated ourselves to haircuts and "slicked up" generally.

We are going to have a passenger in the shape of Mr. Pearce, my old mahogany friend, as far as Trujillo. He had seen Dournoft first and then came around 5 o'clock to see me about it. Of course, the pleasure was all ours and I told him we were going off about nine. We finally agreed to meet at the hotel at 8:30. By supper, all work was finished except a farewell call at the McColloughs'. King again ate with us, and told me that he had decided to go overland and not down the coast with us. It was news, all of it, and not unpleasant. It saved us the inconvenience of regretting that our passenger list was full!

Campbell had all the baggage ready, so right after supper we went over to the McColloughs'. Shortly after eight a terrific rain came up, and at 8:30, when we should have been over at the hotel with Mr. Pearce, we were still contemplating the deluge from Mr. McCollough's balcony. I sort of obligated myself to bring back their furniture from Bluefields, there being ten boxes! It was my own fault, but I had no idea I was letting myself in for such an extensive cargo.<sup>67</sup> The rain abated just before nine, and seizing the lull as our excuse, we broke away to John's infinite and evident, not to say obvious relief, and made for the hotel. Mr. Pearce was waiting for us, and after ascertaining that Campbell had already taken our baggage down to the playa, we bid goodbye to our host and King and set off for the beach.

It was dark, so to us looked like a rough night. We shouted and yelled for about five minutes before we succeeded in raising anybody on the *Lilly Elena*, but by and by got a faint answering hail and saw lanterns moving about.

A boat put off presently, and John and I went aboard first. It was one of those wretched little capsizing dories that turn over if you shift an eyelash. The sea was rough and the night pitch dark. The paddler was only a boy, and one can well believe John and I crouched low in this frail craft, hoping thereby to lower the center of gravity, scarcely daring to fetch a full

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Pennsylvania Military College in Chester, was a major munitions plant that exploded on April 10, 1917, killing 139 people, mostly women and young girls who worked in the loading room.

<sup>67</sup> How Morley "sort of obligated" himself to carry the McCollough's furniture is unexplained in his diary, and must have transpired during one of his "lacunae." The decision caused him no end of problems later.

breath. Truth is, we're both confirmed land-lubbers and cut but a sorry figure at sea. Almost arrant cowards in fact.

Fortunately, for our over-working imaginations, the *Lilly Elena* was the nearest in of the two boats riding at anchor, and we quickly clambered aboard her. Mr. Pearce was soon brought out, and the boys got her under way at once. Campbell fixed up a cot for Mr. Pearce, and John and I took the two bunks. At first, I sat on deck and talked with Mr. Pearce; John turned in almost at once. Not long after, however, when we finally got out of the lee of the wharf and she began to nose into the swells with a long dip, then I bethought myself of my stomach more than my duties as host and incontinently piled into my bunk in the smelly hold. In spite of necessary olfactory discomforts, I managed to rest pretty well.

One more taste of civilization—the Fruit Co. establishment at [El] Rincón opposite Trujillo—and then the rough life for us down the Mosquito Coast [Figure 5.6].

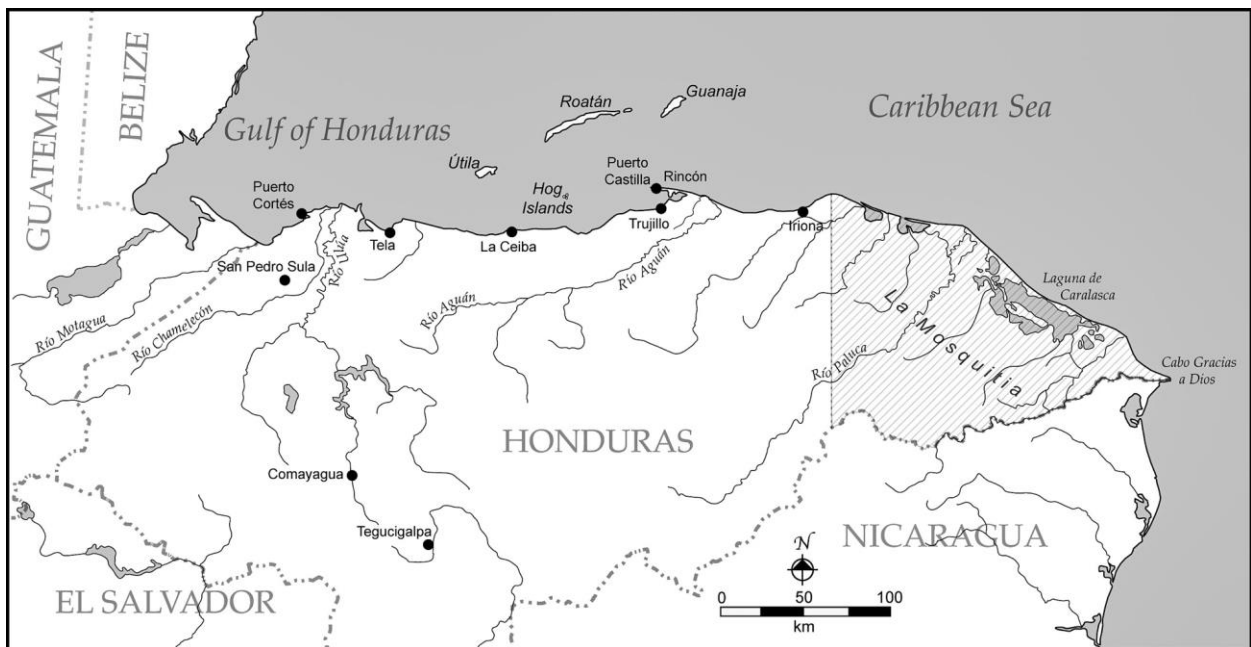


Figure 5.6. The north coast of Honduras.

## CHAPTER 6

### TRUJILLO AND EL RINCÓN

#### September 9, Sunday

When I woke up about six o'clock, you could not yet see the town of Trujillo. Mr. Pearce was on deck and I joined him at once, John continuing to tear off great chunks of slumber. The sea was like glass, and although Dournoft said the water was four or five fathoms deep, the bottom looked to be just under our finger. By and by, the houses of Trujillo came into sight [Figure 6.1] stretched across a fine bluff whose steps came down to the edge of the water, a pleasant spot and well located to sight a long way off chance English buccaneers. As we came close, the old Spanish fort came into view with its crumbling walls and towers, overgrown with hideous modern excrescences of wood and corrugated iron, the *cuartel* [barracks] of today. And so this present civilization thrives poorly and inconsiderably from the old.

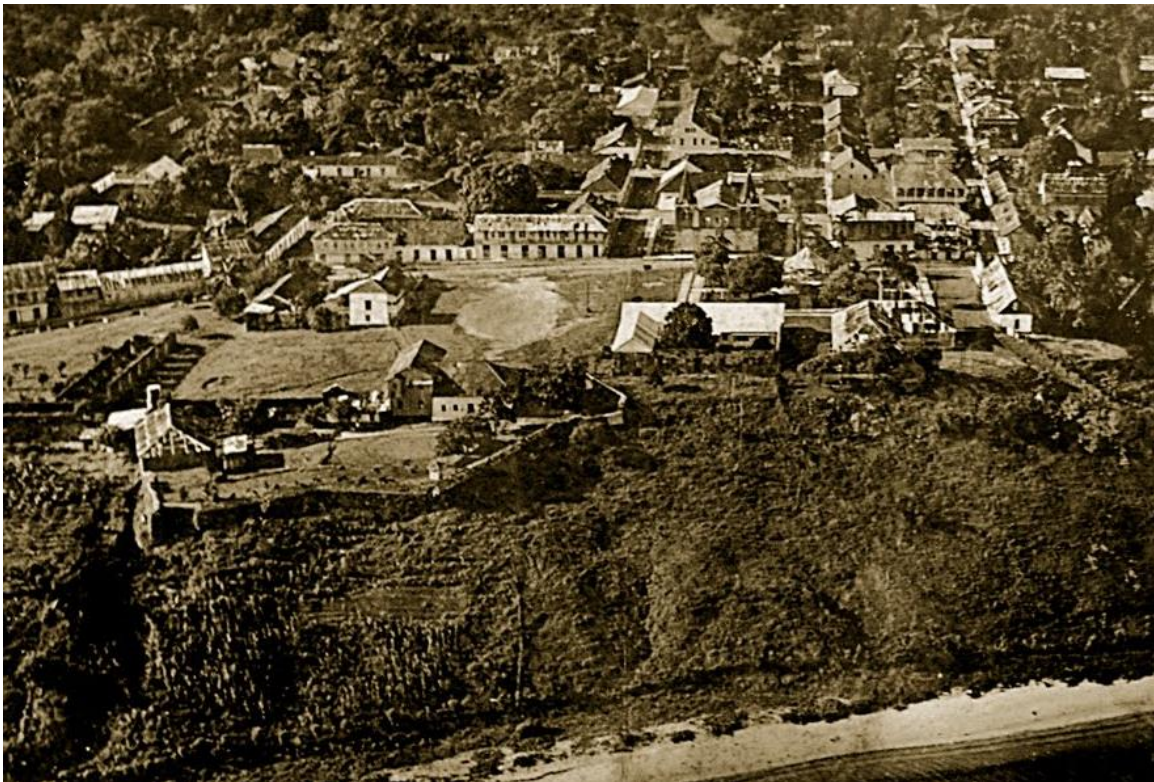


Figure 6.1. Trujillo from above, circa 1920. The remains of the old Fortaleza Santa Bárbara can be seen in the left foreground.

We drew in almost to the wharf and only had to wait about half an hour for the *guardia* to allow us to land. We then pulled our boat in by the hawser and stepped ashore. There are a few stores and warehouses along the beach and the Fruit Co.'s railroad station, but the main part of the town is on the bluff. Mr. Pearce knew a place to eat, and we all hied [a Scottish verb, to head] ourselves thither. The *dueña* was a Hondureña, and she said she would have breakfast ready in half an hour. While she was preparing this, John and I climbed the rest of the way up the hill to the town.

The plaza is a broad open space at the top. *The cabildo, comandancia.* and *cuartel* occupy a fraction of the space where formerly stood that splendid old fort we'd seen from the seafront. The church is on the south side. It is colonial all right, but not particularly meritorious. The keys of St. Peter and the Papal Tiara are on the front over the doorway, and the façade is flanked by two towers with peaked roofs, thus not overly well proportioned. Later, I went inside and found everything very modern and tawdry—there were some terrible plaster of Paris stations of the cross—except some real, fine, old Spanish tiles on the slanting window sills.

We looked up the Melhado Brothers, with whom is our letter of credit. William, the head of the firm, was out, as well as his younger brother, Ernest. Just as we were leaving, the latter returned and I introduced us. He read my letter from the Banco Comercio and kindly offered to do anything he could, but as we didn't intend buying our supplies until Wednesday, there was nothing he could do for us just then, and shortly we bid him goodbye, promising to return Wednesday, however. By this time John was sure breakfast was ready and we went back to the house where it was to be served. Mr. Pearce was ready and we all sat down.

Afterward, John and I sauntered out to take the town. I had noticed a lovely old Spanish gate [Figure 6.2] just east of the *cuartel*, and went there first. I was in fact on the point of snapping this, when several individuals burst out of the *cuartel* gesticulating "*Es prohibido.*" I explained my peaceful and honorable intentions, but to no purpose—was referred to the *comandante*.



Figure 6.2. The gate leading into the Fortaleza Santa Bárbara at Trujillo.

A *soldado* was sent to guide me thither, and we soon reached his *casa*, which was guarded by a large and ferocious dog. The *soldado* told me to wait outside as the dog displayed cannibalistic tendencies toward strangers, and he went in. The *comandante* sent out word that he was too ill to be bothered, whereupon I sent in President Bertrand's letter, he this time sent out word that the matter lay without his province—an infamous lie, as it turned out—and referred me to the *alcalde*.

My *soldado* next guided me thither, and after meeting the *alcalde*, don Salvador Crespo, and explaining my business, he said I could photograph where I pleased, only he thought the matter up to the *comandante*, as of course it was. When I went back to the *cuartel* with the permission, I was told I could not photograph without a written order from the *comandante*! In vain I told them what he said, they only referred me to him again. I was very indignant at this running around in circles, and protested, showing the presidential letter, but it availed me nothing, and in the blazing sun I was obliged to put over to the *comandante's* again. This one, seeing I was not to be discouraged by rebuffs, saw me, and on mentioning my letter gave me a telephonic order to permit me to take the pictures I wanted. I was much "het up," but this time spiritually as well as corporally, and walked back to the *cuartel* in no good humor. Permission had arrived, however, and I was permitted to roam at will over the old fort.

Behind the wooden excrescence which houses the *cuartel* is an old court formally surrounded by a wall and watch towers, which commands a fine vista of the sea. Now the drying linen of the *soldados* on duty littered this grassy plot, and a few old rusty cannons looked ineffectually out to sea [Figure 6.3].<sup>68</sup>



Figure 6.3. Cannon on the ramparts of Fortaleza de Santa Bárbara, Trujillo.

I took a photograph or two here, another one or two of my fine old gate, which was the main entrance of the fort in former times, and then worked around a long range of rooms to the east and then back on to a lower bench nearer the sea. Here was a delightful little watch-tower at the edge of the bluff with a couple of *zopilotes* [vultures] roosting on its round-domed roof. I

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<sup>68</sup> Fortaleza Santa Bárbara, constructed by order of Hernán Cortés, was a failure in defending Trujillo. The city fell so often to pirate attacks from the buccaneer-controlled Bay Islands that the Spaniards abandoned it in 1679, not returning until the 1780s. With the construction of Fortaleza San Fernando at Omoa and a new Fortaleza Santa Bárbara at Trujillo (the version visible today), the Spanish Crown reasserted control over the Honduran coast. The fort, the gravesite of the infamous William Walker (see note 72, below), is now a tourist attraction.

stalked these very carefully and succeeded in getting a bully view under 50 feet, the *zopilotes* being silhouetted against a sea of an incredible azure. This seemed to happily symbolize the departed glory of Spain, carrion desecrating the former haunts of pomp and majesty.

This finished my only roll so I returned to the wharf, where a difficulty was in progress over getting off. Charley's brother-in-law is administrator of the port of Trujillo, so there promised to be no difficulty in clearing on Sunday, although this is *contra la ley* [against the law]. However, every signature necessary was secured only to find that the key of the *comandancia*, where the official seal is kept, was missing, the boy who had it being off on a *paseo* somewhere, anywhere, everybody seemed to think. Here was an impasse. We couldn't get off until the papers were sealed and the seal was inaccessible.

At this juncture, I saw a motor-car making ready to depart for Rincón [modern day Puerto Castilla Colón], and found it was on the point of carrying a Mr. and Mrs. Humphreys over to Rincón to dine with the Scotts. I asked them if they would take me, and on this assent, I walked out to the wharf and told John I would go on over ahead by land. The road by land is 19 kilometers and swings around a narrow spit of sand and marsh, making almost a complete horse-shoe. Rincón is on the inside of this, facing Trujillo. The distance across the bay is only six or seven miles. Our machine broke down en route, as usual. This time, fortunately, it was only a dirty sparkplug, but the location of the trouble consumed nearly half an hour. We reached Rincón about noon. One is a long time getting there, or to put it another way, the houses straggle along for about 2 miles before you reach the head offices [of the United Fruit Co.].

The Humphreys took me out to Mr. Scott's house and introduced me to Scott,<sup>69</sup> his wife, and a Mr. and Mrs. Rollins. Rollins is the head of the accounting department. I presented Brown's<sup>70</sup> letter, and received most kindly and hospitable treatment. I told him John would soon be over, and indeed the *Lilly Elena* was nearly in by the time I had reached his house. He said we could have one of their several empty houses and could mess at the mess. John came in and then we all went to dinner, a great occasion graced by a huge and toothsome turkey as the *pièce de resistance*.

We met several other fellows, the most interesting of whom was a Scotch chap by the name of Stuart. After the unexpected squareness of this meal, John and I went over to see the Doctor, a chap by the name of Stowe. He is a brother-in-law of the fellow Fitts that John went hunting with that night in San Pedro Sula. [Two girls were present.] Both these girls were daughters of old man G. Jerbo, who is now working with Cowie. The one who married Fitts died in childbirth not long ago at San Pedro. After a *séance* with this *médico*, we returned to the house that had been assigned us. Very luxurious it was, too: shower bath, W.C., springs, mattress, *pabellón*, and entirely screened-in. This was so comfortable we promptly took off our clothes and proceeded to enjoy it.

In the evening we went over to Scott's house, and sat there until nine, talking with them. The sand flies were very bad. Everybody scratching.

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<sup>69</sup> During this visit, Morley enlisted Harry D. Scott, the UFC manager at Rincón, as a sub-agent for the ONI (Harris and Sadler 2003: 112).

<sup>70</sup> Walter Brown, acting manager of the Tela offices of the United Fruit Co.



## September 10, Monday

After breakfast, I went over to the Engineering Department with Stuart and wrote to A.D.J. This, together with the conversation with Stuart about the coast, consumed most of the morning. Saw all the Fruit Co. maps and charts of the projected Trujillo R.R., which is to go as far as Iriona before striking up the valley of the [word missing; possibly Black River]. I arranged with Stuart to have John copy the Navy chart as far as it goes, about 100 miles north of Bluefields.

After lunch, Scott asked me if I wouldn't like to go to Trujillo, and about one we started. There was Scott, Rollins, myself, the motor-boy, and a *paisano*, who was being given a lift. We stopped on a bridge near Trujillo where there were some mounds and, in a cut, a bank of potsherds was exposed. These were broken into small pieces and were mostly undecorated.<sup>71</sup> Just here a heavy rain came over the hill, and we both took shelter in the car. With the curtain up, we sped along comparatively dry, even though it was pelting down outside.

At Trujillo, we first went into the station until the rain cleared up, and then up the hill. We went directly to Melhados', where Ernest introduced me to his brother, William, whom I failed to meet the other morning. We sat in the latter's office, talking war and local history. The American filibusterer Walker was shot here some seventy years ago under rather discreditable circumstances for an American.<sup>72</sup> I looked over the Melhados' stock of goods against what we'll have to buy Wednesday when we come over to stock up for the down trip.

While Scott was talking with Gayen, the local coconut magnate, Rollins and I sauntered over to the edge of the hill beyond the *cuartel*, and again enjoyed a wonderful view. Perched on this not inconsiderable bluff, the Spanish sentinels could spy the English buccaneers from afar, and in those sailing days only, it can easily be imagined how the civilian inhabitants of the little coast settlements scurried into the fort against the coming attack. We got back before dinner, and I found John "doing his bit" at slumber. He was up at the wireless station when I left for Trujillo, but returned in time to do his daily bit on the bed.

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<sup>71</sup> The archaeology of the Honduran north coast, east of the Ulua Valley, is still underdeveloped compared to the Maya region. When Cortés came through the area in the 1520s, he found the natives near Trujillo spoke Nahuatl, the language of central Mexico. Some scholars have suggested the area was a Nahua colony (Lara Pinto 1991); others proposed that the language was Nahuatl (Nawat), a Nahuatl dialect spoken by the Pipil-Nicarao peoples of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which would indicate cultural ties to, or a migration from, the Mexican highlands (Fowler 1981). In Preclassic times, as at Copan to the southwest, Olmec influence is found in the ceramic register (Healy 1974). The surface samples of pottery seen by Morley almost certainly date to the Postclassic Nahua occupation of the area.

<sup>72</sup> William Walker was an American adventurer who sought to create English-speaking colonies under his control in Central America, an activity known as "filibustering." He had limited success, but did take over Nicaragua and ruled as its president in 1856–1857. Three years later, he became involved with English-speaking Bay Islanders resisting the assertion of Honduran control over Roatan. He was captured by the British Royal Navy and turned over to Spanish authorities in Trujillo, who quickly executed him on September 12, 1860 (Martelle 2018).

We had one or two visitors after dinner, including the nice English-Scots chap Stuart—but these did not stay long—and we turned in early.

### **September 11, Tuesday**

Spent most of the day writing. Went over to the Engineering Department for an early start. Hadn't been writing for more than an hour when Rollins came in and wanted me to go to the commissary department and pick out the goods I wanted. I first went over to the house and got John to come over and make a tracing of the Navy chart of this coast from Chinchorro reef down to below Bragman's Bluff on the Nicaragua coast.

The Rincón commissary is pretty much depleted. The war caught this division at an awkward stage with a big investment of materials on the spot—Scott told me \$3,000,000.00 worth—and nothing forward to a finished or leave-able stage. One sees, everywhere, timbers, car frames, piping, decaying in this corroding sea air, another mark against the Hun. Just two weeks ago, they went through their commissary and cut their stock from \$15,000 to \$3,000, sending the major part to Tela, which, because it is producing, is still flourishing.

There was not much I could buy at their commissary, a few odds and ends, matches, candles, lantern, a few tinned fruits, meats, and vegetables. When I got back to the draughting room, John had the coast traced and the principal rivers indicated. Stuart very kindly offered to help us make a finished map of the entire coast, allowing us to utilize any data they have on file. If we can so arrange our itinerary on our return, we will stop off here and take advantage of these facilities.

After lunch, Stuart came over and talked for quite a while. It came as a shock to me that he is evading service in the British army. I sense a story here. He is obviously of an adventuring spirit, and not the stuff slackers are made of. He let slip something about leaving "home" under a cloud. He's just a year older than me.

As Flannery—Scott's secretary—is leaving for Tela in the evening, I had to hurry through with the rest of my letter. I wrote to Mother, Lybs, and Gann; A.D.J., Gilbert, Miss Poast. I wrote until nearly six, foregoing a plunge in the sea off the wireless station. After supper, went up to the wireless place for a half hour. He is a young chap named Duval, just now on his mental edge, just at his wit's end to know just where his duty lies, whether to give up his Fruit Co. seniority—he is now within 3 or 4 of the top in his line—and enlist, or whether to stand pat. He wants to do his part, but the Fruit Co. does not want him to leave. I suggested his writing to the head of the Fruit Co. wireless service and ask if he couldn't get credit with the Federal authorities for his work down here.

I suffered keenly from prickly heat all day and at the house it reached a climax. I could have torn my flesh raw and yet not allayed that intolerable itching and burning. I left John at the wireless reading the last "post" and came back down to Scott's to say goodbye. John picked me up here on his way home an hour later. I was still itching.

### **September 12, Wednesday**

The boys got back from Bonacca about seven, but as the Bonacca authorities wouldn't give them

an *escala*,<sup>73</sup> they couldn't land at Rincón, but were obliged to go on over to Trujillo. There came early, before eight, a telegram from Mr. McCollough to Scott asking if we were still in Rincón, and if we were, to tell us an important telegram had arrived for me. I got Scott to wire back *urgente* to wire the message *urgente* back to Trujillo care of Melhados'. We put in the morning packing and talking to Stuart, and we left on Scott's car right after lunch. As quickly as we got to Trujillo, we went out to the boat and told the boys we were in. I went up to Melhados' to see if a telegram had come from McCollough, but "*no hay*."

We were more or less in a quandary. The "important" telegram might be anything. It might be orders which would call off the Bluefields trip, it might be money from the C.I. We could neither buy supplies at Melhados nor let the boys clear the ship for down the coast. I even went over to the telegraph office to see if anything had come, but no. I hadn't been back at Melhados' long, however, before a telegram was put into my hands. Although strange enough, it in no way affected our plans. It follows: "Corty shot last night through the abdomen, condition serious grave doubts as to recovery, we are doing all possible for him," and was signed Jack Belt.

This of course cleared the situation as to our trip down the coast, but left us to the wildest speculations concerning what could have befallen poor Corty. We thought of all the usual things, women, some political mess, or private feud, but none seemed adequate. I went over to the telegraph office at once and sent three messages. One to poor Corty deploring his misfortune and wish him "good cheer." One to Jack, urging him to let us know tomorrow at Irióna what really happened to Corty, and another telling him, in effect, "*no hay molasses*."

Back again at Melhados', I started buying the rest of our outfit for the Mosquito trip, and the boys set out to clear the boat *escala* for the coast east. As William Melhado wouldn't be back until after 5:30, and I had to get my money from him, it was necessary to get a special permit to embark after six from the *comandante*. The *comandante* was the same ill-tempered one who tried to humbug me on photographing the day before yesterday. He tried the same tactics again. He was very sorry but the country being under martial law, it was *prohibido*, quite like the German *verboten* in fact. I told him of similar courtesies extended at both Tela and Ceiba, and finally produced the president's letter—which of course he had already seen as I knew and as he knew that I knew. Finally, with a gesture of infinite weariness and disgust, he waved his hand and said "'*sta bueno*." He signed the permit and all our papers, even signing for the doctor who was off on a joy ride with William Melhado, and we hastily escaped, glad to see the last of such a disobliging individual.

After completing our outfit at Melhados', we went down to the woman's who had given us breakfast Sunday morning, and had supper. I forgot to mention that just after we got in from Rincón, we met Mr. Pearce down by the station on his way out to the Aguan Bridge, and thence upriver to his mahogany cuttings. He suggested that a Dr. Miller would go with us, if he was asked. We met him here Sunday, but he had too many gold teeth and too watery an eye, then too, he looked beyond the age limit of endurance, so I passed up this opportunity of securing a *médico*. He was willing to come for his board!

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<sup>73</sup> Authorization for a stopover before reaching a final destination.

After supper, about six, we returned to Melhados', and after a short wait William came back and we all went into his counting room. Here, by a very spluttering light, we settled our accounts. I left \$125.55 for my Fruit Co. bill, as well as some \$276 pesos for their bill, and paid an account of \$75.50 for the boys. Then cashed all my Banco Comercio gold drafts and finally bid them goodbye with about \$225.00 gold cash in hand.

We went directly down to the beach, leaving Charley for a moment at his brother-in-law's, the *administrador*, but he delayed so long that I finally had to send Campbell—poor slow-moving Campbell—for him. We had phoned Rollins we'd be over at Rincón about seven for our goods, but it was just that when we finally put out from Trujillo wharf and the lights of town blurred together behind us.

The *Atlántida* was in and before we left, the captain, Thompson, came across to get his pictures. I told him the boys had taken these across to Bonacca already, and from there they would be sent to Oak Ridge care of Mr. Bob Cooper. I showed him my set, however, and he was much pleased with the likeness of himself and his family.

A squall hit us between Trujillo and Rincón, and we were driven below by the rain. When we reached Rincón wharf, Cap. Wood said he didn't want to venture outside as a "norther" was blowing outside beyond the point. As such matters are to be left entirely in his hands, we prepared to go ashore and spend the night at Rincón. Rollins and his assistant, Wright, were down there to help us aboard with the stuff from their commissary, and when they found we were going to sleep there one more night, they offered to take us down in the motor.

We loaded the stuff aboard that night, however, and then, telling the boys we'd be on hand early in the morning, we climbed in the motor and came back to our headquarters of last night. We turned in immediately, but I didn't go to sleep for hours, suffering agonies from my prickly heat.

### September 13, Thursday

Dournoft Wood was up at the house before I had finished dressing, and John was scarcely up. I took Dournoft over to see the doctor, as I had promised last night, and he was surprised to see us, naturally. If I hadn't long ago ceased being surprised in anything in these countries, I would have been surprised myself. Dournoft may or may not have an incipient appendicitis. [Dr.] Stowe told him to take a purgative and keep quiet. Dournoft went down to the boat, and we went to breakfast.

After breakfast Stuart came down to the wharf with us. Just before I left, he told me his story. Fifteen or sixteen years ago, when only a boy of 19, he became implicated in a sensational English divorce, Sir Reginald and Lady Violet Beekman. He disclaimed being the correspondent, or rather the one who figured in the trial, but in consequence of his culpability, which became known to his mother, he was obliged to leave home, from which he'd been straying ever since. He had been back only once to become involved with a French governess, and his family, all out of patience, had banished him. In the Southwest, he would have been called a remittance man. He interested me particularly because I tried to persuade him his duty lay in not evading military service any longer. He now fears if he joins, he will be classed with the slackers—as he probably would. I am going to take the thing up with Gann and Walters when I get back to Belize. He says he wants to get into it but just doesn't know how to go about

it. I earnestly hope I may be able to help him later when I return. But the time for leaving was at hand, and with his regrets that he was not coming with us echoing across the water, the wharf dropped away and we headed out toward the point.

The sky was overcast, and the captain thought it looked threatening. Once we had cleared the point, however, the sea seemed very little rougher. There is an old abandoned lighthouse, which was never completed, on the point. Otherwise, the spit is low, sandy, and unattractive. The shore was the same way, sand dunes covered with low scrub growth, the mountains rising behind them, much farther inland.

About noon, we were off the Aguan bar, in fact we had passed it, heading for Iriona, when Dournoft decided that a heavy no'wester was blowing up, and that we had better put in. There is no anchorage at Iriona, being an exposed coast, and in case a heavy blow came up, we would have to run before it. We'd been watching two sailboats work into the Aguan, and a time they had of it too. We put about and headed in. Dirty water swirled all about us and, as we approached the bar, broke in ugly white breakers. We passed in and suddenly were aground. Dournoft had chosen the outer side of the bar so that if we did run aground, the sea and wind would blow us into the channel. Here we pounded for—it seemed an eternity. It was our first bar, and both John and myself were petrified with fear. The boys were all shoving with poles and yelling madly at each other. Dournoft was aloft on the main-mast, which swayed fearfully back and forth, calling the channel and meanwhile we were aground. Soon—I don't suppose we were aground more than five minutes, all told—we were in deep water and chug-chug-chugging up the channel.

We anchored mid-stream between the two villages, Santa Rosa Aguan on the east, and the bar on the west. The *comandante* put out from Santa Rosa and, having examined our papers, said we might land. Charley Osgood has an aunt here, Mrs. Charles Kirkconnell, Island folk. She is a sister of Mrs. Bob Cooper, and he assured us a welcome there.

We worked in closer to shore in the *Lilly Elena*, and then put off in a dory. The Kirkconnells live on the shore. The head of the family is in Tampa, Florida, making wooden ships for Uncle Sam's merchant marine. Will, the youngest boy, was urgently needed by his father and was trying hard to get off. Some trouble over a passport had temporarily delayed him, but he was counting on getting off very soon. Another son, Carson, came in soon and we all sat down to dinner. There was one girl, aged 17, but more of her later. After a light lunch of fresh milk and bread and butter, I was shown into an adjoining house where I wrote on this diary for a couple of hours. John improved the same shining hours by pounding his ear in the hammock.

About five, we all sat down to a big chicken dinner to which we all did justice, and immediately thereafter the hunters set off up the Aguan in a *cayuco*: John, Dournoft, and Willie Kirkconnell. We had brought the phonograph ashore, and this I carried over to the other house where was the best room, and Hazel Kirkconnell and I danced until nearly ten. There were visitors from time to time. First Charley Osgood and then Mrs. Kirkconnell came to look on for a while. A terrific rainstorm broke in the middle of the evening, and it was easy to imagine our hunters returning with typical fisherman's luck. Also dropped in an Austrian, Louis Egelsee or Egelkee. He was very broad-faced and painfully polite and obviously delighted with the music. He essayed to dance once with Hazel Kirkconnell, but she didn't dance long. Poor fellow, he tried so hard to be pleasant, and was so naïve about it.

About nine the hunters returned with a fat doe. They had been well-drenched in the downpour, and after Will shot this deer, both lights, the electric and carbide, promptly went out for good. In boarding the *cayuco*, Dournoff fell into the river with the deer in his hands, but he had presence of mind to hold on to it, so this tangible trophy of the chase was not lost. John sent aboard for some grape-juice, and we all had a Bryan cocktail in honor of the celebration. Will took the entrails out of the deer so it would not spoil, letting the skinning go until tomorrow. Dournoff decided to sleep on board, and there was one single bed, and a double one for Charley, John, and myself. As John had already found several *garrapatas* on himself, no one wanted to share the double bed with him, and so with common consent he slept by himself, Charley and myself sharing the double bed.

### September 14, Friday

I rose before sunrise and walked down to the dock to see how it looked outside—from Kirkconnell's wharf, one can see the bar. To an inexperienced land lubbering eye, it appeared to be all right, no white caps showing and no ugly clouds in sight. A Carib paddling by confirmed this amateur diagnosis of fair weather, and I went back in and awakened John. Soon, all were astir and the ladies of the house had breakfast ready. Just before leaving, Willie Kirkconnell carved off a big, generous venison steak for us to take with us. Will came down with us to the mouth of the Aguan, and when we went aground on the bar, he put off in a little cockle-shell of a dory, and took soundings for us. We were not badly aground, and with a little shoving, floated free. We bid Will goodbye and turned eastward.

The 45-mile sail from Aguan to Iriona was monotonous enough, a low shore of sand dunes covered with scrub bush; behind the mountains rose blue and serrated. Iriona is on an exposed and open beach. We anchored what seemed to me a long distance out, too long for making it in our wretched dory. Fortunately, the *comandante's* dory put off and carried us ashore. Only Cap. Wood and I went. When we reached the beach, we had to cross over a sand dune, and then by another dory over the Río Sangrelaya, which here parallels the shore, its mouth being a few hundred yards to the west. The water is quite red, hence the name Sangre Laya, bloody flood. The *comandancia* stands a few hundred feet back from the bank, and thither Cap. Wood and myself went at once.

I had a letter from Mesa Calix at San Pedro Sula to the *comandante*, a Doctor Lobos. I presented this and had an affable enough chat with the doctor, who said a telegram had arrived for me last night. Leaving Wood at the *comandancia*, I hurried over to the telegraph office to see what Jack had to say about Carty. It said: "Carty's trouble was an argument over a bank draft, he is very brave and doing well though the condition is still serious. We are all trying hard to pull him through." Poor Carty. The message left much unsaid, principally who had been the assailant. I wired a message of cheer to him, and another to Jack thanking him for his news and giving him Bluefields as our address after October tenth.

I also sent a wire to Joe [Spinden] at Bluefields saying we would be there about October 15. By the time I got back to the *comandancia*, Cap. Wood's papers were ready, and we only had a few minutes to wait. An American citizen, born in Barcelona, named Ingles wanted passage to Patuca. He was a nice appearing chap, and I told him to get his luggage and we'd take him aboard.

There was an old cockney Englishman named Bluett, watery as to eye, and a long time in the tropics. He wanted to sell me some oranges, and also to give him a newspaper. I did both. He comes from somewhere up the Plantain River, and was down at Iriona for the *Quince*, i.e., Sept. 15, the day of Independence for Central America, their Fourth of July. By the time the oranges were ready, Cap. Wood's papers were made out, and bidding Lobos goodbye, we walked down to the beach, crossed the Sangrelaya and put out to the *Lilly Elena*. Before the Carib boat boys put back, I gave them each four *reales* to celebrate the *Quince* with.

Our new passenger, the "Spanish American" Ingles, appeared to know a good bit about the coast. He has a little store in Ceiba, and was up the coast as far as the Río Patuca selling goods and booking orders. He wanted a lift as far as Patuca. We were passing our last mountains until we get to Bluefields, so Dournoft said. They were lovely in the late afternoon, a deep blue against a lighter one, both shades perfect. At Iriona, we picked up a pilot to take us over the Black River bar. After our experience with the Aguan last night, John and I suffered lively enough apprehensions as to the passage of this bar, but our pilot knew his business, and amidst all the swirlings of the waters, we sailed smoothly in.

The Black River has several mouths and ramifies into a number of lagoons, all part of one system. We heard of an American, Bruner, three or four miles up the river, and decided to go up as far as his place. The pilot told us the river had a good channel that far up, and after we were well in the river, he left us. The banks of the river are low, and behind for the first time we saw pine ridge country. I had heard there was lots of this down the coast from Dick Kevlin when we were up in San Pedro Sula, but this was our first actual experience of it.

The river was very placid, and lovely in the after-light of the sunset. We passed several huts and later stopped at a zinc-roofed house. A gringo carpenter who made solid mahogany chairs for eight sols apiece lived here. He told us Bruner's place was about three miles farther up. We passed a large flock of parrots flying south, stretching literally as far as the eye could reach. Just at dusk we reached the latter, and Cap., Charley, and I went ashore first. Several dogs rushed down to meet us, and Charley, whose end of the dory was landward, hesitated to disembark until a voice from the house on the hill assured us they wouldn't bite.

Bruner is an American, about 45, I should judge, living down here and raising fruit and coconuts. He had a pleasant middle-aged mulattress and other native people about him.<sup>74</sup> He asked us in, and we entered the house, a large shack made of bamboo. It had one large room, divided off by several low bamboo partitions into smaller chambers. The family was just sitting down to supper—Bruner, the mulattress and a daughter of perhaps 16 years—and asked me to join them, but we had just eaten and so I declined.

It seemed to threaten rain so I asked if we might sleep ashore and he said yes. I went back to the *Lilly Elena* for John and the beds and bedding. We just got back to shore in time to escape the rain. The Bruners had arrived at the dessert stage—watermelon—and asked us to partake. It was delicious. He said it was raised from good U.S. seeds.

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<sup>74</sup> Bruner had a lasting impact on this remote part of the Honduran coast: the exact location of Bruner's property is noted as "Bruner" on today's Google maps.

I was feeling miserable—ask John, he knows—and so put up my cot and *pabellón* and turned in early. John and I shared the main room with an Indian and his wife and one coughing small child.

### September 15, Saturday

The Indian began stirring at daybreak and soon we all were up. Ingles came ashore and helped us carry our beds and bedding aboard. Before leaving, the mulattress asked me if I could sell her some sugar. Of course, we couldn't sell it, but we were glad to give her a jar full.

Bruner came down for a short distance to get me a sample of some wood, the sap of which was a strong yellow. It's probably not a dye-stuff, but I took a specimen anyhow and will send it in.<sup>75</sup> Bruner's cayuco was the most capsize-y I have seen yet—about as big as a postage stamp, and far less trustworthy. After getting the wood, we bid goodbye to Bruner and with current and engine both working for us, we quickly slipped down the river and out over the bar.

The sea was like glass, and we reached Brewer's Lagoon by the middle of the morning.<sup>76</sup> We passed over this bar without touching—indeed, the sea was calm as a mill-pond—and glided in behind the western point to anchorage. We lunched here, and presented the ship's papers to the old *comandante*, who lives on the west bank. Going into the lagoon, we had our best fishing yet; as quickly as the line could be baited and cast overboard, it was seized and some fish landed: 2 jacks and 2 mackerel were thus hauled overboard in quick succession. Old Peter Marin, a Belize Negro, came aboard while we were anchored at the mouth. He owns a lot of property on the west side of the lagoon. His hands are all spotted white from that curious disease—I know not what—from which so many of the colored people of these coasts suffer.<sup>77</sup>

The lagoon looks like a large bay, indeed toward the east the end cannot be seen. It is 15 miles long by 7 wide and has an average depth of 5 feet. There winds over this waste of waters, however, an 8-foot channel. About the middle of the western end is a group of four islands, only one of which is of any size. It contains some 3–4 acres, and has two 100-foot hills, one at each end, with a low-water-level saddle in between. They are known as the Cannon Islands, because five old cannon were found mounted on the top of the northernmost hill, i.e., commanding the entrance to the lagoon. Probably pirate impedimenta.<sup>78</sup> Two self-expatriated

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<sup>75</sup> The wood was probably logwood (*Haematoxylum campechianum*) which produces a red or purple dye. Logwood cutting, together with piracy, was the principal reason for the first establishment of an English presence in what is now Belize.

<sup>76</sup> The lagoon is allegedly named after an English pirate, Bloody Brewer, who used the lagoon as a hideout. It is known today as Brus Laguna.

<sup>77</sup> Vitiligo, a condition that produces depigmented skin which manifests as white patches on dark-skinned patients, is thought to be an autoimmune disorder with some degree of genetic susceptibility. Although globally about 1% of people are affected by vitiligo, the rate in Honduras is much higher (Krüger and Schallreuter 2012).

<sup>78</sup> The cannon remain on the island today, and indeed were the "impedimenta" of English pirates who constructed a series of small fortifications along the Mosquito coast in the seventeenth century (von Hagen 1940).



American brothers have lived on the island for the last 25 years with Negresses by whom they have had a large progeny.

I was curious to see these Robinson Crusoes, or perhaps better Swiss Family Robinsons, and we headed first for the island. We anchored off the eastern shore in front of the low saddle where we could see a thatched hut or two, and put ashore in a dory—Dournoft, Ingles, Ben, and I. Wiley Wood met us at the shore, a faded man over fifty, thin, sandy hair, watery blue eyes, weather-beaten skin, and a general air of a man whom the tropics have got the better of. His brother, John, was off up the Patuca river at some plantation. There was an old Negress and several small black and tan children about under the coconuts. Wood took us up to his house, on the lee side of the northern hill—I inferred the one below in the coconuts was his brother's. Here, one of his woolly-headed sons was busy loading shells.

The home was a large, thatched-roof shack, bamboo sides, the only article of furniture that was from the outside [world] was a cheap white metal bed. The *pabellones* were dirty, a few ragged pants and shirts hung about, and a general air of disreputability pervaded everything. And yet Wiley Wood appeared to have some education. An unsavory tale centered around his brother John, to the effect that an American wife had followed him thither and he had deserted her for this Negress. The jilted wife returned to the States and divorced him. Both appeared to be excellent examples of the collapse of white morals in the tropics, with its too-easy living and too-easy women.

There was nothing to hold us here. I would like to have seen the pirate cannon on the northern knob, but Wiley Wood said the trail was all grown over, and that there were *garrapatas*. The latter were sufficient reason not to go, so we returned to the beach and, bidding Wood goodbye, put off. Two of his children were bathing as we paddled out and I got several negatives of these young fishes, also one of the *Lilly Elena*. We steered next for Sicri point, following the channel. Just off the point we grounded, and spent a half hour trying to work ourselves off. Dournoft put off in the dory and sounded for deep water, and presently we were under way again.

It was getting on toward the close of the afternoon, and we headed for the big coral on the north shore, where an American by the name of Riplinger is manager [of the Brus Lagoon Coconut Co]. Crossing the lagoon, we had supper. The water is the color of rich coffee and cream and it was evident the rivers running into it were in flood. We sighted the zinc house on the sand dunes under a coconut grove, and also a wharf reaching out into the lagoon. For one cheerful moment, I thought we were going to be able to dock and escape going ashore in our unspeakable little dory, but Ingles said the water off the end was less than 3' and we had to anchor a short distance out.

Riplinger met us right. He put off in a long impressive *canoa*—that looked like a Hawaiian war boat for size, with six of his *gente*. Ingles introduced us, and we went ashore with our beds and bedding. After we left the boat, Dournoft climbed the mainmast and rigged up a signal halyard, and ran up Old Glory to an accompaniment of a salute of three guns by Charley. And so we celebrated the *quince de Septiembre*, and did honor to our quasi-allies of Honduras.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Honduras was not a full ally in the war effort until July 19, 1918, becoming the last nation to enter the war.

John was in painting fettle, and rushed off to the beach at once with his water-colors, whither I presently followed him with my diary. The sea was calm. A wonderful play of color spread over the sky. Flamingo pinks, lemon yellows, grays, blues, greens, lavenders, heliotropes, shades and tints that occur nowhere else but in the heavens. It was our despair and delight at once: the impossibility of recording, either by brush or pen, that magnificence of color. The sun went down behind a point of coconuts to the west, and for a few minutes blazed gloriously there. Twilight fell swiftly and then dusk.

We returned to the house and sat on a bench, where Dournoft sang to us some fine Island shanties. One in particular, reciting through many verses the hardships of a sailor's life, was lovely. Its refrain ran as follows:

"So wet and so tired and so hungry are we  
There's no one that suffers like a sailor on the sea."

There were others. "The Maid of Payuc," "The Zelda"—all seemed to have a melancholy strain with here and there a flush of rough and ready, not to say fairly broad wit. But we were tired. I had slept so little last night with that cold in my back, so we went to bed early. Riplinger gave us a house where he stored tools and we put up our beds here. I hadn't been to bed long before I discovered that if I could lose my supper, I would rest much easier. Having done this, I went to bed again, but it was a long time before I feel asleep.

## CHAPTER 7

### PATUCA

#### September 16, Sunday

Our plan was to go through the cut-off from the Lagoon into the Patuca [River], and then down the Patuca and outside to Caratasca. We were all up early and went aboard for breakfast. Riplinger's wife—whom I forgot to mention yesterday—decided she would make the trip with us, coming back along the shore on horseback. She is handsome, pretty young, light-colored. She was raised around Iriona but had spent much time latterly at the Islands. It was summer and fall at least, as she is but 18 and Riplinger 44.

Dournoft had been telling me all along how talkative Riplinger was, but last night he scarcely peeped, and I marked it as strange. Dournoft tells me that when he asked Riplinger last night to give us all the information he could about the lagoon, he said "You can tell 'em what you want to, captain, but I ain't goin' to say nothin'. Them's fly cops and them two they's detectives." And thus cheaply reputations are acquired. I must say he loosened up today and talked interminably. He has a tiresome habit of dropping his voice to a whisper, glancing around to see no one is prying, and then leaning over to tell you the most commonplace thing as though it were a state secret. Say, something like, "pass me the potatoes."

Mrs. Riplinger came well attended, a native girl with a 12-year-old son of unknown father. We headed due south across the lagoon to Mrs. Curbelos, to whom I had a letter from Mr. Pearce. She lives just east of the Muskeeta<sup>80</sup> village. The south shore of the lagoon is low and open, one can see savannas stretching back for quite a distance. We put ashore in the dory, Mrs. Riplinger, the Indian girl, Dournoft, and I. Some Muskeet Indians were in bathing as we approached the shores. *The Eagle*, Mr. Pearce's motorboat, was drawing up in front of the Curbelo casa. It looked in very poor condition, and I promptly decided we would [not] try to tinker with her. We stopped only long enough to look for a pilot to guide us through the cut-off to the Patuca. Dournoft looked this one up, and I walked around the village. Squalor and filth and discomfort. Old Curbelo was suffering from an incurable disease, which will carry him off soon, and his conversation was all of his trouble. He frequently referred to himself as "*moribundo*," and I daresay he is. He wore a most extraordinary hat, at least extraordinary for this remote spot, a brown leather chauffeur's cap. He wore black glasses also, and interminably smoked a long, small pipe.

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<sup>80</sup> These are the Miskito people of the Caribbean coast of Honduras and Nicaragua, named after their ancient patriarch Miskitu. Today's Miskito are descendants of the indigenes, plus Northern Europeans (especially early seventeenth-century privateers) and ship-wrecked or escaped African slaves.

Dournoft found the pilot, an Indian, and we returned to the *Lilly Elena* and headed no' east for the cut-off. We were advised of its proximity two hours later by driftwood, bamboo branches, etc. We anchored off the mouth of the channel, and Riplinger and the Indian put off in the dory to sound for the channel. They were gone for nearly an hour, and returned with the very unpleasant news that we couldn't get through. The old channel is filled with driftwood and a new one is not yet cut through. Whereupon a radical change of plans became necessary. We would have to return to the mouth of the lagoon, and then go outside to the Patuca.

Reluctantly we put back, heading for Riplinger's place to drop our passengers. By this time, Riplinger himself had gotten over his delusions about the "fly-cops" and had become quite confidential, pointing out all the places of interest. He did his best to persuade us not to try to make the Patuca that day, but stop with him overnight. We wanted to get on, however, this good weather cannot last indefinitely, so we declined and dropped them at his landing.

We headed back for Sicri point and this time, with our Muskeet pilot, we did not ground. I napped for about an hour and a half, and woke when we reached the mouth of the lagoon, about two. It looked rough outside, but as we wanted to get to the mouth of the Patuca before night, we put out. Ben was at the wheel and Dournoft forward, when we ran afoul the bar properly, right on to it. All hands forward, shoving, pushing, the engine working overtime, but to no avail. Indeed, the current was washing us farther on the bar. It was not until we took down our awning and hoisted the mainsail that the strong no'wester blowing carried us back into the channel, and it was too late to think of trying to make the mouth of the Patuca before dark. We put back into the lagoon, therefore, and anchored near the west bank, and I wrote until about four, when Charley, John, and I all went swimming on the outside of the point. The water was dirty, but just right as to temperature. None of us ventured far in because of the sharks.

Afterward, in the late afternoon, John made a watercolor of the *Lilly Elena*.<sup>81</sup> The sand flies grew unbearable and we put out into mid-channel where we caught a strong sea breeze. The boys had lines out, and presently Dournoft had a bite. He pulled and yelled like a demon. It was a 125-pound June fish. When it was finally brought to the surface, Charley dispatched it with his revolver and it was dropped in the dory. Peter Marin was aboard and began slicing up the catch. He cut off several large steaks, and after taking all we could use, he went off with a big load himself. The boys estimated it would be worth 25 *sols* in Ceiba. They put the head and carcass overboard as bait for a shark and about eight, a disturbance in the aft in the dark advised that we had caught one. Dournoft drew in the line and Charley blazed away while John held the light, but the shark escaped, cutting the line. He, or another, returned and this time was caught fair. He struggled and plunged and fought, but when he was hauled astern Charley filled him with lead and the boys got a rope around his tail. It was a long time in dying, and even after 7 shots had been pumped in, and a knife plunged into its gills, it continued to

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<sup>81</sup> Although we have found and included several of the watercolors Held made on this trip, his painting of the *Lilly Elena* remains elusive. Indeed, we have been unable to find any image—painting or photograph—of this small coastal boat. For our best approximation of what the *Lilly Elena* looked like, see Figure 5.5.

struggle until we staffed it up on deck with a pulley. They left it hanging there until morning to be photographed.

By this time, the sand flies were devouring everybody and we got ready for bed at once. In spite of a fairly heavy roll, I decided to sleep on deck in my cot, which Charley lashed at each end so it would not slip into the sea. We turned in early, but not to sleep long. The sand flies were fearful and no one had their *pabellones* up. Just before midnight the no'wester changed to a land breeze and the roll went down, also the sand flies.

Charley fell overboard when we anchored off the point. Dournoft was launching the dory, and Charley thought it was going to fall on him, and with a yelp he jumped in. "Man overboard." His round red head—just the color of the muddy red water—bobbed up soon and he climbed into the dory.

### September 17, Monday

All hands up at daybreak. The Muskeet [Miskito] Indians left for the east bank, as Peter Marin—our new guide—came aboard from the west bank. There was scarcely a ripple on the sea as we came over the bar at six o'clock, there were even no breakers. We made the run from bar to bar in just four hours.

The Patuca is a large river [Figure 7.1], second only to the Wanks. It has built, in ages past, a big point of land out into the Caribbean. Along way off we could see a great flood of brown muddy water stretching as far out as the eye could reach. The line of demarcation between this and the sapphire blue of the salt water was as sharp and clearly defined as the stripes of our own flag. There was no intermediate zone of clouded seawater. Here, deep blue salt water and half yard beyond, a deep muddy flood of sweet water. The bar of the Patuca [Figure 7.2] has a bad name among coast captains. A no'wester, a norther, or a no'easter kicks up a dangerous sea, and boats dare not venture in or out. The bar itself commences fully a mile out and extends at varying depths, not more than 4' at low water, almost into shore.

When we crossed over at ten o'clock, it was a dead calm. The Muskeet Indian village is visible from the entrance about half a mile up on the west bank, a small collection of thatched huts. We anchored near the *comandancia*, and soon the presiding genius came aboard to examine our paper. This one, surely a Blue Ribbon *sin verguenza*, promptly threw us into dismay by saying our papers were faulty and that he could not clear us for Caratasca, in fact for any other port on this terrestrial sphere save Iriona, a good 55 miles behind us. Here was a pretty kettle of fish indeed. This man's superior at Iriona, Dr. Lobo, had told us just what to do, and we had done it, only to run into this snag. I argued and pleaded and threatened but he refused to clear us for any other port save Iriona. He said he wouldn't try to hold us, if we went without papers, but for Caratasca not one paper would he give us. Ingles, the little Spaniard whom we had carried from Iriona, sided with this *paisano*, to my amazement, and caused me great disgust.

One of two courses presented itself to us in this dilemma: either we could go up to Caratasca without papers, and stand a chance of having our ship seized in consequence, or else we could send a letter back to Iriona, asking Lobo what to do.



Figure 7.1. The mouth of the Río Patuca.



Figure 7.2. Held's watercolor of the Patuca bar.

The Patuca *comandante* was sending off a *soldado* with a letter explaining the affair, so I wrote him at the same time, telling how we had been refused papers to Caratasca, and asking him to clear us from there straight through to Cape Gracias, Nicaragua. I saw the *soldado* privately, and told him if he got back by tomorrow night—it is 125 miles easily there and back—I would give him 10 *sols*. He said he could and would do it, and Peter Marin, who knew him, said he was to be trusted. He got off about noon. We lay out amid-stream for the rest of the afternoon and night, to cool off.

I was furious. I had tried honestly and earnestly to conform to all the laws of the coast, and here I was being held up by this ignorant, two-for-a-penny, petty official, who didn't even draw a salary. He was cursed by everybody roundly. Island oaths, Carib oaths, Hondureño oaths, and most efficacious of all, good old gringo swear words. But to no purpose: we will have to wait here until proper papers come from Iriona. I wrote in my diary and John read. Every once in a while, we'd stop long enough to curse out the *comandante*. In the late afternoon, John, Dournoft, and Ingles went down along the west bank dove-shooting. We heard shots, but the huntsmen came home empty-handed. John said they were flying high!

We had an early supper so they could go hunting on the east bank for deer; Ingles averred they were very plentiful there. There were four in the hunting party: John, Dournoft, Ingles, and Robert Trap, a Belize Negro. They set off about sunset. Ben went ashore to "take a walk in the village" and Charley, Campbell, and I settled down to a nice phonograph concert, when the *comandante* came aboard to listen also. His reception was pretty cool. Charley answered all his questions by "*como no*," the most aggravating sentence in his whole language next to "*quien sabe*" and "*no hay*," and I said nothing. Under this refrigeration process he soon froze up himself, and after a half hour he said "*buenas noches*" and went ashore.

The sand flies were troublesome, though not so bad as last night, and Charley helped me put up my cot. This time it was the best arrangement I have yet achieved. Put her up between the aft hatch and the middle hatch, across the deck, and hung the *pabellón* from the edges of the awning. Inside I was trig as could be, and barring a lot of old itches contracted during the past two weeks, I fared very well.

Ben came back and reported we had missed a real time ashore. The Island woman who knew Charley, a Mrs. Saunders—the mother of the attractive coffee-colored girl I saw ashore at the *comandancia*—had prepared a cake against his coming, but he didn't show up. I was in favor of sending ashore for this hospitable lady and her four daughters and the cake, but it was eight o'clock and the evening over for social purposes.

About nine o'clock we heard a shout from the shore and the huntsmen came aboard in a towering rage. Fisherman's luck was a bagatelle to what had befallen them. The mosquitoes were so thick as to be drawn with the nostrils every time a square breath was indulged in. The pampas grass was so high that giraffes could not have seen above it. They walked a million miles in deep sand. Every misery the flesh is heir to, they suffered from, and with all this anguish they didn't as much as see a trail, let alone get a shot. The four or five shots we heard were at a coconut tree to bring down some of the nuts. John flung himself on the beach when they finally got out, and all but expired. He was furious at Ingles for having betrayed him into the wild goose chase, and when I raised the pregnant subject of the *comandante's* outrageous stand, this opened full the floodgates of his wrath. John fairly screamed at Ingles, who visibly

shrunk into the bandage he had tied around his face to keep off the mosquitoes, and soon he slunk off to shore. John, muttering blood and thunder, finally composed himself for the night.

### September 18, Tuesday

Ben called breakfast before anyone was up, and everything was cold before we finally got around to eating it. As we had to put in the day somehow, waiting for the *soldado's* return from Irióna, we decided to go upstream. The river has a strong current and we didn't make particularly good time, but we were in no hurry and it didn't matter. We went up about 20 miles, as far as Robert Trap's banana plantation on the west bank. The shores are flat and low, covered with a low, dense vegetation. We bought some bananas from an old witch in a *pitpan*, and sent back word to Mrs. Saunders to cook us a couple of fowls for supper.

Whilst Dournoft was bathing in the dory, which he had filled with water, a large alligator<sup>82</sup> swam out for him. John blazed away at him with bird-shot and Charley with his revolver. Some of the former bounced off his back and, together with the noise, he dove out of sight, not until after Dournoft was in the halyards at the bow, however. The audacity of this *lagarto* [alligator/crocodile] was colossal—in broad daylight to swim out against a 35-foot boat with a half dozen noisy people on board. He must have been hungry indeed to have thus ventured. It had some of the elements of a German submarine torpedoing a battleship. Another incident of the up-voyage was hauling a couple of Indian women in a *pitpan* to their home upstream. We had saved them three hours hard paddling, and they were very appreciative.

When we got up to Robert's banana plantation, he went ashore in the dory and brought aboard a load of stems. I put some good strokes at my diary and John did some bully portraits—Dournoft, Ben, Robert, and some sketches. We started back down the river at two and, with the current and engine, we reached the mouth two hours later. The wretched *comandante* came out and looked at us as we swept by the village. What with power and current we must have been making ten miles [per hour].

John wanted to sketch on the beach, at the east of the mouth, and Charley to stalk alligators, which were as thick as driftwood, sunning themselves on the sand flats down at the mouth. He was highly amusing. He would make huge detours inland on the flats and then, dropping on to his knees, creep laboriously toward the water making the noise of a young bull elephant crashing through a bamboo brake. The 'gators enjoyed this, dropping into the water and disappearing long before he got into even the range of heavy caliber indirect fire. He got none. Having finished his sketches, John came down to the water and roared for the dory to take him off. His usual misery: sand flies devouring him alive. Charley was summoned from his absorbing knee-breaking occupation, and we put back up the river and anchored off the *comandancia*.

Charley went ashore to look up the two chickens we had ordered of Mrs. Saunders, and returned saying they were coming along fine--big, brown, tender, and juicy, and would be sent in about an hour. The chickens were beyond expectation, which was going far. After a banquet

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<sup>82</sup> This would have been an American crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, which occupies saltwater mangrove swamps in limited areas of the south shore of the Bay Islands, and other islands of the Caribbean.



off them—the best meal we'd had in days—the crew went ashore on pleasure bent. John and I played the gramophone to Campbell, until Charley came back and operated the machine. Charley reported Dournoft in conference with the *comandante* and we anxiously awaited his return. His peregrinations ashore could be traced by his white electric flash. He patrolled the beach many times, almost from the bar to the last hut inland, but we could only guess at what he was searching for. About nine he hailed us to be taken off, and Charley put in for him. Ben came along too. The *comandante*, Dournoft states, is very sorry we hate him so cordially, that he bears us no ill will, that he regrets I am so "*bravo*" and "*caliente*," etc., etc.

Although the incident is now 36 hours old, it makes me froth at the mouth to think of it, and we all grouched ourselves to sleep hoping to high heaven the *soldado* gets back from Iriona early in the morning with proper papers clear through to Cape Gracias. I forgot to record one important development in the affair. When we got back from the trip upriver, Ingles came aboard and reported that the *comandante* of Brewer's Lagoon had sent up an envelope sealed, for us to carry to the *comandante* at Caratasca, and that he, and the Patuca *comandante* felt sure it contained our correct papers.

As it was addressed to the *comandante* at Caratasca, we naturally refused to open it, and even to carry it. We want no clearance from Brewer's Lagoon or Patuca either, now as we've asked for clearance from headquarters directly, namely Iriona. Ingles was "hurt" at our attitude, and he went ashore in a huff, none too soon for the crew and certain of the *Lilly Elena*, however. If our papers should be in this letter, why wasn't it addressed to the captain of the *Lilly Elena*? Nor will we carry it through. I am staking everything on through papers from Lobo at Iriona.

### September 19, Wednesday

As soon as it was daylight, we all looked at the *comandancia* for signs of the returning *soldado*, but "*no hay*." I began to fret and stew. Should we demand papers for Iriona, retrace our steps and go back ourselves for proper papers for Nicaragua? And the morning wore on, and no *soldado*.

About nine Charley, Dournoft, and I went ashore to see Mrs. Saunders and thank her for cooking the chickens. The lady herself was black as the ace of spades, but her five offspring—four daughters and a son—varied in hue. Under the Mendelian law it would hardly be possible to account for such divergence in one wedlock. And indeed, such was not necessary in the present connection, Charley tells me, as the good lady was an exponent of the trial marriage idea. Her children all had different fathers! After sitting there a while and cussing out the *comandante* and Ingles—the latter a prime favorite I found out later—we bid them goodbye and went down to the *comandancia*.

The *soldado* had not returned. The *comandante* wouldn't give us our old papers back or indeed clear us for any other port but Iriona; in other words, he stuck to his original position. I couldn't talk without getting red-headed at this rank injustice, but finally before leaving he suggested waiting until four in the afternoon, and if the *soldado* had not returned by that time from Iriona to send another to Brewer's Lagoon with a message to the *comandante* there asking him if our papers for Caratasca were in the envelope he had sent up yesterday, and if so, to send permission to open the letter. I could do no better than this, and so reconciling myself to losing another day in this devilish place, I returned to the boat. My diary being up to date, I

resurrected some of the cheap literature we have aboard—"Argosy," "Popular," "Metropolitan," etc., and anaesthetized my mind for the rest of the day.

One interesting phenomenon I should note, while I think of it. The Patuca is at the flood time just now, and great quantities of muddy water, brush, logs, branches, and sometimes even small islands float by us and on out to sea. Ben, who hails from Bluefields, says a piece of land once broke off down there with two head of cattle on it and floated out.

In the afternoon about two, the *comandante* called me ashore to show me the letter he had written to the *comandante* at Brewer's Lagoon. It was as we agreed it should be in the morning, asking authority to open the letter he sent up yesterday if it contained our papers to Caratasca. He really showed some signs of decency, and barring his refusal to give us papers to Caratasca, is doing his best to help us on. For the first time in two days, we didn't quarrel. There has been a big blunder somewhere, either with Lobo back at Irióna, or with the *viejo* at Brewer's Lagoon, or with the man here. Time will tell. The new messenger was told that if he meets with the first *soldado* to return with him. Leaving matters thus, I returned to the boat. Toward the close of the afternoon Dournoft saw a black object out beyond the bar bobbing up and down, which we tried to conjure into a submarine, but which the glasses indicated was a log. Campbell put the finishing touches by remembering having seen it pass.

The old *comandante* had tried so hard to hurry this second messenger—lending him a horse—that we decided to give him a little ride up river after supper. It seems he felt badly that he wasn't included yesterday, but truth is his stock was so low no one wanted him then. We really weren't keen on him this time, but although he had then held us up 48 hours, I thought it was time to bury the hatchet. I sent Dournoft ashore to give the invitation and fetch the gentleman if he accepted, and soon Dournoft returned with him. We weighed anchor, and had just started up stream when Dournoft seized the glasses and cried out, "there come the two *soldados*." Sure enough, the two messengers could be seen coming up from the point.

We put about and came to anchor for the steenth [sic] time off the *comandancia*, and we all went ashore. There were two letters for me from Lobo, and one from Lobo to Cordoza. One of mine contained our through papers to Nicaragua with stop-over privileges anywhere. *A cabo Gracias escala la costu*. The other was a very nice letter from Lobo, regretting the trouble and hoping the new papers would prevent a recurrence of the same in our future peregrinations. Cordoza's letter I didn't see, but it evidently gave him to understand we were free to go, and we immediately made preparations therefor.

I paid the two messengers, and also Pedro Marin, who has been detained until the matter was cleared up. He was detained through no fault of his own, indeed only because he happened to be our pilot, and lost thereby three days of work. For this, I reimbursed him. Finally, to show there were no hard feelings, I sent some tins of meat and fruit ashore to the *comandante* and distributed some smokes among the boys.

In the final analysis of this contretemps, it seems possible to distribute the blame as follows: chiefly upon the ignorance of the Patuca *comandante*, the indecision of Lobo at Irióna, and the carelessness of Dournoft. Had Lobo originally given us the papers he finally sent, there would have been no trouble. His instructions, however, were sufficiently explicit and clear that Cordoza should have cleared us for Caratasca, particularly after he had seen Lobo's letter to the *comandante* of Caratasca ordering him to clear us for Cape Gracias. Finally, Dournoft was to

blame for not having examined his papers after leaving Iriona and finding out just where he was cleared for from there, a thing he does not know this minute.

The sun was setting and we decided to run the bar before darkness fell, and reach Caratasca by morning. Everything was in readiness, had been for two days. The anchor was weighed, and we swept down on the flood of muddy waters, Ben at the wheel and Dournoft forward, sounding. The strength of the current here was excessive at the mouth. The only way we could approximate its speed was to fix our eyes on some point on the bush, and watch how rapidly it fell behind. Dournoft sounded repeatedly and in one place got as low as a fathom, but a moment later the bottom dropped from under his pole and we went across the bar. Outside, a strong east wind was blowing, and we had to buck against this all night. It was calm enough at first, but about ten a series of heavy swells blew up from the east. Rain fell in torrents. John went below and I huddled under the boom, dodging the drops as the boat shifted from side to side under buffetings of the wind. When it was over, John popped out of the hatch, for all the world like a Jack-in-the-box, cursing the heat and odors of the hold.

In spite of a heavy roll that developed after the first of these squalls, we both slept on deck. It was just rough enough not to make me seasick, but a little more and I would have been heaving ballast. It was all very interesting, the half-dark night with black clouds banking up behind us, frequent flurries of rain, and the pitching and tossing of our little craft in the big swelling seas. Little flecks of phosphorous flashed like diamonds in the black water and our propeller left a trail of foam behind us. I didn't use my cot, it is easy to believe, and indeed slept with a rope around my hand, the other end made fast to the deck. It was pitching that much.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE MISKITO COAST

#### September 20, Thursday

We did the 41 miles from bar to bar in just 12 hours, only 3½ miles an hour, not bad with wind, current, and heavy seas all against us. One does not see the mouth of the Caratasca Lagoon [Figure 8.1] in approaching from the west, as the eastern side of the opening runs back in behind the western side. The sea was without motion when we finally reached the bar, over which no breakers were breaking. Our entrance was effected without difficulty, our minimum sounding being 10 feet.

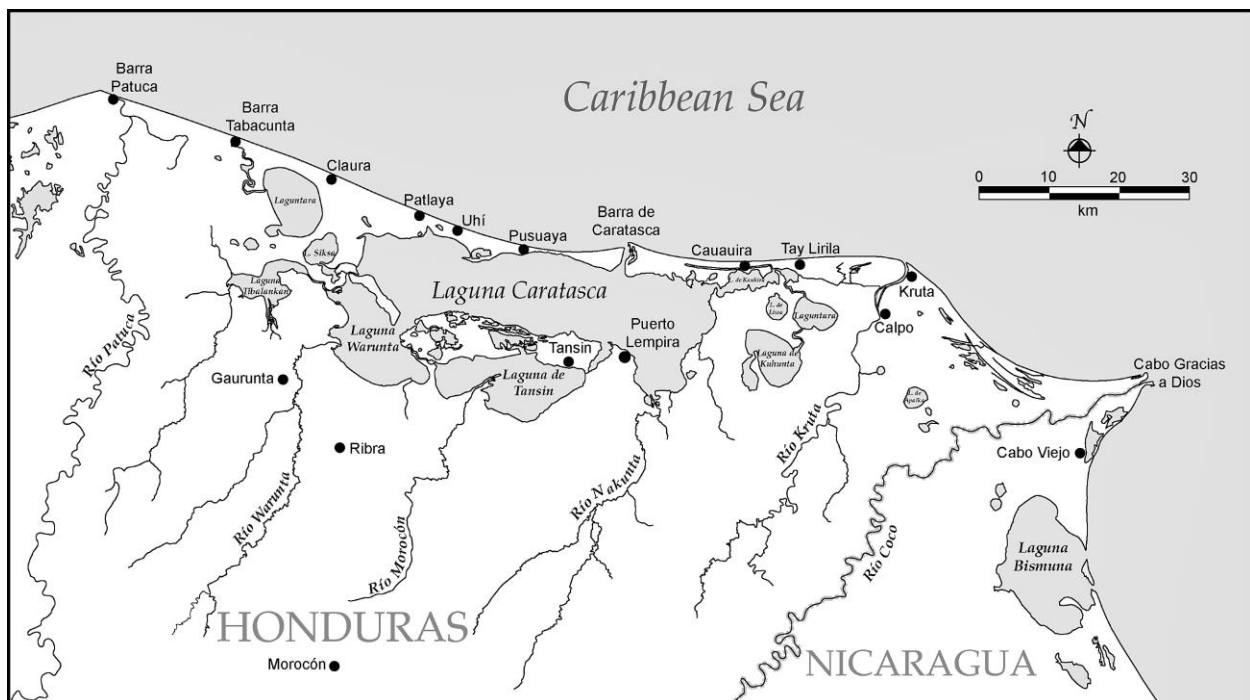


Figure 8.1. Caratasca Lagoon and the adjacent coastline of La Mosquitia.

There were several houses on the east point and one on the western one. No one lives there, however, being only storehouses for coconuts and the like. Both points were heavily forested, particularly the western one, and from the sea we saw a return of the high tropical vegetation we had been looking for, but which we had not found. In the channel between the two points, we passed three canoes of Miskito Indians, and found that the *Obispo*, the Chicle Co. boat with Dick Kevlin aboard, had got in last Saturday (the 15th). We hope to see him tomorrow around

at the Chicle Co. commissary at the southern side of Tansin Island [in Caratasca Lagoon]. From the mouth, we crossed the lagoon to the *comandancia* on the southern shore, a distance of 12 miles. The lagoon is really a big inland lake, or rather a confusing maze of communicating lagoons. Mr. Hurter told me in fact, you can go from Brewer's Lagoon to the Wanks River<sup>83</sup> in *pitpans* at high-water with only two short haul-overs.

The water at the bar never gets lower than 6 feet in the dry season, and when it is highest shows 12 feet. Just inside the entrance there are some flats where the water is less than a foot, but through this an 8-foot channel winds the deeper parts which average 12 feet. Along the northern shores, the water is deep fairly close to the land, but along the southern shore, particularly by the *comandancia*, there are flats quite a distance out where the water is not more than 3 feet deep. The shores of the lagoon are surrounded in some places by bush, and in others pine ridge, and open grassy savannas come right down to the water's edge. This is particularly true toward the south, where the open savannas extend for three days journey, in fact, as far as the Wanks.

We anchored a long distance offshore, although even then we were as far in as we could venture, and waited for the *comandante*. This one came aboard presently with his Indian woman, of all people a Maya from Corozal in the colony [British Honduras], and although good looking, of excellent Maya type.

Dournoft presented our papers, including that interesting letter from the *viejo* at Brewer's Lagoon, which had been sent along after us, and which both Cordozo [the Patuca *comandante*] and Ingles were sure contained our proper clearance for Caratasca. We were interested in the contents of this letter and when it was opened asked the *comandante* if it concerned us. But it did not, containing some stamped papers and other matters. So the *comandante* at Patuca was, after all, to blame. The Caratasca *comandante* confirmed this by saying he could and would have cleared us for here under the same circumstances and further, that the rule forbidding the issuance of papers to points other than Iriona only applied to boats carrying cargo, merchandise, etc., and traveling with a *guia* [guide], which we were not. The whole thing finally boils itself down, therefore, into a blunder of the *comandante* at Patuca.

John and Dournoft went ashore in our dory to hunt on the savanna behind the *comandancia*, while I came on shore in the *comandancia's* boat to photograph and get information. I met a boy from Bluefields ashore who said that White<sup>84</sup> was at Cape Gracias three weeks ago, and that he makes his headquarters there. I had found out what I wanted to some time before John and Dournoft got back, so I was ready when they came off the savanna with two small birds—a pigeon and a snipe. John claimed, in addition, four or five parrots, but there was no ocular proof of these latter.

The *comandante* had decided in the meantime that he wanted to go over to Cowkera with us, and that he would come out after breakfast. With this understanding, we started for the

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<sup>83</sup> The Wanks River in Nicaragua, also known as the Wanki and the Río Coco, lies near the border with Honduras. It is the longest river in Central America.

<sup>84</sup> B. M. White was the manager of the Kentucky-based Mengel Bros. Co., which was one of several large mahogany operations, the main industry at Caratasca.

ship. John and Dournoft undressed at the shore and pushed me in the dory. When I got aboard I also went in. The water was warm and I could walk on the bottom, albeit up to my chin. While we were getting dressed, the *comandante*, his woman, his *sargente* and his woman, two as ill-favored wenches as I've ever seen [came aboard]. They were an affectionate quartet and did much embracing of each other during the afternoon. One amusing thing happened to them. The *comandante* had on a pair of quasi-immaculate white trousers, and he was sitting with his legs over the top of the cabin just where the bilge water pump exhaust emerges. Charley began to pump and before the *comandante* discovered his position, his leg and boot were covered with oily black bilge water.

Crossing to the east end of the lagoon, we went behind a high patch of bush and through a narrow channel into Cowkera Lagoon. The rain beat down and a strong, indeed heavy, east wind drove it into our faces. For a moment it seemed as though we were not going to get around the point. The waves lashed our sides, the wind whipped our canvas awning (which, acting like a sail, held us back), and we only crept along. By and by, the squall was over and although the sun didn't come out, the water went down. About two, we wound into another reach of the lagoon, and came to anchor at Cowkera, where lived two white families, the Haylocks and the Hunters, Island people. Mr. Nat. Hunter came aboard as well as Norman Haylock, the brother of Manny Haylock, the owner of the *Memory*. Someone mentioned hunting and nothing must do but that John should prove his prowess again. The *comandante* and his *gente* went ashore after vainly trying to spend the night on board with us. The women of the party were a fearful nuisance and we certainly were not going to be annoyed with them when he had several *paisanos* ashore.

I was busy with my diary when John finally got off. John, Dournoft, and Alfred Haylock went in our dory. About five—the hunters still being absent—we had supper and I went ashore with Nat. Hunter and took a *paseo* down the lagoon. The soil is sandy and not over-fertile. We must have walked about a mile. Returning, we passed the *comandante* and his party out for an airing. We went into Mr. Nat's house for a half hour or so, where Charley joined us, and met his wife, a rather good-looking woman prematurely grown old with too many children and too much work. She had nine and all were living. One, a pretty little girl of 6 or 7, impressed me. She was both deaf and dumb, and had that curious detached expression so often seen in those surrounded by that terrible wall of utter silence. The only decoration in the narrow pine-boarded room where we sat were two posters, one covered with Sunday school tracts and the other showing more or less inaccurate likenesses of Edward VII and Alexander and George V and Mary.

The mosquitos were active and so we went aboard early. After listening to the phonograph for a while, I was just getting my bed up when a hail from the water announced the return of the hunters. John began clamoring for food a half-dozen ship's lengths away, and by the time he was aboard was roaring lustily for his supper. Same story as at the Patuca—no game. Fresh tracks in plenty, but not one sight. They'd encountered a squall going and all but capsized. John was kept so busy bailing her out that he had no time to be afraid. Knowing the propensity of our dory to ship water even in a dead calm, with any kind of a breeze on he must have been kept busy. Well, they didn't capsize and so all's well that ends well. John says coming back it only took them an hour to do what had taken them two and a half to do going out. But knowing

John and his bizarre estimates of time and distance, I cut the going time almost in half. I got under my *pabellón* before they were through supper. After supper, Dournoft and Ben went ashore again and did not come aboard until late.

Gladys Sheehan [actually, her sister] was probably married sometime today. At least so A. wrote in one of the letters I received at Ceiba. Gladys and her younger sister were to be the only attendants. The wedding was to be at The Little Church Around the Corner.

### September 21, Friday

We were eating breakfast when the *comandante* and his henchmen came aboard and, bidding goodbye to Mr. Nat. Hunter, we started out through the small channel to the main lagoon. When we got off Ajuiyere—the *comandancia*—we delicately conveyed to the *comandante* that we would like his company as far as Tansin, but not that of his lady friends. These dirty women were a continual nuisance and, when I found he was planning to take them on to Tansin, I declined the pleasure. This was conveyed to him delicately with a million regrets which would have done credit to a *paisano* himself, and when they went ashore at Ajuiyere they went for good. The *sargente* came back with our papers and laundry, which had been taken ashore yesterday. While waiting for our papers, John, Charley, and Dournoft went overboard to shove us off. We went too far in before we anchored and brought up against the muddy bottom.

It was a lowering gray day with occasional showers. After leaving Ajuiyere, a heavy rain squall overtook us and Dournoft, who was at the wheel, could hardly follow the north shore of Tansin Island. In fact we did run ashore on a mud bank out quite some distance too, and both Dournoft and Charley had to go overboard and shove her off before we were clear again. By clinging to the north shore of the island, we finally rounded its northwestern-most point and headed south, when a new difficulty arose: the water had now become quite sweet and there began to appear a long water grass. This was found here and there before we rounded the northwest point of the island, but around on the west side it was thick. The *sargente* told us the first opening was the one leading to the Chicle Co. commissary, and we headed into this, promptly going aground. Dournoft climbed down into the dory and set out on a sounding reconnaissance. He came back soon with the news that there was enough water ahead to float the *Titanic*, so we pushed off again. And now the grass grew thicker, slower and slower turned the propeller, and presently it came to a halt. Overboard went the boys, diving under her stern to cut loose the entangling grass. This performance was repeated several times, only to find, when we finally worked our way into the bight, that it had no outlet, was in fact a cul-de-sac, and all the boys' work was for nothing.

We came back out and continued on around to the southeast. Again, the propeller became befouled with grass, and finally the engine failed to turn her. It was now close to sunset, and it was evident we couldn't go any further before night. We hove to, therefore, and drifted idly before only occasional puffs of breeze. The gray rain clouds, which had hung so low all day, lifted for a little while at sunset, particularly toward the sea, and gave us occasional glimpses of fair blue sky beyond the torn fragments of gray veil. In the west, two or three thin streaks of vivid orange cut through a curtain of deep, dark blue at the very horizon.

The evenings are the most tiresome parts of our days, as one cannot go to bed at seven and yet there's nothing else to do because of the insects. Just after I had got under my *pabellón*, a

heavy rain came up and drops, quite a few, percolated through the awning and through my *pabellón* to me. We went to bed about eight, and about an hour later heard voices somewhere off to the southeast in the general direction we imagined the Tansin commissary to lie. John first heard them—people shouting and yelling. Then Charley caught it, and finally Campbell and I. There could be no mistaking it.

We had heard lurid enough stories about their carrying on from Nat. Hunter—how they would get stuff issued to them from the commissary and then sell it to buy rum. With this, they were drinking and carousing about. I rather fancied poor Dick Kevlin might be having a hard time of it, and I wanted to get over there to help him in any way we could. He had some hundred *chicleros* on his hands, many of them Mexicans, and as tough a crew of cutthroats as could be imagined. The *comandante* told me they weren't going up the river (the Ibentara) until Monday, so we hope to catch him before he starts up into the hinterland.

### September 22, Saturday

No attack last night. We were in such a Saragossa [Sargasso] Sea of weed and grass that it seemed useless even to clean of the propeller until we got clear of it. Dournoft had a happy idea to carry a rope forward in the dory, fasten it to one of our sounding poles, plant the same on the bottom, and then draw the *Lilly Elena* up to her. This plan worked very well, and by six such haulings with a 30-fathom cable, we warped into clearer water. We passed by some water lilies in the bight, and I put off in the dory to pick some. Yes, I have become so familiar with this uncertain craft that I'll venture out in her by myself. I picked a bunch and then return to the boat, which had not waited for me.

We were in for a disappointment in this bight, as it proved to be another cul-de-sac. John and Dournoft set off in a dory to see if it had any other outlet beside the one through which we had entered, and during the investigation raised an alligator. John paddled and Dournoft stood ready. They chased the beggar all over in circles around the bight and finally he dropped out of sight when they would have had him.

We were all getting pretty well fed up on this sort of thing, working into these bights at the cost of infinite weariness only to find them closed alleys. We put out of this one, and continued following the coastline along to the southwest. The next opening appeared more promising and, after heading up into it, Dournoft announced it was a fair channel and we were off. Perhaps a mile of winding brought us into the next lagoon, Tansin, where more misery in the shape of water grass awaited us. Nor could we see the commissary at first. Presently, however, when we got fairly out on the lagoon, Dournoft's long-distance eyes picked up the sail of the *Opisbo*—the Chicle Co.'s boat—and toward this we set our course.

While we were working and cleaning and working and cleaning, we saw a young flotilla of *pitpans*, *cayucas*, and two motorboats put out from the commissary heading across our bows from the mainland. It looked like some pirate crew leaving a vessel they had just scuttled. There were ten boats in all, first a Miskito fleet of four *cayucas*, which we were unable to intercept. They were nearly across to the mainland when we first sighted them, and they disappeared up some estuary early. Behind them some distance hurried a little powerboat, which reached the mainland before we intercepted the last half of the fleet. Indeed, for a few minutes I doubted our ability to do even this. By continually starboarding our helm, however, we eventually cut



them off, and the last part of our work they made easy for us by abandoning their course and heading toward us. The second division of the chicle fleet consisted of a motorboat called the *Gertrude*, which was towing four *pitpans* laded with supplies. I should say, before they finally changed their course, we had run up the stars and stripes.

The boy in charge of the *Gertrude*, O. Ribero, said Dick Kevlin was on ahead in the little motorboat we had seen skipping over the water at such a prodigious rate. We thought Dick had failed to sight us, so I wrote a short "goodbye" note to him. As I was giving this to the Ribero chap, however, we saw the little boat put back. Ribero then went on in the *Gertrude*, and we hove to waiting for Dick. When we drew closer we saw his boat was nothing more than a rowboat equipped with an Evinrude engine. Even as we watched, this choked up and it took him so long to get her going that we finally started up ourselves and headed over to them.

Dick came aboard and well surprised to see us, too. At first he thought it was Manny Haylock's boat, but when he saw us dip the stars and stripes he gathered it was us and put back. Lunch was ready and we asked him to join us. He was then on his way up the Ibantara River to be gone a month. He was taking eighty men up with him. Things had been in a very bad state, he reported. If he had been one day later, all his *chicleros* would have left. They had eaten or stolen all the food they could lay their hands on, and were trying to make their getaway. Dick blamed the contractor, who had led them into the bush and left them with only two weeks rations, and then failed to send any more up to him when this was used up. Naturally, they returned. And so it had gone on from bad to worse. He had, he said, just arrived in time to prevent all from decamping. He was taking some eighty up with him to get them started, and was then going off on a cruising trip himself to look for more trees, probably coming out by way of the Wanks and thence down to Cape Gracias. But he was in a hurry to be off, and since we ourselves had some mile or two of water-grass as well as a long pull across the lagoon to the bar before nightfall, we did not tarry much over lunch.

Dick got some extra shells [for his gun] from Charley and said, as he went aboard, [that] after they were used up, he could use it as a club. He has more kidney than almost any man I know. Here he is going into the bush single-handed without another white man and eighty odd disgruntled Mexican *chicleros*. All have had advances as high as two hundred dollars gold, and this one man only stands between them and a clean getaway. He said he wished he were going with us, and we would have enjoyed it also. Instead, he goes back into the hinterland for a month with a bunch of cutthroats. I hope earnestly he'll come though all right and that we may see him as soon again as this last time. It was August 26.<sup>85</sup> His little *cayuca* went one way and we another.

It was the same old story: fouling up the propeller and having to clean it out again, Charley and Dournoft alternating in the diving. We worked out through Tansin Lagoon into Guarunta Lagoon without too much difficulty, but here our grief commenced. A strong no'easter was blowing, and we had to give up bucking both breeze and grass at the same time. Again, the boys resorted to the same makeshift as before, taking the anchor out in the dory and dropping it the cable's length ahead of us, and then drawing ourselves thereto. John and Dournoft went forward in the dory with the anchor each time, and Charley, Campbell, and Ben would draw

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<sup>85</sup> Dick Kevlin lived a short life, dying in 1920 at age 29 from a tropical fever.

the boat up. Nine back-breaking times this laborious process was repeated before we were finally clear enough of the grass to go forward under power once more. By this time, the sun had set and we headed across the main lagoon for the mouth. The water was inky black and, as we were well within the shark zone by this time, Charley, whose turn it was to clean the propeller, did not want to go overboard. So we limped along at half speed for a couple of hours and then anchored in the middle of the lagoon for the rest of the night.

### September 23, Sunday

We got an early start for the mouth of the lagoon, and when we nearly reached there, Charley went overboard and pulled off the last of the grass from the propeller. We were all glad to see the last of this troublesome growth. Dournoft has a heavy cold as a result of his frequent plunges yesterday, and Charley looks pretty seedy. We passed out through the bar of the lagoon about nine o'clock without mishap. Indeed, there was a good nine feet, which makes it our best bar yet. We headed east-southeast.

Between Caratasca and the Cruta [Kruta] River, an ugly sky began backing up behind us. Dournoft thought it might be a no'wester. Heavy gray-black clouds piled high and overspread all the sky in that direction. One could see through it at the edges, however, and distinguish the shapes of the cumulus clouds behind it. Happily, it was moving more to the southeast and it cut across our stern and followed up the beach. Off a settlement called Diamante, the side of it caught us and kicked up a little sea, but nothing to take account of. By the time we had reached the Cruta bar—one o'clock—it had passed off to the southeast and left us with little sea to contend with at the bar. I must admit Dournoft ran the Cruta bar in great shape. With unerring judgment almost amounting to instinct, he picked his way through that swirling flood of muddy waters without once touching bottom, and in much less time than it is taking to write about it, we were inside and creeping up the river.

Nicaragua claims this river, i.e., everything east, and in support of her claim has a *comandancia* at the mouth on the east side. Honduras, on the other hand, claims to the Wanks, a claim which I believe has been sustained by the King of Spain. At all events, the Honduran *comandante* on the Cruta is on the west bank, and thither we hied ourselves, the *Hondureño* banner aft and Old Glory floating forward. The *comandante*, a sickly-looking individual who had obviously had too much malaria, came aboard at once and examined our papers—this time, fortunately, they were all right.

We only went up the Cruta a short distance, as we had reached there so early in the day; we decided to push on to the mouth of the Wanks in the afternoon. There was an Island man, John Borden from the Grand Cayman, about half a mile up on the east bank, whom Dournoft knew, and we went as far up as his place. As we approached, he ran up the British flag most ceremoniously. Dournoft and I went ashore to his little trading post. He is a typical Islander, grizzled, gray, sandy mustache, and gold-rimmed spectacles. He gave me some information about the surrounding region and said the captain of the *Leonidas* had spent a night with him ashore several months ago while his boat was on that submarine hunt. Before leaving, he took us out and showed us some hides he had bought from the Indians: an ocelot, some deer-skins, and a number of otter skins! But as we wanted to reach the Wanks before night, we did not linger long and, bidding goodbye to Mr. Borden, we returned to the *Lilly Elena*.

We dropped the *comandante* at the *comandancia*, and slipped over the bar with even less difficulty than when we entered. The 21-mile run to Cape Gracias was accomplished without incident. Shortly after leaving the Cruta, we passed Cabo Falso and its lighthouse, the first on the coast since we had left Puerto Cortés. A little settlement of a dozen odd houses clusters around its base. The light is acetylene and only has to be lighted once every six months! It burns night and day and gives no trouble.

The sun had set before we finally got to the bar of the Wanks. From afar we could decry the houses, particularly one huge ungainly one, a hotel built by a German, Deitrick, many years ago. This has never been occupied and Dournoft says it is now in a state of utmost ruin. When we entered the muddy, fresh water from the river, it was after sunset. The north channel appeared closed at first, but later Dournoft saw the opening. He had already decided to enter by the southern, or main channel, which opens out toward the northeast, so we passed by the light, by the town, swinging way out to the eastward to dodge the bar.

The mahogany steamers were anchored about three miles out, and between these and the bar we made our course. Although a new moon shed some light, we dared not go ahead at more than half speed because of the danger of mahogany logs and other debris running afoul of us. The Wanks is at flood time, and is bringing down with it great quantities of drift material—mahogany logs, trees, branches, and small islands. An end blow from a good-sized *trozo* [piece] would stave us in like a punctured air bubble. So we nosed our way forward at half speed, Charley forward sounding, Dournoft aloft on the lookout, and Ben at the wheel. A long, low black streak—the outer end of the bar—drove us eastward a mile and a half before we could get enough water to turn in. Repeated soundings showed 7 and 8 feet, a very low flat where the Wanks gives up the earth it has carried down with it from the interior. It was uncertain, this going, and the channel seemed to have changed since Dournoft was last here in May, and finally, because it was so dark, we decided to anchor in Sunbeam Bay, just south of the bar, for the night. As soon as we got off the flats, we headed south and came to anchor not far from shore. It was very quiet here behind the shelter of the bar, and the swell that had been rocking us all afternoon was no longer perceptible.

### **September 24, Monday**

About three o'clock, the wind shifted from northwest to northeast and, as we no longer enjoyed the protection of the flats at the bar, a fine swell began to rock us in consequence. We rose early, and after breakfast worked our way over the bar, where we got a sounding of 5 feet. A mighty torrent of water was rushing down the riverbed, and we scarcely made steerageway against it. The town is on the right, or west bank going up. Technically and legally, I believe, it is in Honduras, but practically its affairs are administered and its customs are collected by Nicaragua. There are a number of wooden houses. The most conspicuous is the large hotel out near the point. Near this also is the light tower, a steel frame construction. Also, there are many disreputable looking hulls, some drawn up on shore, others rolling at their moorings, and at the end of the village was a huge old stern-wheeler like an old time Mississippi packet [Figure 8.2]. A veritable Port of Missing Ships it looked to us, as we crawled up the river to the *aduana*.



Figure 8.2. Postcard of the stern-wheeler that plied the Wanks River, circa 1917.

Old Glory was flying fore and the *Pabellón* [more correctly *bandera*, flag] *Hondureño* aft and all the town was waiting for us on the *aduana* dock. Dournoft had many friends ashore, apparent by the number of hails he got, and he went ashore first to present our papers. I had heard from John Borden at Cruta that White is not here, indeed not even in Nicaragua. Mengel's had a man here, a Mr. Bischoff, so I looked him up at once. He turned out to be a young fellow, awfully decent sort, and on further acquaintance wore better and better. I explained who I was, how and where I'd known White, and he in turn told me all he could of him. He's now in the States with Grace at his home, and probably will not be back before we leave again for the north. Unfortunate. I had looked forward to seeing him. Bischoff told me Joe Spinden was here last week. This was news indeed. We bid him goodbye over at Amapala in the Bay of Fonseca about July 25, and to hear of him way over here on the shores of another ocean was a bit of a start. He got as far west as the Cruta, and then turned back.

While I was learning these things, Dournoft and John came in, reporting a rotten breakfast at the Chinaman's. Bischoff thought this was unusual as he had just been telling me what good chuck he was getting at the same place. Later he went over with me and I had the first real breakfast I've had in several months: two grapefruit, a poached egg, tea, toast, and some delicious French toast with wild honey. The tang of wild honey has a taste all its own and is delicious. It was a real meal, a culinary oasis in a long desert of culinary catastrophes.

John and Dournoft walked over to the old hotel in the morning while I stayed at the Mengel Co.'s office and talked with Bischoff. He is from Billings, Montana, and he and John found they had a mutual friend. John reported the hotel to be in ruinous state on the verge of

collapse. The floors and baseboards were of mahogany, fancily laid in a sort of herringbone pattern, and there were other evidences of costly construction, but ruin had overtaken all. The verandas had fallen away from the house. The ceilings had buckled, doors and windows sagged, and the hardwood floors were stained and discolored. In short, a heavy gale gives promise of accomplishing its utter disintegration.

After lunch at the Chinaman's, John retired to the boat to read and I had a further long conversation with Bischoff, during which I got much information from him. Toward the close of the afternoon, we walked downtown to meet one of the people who had been with Joe while he was here. He stayed with an alien enemy crowd, R. Lehmann and Co. Truth compels me to add the manager is an American, however.<sup>86</sup> Afterward, we walked up to the old sternwheeler, the *Deitrick*. The big man of the place some 15 years ago was a German [sic.] named Deitrick.<sup>87</sup> He it was who built the big hotel and who formerly owned this old relic of Mississippi river travel days. Indeed, on some of the nautical charts of this region the settlement here at the mouth of the Wanks is called Port Deitrick. This man was the John D. Spreckles<sup>88</sup> of this place at all events, and formerly owned about everything. Today everything has changed hands and he is now said to be in the States somewhere.

Bischoff and I went aboard the old sternwheeler, which is used for river traffic. She only draws 2½ feet and can go up as far as Wasbrook Mouth, 210 miles above the bar. She is a commodious old tub, and a trip on her wouldn't be so uncomfortable. I understand she goes up whenever there is enough freight to warrant the trip—eight or ten times a year. The settlement to which she goes, Wasbrook Mouth already mentioned, boasts a couple of trading posts (white), one run by some American brothers by the name of Fagot, the other by a German, Eble, and a Moravian Mission presided over by an English parson, one Heath—quite an international colony to be so far up in the Mosquito bush.

At dinner, it transpired that Bischoff plays Solo,<sup>89</sup> so a Solo session was at once arranged for the evening. It was a curious sunset, fiery and with broken wisps of black, smoke-like clouds floating out of the northwest. Hurricane weather, Dournoft sized it as, and others agreed. Dournoft thinks there was trouble up on the Gulf beyond Yucatan.<sup>90</sup> At the Wanks, it was dead

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<sup>86</sup> The Richard Lehmann Co. was a German-owned mahogany export business (Morley ONI report #11 in Harris and Sadler 2003: 325).

<sup>87</sup> James Deitrick, an American, not a German, held a mining concession for the entire Mosquito coast under the auspices of his company, the Unites States Nicaragua Mining Company, which was funded by Pittsburgh investors. Deitrick's extravagance (building expensive hotels, among other things) led to his dismissal in 1906 (Gismondi and Mouat 2002: 859–860).

<sup>88</sup> Spreckels was a German immigrant to the United States who made a fortune running a shipping company that controlled most of the trade between Hawaii and California. He used his fortune to build San Diego into a major port, becoming its leading citizen.

<sup>89</sup> Also known as English Solo or Solo Whist, Solo is a four-player, trick-taking game that evolved from the seventeenth-century Spanish game of Ombre. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solo\\_whist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solo_whist).

<sup>90</sup> A hurricane was indeed swirling in the Gulf of Mexico at this time, and a major Category 4 storm at that, today remembered as the Nueva Gerona Hurricane. As it approached Cuba

calm, a lifeless, hot evening with swarms of sand flies and mosquitoes everywhere. Even the tide was unusual, being the highest Bischoff had ever seen there. We played Solo for about three hours: two games, both being won by John, who comes from the Solo belt. Bischoff knew a lot of new frills—a push, a spread, a *misère* spread, *misère*, etc. We tried some of them out, but came back for the most part to the better-known trio: frogs, solos, and heart solos. The game broke up about ten and I went back to the *Lilly Elena*. John slept with Bischoff at Mengel's place. Our boat, unfortunately for sleeping purposes, was moored next to the *aduaná* wharf, and two other boats were lashed alongside of us on the water side. Every time one of the crew of these returned to his ship he went via us, with the result that our boat was constantly rocking to these late returnings. Then, too, the sand flies and mosquitoes were out in force, making life miserable for everybody, even the *paisanos*, to say nothing of foreign trade. Finally, it was sultry and hot.

I had just fallen asleep about eleven when the *Eagle* got in from down the coast. Dournoft knew the captain and a long pow-wow followed. Sleep seemed to be pretty much out of the question, though sometime after midnight I finally fell off for good.

### September 25, Tuesday

We rose early for an early start, an *ignis fatuus* [lit. will-o' the wisp; deceptive goal or hope] in these countries. I routed out Campbell and sent him down to call John, who presently appeared with Bischoff. He said a man who came up on the *Eagle* from Wanta said there was a letter for me from Joe in the hands of Otto Lehmann, who came up on her last night. So I went ashore and looked him up. It was early, about six, and I wasn't surprised to find him at his shaving. He kindly interrupted this function long enough to get the letter. It was from Joe all right, written from Bluefields on September 18th, just after he had returned from the trip up to Gracias. Although it was more or less guarded, it was clear that he had my telegram. He says he has not found much archaeology, but what little he has indicates a connection between Costa Rica and Honduras on a Maya horizon. He thinks there won't be much to hold us in Bluefields.

After reading this, we bid goodbye to Bischoff and went aboard. Charley cranked up the engine and, with considerable maneuvering, Dournoft wriggled out of our berth, and we slipped down the river past the rotting hulls, past the shanties, over the bar, and then south. When Christopher Colón was this way some 415 years ago, the lay of the land was almost certainly different. The present Cape Gracias a Dios is not the Thank God of the great admiral, but was at that time as yet unmade, its location still in the sea. Colombo's Thank God spit of land is the old cape, now known as Old Cape, some five miles south of Sunbeam Bay and the mouth of the Wanks. Tradition has it that, harassed by a fearful storm, Columbus finally rounded the cape, and finding himself in calm water, said Gracias a Dios: Thank God. And so the cape took its name.

We had been told at Port Deitrick that we could get into the Old Cape lagoon all right, but that we would have to anchor just inside, as low flats, through which there were no channels, cut off the lagoon from the sea. Everything was as foretold. We got inside the entrance of the lagoon without any trouble, only to poke our bow into a mud bank about a couple of hundred

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before crossing into the Gulf, a slight turn to the west would have brought it near the *Lilly Elena* and Morley's penchant for seasickness would have been given the ultimate test.

yards in. It was clear we could go no further. One could see the old settlement across the lagoon on the south shore, about two miles distant, and I determined to visit it. A Miskito Indian was cruising about in a two-by-four *cayuca* with a handkerchief for a sail, and Dournoft hailed him in Miskito and asked him to take me ashore. Ben came too, to aid in paddling, as the wind was against us going over. The flats had only about 2½ feet of water when we crossed them, but we got into fathom water before we reached the village.

The old Miskito landed me at the opposite end of the village than that where I wanted to go. The town, which has between four and five hundred people, stretches out along the southern shore of the lagoon for a mile and a half. No streets, just a casual arrangement of houses fronting, for the most part, toward the lagoon or, unusually, like the *comandancia*, built over the lagoon and looking landward. This was the first time I have ever set foot on Nicaraguan soil, as Port Deitrick is surely in Honduras.

I asked where the Moravian missionary, Rev. Taylor, lived and was told that both church and parsonage were at the entrance end of the village, so I set out walking along the path thither.<sup>91</sup> It was soon evident that the town had seen better days. Many of the houses were unoccupied, and many others dilapidated and fallen into disrepair. The *comandancia*, once a good, substantial building built on piles over the water, was particularly disreputable. One of its outhouses had completely collapsed, the floor standing at an angle of 45 degrees with its roof stove in, and the main building itself is sagging at one of its corners and stands in imminent danger of sliding off into the lagoon. Perhaps by this time, it is no more.<sup>92</sup>

The missionary had a pleasant little house in front of the church. I knocked at the door and, getting no answer, I walked around on the veranda and met a youngish English woman, whom I took to be Mrs. Taylor. I introduced myself and she asked me into her sitting room while she went to call her husband, who was in the church at school. He came in shortly, an Englishman, not cockney, but nearly. Short dark hair and dark eyes, with a white sports shirt with blue and white striped collar and cuffs. This was worn open at the neck and was, in effect, very debonaire. We talked for a while about the Miskito Indians [Figure 8.3] and then he asked me if I didn't want to see his school out in the church. They had asked me to breakfast and, while that was preparing, we went out to the church behind.

The church was large and airy, built of wood of course, with a corrugated iron roof. The school part was at the back and was divided into two sections of seats facing each other. On one

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<sup>91</sup> The Moravian Church was founded in Bohemia and Moravia (now the Czech Republic) in the fifteenth century. It arrived in Bluefields in 1847 and began a vigorous missionary campaign along the Mosquito Coast, an effort that was so successful that almost all Miskito Indians today are members of the Moravian faith. Reaching to the smallest villages by the end of the nineteenth century, the Moravians established schools and provided religious instruction, including a strict prohibition on alcohol. The Moravians also brought a measure of modernization—or better, westernization—in the form of insisting the Indians live in houses with four walls and wear western clothes. The Moravian influence is so pervasive among the modern Miskitos that “For many Miskito...being Moravian has become synonymous to being Miskito: religion has turned into one central element of ethnic identity” (Oertzen 2005: 45).

<sup>92</sup> This line is evidence that at least part of Morley's diaries were written in arrears.

side sat the children who could speak English, and were taught in English, and on the other side those who could only speak Miskito, and were taught in that language. Eugenically, they were all chips off the same block, chiefly Miskito with occasional and casual strains of Negro, Nicaraguense, and even white admixtures. The difference between the two groups was only one of education, and all of the second group would eventually pass into the first. They have little use for Spanish, learning English as a second language in preference, but the Nicaraguan government compels them to teach Spanish, and so all three languages are spoken in the school. In fact, I heard "Onward Christian Soldiers" sung in Miskito, "Happy, Happy Bethlehem" in Spanish, and a Christmas anthem in English. The children were bright, and in reading, quick. Taylor says it is abstract things like arithmetic where they fall down. For instance, an abstract problem like  $2 + 3 + 6 = 11$  presents well-nigh insuperable difficulties, but when it is brought down to everyday matters such as 2 fish and 3 fish and 6 fish are how many, they quickly can tell you the catch was 11 fish.



Figure 8.3. Postcard of Miskito Indians, circa 1910.

After the singing and a prayer, school was over for the day. At lunch or breakfast, it came up that Mr. Taylor would like to go to Bay Mona with us. I was glad to return his kindness and hospitality by asking him to come with us, an invitation he speedily accepted. In leaving this little mission, my thought wandered to another up behind Belize on the edge of the Petén bush, to Father Versavel, my Jesuit friend, a Belgian<sup>93</sup>, and a whole-hearted servant of the Lord, working in a sterile soil. The effort in each case seemed equally heroic and unselfish and

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<sup>93</sup> Versavel has also been reported to be an American. Morley's interactions with Versavel are covered well in Rice and Ward 2021.



pitifully inadequate. And each was a quick uplifting influence in his community; each an unselfish Christian gentleman.

The Reverend Taylor took with him a boy who knew the channel into Bay Mona, and about noon the five of us set off for the *Lilly Elena*. When we got within hailing distance, John shouted, "Are you ready to go?" and when I called back, "Yes," he answered, "We're not; the tide has left us high on the bar." And so it was. The tide running out had left us stranded on a soft bank of mud with our waterline 6 inches above water, and a cant to our deck like the slant to a Bowery bum's straw hat. There is about 2 feet difference between high and low tide in this lagoon, and with the going out of the tide we were left high and dry. Banks appeared here and there in the lagoon, and it was well nigh incredible that the whole English fleet had anchored in this sheet of water not fifty years ago. But such was the case. The old Miskito who had taken me ashore said it had happened when he was a small boy and that he had seen it.

There was nothing we could do until the high tide came back in and lifted us off, so we all set ourselves to waiting, each with as good grace as he could muster. John and Dournoft went off in the dory, hunting. In about 2 hours, they returned with 3 snipe and a young swordfish. Although the latter's sword was only some ten inches long it was quite a vicious weapon, full up to inflicting an ugly wound. John shot him in 6 inches of water while he was in wading.

About five, after several abortive attempts, we finally got off with the help of the anchors and the rising tide, and, shaking the mud from our keel, we put out to sea. When the tide had thus betrayed us, it had stranded us on an old stump, which nearly scraped our bottom off before it finally let us off.

It was quite rough outside, and the dinner dishes slithered and slid all over the deck. Parson Taylor proved a good fellow, and anecdote and story passed back and forth. Charley won the prize hands down with a true story of Utila Island, a murder yarn which, for diabolical magnitude of conception, is one of the most remarkable instances of its kind I have ever heard.<sup>94</sup> Not ten years ago, there left from Utila one night a small schooner with 13 people on board, one a stowaway. The captain had a considerable sum of money aboard, several thousand dollars, and was going to Trujillo to buy cattle. There were two others in the crew besides himself, and the remaining nine people were passengers for Ruatan. The vessel [*Olympia*] left Utila about nine, and one of the two women aboard, a Miss Bessie Beaseley,<sup>95</sup> thought she heard someone in the hold and told the captain, but he reassured her saying it was only the cargo shifting.

Presently one by one, each settled himself for the night. Finally, when all were quietly sleeping, the stowaway, a Negro, crept from the hold. If ever the word stealthy were apropos, it were surely now with the fell purpose he had in mind. One of the crew sitting opposite the

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<sup>94</sup> Robert MacField was a stowaway on the schooner *Olympia*, which left Utila on June 30, 1905. MacField, in a drunken rampage, murdered eight of the twelve people on board the vessel, then tried to sink it. He took the four remaining passengers with him in a dory as hostages, only to kill three of them in the hours that followed. There was only one survivor. The account in the Methodist Mission House archives recounts both a confession, reproduced in full in the archive, and a formal trial. Finally, "after leaving the court house, he was taken up the Middle Path and hanged from a limb of a mango tree, thus ends the career of Robert McField" (Bomford 1905).

<sup>95</sup> The name of this person, the only survivor, was actually Miss Elsie Morgan.

hatch received a bullet in his breast and fell over backward, dead. The shot awakened everybody. The helmsman and captain were shot down in their tracks, [as were] several of the passengers who sprang to disarm the fiend. The woman and her husband were thus killed, their small baby, under a year in age, was seized by the arm, whirled in the air, and flung overboard. The holocaust continued. All were killed systematically save two, [Miss Bessie Beaseley] and a man, Alfred. When these three were left [two plus the killer], the murderer ordered Alfred to get the money for the cattle and then scuttle the ship. The three put off in a dory. Alfred in the bow paddling, [Miss Bessie] in the middle, ditto, and the murderer behind, heavily armed. Alfred was told to paddle back to Utila. It was now after midnight and the weary tragic journey landward was commenced.

At daybreak, they were a mile off shore. Without warning, leveling his gun behind [Miss Bessie's] back, the Negro shot Alfred in the back of the head. He sprawled overboard dead, number 11. [Miss Bessie] instantly divined her turn would be next, and without waiting turned on the man and tried to wrestle his gun from him. A brutal conflict followed in the false light of the dawn, the dory swinging crazily in the water. He clubbed her with the gun and finally beat her overboard. She sank, came up, and made for the boat. Again he clubbed her off and shot her. She saw in that instant her only hope lay in simulating death, and so without much motion or further struggle she floated off, blood from a wound in her arm discoloring the water, expecting the final *tire de grace*. The murderer seems to have thought her dead enough and paddled ashore to his house on the beach. He washed the blood from the dory, drew it up, and went to bed just after sunrise without anyone knowing he had ever left his hut.

Two days later, the baby was drawn up in a turtle net, and everybody thought the [*Olympia*] had capsized, all aboard going down. The night she had sailed had been calm, but here was the evidence, this little putrefying mass of flesh, and the thing was written off as one of those never-to-be-explained tragedies of the sea. Two days later, half crazed with thirst, terror, and exhaustion, [Miss Bessie] emerged from the bush which covers the interior of Utila and staggered toward the beach. She had floated away from the dory four nights before, and when [the murderer] finally paddled out of hearing—remember it was the false half-light of dawn—she began to swim toward shore. [Miss Bessie] was a powerful swimmer, another Annette Kellerman<sup>96</sup> we must believe, or else with shattered arm she never could have won to shore. Indeed, the miracle is the sharks did not eat her.

When she reached the beach, she stumbled into the bush in an agony of terror lest [the murderer] should see her and finish his ghastly job. She lost her way and wandered in the bush for four days living on roots, berries, and the casual fare of the tropical forest. Coming out to the beach again she made her way, now fainting and half-delirious, toward the village. Two fishermen saw her, and dropping their nets, fled in terror along the beach, shrieking "[Miss Bessie's] ghost!" And so they thought it was, come to haunt her home. But she could not follow them and sank exhausted. Their terror overcome by this unghost-like procedure, the fishermen

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<sup>96</sup> Kellerman was an Australian swimmer and film actress who overcame physical disabilities to become a champion athlete. She is most remembered for being the first to wear a one-piece swimming suit, which was probably the reason she won swimming races against competitors wearing bloomers. Kellerman was also an early proponent of synchronized swimming.

approached her and finally satisfied themselves that it was [Miss Bessie] in the flesh, without doubt, and helped her to the village.

Great was the horror in the little town, as details of this tragedy seeped from house to house. And swift, we can feel sure, was judgment. A great troop of men, women, and children went to the house of [the murderer] and confronted him with this prima facie evidence of his crime, this living and indisputable Exhibit A. His dory was overhauled and bullet marks found on it. Thus confronted, he broke down and confessed all the fearful story. A tree was handy—no trusting to tardy Honduran justice and interminable legal delays here. The murderer was quickly strung up. In one great popular surge of outraged feelings of unanimous horror, the Islanders avenged their lost kin. Charley's story, fully corroborated by Dournoft, made a powerful impression, and broke up the group.

Toward ten o'clock, under a fair moon, we put in for Bay Mona, or Bemuna. Our Indian pilot ran us on to a shoal long before we reached the bar, and after we were off, Dournoft and Charley took to the old tried method of half-speed ahead and sounding our way. Thus we got off the shoal and, feeling our way over to the southern bank, finally worked around and into the channel. We anchored in the mouth of the Bay just inside in a torrent of sand flies. We hurried under the *pabellones* but these were but inadequate protection against that vicious onslaught. I felt most sorry for Parson Taylor who had not brought one. We loaned him a hat we had. He climbed into a bag of some sort and tied his shirt around his head leaving only his nose exposed. To add to the general *tristeza*, it rained later and soaked our bedding. Parson Taylor tried the hold, finally, and finished the night down there.

## CHAPTER 9

### SOUTH ALONG THE NICARAGUA COAST

#### September 26, Wednesday

Everybody passed a miserable night. No dissenting votes either. Poor Parson Taylor's face was all swollen with numerous bites and he appeared quite doleful with a shirt wrapped around his head. After breakfast, we waited around for some Indian to show up to take the parson into Bemona, as Wauni Sound where we were anchored was too shallow to permit us to go any further into it. It was not long before several canoes appeared with Indian fishermen, and the parson hailed one in the outlandish Miskito dialect, where every sound or any appears to have a meaning. A canoe was arranged for, and then just before Taylor left, he suggested that it would be a nice trip for somebody to go inland down to Sandy Bay, the place we were going to sleep that night. John caught fire at once when the possibility of game was mentioned, and it was finally arranged that Dournoft and John were to go over to Krackpackia village with Parson Taylor on the west shore of the lagoon, and there they were to secure another canoe and two Indians to paddle them down the connecting chain of lagoons and creeks clear through to Sandy Bay [Laguna Kokerta]. The Indians told Parson Taylor the trip was about 6 hours from Krackpackia.

They left us without anyone who knew where Sandy Bay was, so we took along a young Miskito who spoke no Spanish and only monosyllabic English, and devilish little of that either. We parted company about eight, John, Dournoft, and the parson setting off for Krackpackia, and myself, Charley, Campbell, Ben, and the young Miskito staying by the *Lilly Elena*. We weighed anchor immediately and put out through the mouth of Wauni Sound. Charley, who was forward, kept sounding every few minutes and was getting such satisfactory depths that he decided to pass straight out to sea, i.e. leaving the southern channel by which we had entered last night off to the right. Everything went as merrily as a marriage bell for a while, and indeed we thought we were well outside, being nearly a mile off, when we bumped good and hard. Before the engine could be stopped, however, we had floated clear again and although 4 and 5 feet soundings were still obtained further out, we did not hit again.

There was quite a roll outside, and I was glad enough to lie down, to get my head on the same level with my stomach. It was a drowsy morning anyhow. The Miskito slept, Charley slept, I slept, and Ben had the wheel. Campbell puttered around in that endless way he has. About one, the Miskito began to grunt and we gathered we were off Sandy Bay, although only a very small opening, a creek in fact, appeared. Ben tried him out in Miskito, which I suspect was not overly adequate as the youth did not vibrate with intelligence after his questions, and I essayed a few monosyllabic interrogations in English. Grunts were the only answers with wags

of the head and pointing toward the miserable little creek, which perforce we were obliged to conclude was Sandy Bay.

It was so rough outside I didn't want to eat until after we were in, so told Charley to run the bar first. The Miskito indicated the channel by a wave of his hand and we nosed our way in toward shore at half speed. It was well, too, for suddenly we pushed our prow into a 2-foot bar that swung us around short. By reversing the propeller and all hands shoving we got her off, however, and everybody was too discouraged for words. Charley said, "So help my Damn," his favorite oath, by the way, that he'd never trust another Indian pilot. It seemed best to relieve our hunger then, and we ate an unpleasant meal, the *Lilly Elena* heaving around in a long swell.

After lunch, Ben put off in the dory and paddled around taking soundings for the channel. He came back after a while saying there was a 5-foot channel clear in, and said where it went. Fortunately, Charley did not trust to his judgment, but went out in the dory himself and was gone for upwards of an hour. He went clear into shore and then way outside twice. He reported when he climbed aboard that there was a tortuous 5-foot channel, which he had marked in his mind by certain trees and that he could take us in without hitting. He was, moreover, good for his word. He took the wheel with the engine going at half speed and Ben and I forward sounding. Our trail writhed like that of a snake, but he finally put us inside the mouth of the river.

The water inside was deep enough, 8 to 9 feet, but we continued going forward slowly. The river, the Miskito made us understand, led into Sandy Bay. There were several canoes in the stream, the occupants in the water up to their knees slashing around—of all things with a machete. A native method of killing fish, it seems. We were wise again in going slow, for we had not proceeded a couple hundred yards when we brought up again on a second bar, this time one of only three feet. This was too exasperating and everybody but the Miskito cursed roundly. The boys worked her off again and we backed into deeper water. Again Charley and Ben went overboard in the dory and sounded clear across the river. The maximum depth they were able to obtain was 3 feet, so of course we had to give up the idea of going in.

We lay at anchor, however, well within the mouth of the creek leading to Sandy Bay, and as we need water anyhow, I sent Ben into the village with the water barrel and the dory and told him to wait there for Dournoft and John to bring them out. He took off the Miskito youth who had proven a useless investment. This left Campbell, Charley, and me aboard. I read the rest of the afternoon, which was not much, as it was nearly four when we finally dropped anchor. I looked for John before dinner, but he didn't show up. We figured we had covered 20 miles coming straight down the outside, and that by a two-hours inner passage it might well be 30 miles. I thought if they reached Sandy Bay about 5 or 6 they would eat there and come over in the early evening. But supper came and went and neither Ben nor the other two returned. Seven, eight, nine, and ten passed, and still no signs of them. I finally turned in, concluding that if they had got through at all they were spending the night at Sandy Bay.

We saw a number of canoes about with fat pine torches. They were out harpooning fish. Their lights would pass us by and disappear in the distance. Occasionally, someone aboard them would burst into a mournful song, but for the most part they were quiet and the evening passed quietly. A lovely moon, now almost full, swung high overhead though heavy black rain clouds floated between us at times, promising a drenching later in the night. We stayed up until

about ten and then hung up our anchor lights as a beacon to guide the wanderers should they return during the night. It rained heavily about midnight and partially soaked my blankets.

It must have been about three when I was awakened by the sound of paddling. Soon I heard John roaring out of the dark, "Where in the hell is your light? Get up, get up, I 'm drenched and starving." It was he and no mistake, with a blue-ribbon hard-luck story. In the first place, the estimate of 6 hours, it appeared, had been entirely too casual. They were 13 hours on the way with no stops. It had rained heavily—I could vouch for that myself—and they'd had nothing to eat all day long but oranges and bananas, of which they were heartily sick. Finally, the canoe had been so small that John was stiff and sore from sitting so interminably in such cramped quarters.

I did not get all this at once, but drew it out cautiously between wolfish munchings at dry crackers, etc. Campbell was roused out and made some tea and knocked together a meal of some sort. In spite of the swarms of sand flies and mosquitoes, I emerged from my mosquito bar long enough to take a cup of tea myself, and a snack of marmalade. But it was too itchy outside, and I ducked in again. As John's hunger was appeased, he grew more eloquent over his hardships, but I was too sleepy to listen to them, and I drowsed off in a confusion of invectives against lying Indians, drenching torrents, the inadequacy of bananas and oranges for solid nourishment, etc. The two Miskito who had paddled them said nothing but ate steadily. John was loud in their praise, and in truth they deserved it—13 hours paddling without a stop. It seems they had not been able to get away from Krackpackia until one o'clock, and this very late start had made them equally late, or rather better, early, for it was nearly four in getting in. They had seen nothing of Ben, whom we concluded was sleeping at the village and would show up in the morning.

### **September 27, Thursday**

Poor John was all bitten up with mosquitos and the cruel light of day brought out other ravages. At dawn, the Miskitos who had paddled them over wanted to return, so I paid them off and John bid them an almost affectionate adieu. Ben came back a little later very grouchy and ugly. We couldn't make out where he'd passed the night.

We got an early start and Charley took us out through the tortuous channel without hitting once. John slept all morning and I read and dozed. Toward noon we could see off ahead a promontory, which Dournoft said was Bragman's Bluff [Bilwi] [Figure 9.1], the highest land between Trujillo and Bluefields, and the only place where the open savanna comes down to the sea. Just off the Bluff, there is an old wreck marked on the Navy chart, around which clings a story of the Spanish Main, the King's gold, English pirates, a scuttled ship, and a buried chest of treasure. I had heard the yarn at Cape Gracias, which ran something like this:

Many years ago, over a century, a Spanish treasure ship was pursued up the coast by an English buccaneer. The Spanish boat was fleeing for shelter to Sandy Bay, but when they got off these bluffs it became apparent that the buccaneers were overhauling them. Rather than permit the treasure to fall into the hands of their enemies, the Spaniards not only set their ship on fire but also scuttled her. They put off for shore in the small boats, taking with them a chest of gold and treasure which they buried somewhere about the bluff. The ship sank before the buccaneers reached her, and several millions of dollars worth of treasure from the mines—I believe in

behind Prinzapolka, where the present mining district is—went to the bottom. This is the old tradition as near as I could get it. The modern sequel follows:



Figure 9.1. The beach at Bragman's Bluff, where Morley encountered the treasure hunters.

Not many years ago, in fact, fairly recently, an old Indian living on the bluff was repairing his hut and found in the foundations an old metal chest in which there was an old chart. He turned this over to a Nicaraguan by the name of Pereira, who finally turned it over to another one of his countrymen, a man named Bordas, at Cape Gracias. The chart was supposed to be in old English—the apparent incongruity of a Spanish location chart being written in English does not appear to have challenged its authenticity in the least, and what after all is a mere matter of language in a real pirate story; a thousand plausible excuses occur to me on the spot—and was supposed to give the location of the buried chest. Some people in Gracias had seen the chart and pronounced it old, the reasons being given that the “the’s” were written “ye,” and the old “f” was used for “s.” No one but a doubting Thomas would go behind such evidence as this. Finally, we’d heard several attempts had been made to recover the treasure, but it had not yet been found.

Imagine our amazement, then, as we got abreast the bluffs, to see a small motorboat anchored off shore, and a dozen men digging on the beach. This surely was bringing the Spanish Main right down to date with a vengeance. Through the glasses we could see the operations clearly. There was a trench dug in the beach right down to the water’s edge and when they sighted us, a dory with two men and a large chest in it put off to the boat. This was

highly interesting and I decided to put ashore. The chest appeared new and in fact looked more like a tool chest than anything else, and such I judged it to be.

I hailed their dory—ours was drawn up on deck—but it started for the beach. When it reached the shore, however, the man in charge evidently told it to return to our boat, and I got ready to go ashore in it. I put on my revolver in case anything should be started by the treasure hunters. It seemed wiser, too, that only one should go ashore, as they would hesitate to put one out of the way in plain sight of a boatload of his friends. I was assuming the worst, that we had surprised them in the very act of having found the treasure, a fact they would hardly have wanted strangers to know.

So, I went ashore by myself. When I landed, I asked for the boss and Mr. Bordas of Cape Gracias introduced himself as in charge. I asked him if he had found the treasure yet and he said no, but that he was looking for it. The beach was all staked out, and a trench had been dug from the water's edge back toward the bluff. There were picks, shovels, kettles, pots, odd pieces of clothing, and about 15 men lying about. The delay in finding it seemed to be due to the loss of one of the landmarks described in the old chart, namely a coconut tree.

After looking about and seeing a lovely spring of fresh water trickling over the bluff—a fact noted on the navy charts of this coast—I wished the treasure hunters good luck and goodbye and put off. On my way out—my back was to the shore—I heard a terrific explosion. I thought I had at least been fired at by a 42-centimeter gun. John says I nearly capsized the canoe, which is not unlikely. I wheeled around and found that a charge of dynamite had been set off near the water's edge. The men rushed to the spot and commenced digging furiously. Before we finally got under way, four or five such charges were exploded, and after each the men would rush to the spot, yelling like children, and commence to dig furiously. But we had other work in hand than watching treasure hunters, and the bluff and its disturbers slipped behind and out of sight.

It was getting on toward six when we finally got off [Río] Wawa. There was a mahogany steamer off shore, and we passed fairly close to it before we finally turned in. The bar must have been a good mile off shore. By going slowly and sounding every few feet, we got in without hitting and anchored off the little settlement on the south side of the mouth. Dournoft went ashore with our papers and came out presently with a Negro to pilot us on into Karata Lagoon. The Wawa River, if that is what the mouth is called, winds for three or four miles and then opens out into a fairly large lagoon called Karata. It was just dusk as we began to move up this river, and when we came into Karata Lagoon, perhaps a half hour later, the whole sheet of water was sparkling under the magnificent moon. The bar of the lagoon is about 5 to 6 feet, but within it quickly shallows to 4 feet and less where there are oyster beds. We held in close to the south shore and came to anchor after a short run off the village of Karata. This stands on a point covered with coconut palms and a number of houses. The moon sinking behind the trees made a wonderful effect, a silhouette of graceful swaying palm fronds against a sky of glowing silver.

We ate supper after casting anchor, and during the meal the single white man in the village, a Swede by the name of Bunser, sent out his dory for me. We had a letter for him, which I took with me. From the boat we heard a great noise of children laughing and shouting, so much so that I thought some fiesta must be in progress. On landing, I found all this noise came from some 15 or 20 small boys bathing in the moonlight, splashing and ducking around like a



school of porpoise. Bunsen<sup>97</sup> kept a trading post and general store of the kind one sees down here. Plenty of booze, tinned foods, oil, lanterns, and bolts of prints (calico and the like), a few hats and shirts, knives and trinkets, a cheap John sort of junk, worth little but all the poor natives could afford, and apparently more than enough for their simple needs. I did not stay long here, waiting only for a letter which he wanted me to take down the coast. He sent his boy out with me in his dory, and in spite of the beauty of the night, we all turned in early.

### September 28, Friday

In the morning we were stuck high and dry and could not get the early start we wanted to. When we anchored last night, it was high tide and we were afloat, but this morning it was low and we were on the bottom. We could only wait until the tide came back in and lifted us off, a matter of two hours. About eight it had come in sufficiently to lift us out of the mud and we came back down to Wawa. On the left bank going out, we saw a lot of mahogany logs and a motorboat, the *Maria Kelting*, we had passed coming down the stream the night before. The Wawa River proper runs into Karata Lagoon and up it a great deal of mahogany is cut, this man Kelting, a German, being one of the largest operators. At the mouth of the river, we dropped our pilot and Ben, who had been growing surlier and surlier and surlier ever since leaving Sandy Bay. In fact, this morning in Karata Lagoon, he practically refused to work. Dournoft told him he could do his work or go ashore at Wawa bar, and he chose the latter.

Charley and I went ashore to get the papers from the *comandancia*, where they had been left the night before, and I also took a number of pictures. After clearing, we returned to the *Lilly Elena* and put out to sea. Off Waunta, we saw the same mahogany steamer that we had seen anchored off Wawa the night before. The bar here was the farthest off we've yet seen—we must have been a mile and a half out when we crossed it, and breakers Dournoft told me are noticed as far as three miles out. We got in without touching, however, owing to the excellent manipulations of Dournoft and Charley, and anchored off the settlement on the south side of the mouth, which contained the offices and commissary of the Wawa Commercial Company, a mahogany cutting company. The head of this, a German, Richard Lehmann, had just returned that morning from the States, where he had been detained for several months on one pretext or another. I dare say the truth was they did not trust him, but couldn't get anything on him. I believe he claims American citizenship and to me protested violent pro-Ally sentiments, but I couldn't get over the feeling for all of that that he was very much a Proosian (sic. Prussian). He is clever too, far more so than his cousin Otto, who gave me the letter from Joe Spinden at Cape Gracias. Otto is only a fat, ordinary type of German Jew, whereas his cousin is obviously an able man.

Dournoft and I went ashore here, indeed Dournoft had formerly worked for Richard Lehmann. We went first to the commissary where Dournoft—to use his own phrase—“bucked up with” some Island people. He's continually meeting them, and a great deal of good fellowship always follows. They want to know about the Bonacca<sup>98</sup> news, and Dournoft about

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<sup>97</sup> Morley uses the spelling Bunser and Bunsen in his diary.

<sup>98</sup> Bonacca is the main settlement on Guanaja, the easternmost of the Bay Islands of Honduras, and Dournoft's home. See diary entry for September 3, when Morley visited the town.

them. There was nothing particularly interesting about Waunta, and as it was not yet 3 and Prinzapolka was only 8 miles below, we decided to try to make there before night. Before leaving Waunta, Dournoft and I went up to see Richard Lehmann, as I have said. He told me that everybody was getting together in the proper spirit at home, but no new war news. I photographed some of his mahogany logs before I finally went on board. He is a smooth *hombre*, Mr. Ricardo Lehmann, and I think could be safely counted upon to be against us and for the Fatherland in any showdown where the latter had half a chance of winning.

We got to Prinzapolka at the close of the afternoon, in fact the sun was just setting when we crossed over the bar. This river was in flood, an angry seething mass of muddy waters filled with trees and logs and other debris. The setting sun cast a golden glow in our eyes as we came over the bar, showing through a mist of golden yellow. Where the saffron light fell on the muddy brown waters, it burnished them to a wonderful gold. In fact, sky, water, and earth were for a few minutes bathed in a wonderful light of gold as though King Midas had touched them all. But this quickly faded, and dusk was coming on swiftly when we finally got over the bar and into the river.

John called Prinzapolka "a sea-going" place and it certainly was the biggest place we'd seen since leaving Trujillo. It was much nicer looking than Cape Gracias and, as I say, somewhat larger. The homes are built of sawed lumber, painted, and have corrugated sheet-iron roofs. It is surrounded by water on three sides and is provided with boardwalks everywhere. It seemed as though all the town were down on the *comandancia* or Customs House wharf, where we came in. For this reason, we were glad when the *comandante* told us to anchor out in the stream. He sent aboard presently for our papers and said we might go ashore. I was anxious to do this, as I wanted to telephone Joe [Spinden] in Bluefields if I could. A native of the place guided me to the telegraph office, where I found that telephone communications with Bluefields were interrupted and the best I could do would be to send off a telegram, which would go in the morning. I wired him we would be in Bluefields on Monday or Tuesday.

I returned to the *Lilly Elena* to find that there was a *payaso*, or circus, in town, in fact the son of the proprietor, the clown, was then aboard us telling about its wonders. Unfortunately, there was to be no *función* that night and we were leaving in the morning. We felt we had a spree coming to us, so we dickered for a special performance. At first, this Pierrot [sad clown] wanted \$30.00 gold, but I felt that too high. We finally agreed on \$10.00 and they were to sell what tickets they could in addition, we to have the six best seats (ring-side seats they later turned out to be). The youth departed to take the matter up with his father and to bring back his answer. He returned presently with the news that it was all arranged and the performance would begin about eight.

In a little Kansas town of 500 this circus wouldn't have gotten to first base, but after two weeks on the Spanish Main, it looked like the Hippodrome to us. The tent was perhaps 100 feet in diameter, one half was roofed over, the other, the stage side, being open. The troupe consisted of Mr. Ayala and his numerous progeny. The son who had arranged the performance was the principal actor and was a fairly clever clown. Ayala himself did acrobatic and trapeze work and three girls of the family assisted him here. The best stunt was a duet between a small boy and girl, about 12 and 10 respectively. The little lady's voice would have penetrated cold-pressed steel, but for all of that this duet, which was a costume affair, was the hit of the evening.

There came in and sat behind us two Americans. Dournoft knew one, a Mr. Waters of Bluefields, and he introduced us to the other, a Mr. Scobey of New York. The latter is a mining engineer just from the States, that day in route for the Luz y Los Angeles mine up the river, where he is in charge. He brought good news indeed—Argentina’s break with Germany over the latter’s intrigues there carried on through the Swedish Legation. Our own secret service is doing great work. It was somewhat of an achievement to have ferreted out such information, passing as it was though neutral diplomatic channels. This was very encouraging. The ruthlessness of “leaving no trace,” though almost inconceivable, is still thoroughly typical of the Prussianized Hun.<sup>99</sup>

Scobey is our best type of American: able, resourceful, and strong. I could fancy the mine he manages running like clockwork. Curiously enough, he came from Denver and knew several people I did there. The Carpenters, for example, one of whom was the mineralogical expert we had at Buena Vista before my father died fifteen years ago.<sup>100</sup> He knew also Collins, the manager of the Mary Murphy, which is even closer to home. But the performance was over in an outburst of noise from the three-piece band, and a confusion of legs and somersaults by the “entire company.” We felt we had our money’s worth and more as we walked home in the moonlight. Scobey is very anxious for us to visit his mine, and we’d very much like to, only I fear the time is lacking. We left him at the Luz y Los Angeles office, whither we all adjourned for a drink of rainwater.

We returned to the boat and put out in the dory. Dournoft picked up another Negro here, Robert McKenzie, whom he has had before, and he goes with us in place of Ben from here on.

### September 29, Saturday

While we were waiting for the *comandante* to get up and give us our papers, I went ashore and borrowed from Scobey and Waters such reading material as they could lend me. Scobey was bringing down a number of the latest magazines—a *McClures*, a *Metropolitan*, a *Cosmopolitan*, a *Life*, and a *Current Events*—to the boys at the mines, and he said he’d let me take them if I’d send them back by Waters, who was going to Bluefields the next day for a short trip. So we acquired more current literature than we had seen in a month. I forgot to add that when we left Waunta yesterday, Richard Lehmann sent on board a trunk for us to carry to Prinzapolka, which he said belonged to an American named Scobey who came down from New Orleans on the same boat as he did. I remembered this at the circus and told Scobey about it. He said he was more than glad, as it contained all his clean clothes. He sent over for it last night.

After I had borrowed these magazines, I stayed talking on the gringo in Central America, an ever-fruitful field of discussion when two or three of them are gathered together. Dournoft

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<sup>99</sup> This is a reference to the so-called Luxburg Affair, named after Karl Graf von Luxburg, the German chargé d’affaires in Buenos Aires. Luxburg sent a secret telegram to Berlin urging the sinking of neutral Argentina’s merchant ships “without a trace,” a communication that ultimately came to light via the U.S. Secret Service. The affair shattered what remained of relations between Argentina and Germany.

<sup>100</sup> Morley’s father, Benjamin, had moved the family to Buena Vista, Colorado, in 1894, the senior Morley becoming a part owner of the Mary Murphy Gold Mine in St. Elmo, Colorado.

interrupted this discussion to say the boat was cleared and we would get off at any time. It was now nine and high time we were off. Bidding goodbye to these pleasant gentlemen, I went down to the wharf and put off for the *Lilly Elena*. The anchor was drawn aboard and we swept down the river in that swollen flood.

The run down the coast to Great River was not long and we were off the bar shortly after one o'clock. We worked in slowly but the channel was a good 9 feet and we had no difficulty. The village is on the north side, just above the mouth and a sorrier place it was hard to imagine: many thatched huts and a few corrugated iron houses. We got in close to shore and then put out in mid-stream to wait for the *comandante*, since they indicated we couldn't land. The village was strung along one street, and that along the riverside for perhaps three quarters of a mile.<sup>101</sup> On the opposite was a fine two-story house with porches on both floors all the way around; corrugated iron roof. It was a palace indeed, compared with the hovels on the other side, and we speculated endlessly as to what it could be. It appeared far too grand to be the *comandancia*. I thought it might be the offices of the Atlantic Fruit Co., which I knew cut bananas on the river, or perhaps of some mahogany company. When we did find out later in the afternoon it was none of these, but another one of those ill-fated hotels put up by that interesting personality Deitrick. He organized a vast concern of Pittsburgh capitalists called the United States Nicaragua [Mining] Co., and this was one of his hotels. Another we had seen rotting away up at Cape Gracias. Here was another, though apparently in much better condition. It had never been used. The wharf in front of it had rotted away, and unless it is speedily opened, it, too, is destined to pass over the same road to decay and disintegration.<sup>102</sup>

After lunch we grew tired of waiting for a *comandante* who didn't show up, and so Dournoft and I went ashore. We were met by the only simon-pure white man in the village, an old ex-English soldier by the name of Cooper, who by some outrageous fling of fate found himself teaching school at Great River, \$45.00 in back pay was owing him, and he was only waiting to collect this, he said, when he was going elsewhere. He said Great River was a hell of a place and we could see no reason to contradict him. Dournoft knew him already, indeed he seems to have known everyone on the coast all the way down. This old chap Cooper had taught school at Bonacca for a while, but had to be removed on account of drunkenness. He had quite braced up now, he assured us, and however seedy he looked, one felt it was not due to King Alcohol this time. It seemed, too, he'd had a sort of middle-age romance—he was over 50—with a widow in Bonacca, whom Dournoft skillfully pictures as still waiting faithfully and yearning for him. Dournoft even urged him to write to her, undertaking to deliver the message if he did, and old Cooper said he would bring aboard a letter after supper.

He showed us the town—what little there was of it. At the western end of the village two island Whites, the Sinclair Brothers, have a general store filled with the same familiar old stock. They were taciturn and Scotch and we did not tarry long. They own the ex-hotel across the way,

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<sup>101</sup> No town today exists at the mouth of the Río Grande de Matagalpa, and the area is largely uninhabited except a few Miskito settlements and associated Moravian mission churches.

<sup>102</sup> This and the hotel at Cape Gracias were built between 1903 and 1906, their state of decay barely 15 years later testifying to the difficulties of maintaining infrastructure in the tropics.

we heard. Cooper then took us east, almost to the point where he lives. We sat down on a crazy porch here and idled away the afternoon. We left Cooper here and we walked back to the dory. An ill-favored, colored wench wanted us to take her to Bluefields, but we firmly declined the pleasure.

We had supper early, and afterward Cooper came aboard and spent the evening, bringing his letter to the faithful widow. We played the Columbia for him, which he professed to enjoy. I gave him a newspaper, for which he said he was starved, before he left us. If he can collect what is owing to him on his educational venture, he told Dournoft, he might take a run up to Bonacca. Anyhow, he will not remain in Great River.

### September 30, Sunday

We had cleared yesterday and so we were able to leave first thing in the morning. The run down was not long and we found ourselves off Pearl Lagoon just after noon. The bar was even deeper than that of Great River, and we had no difficulty whatsoever in getting in. We entered this place in great style with the stars and stripes flying from her main mast and the *bandera Hondureña* aft. We landed at a real dock, the first we'd put into since leaving Cape Gracias, and Dournoft and I went ashore. The *comandante* is a clerk in the Atlantic Fruit Co.'s commissary, and we repaired thither to have our papers examined.<sup>103</sup> Here, to our chagrin, he told us we were liable to a fine of twenty-five dollars "*córdoba*, or gold—they are both the same—for flying other colors than the Nicaraguan. He graciously waived this, however, and charged us \$2.50 *córdoba* for examining our papers "because it was Sunday." Our patriotism thus came near to costing us dear, and he said if we attempted the same thing at Bluefields Bluff we'd surely be fined.

The settlement here at Pearl Point is little more than the Atlantic Fruit Co.'s commissary and the place has no more than 30 people. Pearl City,<sup>104</sup> or Brantigams across the lagoon, however, was fairly good-sized, they told us, and we decided to go over there. The channel is winding, making a perfect "S" in short. It is vital to follow it, moreover, as the oyster beds that cover the lagoon make shallows everywhere. By following the channel, however, a ten-foot depth can be had and clear over to just off Pearl City. The *comandante* knew this channel and said he would pilot us over. We left between three and four. At first the channel clings to the southern shore, but some distance on strikes across the lagoon—the turn is marked by a barrel-buoy—to Pearl City. We stood in as far as we could and then went over to the wharf in the dory, Dournoft and I.

The town, a wooden shack affair, crowns a little eminence at the southwest side of the lagoon. There is a long wharf, and several warehouses belonging to Mr. [Emile] Brantigam along it.<sup>105</sup> We went right to Mr. Brantigam's house and, while I was talking to him, Dournoft

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<sup>103</sup> Unlike most of the other fruit companies, the Atlantic Fruit Co. was based in Baltimore. United Fruit bought half of the company, but was forced to sell it to conform to newly enacted antitrust laws. The company was eventually sold to Standard Fruit Company in 1932.

<sup>104</sup> Formerly known as English Bank; today known as Laguna de Perlas.

<sup>105</sup> The Brantigams were the preeminent family on the shores of Pearl Lagoon. One of Emile's descendants, Harry Emile Brantigam, was a noted economist and one-time President of the

went over with the papers to the *comandancia*. Brantigam is a middle-aged Swede. His English is perfect and I imagine he may be an American citizen. He is the first citizen of the place, and was at work on a big railroad proposition for the country behind the town when the war broke out and tied up his prospective capital. He had concessions to several hundred thousand acres of this hinterland and, with a railroad to tap the country, he felt he had a big thing. The war, of course, had indefinitely postponed his project. He told me he had seen Joe Spinden several days before in Bluefields and that he was looking for us there. He said further I could probably reach him at Bluefields now by telephone.

I went over to the telephone office—just next to the *comandancia*—and had the boy call up Bluefields. This poor young chap had one of his legs cut off at the knee by a shark off the bar of the Colorado, some 60 miles south of Bluefields. This bar, for some reason, has the worst name on the entire coast for sharks. The telegraph office was painted blue and white, the national colors, embellished with two of “His Master’s Voice” lithographs advertising the new Victor records for February and December 1916, respectively. The boy said he couldn’t locate Doctor Spinden, but would take any message I might care to send for transmission if the opportunity came. But there was nothing I wanted to say particularly to Joe, as we were going to see him the next day, so I said no.

On my return to Mr. Brantigam’s, he asked me to stay for supper, and I sent Dournoft off to tell John to come, too. Brantigam’s assistants were assembling, too. I can’t remember the names of any of them. There were two married couples, one with two very nice looking boys, and then three or four old bachelors. The father of the two boys gave me quite a start when he came on the mess porch. He looked so much like brother—particularly in profile: the same devil-may-care nose, the loose-jointed shoulders, and a disreputable old felt hat. I felt drawn to him at once because of this close similarity, and on the way down to the end of the wharf to embark, whither everybody escorted us, I walked with him. He was from Cape Town, South Africa. The resemblance to brother, whom I haven’t seen for four years, made me very homesick.

We thanked Mr. Brantigam for his hospitality, and bidding goodbye to everybody, put off in the dory. Charley started the engine but the *Lilly Elena* would not budge: we were fast on the bottom again and for the same reason as two nights before in Karata Lagoon—the tide had gone out leaving us high and dry. We pushed and shoved but to no avail. We were stuck fast on the bottom and could not move an inch in any direction. Mr. Brantigam finally offered to help us off with his little tug and, with the ladies aboard the latter, he came out and threw us a hawser. This we wrapped around our foremast and they steamed off at a good slip. We were jerked a good 6 feet by the first trial, but still stuck fast. Again they came back and again jerked and again we moved another 6 feet, but not yet free. Five or six times they jerked us this way until the last time we floated free. The moon by this time was up and burnished a brilliant path of silver from us to the horizon. Our course lay directly along this highway of light. We waved goodbye to the tug and its friendly owner and headed east across the lagoon. The pilot guided us through the oyster beds, and about nine we came to anchor at the dock at Pearl Point once more, and here our pilot left us.

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Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica. Harry died in a plane crash in Tegucigalpa in 2008. Emile, born in 1876, passed away in 1974.

The American who was in charge of the Atlantic Fruit Co.'s commissary was down at the wharf and he and John struck up an impromptu friendship. John went ashore to smoke a Fatima<sup>106</sup> the chap said he had. John said he was pretty well fed up on King Bees. The sand flies were so bad at the wharf that we could not wait for John there, but had to put out into mid-stream where we anchored. About a half hour later, John hailed us from the shore and the boys went in the dory and brought him off. The run to Bluefields Bluff, even for the slow moving *Lilly Elena*, was only a few hours, so we stayed in the mouth of Pearl Lagoon until about three, when we started out. We made the bluff just about daylight and came to anchor off the Customs House dock there about 6 o'clock.

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<sup>106</sup> Fatima cigarettes, a best-selling brand in the early twentieth century, were made in the U.S. with Turkish tobaccos.

## CHAPTER 10

### BLUEFIELDS

#### October 1, Monday

The Customs House wharf looked very business-like and gringo. There were a number of small sailing vessels like ourselves waiting to enter, and the scene was active. The Customs House itself is a long, mediocre, wooden building of one story, except for a two-story excrescence in the middle. We could land even if we were not “received,” and Dournoft introduced me to a young Frenchman, Craput, in the forwarding business, an exporter and importer. His partner, a German by the name of Kooper, was a young chap who’d just been let out of his position in Bluefields because of his unfortunate birth. Craput and I became involved in a discussion of the U.S. in Nicaragua. He, of course, had all the facts and I none. He said the only possible way to explain the wholesale exploitation of the country, in which we had permitted the Brown Brothers of New York<sup>107</sup> to indulge, that is, was a preliminary step to disgust, discourage, and prepare the Nicaraguan mind for annexation!<sup>108</sup> This was a broadside indeed, and I’d been pluming myself these last few years as to how we’d been lending the helping hand to our little brother—lending, yes, but at extortionate and compound interest rates. It seems we’ve taken from the government its self-respect and given it nothing in exchange. It has no credit (financial or otherwise) at home or abroad and its officials go unpaid, even. I attempted a feeble altruistic futile line of defense—one hates to see one’s country called so hard with goods in hand, so to speak—but this young Frenchman knew the facts and I had better spare myself the pains.

But it was eight o’clock, and going into the American and ministerial Customs House, we were entered [allowed to land]. Everybody on the wharf whom Dournoft consulted seemed confident that a boat of our draft could not go directly across the flats to Bluefields, but would have to follow up the Rama [River] and then through—the longer way, a three-and-a-half-hour jaunt in the *Lilly Elena*. There was a sail boat going directly across, and John and I took passage in her, but when she started the breeze was so very light, and the *Lilly Elena* starting out on the longer route moved so much more rapidly, that we decided to stay by our own ship. So, I hailed Dournoft and we transferred ourselves. I wasn’t sorry either, as the boat we left put back to the bluff [Figure 10.1] after she was quite a way out.

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<sup>107</sup> The Brown Brothers had raised money and invested in the Nicaraguan bank and railway system, effectively turning the indebted country into a fiscal fiefdom. A history of the Brown Brothers’ role in U.S. foreign policy in the early years of the twentieth century has recently been written (Karabell 2021).

<sup>108</sup> Craput was not far off the mark. The U.S. maintained a military protectorate over Nicaragua for decades, leading to a full-scale occupation in 1927, which lasted until Herbert Hoover began withdrawing troops in 1932.





Figure 10.1. Old postcard image of the bluff (“El Bluff”) on the coast outside Bluefields.

We could now see Bluefields three or four miles across the flats, but presently we turned into the Rama and the town disappeared. For upwards of three hours, we wound in and out the curves of this river, passing a large mahogany camp, sawmill, and lumberyard, until about noon we came out on to the same lagoon once more, only this time just around the corner from Bluefields. The town is impressive [Figure 10.2]. It stands at the top of a little bluff and stretches for perhaps a mile from end to end. The houses are of sawed lumber, painted white for the most part, with corrugated sheet iron roofing. More utilitarian than aesthetic. We put into a Mr. Cohen’s wharf, alongside a great old stern wheeler, the *Hendy*, which has a run up the Rama [Figure 10.3].

As soon as we went ashore, we looked up “Petersen’s Hotel,” where Joe’s letter at the Cape said he was stopping, and in this small town quickly ran it to ground, nearby “The Tropical Club” whence Joe had written. It was good indeed to see him again. I had missed him, his contentious ways, and his always-valuable comments. We’d last seen him in the Bay of Fonseca at Amapala about two and half months ago. He took us to Mr. Petersen, a “Proosian” by the way, who gave us two rooms “with bath.” The “with bath” was a wholly unexpected luxury, which seemed almost out of place in a Mosquito Coast setting. Thence to lunch in another house, also under the Petersen’s aegis, and then back to our rooms for catch-up confabs. Sam Lothrop, Joe had seen. Rachel<sup>109</sup> had joined him and they were somewhere in Costa Rica. His handbook was out, a very neat affair and well-illustrated.<sup>110</sup> There was museum gossip, etc., etc. They talk about women gossiping, the men are far worse, I’ve always thought.

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<sup>109</sup> Lothrop’s first wife.

<sup>110</sup> This refers to Spinden’s new *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America* (1917).

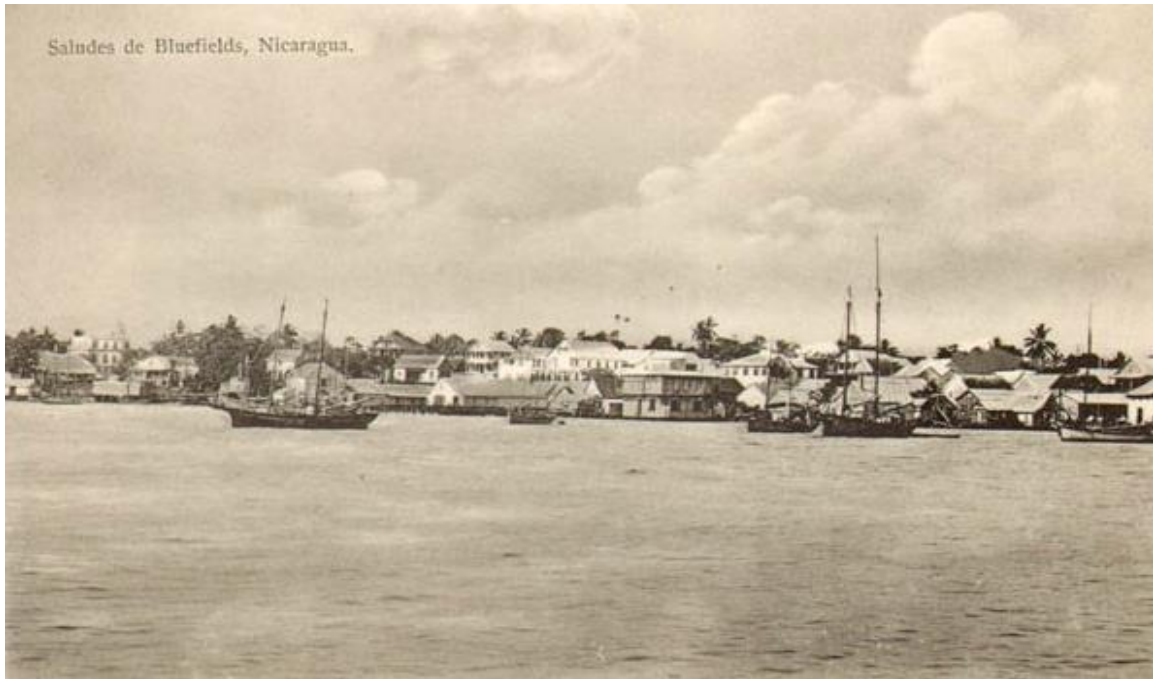


Figure 10.2. Postcard showing Bluefields harbor in the 1910s.

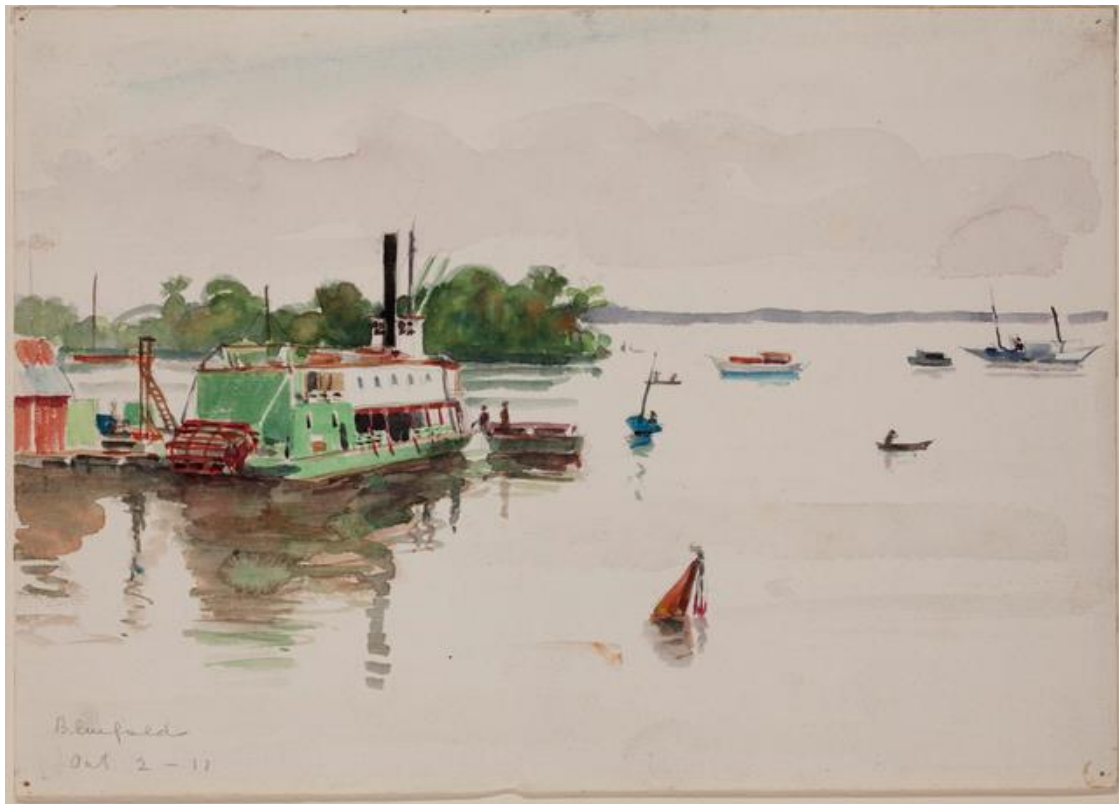


Figure 10.3. Held's watercolor of the *Hendy* at Bluefields harbor.

Toward the close of the afternoon, we walked down Bluefields principal street [Figure 10.4]. It has cement sidewalks. There are no electric lights, but an ice factory, which is very much as it should be. I was struck most by the great number of Chinese stores. I was told there were over thirty, and I would well believe it.<sup>111</sup> The stores are only glorified trading posts, such as we saw on the trip down, and offered little attraction. The *comandancia* occupied an imposing position on the shore and is a white mansard affair. The Moravian church is homely enough in all conscience, and their school a plain-looking affair. In all this commonplaceness, we struck one oasis—Borden’s ice cream parlor, where the most wonderful oyster cocktails imaginable were served. These are made of the small oyster which occurs so plentifully in the lagoon, and are served about fifty to the cocktail in a tall lemonade glass filled with the oyster liquor, cracked ice, tomato catsup, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, and lime juice. This makes a most salacious [?? salubrious?] concoction, and we promptly vowed to have at least one daily.



Figure 10.4. Postcard of the main street in Bluefields, circa 1910. The colonnaded building in the center is the Casa Aleman, the principal store of the town.

Returning to the hotel, we went to Sam Weil & Co.<sup>112</sup> and presented Mr. McCollough’s letter of introduction. Joe Weil was in charge and he said whenever I wanted it, it would be ready. By this time, the Bluefields dinner hour, five o’clock, had arrived and we all repaired to Petersen’s again. Joe introduced us to a little Englishman named Steinback, who is Mengel’s

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<sup>111</sup> Chinese settlers first arrived on the eastern shores of Nicaragua in the mid-nineteenth century and by 1900 Bluefields boasted the largest Chinese population in Central America.

<sup>112</sup> Sam Weil was a Bluefields-based importer connected to investors in New Orleans. He is noteworthy as having opposed Nicaraguan efforts to assert authority over the self-governed Mosquito Indian Autonomous Region, the leaders of which had granted concessions to foreign interests, concessions investors feared a Nicaraguan administration would not fully honor.

manager here. He told me B. M. [White; Chapter 8, page 126, note 84] ought to be back within a month now. I was sorry to have missed [again] seeing him and Grace. After supper, we returned to the hotel and went to bed early. It seemed good to me to be off the *Lilly Elena*, with our cruise half done. We've put something like 450 miles behind us in a straight course from Ceiba, to say nothing of our numerous turnings and side trips.

### **October 2, Tuesday**

Looked up our films, which we had exposed but not developed on the way down, and took them to a native, who said he could and would develop them. It was so dark in our room—a period of rainy weather has set in—that we moved, for the day at least—out to a back room, which was really only a screened-in sleeping porch. Joe is taking voluminous notes on the old newspaper files here, getting a line on the financial crisis through which this poor, bankrupt republic has passed. I got out my Copan gallery proof<sup>113</sup> and pasted it into a blank book so I could preserve it better. It was coming to grief in the kayaks.

The rain came down in torrents all day. I went out to the *Lilly Elena* in a terrific shower with high seas running. The dory, manned by McKenzie, bobbed about like a cork, but no accident happened. Joe and John went down for oyster cocktails in the afternoon, but I stayed at the hotel, being under the weather. There was plenty to do, and cutting up the Copan galleys and fastening them in was a larger job than I bargained for.

### **October 3, Wednesday**

We find it difficult to frame adequate plans. From what Joe tells me, I feel a trip to Colón [Panama] would not be wasted, but it's a long hike down there in the *Lilly Elena*, and one gets quite far out from land, and we hardly like to undertake it. Although I found no mail here when I arrived, I certainly am looking for something on the mail tomorrow. The mail this week has been greatly delayed. That curious sky we saw at Cape Gracias on the 25th, and pronounced by Dournoft to be a hurricane on the Gulf, was indeed such. The Bluefields Steamship Co. steamer was held until the 28th at New Orleans waiting for this to subside and, consequently, will be late getting here. She is reported, however, for some time tomorrow. The wireless had a hurricane warning for the 28th, and we heard the wind blew to 75 miles an hour.

I spent the entire day writing up my reports. This will take the form of a letter giving general conclusions, and a more detailed report giving more minute information about every place visited.<sup>114</sup> We had two oyster cocktails today, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. The habit seems to grow with its indulgence.

### **October 4, Thursday**

I have been so annoyed with this itching, which I have been ascribing to the prickly heat—and

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<sup>113</sup> This refers to the galley proofs of his *The Inscriptions at Copan* (1920).

<sup>114</sup> This report, Number 11 by Morley, is reproduced from the original in the National Archives by Harris and Sadler (2003: 318–332).

indeed it has been accompanied by a slight red rash under the skin—that I finally looked up an American doctor to see what I could do for it. This proved to be a Doctor Barnabee, and he quickly diagnosed the trouble as a skin disturbance from which both he and his wife had suffered intolerably when they first came to Bluefields. He did not know its cause, but believed it came from some bacteria in the water, probably transmitted by the clothes being washed by the native washerwomen. I remembered, in this connection, what Dr. Stowe at Rincón had said about it. He was of the opinion that it came from swamp water and was actually a fungus growth of some sort. If the medical profession could not tell exactly what it was, how could a layman be expected to? No wonder I have been mistakenly accusing the prickly heat for all the grief this wretched thing has been causing me in the past three months.

I think now that I must have got it from clothes I washed either in San Salvador or possibly even as far back as in Guatemala. However, be that as it may, Doctor Barnabee knew a sure cure, which sounded very good to me, namely sulphur ointment, the same thing that Doctor Davis had given me way back in Tegucigalpa when the trouble first appeared, and which I had not used because it was so greasy and messy. What discomfort I would have saved myself if I had. He gave me a box of strong sulphur salve and recommended that I apply it but twice, as he said the mixture was strong enough to cause a decided skin irritation itself if used too frequently. He also advised me having all my clothes boiled after each washing to do away with the danger of reinfection.

On my return to the hotel, I found Joe had a letter from Panama which I helped him to read.<sup>115</sup> It contained nothing of importance, and still leaves our plans in the air. He feels he ought to go to Panama, and I would like to myself if it weren't so far off. The mail did not get in until after lunch, and it was evening before I got the one letter it brought for me, and that not from Washington either. It was from Gladys Sheehan and described her sister's wedding. I was glad enough to hear from her, apparently she is the only person of all I wrote to who remembered I could be written to at Bluefields up to October first. Her letter contained one item of news, which sent John Held's head in a whirl of doubt, and I suspect worry also. She was describing her sister's wedding and said that afterward she saw Myrtle Held for a few moments. The latter told her she was sailing for Paris on September 16th. The wedding was on the 12th.<sup>116</sup> John couldn't understand it, nor could I enlighten him further in more ways than one. It is an inexplicable business anyway one looks at it, as in her last letter, dated August 27th, a fortnight earlier, she made no mention of such a step. Of course, he was upset at this all too upsetting news and wants to get back to Ceiba and get the mail as soon as he can. He did not give Myrtle a Bluefields address, so all her letters have been going to the Carnegie Institution and then to Ceiba.

In the evening, Joe and I went down to Mr. Waters'. He has a pleasant home situated back from the foreshore in the northern end of the town. We sat on the porch, several of us—a Captain and Mrs. Sargent (his father and mother-in-law), and his wife and another young man.

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<sup>115</sup> Morley had to "help" Spinden read the letter because it was in a substitution code that was frequently used in ONI communications.

<sup>116</sup> We do not know the circumstances that led to the breakup of John Held and his wife, Myrtle, but they were divorced and Held remarried in 1918.

He returns tomorrow to Prinzapolka. I told him to tell Mr. Scobey that we were very much afraid we would be unable to get up to his mine. It is a question of time. The trip up there would take about ten days, and that would delay us too long in getting back to Ceiba. The northerners will not hold off indefinitely, we know, and we want to be back in the shelter of the Bay Islands before they finally break. On my way back to the hotel, we stopped at Borden's and had an oyster cocktail, making our second today.

I took the typewriter back this morning. Day before yesterday, I took it for the first time to a man in the Bluefields Steamship Company office, who mended them. I got it yesterday and John used it on some of his literary productions, but it commenced to go bad. I tried to use it myself in the afternoon, but it was quite out of the question. I took it back this afternoon and it is promised for tomorrow morning. The trouble is complicated—the spacer does not work right and the ribbon is all twisted and folded. Fortunately, I have another on board and I will get it in the morning and see if it works any better. It cannot work any worse, at all events.

### **October 5, Friday**

Went out to the boat the first thing for the typewriter ribbon, and *mirabile dictu*, found it in all our welter of impedimenta, almost the first thing. True, I had a slight clue: John had seen it in a tin cigarette box somewhere in one of the eight kayaks. With this starting point, my lists of contents as a guide, and Campbell as a helper, I found it quickly, to my infinite astonishment.

We have been kicked out of our nice back room by an individual we haven't even seen. It seems he came up the coast on a sailing vessel yesterday and is going to be here some time. He is a gringo. In consequence, I wrote over at the Club all day. We are now accorded the privileges thereof, our Proosian host having secured us cards. He is the secretary, also. About mid-afternoon, we knocked off work and went down and had a cocktail. The typewriter is finished and runs better. There is still a hitch in the spacer for the first ten spaces, but after that it goes cleanly to the end of the line. It requires a special technique to get over these first ten spaces, but by thumping the table hard enough the carriage slips to the next space and you save yourself.

In the evening at the Club, we met the man who had dispossessed us, a Cyrus F. Wicker of New York. Although he's only 34, he looks years older than I do, because he has shaved his head tight in addition to being partially bald. He plays auction, and Shields, the American consul who was also at the Club, thought he played also, so with Joe and me we made four. Shields played infamously the first rubber, betting his head off on a suspicion and we lost 1,400 points in consequence. Thank heaven we were pivoting, though it did not do me much good, as he steadied after the first rubber and I was only able to cut this down 200 points during the rest of the evening.

### **October 6, Saturday**

Got up feeling miserable. Too many oyster cocktails, I expect. Am going to cut them down, if not out, in the future. All morning long I worked on my report, which is taking shape. It will run to 15 pages, single spacing, before I am through.

After lunch I felt too miserable and upset to work, so getting a book, *Tanguera* (Bell 1899), I

read for the rest of the afternoon. The story is of life in the early days—the fifties of the last century—on the Mosquito Coast, and is written by an Englishman named Napier Bell, who was a son of the English Commissioner at Bluefields in the middle of the last century. This officer was, in reality, the guardian of the Mosquito King, an Indian functionary who the British maintained to cloak their protectorate. He had about as much real power as the present Sultan of Egypt. The book is well written by a sympathetic hand. Bell spent his boyhood on the coast and seems to have been an unusual child. He kept voluminous notes on his trips about the country, particularly on the natural history. The fauna seems to have interested him, and an unusually full description of it is found in his book. Not so much from the scientific point of view, perhaps, as from that of an obvious and frank lover of nature.

There's another book on this coast written by our own Squires [Ephraim George Squier] under the nom de plume of Samuel Bard, and in the form of a novel, *Waikna; or, Adventures on the Mosquito Shore* (Bard 1855). The style of this latter is much easier than Bell's. It reads more smoothly, but it does not contain the mass of detailed information that *Tanguera* has. Bell, of course, had greater opportunities for study than Squire, but Squire's pen is the cleverer of the two.

### October 7, Sunday

I did not do too much work today as I am still feeling upset. Read *Tanguera*. We made further acquaintance with Wicker, who is a very decent sort. By a chance remark he let fall, we found he was interested in the Maya—in fact, he had read Stephen's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*. After that he was in for it. We both bombarded him with a heavy fire of things Maya. He was a good sport and came back for more. I think he is genuinely interested in the glyphs. We piled a lot of solid reading upon him. In the evening, he had an auction engagement at Lander's, the British consul's, and asked Joe to make a fourth. So they went off to play there. John and I read at the Club all evening. I got caught up on the *Digests* and the *Posts* and the *North American Reviews*, to say nothing of *The Times-Picayune* to date.<sup>117</sup>

Toward the close of the evening I got drawn into a fruitless war discussion with our host, Nicolay Petersen, who is a Prussian from Konigsberg. What warped philosophy, what twisted logic, what vicious ideals they have! Wilson was wrong, I am afraid—we are fighting the whole German nation, not only the government. The latter could not continue in their monstrous line of conduct without the former's consent and assistance. Petersen's point of view showed that. Of all the things I said, the one which made him the angriest was when I told him that we were in the war to stay until the German people had been freed from the Kaiser and his crowd. Almost apoplectic and banging the table with his fist, he roared, "Ve don't want to be freed from our Kaiser. Ve lof him. Look vot he has done for Germany." And there's the German point of view in a nutshell. They don't want to be freed. The whole nation has run amok. And so we must fight and struggle on until this monstrous Frankenstein that threatens to stifle liberty shall be crushed. This support of the German government by the German people is undoubtedly due in part to the fear of an Allied victory. The German government repeatedly sounds this note to

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<sup>117</sup> Because almost all steamships calling on ports in Central America sailed from New Orleans, the *Times-Picayune* became the main U.S. newspaper read in the region.

its people, that if the Allies win the German people will be annihilated as a nation and that if they are to save their homes, their traditions, their national existence, they must fight on, on, on, until a German peace has been won.

It seems to me, therefore, we should lose no time in dispelling this belief, in stating our peace aims, in getting before the German proletariat the fact that their national existence is not at stake, is not even threatened, only their present government, the Hohenzollerns<sup>118</sup> and what they stand for, who have betrayed them for the last fifty years.<sup>119</sup> Germans must be brought to realize that their place in the sun is no bigger than anybody else's and that they are no more the chosen people than the French, the English, the Italians, ourselves, or anybody else. When they see their own position in the world in the proper perspective, and not in the present exaggerated proportions; and when they realize how the Hohenzollerns have, by the bait of an unprecedented material prosperity and the lure of a German world domination, reduced them to their present unhappy extremity; and most important of all, when they understand the Allies wish no more of them than the repudiation of the clique which has thus betrayed them, and not their extinction as a nation—then I believe the war will be over. It may be necessary to kill off all the older ones like Peterson, the generation of 1870<sup>120</sup> fed on German invincibility, but the younger ones will some day know, and knowing, cease to fight for such a government.

### **October 8, Monday**

I finished copying my report in the morning and John at the same time closed his literary labors. After lunch he got to work on the map, and finished it in about three hours time. It was hardly satisfactory. The paper was not suitable for ink, as I feared, and it made neat work impossible. There seemed to be no other paper available, however, and I had to be satisfied. Joe was closeted with Wicker all afternoon having a great pow-wow.

In the evening, he told me Wicker knows some of our friends in Washington.<sup>121</sup> Quite a coincidence meeting him down here. It also turns out that he is a member of the Cosmos Club, and knows Doctor Washington intimately. He was secretary of our Legation at Nicaragua about two years ago, and was let out for a too frank expression of opinion as to what we had permitted the Brown Brothers to do. He is a lawyer having specialized in international law. He contemplates a book setting forth the facts of our mismanagement down here, which the people

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<sup>118</sup> The German royal family name.

<sup>119</sup> Morley's optimistic expectations regarding the end of the war did not materialize. Instead, Germany was burdened with war reparations payments that propelled the defeated nation into economic crisis, the main result of which was the rise of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist Party less than two decades later.

<sup>120</sup> Morley is referring to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which established Germany as a united nation.

<sup>121</sup> Wicker was the lead ONI agent in Costa Rica, but before the year ended, he was no longer in the service, being accused of desertion of his post during wartime. This led to his also being booted out of the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC for "conduct unbecoming a member" (Harris and Sadler 2003: 180–181). Morley did not seem to know that Wicker was a fellow agent at the time of this initial meeting.



at home ought to know about.<sup>122</sup> And I say, he knows other friends of ours in Washington and he and Joe became quite confidential. I hope I will have a similar opportunity myself. We played auction in the evening, Joe, Wicker, Shields, and I.

### October 9, Tuesday

I started the day with a battle royal with John, the second we've had in six months. The last was in Tegucigalpa in August just before we left, and was over nothing. This time, that wretched map he made yesterday was the *casus belli*. The map, as I say, was not neat, and I hated to send it in. We got to talking about it before breakfast—these things happen on empty stomachs usually—and I said frankly I thought it wasn't a very good job and that it had been done too hurriedly: three hours for all that work. John said the paper was bad to begin with, although he'd said before it started that it would take ink, and that anyhow, it was "good enough." Those last two words roused my ire and I told him "good enough" was his worst fault, that the "best possible" was never none too good, and that he would do better work if he'd follow that as a motto instead of "good enough."

Of course, he was furious; he stalked in, snatched the map from the table and tore it up like a spoiled child: the artistic temperament running riot. I was thoroughly ashamed of myself for having so far forgot myself as to lose my temper, and thoroughly indignant with him for acting like a baby. I determined then and there to get someone else to make the map, even though I considered it John's business. I was writing the report and had been for a week, and the least he could do was to make a decent-looking map. Fortunately, neither of us was the kind that harbors resentment, and before the day was out, we'd quite made up, though I stick to my idea of having someone else make that map.

Joe next came buzzing around about an article he promised I would write for the *Bluefields American*, which comes out on Tuesdays. He wrote out a rough draft before breakfast, but it didn't sound too good, so after breakfast I wrote another, Joe bobbing in every five minutes to tell me if it wasn't ready in another five, it would be too late to get it in, etc., etc. I finished it about ten-thirty and he walked down to the American office with me to leave it. Platts, the editor, said it would get in and said I could see proof on it at two. I also asked him if he knew anybody who could draw maps. He said there was an old Frenchman, whom he sent out for at once. We waited at the office for a half an hour and then the old man showed up. He wore gold-rimmed glasses and spoke a very French English. I told him what I wanted done and as the time was very short, suggested he go up to the hotel with me and look it over. When he saw the work, particularly all the lettering, he didn't know whether it could be finished by Thursday afternoon when the mail closes, but said he would do his best. He took along John's destroyed map as a basis, together with the Visscher map of Central America.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Wicker published his opinion about U.S. policy in Nicaragua as a magazine article (Wicker 1917), rather than a book. His opposition may have played a role in his dismissal from the ONI.

<sup>123</sup> The Visscher map of Central America, which details the Mosquito Coast, was first published in 1658; Morley must be referring to some other "Vischer" map, but we have not been able to find it. One hardly can believe the very primitive Visscher map of the seventeenth century would be of any use in preparing anything for Morley's report.

Joe read the proof of the article I wrote, but let two errors get by. I got thirty copies. Wicker had one in about himself, telling of the sugar interests he is representing down here. I had a long talk with him myself today, and cleared up many points with and about him. His appetite for Maya is omnivorous and I gave him a copy of Bulletin 57 today.<sup>124</sup> He is even going so far as to memorize the Maya day and month names! If that's not a labor of love, I'd like to know what is. In the evening we had a real session of auction at the Club. There were five of us playing—Shields, Joe, Wicker, myself, and a Mr. Nourse, chief bookkeeper at Samuel Weil & Co. One cut out every rubber. There was also an impromptu dance on: the reading table was cleared out of the large room. There were only three ladies out, and these all married, so I did not go in. When I was "cut out," I kept score. It was the noisiest game I have ever been in, and the confusion was such that I played very badly, for which I was properly lectured by my partner.

Returning to Petersen's late, Wicker, Joe, and I got into a discussion about Maya astronomical learning, and such were the weighty opinions it brought forth that John was awakened thereby and was very wroth. Said it was no time and place to discuss such matters, and thus discouraged, we broke up the meeting, each returning to his own mosquito bar.

### October 10, Wednesday

I finished correcting my report and writing my letters. Right after breakfast, John and I went over to Friedlander's store where John bought some candy and tobacco, and then down to the American office, where we bought some books to read going back: *The Mysterious Island*, *Trip to the Moon*, and *By Order of the King*, all three of which I'd read years ago and forgotten about. The last one I read under the title of *L'homme que rire*. We also got the newspapers Platt promised me yesterday. Next, we went over to Weil's, where we met Dournoft and laid in a supply of food and oil for the trip back. Before we could finish this, Campbell and Charley both had to come ashore and tell what was missing. I got 12 cases of coal oil, but no gasoline, as we still have 5 cases of that left.

Joe Weil, the manager of the Bluefields store, is old Sam Weil's second son, an able young Jew of 27. In addition to selling us these goods, he very kindly offered to let me have some of his Victor records at cost. John and I had tried to get some new at the Casa Aleman [Figure 10.4], now an American store, but the only thing they carried there were Chinese and Spanish records, neither of which appealed to us in these tensely patriotic times. He had a lot of new records, he said, and thought the best plan would be to send over a number and we could pick out what we wanted to. He also said that if I wanted to send our mail in their own private bag to New Orleans where it could be re-mailed, he would be glad to have me do so. This plan had a double recommendation in its favor, so I took him up at once. Not only was it far safer, but also we did not have to turn in our mail until 8 or 9 o'clock, whereas the regular mail closes at four. This was most satisfactory, and I told him I would take advantage of his offer.

After I got back to the hotel, I went over to Shields', i.e., the consulate, to see if I had any mail and found two letters, one from Lybs and one from Jennie Provost. From what Jennie says, I make out it's the fourth or fifth she has written since early in June, and since the 9th of June I have not had a single line from her. This lifted a load from my mind, for her persistent silence,

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<sup>124</sup> Morley (1915), *An Introduction to the Study of the Maya Hieroglyphics*.

for that is what it was beginning to appear to be, made me feel she was angry, or at least vexed, and I could think of no reason therefor. It was downright good luck, therefore, to get her letter and find out what she's been doing for the past four months. Deciphering her altogether individual hieroglyphics was like meeting an old and dear friend again. Lybs' letter was more or less blue.<sup>125</sup> Poor little sister, she is having a hard time getting over to France, her age in spite of her faithful work all summer still weighing heavily, and I am afraid effectually against her getting there. Her latest idea is to get to Russia. It seems Edith MacNaughton (Bowen) has married a Muscovite and they are going to Russia soon. Lybs, of course, is crazy to go with her, but I cannot see it. Russia is still entirely too unsettled: before she could get there, it may be in the hands of the Germans. I wrote mother that, however much I was in sympathy with her going to France, I could not see Russia at all.

Jenny told of a lot of war activities. Chester, under her father's executive ability, raised \$100,000 as their share of the Red Cross work. John Wetherill is a First Lieutenant in the Engineer Corps. William was turned down on account of his eyes, but may get in on the second draft. It all sounded as tho' our world had become very topsy-turvy.

In the evening, we had a final session at auction. Six were going to play, two cutting out each rubber: Shields, Nourse, Joe Weil, Wicker, Joe, and myself. But just as we were starting to play, an invitation for Joe and Wicker came from Mrs. Lander, so they went off leaving us a four. There was another dance on tonight, indeed Wednesday is the regular ladies night, and last night's fiesta was only an extra affair, but few I think, not more than one or two, came. We played six rubbers pivoting around twice. I lost eight cents.

### **October 11, Thursday**

Our last day in Bluefields, and a busy one. Finished packing before breakfast, as Dournoff wanted to get off fairly early for the bluff so he could clear the boat and have everything in readiness when we went out after supper in Weil's motorboat. After breakfast, I went down to Weil's store and paid our bill, by check on the Charles River National as my cash funds have almost given out. Joe Weil was very decent about it. The amount of the bill was \$115.73.

My next job was to look up a dentist. I broke my tooth on a piece of candy several days ago and I felt there would be worse in store for me if I didn't have at least a temporary filling put in. Joe Weil said he knew the dentist and would take me up to make an appointment. In fact, he lived near his house. The dentist was a clean looking man of mixed colored and white blood, rather more of the former than the latter I should say, who had a clean looking place. It was just ten and I made an appointment to return in just an hour. I returned to the hotel and finished a letter I had started and at eleven was back at the dentist's. Curiously, he had received his professional education in Philadelphia, and knew Chester fairly well, having played baseball there several times. He said he could put in a substantial amalgam filling which would hold until I could get the tooth crowned, and this he proceeded to do expeditiously and painlessly and inexpensively. I was out of the chair in an hour and it only cost two dollars.

On my way back to the hotel I met John and we went over to Petersen's, where Joe was already eating. After lunch I looked after a few details, sent a "*no hay molasses*," telegram to

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<sup>125</sup> Lybs was a nickname for Elizabeth, one of Morley's five siblings.

Jack Belt in Tegucigalpa, and finished another letter. At two, promptly came the old Frenchman with the map, a really good job, including some fancy lettering in the legend. This cost twenty dollars, but was a far better job than John's. I gave him his money and he left me with profuse thanks. The map was of a convenient size for folding and fitting in one of the large linen envelopes given me by Joe Weil, and at last our mail was ready. John is going to send his by the local mail so as to get the psychological value of local color for his stories that is to be found in a Nicaraguan postage stamp. Wicker decided to send his mail through Weil's and, as it was after four, we decided to walk down that way, hand over our mail to Weil, and have an oyster cocktail—the last—just before dinner. Joe, John, and Shields went with us—we left the former to order the cocktails at Borden's while we went over to Weil's.

They had American stamps, and I had the great satisfaction of seeing my letters thus stamped and enclosed in a large envelope, which they riveted together in five places. This will leave by their own pouch in the morning on the *Rama* for New Orleans. We returned to Borden's, where the cocktails were just being served. Aside from leaving Joe, I must confess the things I'll miss most here are these super-delicious oyster cocktails and the evenings of auction at the Club. From these gastronomic joys, we returned to Mrs. Petersen's for our last meal. The good German lady—good in truth—she does not understand the war she says, or what it's all about. It only hurts her "here," as she strikes her ample German bosom. I had bought from her a large ten-pound tin of guava jelly—clear, red, rich and full-flavored, not the anemic substitutes one buys at home.

Wicker told me the head of the U.F. Co. wireless work, a Mr. Easton from Swan Island and Limón, was in town and that he had arranged for me to meet him before I left. Immediately after supper, returning to the hotel for a last look around our rooms, we met him, and he came back with us, where we had a little conference on the question of sending wireless messages in from the Fruit Co. stations on the northern coast, notably at Tela and Rincón. This concluded, we bid him goodbye and walked down toward Cohen's wharf, meeting Shields and Joe Weil on the way. It was nearer seven than six, the hour we had fixed for leaving, but there had been so many last things to look after that the time had gotten away from us. Several people came down to see us off—Shields and old Mr. Friedlander. Joe Weil was going out on his boat with us, and Joe Spinden and Wicker came along too. We climbed aboard, the engine coughed, and we moved away from the dock, waving goodbye to everybody. Although the tide was low, our boat only dragged in a few places—we were not stuck on the bottom anywhere, only slowed down over two or three shallow places—and we made the bluff in 35 minutes.

Going over, Joe Weil told me of his family history and that of several other of the F.F.B. ["First Families of Bluefields]. Old Mr. Friedlander, fat and fifty, jolly and well liked by everybody, had even had his romantic interlude. He had retired ten years ago with close on to one hundred thousand dollars gold from his wholesale grocery and dry goods business, and had gone back to the States and taken unto himself a wife. Joe did not exactly call her a brazen hussy, but intimated she was not all she should have been, a high-flier, I think he called her, a not inappropriate name as the sequel shows. They travelled all over for several years, living off the best until Friedlander went through his money, then the high-flier left him. To Friedlander's credit, although over forty, he returned to Bluefields again, started up at his old business, and is

now making a good living again. This particular part of it excited Joe Weil's liveliest admiration, and with reason—his coming back and making good a second time.

We had difficulty in locating the *Lilly Elena* in the dark, but catching the thin metallic strains of a phonograph floating out over the water, we followed them and located [her] up at one end of the long dock. Dournoft greeted us with the chilling news that she could not be cleared until we had our personal passports and that it was after hours. For an instant, this looked as though our hopes for getting off that night were blasted, but he whispered in my ears that Craput—the Frenchman who had spoken so frankly about how we were manhandling Nicaragua the morning we arrived—could “fix it,” though it would cost “a little extra.” I saw a great light, and we all went over to Craput's office. While Craput was closeted with the powers getting our papers, Dournoft, Wicker, John, and Kooper—Craput's business partner—did some mildly acrobatic stunts, picking up chairs with one hand, jumping through brooms, tying knots in handkerchiefs, ropes, etc. Joe Spinden and I applauding these roman contests bravely. Some limburger cheese in a corner of the office all but drove us out.

By and by, Craput came back and said all was ready, whereupon I suggested we all go aboard the *Rama*—the big mail steamer, 900 tons burden—and have farewell beers. Linberg, the head of the Customs House, who had in the meantime joined us and in whose power permission to board her lay, said it might be so, so we all went aboard. The beers were ordered and the Victrola started. Many new records. A new Harry Lauder,<sup>126</sup> several pieces from the 1917 Follies, some good blues, and a new jazz. This, by chance, was in duplicate, and the captain most obligingly sold me one of them for our own little sardine box. He also was kind enough to give me a chart from the Hydrographic Office (I.S.N.) of the coast from Chinchorro reefs off the coast of Yucatán clear down to the Wawa River, which will be exceedingly useful on our way back, though I noticed a number of minor inaccuracies in it.

The music was good, the beer cold, and the company congenial, and we fain would have lingered, but we had to get out that night, so we reluctantly had to be the first to break up a merry party. All came down to the boat with us—Joe Weil, Craput, Kooper, Linberg, Joe Spinden, and Wicker. After a little delay, Charley was located in the hold of another boat staying her engine, and soon our own began to sputter and cough. We shook hands with everyone, old Joe last of all. Why am I always having to say goodbye to the man whose mind I admire most of all, and whose friendship I value the most highly, is beyond me. The world seems to be built on those lines, though, always forcing goodbyes to people one likes. The life of an itinerant scientist has its drawbacks, after all.

But we were slowly moving out from between the wharf and a boat on the other side of us. The little sardine box was on deck and I put on our newest record, the jazz, and to its banging syncopated noise we made a good exit. Everybody was yelling goodbye at one time and waving hands, the engine was hitting true, a small steamship blew her whistle three times, others honked their horns, and the jazz mingled with it all noisily and not unmusically. And so we pushed out to sea, the Custom House lights dropped around the point and were lost to sight. The jazz was through and we had left Bluefields for the long trip north.

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<sup>126</sup> A Scottish singer and comedian popular on the vaudeville circuit.

## CHAPTER 11

### NORTH ALONG THE NICARAGUA COAST

#### October 12, Friday

Four and a quarter centuries ago today, Cristóbal Colón discovered the New World. Some hundreds of miles out to the east of us, he sighted the island of Santo Domingo, and opened up another hemisphere. This morning, we are standing off a coast where he cruised some 10 years later, just about now, too. It was on August 24th, if my memory does not deceive me, 1502, that he sighted the island of Guanaja, to which, as I have already noted in these pages, he gave this name, and cruised south along this very coast, anchoring off the San Juan River south of Bluefields, and later, skirting the coast of Costa Rica, he put into the Bahía del Almirante, which was so named in his honor. The Spanish Main teems with historic interest everywhere, but perhaps no single stretch is as replete with romance or so possessed of a great and glowing past as this Mosquito Coast.

In spite of these stirring and historic memories, however, I felt quite inert. Seasickness held me helpless. All I could do was to lie prone on my back and wish the day was over. I didn't actually pay the extreme penalty, but my escape thereof was only due to the fact that I kept quiet. I had hoped for an hour's respite from the choppy sea at Prinzapolka, but we didn't get off the bar until after nightfall, and Dournoft was afraid to risk the tortuous channel after dark. So we pushed right on. Anyhow, it cuts down tomorrow's agony.

#### October 13, Saturday

The usual quota of ill luck chargeable to the 13th was ours today without any doubt. The first half, up to one, in fact, was auspicious enough. We made good time, Sandy Bar before breakfast, Bay Mona, Old Cape, and finally Cape Gracias a Dios just after noon. We crept into the same mouth as we left nearly three weeks ago. The river we could see was lower—that is, the new-formed sand banks piled with driftwood stood out higher above the water—but we edged in closer and closer and were just beginning to congratulate ourselves that we had passed over the bar, when bump—we hit it squarely. Thinking we were nearly over, and a few shoves would put us into deeper water inside, Dournoft hoisted the mainsail, which a strong easterly breeze bellowed out in great shape, and promptly drove us into shallower water. By this time, we were caught fairly.

The tide running out, counterbalancing the strong east breeze blowing in, proved a Scylla and Charybdis,<sup>127</sup> and there we lay between the two forces, stranded on the bar. It was now

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<sup>127</sup> In Homer's *Odyssey*, taken from Greek mythology, these are two "sea monsters," a rocky

nearly two, so we had lunch, which I hoped would have been eaten ashore. After lunch, Dournoft put out the anchor and tried to pull us off, but without success. It was apparent we were not going to move until some external force—the rising tide or one of Bischoff’s motorboats—pulled us off. When I finally saw this, I decided to go ashore in the dory with Dournoft and McKenzie and persuade Bischoff to rescue us from our plight.

The waves were fairly high as we put overboard, and I experienced that same sinking of heart I did the night John and I put off from Ceiba, or more recently in Bluefields harbor, the morning McKenzie took me out to the boat when it was so very rough. The dory bobbed up on one crest and sank down into the next trough. Once we shipped water. As we drew into the river, however, the waves went down and when we finally got off the point—where we landed—it was quite calm. The point below town where we landed was mostly swamp. Several paths, cattle trails no more, were open to us and we chose the one that appeared least wet: none was dry. We waded through one swamp over our sneaker tops, raised a flock of ducks, dodged a bull who went bellowing off in another direction, and finally made dry land, or rather terra firma, just in front of Deitrick’s old hotel, now falling apart. To Dournoft’s disgust, I went in to what had been the office for a brief look over. I didn’t know whether I’d ever pass that way again, and I wanted to give it at least a once over. The mahogany floor was splitting up. Sections of the ceiling hung down. Great holes gaped in the walls. No windows, no doors; the balustrade of the stairway swinging loose. I did not go upstairs; the ruin downstairs was enough to proclaim its general decay.

Hurrying on toward the village, I overtook Dournoft and just as we were entering the town we saw the *Baldwin*, Mengel’s boat, putting down the river with somebody aboard who looked like Bischoff himself. I went directly to the Mengel office and found out that he had gone out to help us off. I went to the Chinese Restaurant and ordered dinner for three of us—a good one, I told the Chink we wanted—and then back to Bischoff’s to wait for him to return. The sun was almost setting when I saw the *Lilly Elena* slowly coming up the river. I went down to the Customs House wharf where she anchored, and John told me Bischoff had first pulled them off and then gone out to the *Rama* with some mail. All agreed we had been well stuck, for when the *Baldwin* grappled hold of her and gave her the first tug, she nearly capsized!

We waited and waited for Bischoff, but it was after seven when he finally got ashore. He had that fellow Walz with him, the Mengel Co.’s man whom I had met at Prinzapolka on the way down. They were drenched from spray trying to get the mail aboard the *Rama*, and we waited for them to change into dry clothes before going over to supper. The old Chink did himself proud, and we had a fairly good meal, including little rice birds, which were tinned, of course. The circus is here, and before we were through supper the din of its band arose just outside the door and rendered further conversation impossible. The tent was pitched just next door to the Chink’s, and this was the evening call to arms. The question was whether we should play Solo or go to the *payaso*, and it was answered unanimously in favor of Solo. The reinforced band was too awful, and we all wanted to put as much distance between it and our ears as possible.

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shoal and a whirlpool, respectively, which guarded opposite sides of the Strait of Messina between Sicily and Calabria. This is the basis for idioms of “the lesser of two evils,” etc.

We made John fetch his two-pound box of Jacobs chocolates, and the four of us—Walz also played—sat down to an evening of Solo. I don't care for the game particularly; I don't play it particularly well to begin with, and I always lose. I must admit there is a good bit to it, particularly in the sloughing part, which I haven't picked up yet. We did this for the first two layers of the Jacobs chocolates before we finally knocked off. I walked over to the boat and had Campbell take my cot, bedding, and *pabellón* over to Bischoff's, where I was going to sleep. John wanted to sleep on board, as he and Dournoft are going duck hunting the first thing in the morning. We hope to get off about eight or nine o'clock. Being Sunday, it may be a little late, and it may require a little extra push to get the *comandante* to clear us at all.

### October 14, Sunday

Dressing, we heard two shots, which we hoped might mean some duck. It seemed unfeasible to wait for John for breakfast, so the three of us—Walz slept at Bischoff's also—went over to the Chink's. He had some of those delicious Cape Gracias grapefruit, which, with a dash of sherry, forcibly bring back happier climes. He also had some of his justly celebrated French toast, whose praises I have already sung earlier in this book. There were also ham and eggs and hot pancakes and wild honey. "Oh, boy," in the current slang.

After breakfast we walked over to the *Lilly Elena* and found out the huntsmen had brought back nine ducks—a good bag. They were the blue-winged teal. They are just beginning to come south and a little later will be very plentiful around here. I asked Dournoft if he thought we could get off this morning, and he said a little later when the *comandante* was up he'd go and see him. He took me over to the British Consul, a Mr. Blakesley, who was just going up the river in his motorboat, and introduced me to him. He is a pleasant middle-aged gentleman, wears gold-rimmed glasses, is rather precise and English. He regretted that we could not see more of each other. He tells me he has his weather eye on the two Lehmann cousins, Richard and Otto, whom he does not trust. Nor did I, for that matter. He feels, however, that they could get away with very little that would not come to his attention. I dare say he is right. At any rate, it is satisfactory to know a man of intelligence is watching all the time for an act overt or otherwise, so long as it is inimical to our interests.

While we were standing there, a tug boat came in which had been out at Vivarilla Keys salvaging a boat that had gone down out there. I photographed her as she came in. But Mr. Blakesley had to go, so I bid him goodbye and returned to Bischoff's. It seemed to be a good time to explore the town a bit—Sunday morning and lordly weather, so I persuaded Bischoff to take a stroll with me. We walked out as far as the old hotel and went in. There is one nice room on the northeast corner looking out to sea on both sides which, with little work, could be patched up and made quite habitable. Two families share this big establishment now. A Negro and an Indian woman on the first floor back, and another similar pair on the second-floor side. A few dirty rags, cooking utensils, and the all-important *pabellones* seemed to be their chief *Lares* and *Penates*.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Lares and Penates were two Roman groups of gods who were guardians of domestic households: Lares refers to ancestral spirits; Penates to the pantry and domestic goods. The term now refers collectively to household possessions.



Coming out, we met Dournoft on his way up to the *comandante*, still trying to get us cleared. We walked back toward town and stopped at a house where Dournoft said the *payaso* people were living. We offered to photograph the ladies of the troupe, and they were keen for it, but it could not be done without their father's permission and he was down at the tent. Bischoff, who is quite a shot, gave us an exhibition of fancy shooting here. Dournoft threw an old bottle into the air and Bischoff broke its neck off; the second time he broke the body and the third time shattered the base. Three hits in three successive shots. Devilish good shooting, since he was firing with a little 22. John joined us looking for the Kodak. It seems the tug I saw coming in from Vivarilla Keys had aboard her forty or fifty iguanas, which John wanted to photograph. He took the Kodak with him and went back to town, whither we presently followed. We walked back to Bischoff's, where we found Walz and where John presently joined us, and we played some more Solo, until nearly noon.

Dournoft looked us up, finally, and said we'd have to get our personal passports, so we all went up to the *comandante's*, or rather the governor's. This was an imposing patriarch indeed. He must have weighed twenty stone, with large equator and full round face, from which peered two small bright eyes, and to which hung a long white fringe of beard. He was most affable, and while he dictated our passports to his secretary he kept up a running fire of conversation with me. In addition to his gubernatorial duties, he was also *Diputado* from the *Cámara*<sup>129</sup> de *Mosquitia* to the National *Cámara* in Managua, and he was already figuring on how he would get there for the opening of the National Congress on December 15th. He was either going by Limón, San José, Punta Arenas, and then up to Corinto, or up on this side to Puerto Barrios, thence over to San José de Guatemala, and thence down to Corinto. He finally gave us our passports and also a bill of health, all three plastered with the proper stamps, and we bid him goodbye.

We returned to the Chink's and had a square meal. Something was still lacking about our papers, somebody's signature or other—I suspect Dournoft's desire to see the afternoon performance of the circus may have had something to do with it—so we all went to the circus. It was furiously hot under the tent, but everybody had a good time. The governor's lady was there in full force, a large, well filled-out person with a tremendous bass voice which could be heard all over the tent. Theodore von Kurnatowski's two little boys, 8 and 6, were there, Fritz and Roland. Handsome little fellows. Their mother is a Nicaraguense. We stayed on and on until about four when Dournoft, who had been rushing about, came in and said that at last we were all cleared. The afternoon performance was so nearly over by this time, however, that we decided to see it through. Immediately afterward, we went down to the boat and Bischoff, Walz, and Johnson (with whom we'd been at the circus) saw us off.

The *Lilly Elena* was ready and her two new passengers aboard; one of these is a Nicaraguan youth from Granada, whom I am carrying with us as far as Trujillo, where he goes to arrange for the coming of the circus. Dournoft plans to return for them in a larger boat in about a fortnight. Our other passenger is Hubert Garvin, ex-captain of the *Eagle* and an Island man from

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<sup>129</sup> *Cámara* means chamber, as in a legislative body.

Bonacco. He's an old tar, wall-eyed to be sure, but knows the sea for a' at that. I was glad to have him aboard, as I thought he surely must know the Wank's channel by heart, having been in and out of it so much.

We slipped down the [Wanks?] river just before sunset, with Hubert at the wheel. We chose the main channel this time and everyone was happy, homeward bound, clear sky, etc., etc. We could see shallow water ahead, thin breakers, but concluded Hubert knew the channel. Suddenly we brought up with a bump on the bottom, shook ourselves free, bumped again and stuck for good. Everybody began to malign Hubert for this turn of fate, and that poor fellow stoutly maintained he was in the middle of the channel and that he couldn't be blamed if the channel didn't have enough water to float a *pitpan*, etc., etc. These recriminations got us nowhere, and finally Dournoft and Hubert put out in the dory, going ahead to see how far out the shallow water continued—a good hundred yards we could see by their sounding before they got back to the boat, much too far to attempt to drive the *Lilly Elena* with her little 18 h.p. engine.

The only alternatives were to try and back her off or to wait for Bischoff to see us and come out with the *Baldwin*. We hoisted our colors upside down to emphasize our distress in case he should be looking our way, and at the same time set about helping ourselves. The boys took off the anchor in the dory, dropped it behind us, and then by pulling on the hawser and backing at the same time we managed to get back into deeper water. Turning the boat back, we returned to Cape Gracias very crestfallen. I was in favor of picking up a pilot who really knew something, and going out by the North Channel even after dark, and it is probably deeper now in view of the east winds which have been filling in the Southern Channel. Charley did not want to do this, as he was afraid to risk his boat. There was some justice to his point of view too—we certainly had had ill luck over this bar, and if Hubert Garvin, who had been running in and out of here on the *Eagle* for the past six months, didn't know the channel, who else could be expected to? In view of these circumstances, we decided to wait until morning and get Bischoff to take us over if we stuck.

Bischoff was surprised to see us and laughed his head off: "More haste and less speed" stuff. He had not eaten, so the three of us (including Walz) went over to the Chinese restaurant. John, for once, did not come. He is sick—overeating or too much hunting or nervous strain over the bar running. *Quien sabe cual*, but he had quite lost his appetite and lay on the deck of the *Lilly Elena* looking and feeling very sad. Nothing the Chink might have would tempt him, and so we left him. Johnson came in, and as our Solo game was broken up, as Walz had a touch of fever and went to bed early, he asked Bischoff and me to go to the *payaso*. Bischoff said the noise was too much for him, so Johnson and I went by ourselves.

Just before the performance, a drunken native, whom I met out on Bischoff's wharf, drew his revolver and said he was going to shoot me. I had no arms on at all, not as much as a penknife, and the occasion appeared to me one neither for flight or fight, but for diplomacy of the most delicate order. He stood about 8 feet off, and I tried in my halting and lame Spanish to temporize. "Let us talk this business over first, my friend," I said. "No time for talking," he replied. "But there is so much to say first," I said. All the time I was drawing nearer to him, because it seemed less hazardous than to run. By the time I had got close enough to him to get my arm on his shoulder, he had become at least neutral and I guided him back to the crowd,

suggesting that he put up his gun. I left him just outside the door of the tent, and as I was passing in I heard a shot. At first, I thought he had changed his mind and taken a pot at me, but this seemed hardly probable as I was only ten feet off when he shot, and even a drunk could hardly miss such a shot. As it turned out, he shot in the air. This raised a great hue and cry, however: women screamed, children rushed out of the entrance, and it was more than half an hour before order was restored and the performance could proceed. I slept with Johnson.

### October 15, Monday

Dournoft came up to Johnson's before daylight to awaken me, and I was dressed and down to the boat before 5. I bid good-bye to Johnson under his *pabellón* and thanked him for his hospitality.

We were all cleared and the only thing remaining to be done was to ask Bischoff if we could have the *Baldwin* to help us over in case we got stuck, as seemed probable I must say. Bischoff said it wasn't up yet but sent down word to the *Baldwin's* crew to come down and help us over. The anchor was raised, and we started downstream in the wake of the *Baldwin*. When we got out toward the bar, a hawser was thrown to us and, coming to half speed, both boats moved out over the bar. At first it seemed as though we were going to get over without touching, but when nearly out to the breakers we hit the bottom. The *Baldwin* stiffened to the job, and dragged us fifty yards over the bottom. The *Lilly Elena* shivered and groaned at this rough treatment, and the boys said "sprung something," but the *Baldwin* never faltered, but dragged us out to deep water.

We waved good-bye to the friendly little tug, and turned our bow northeast. With this early start, and a light east wind behind us and the current worth a mile or two, we made good time, and passed the entrance to Caratasca Lagoon about one o'clock. The boys had to do a great deal of pumping to keep the hold clear of water, and it very quickly became apparent that we had sprung a leak somewhere in being towed over the Wanks' bar. Charley thought it was the stuffing box, i.e., where the propeller shaft goes through the hull, as a half-inch stream of water was running in around the shaft inside.

This piece of bad luck was directly responsible for another more serious breakdown, before the first was ever discovered. The rising water in the hold had reached the bottom of the fly-wheel of our engine, which finally threw a spray of water on the magneto,<sup>130</sup> which promptly short-circuited the same and stopped us. It sounds something like the old nursery rhyme: Fire blaze and burn stick, stick jump and strike dog, dog run and bite cat, cat scratch and chase rat, etc. One thing led directly to another until the engine stopped and so did we.

At first Charley did not know what was the matter, but when he started the engine on the batteries and switched to the magneto, he saw where the trouble lay. Although they pumped

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<sup>130</sup> A magneto is a generator that produces electric current from a magnetic field, using permanent magnets to produce pulses of alternating current. Simple and reliable, magnetos are often found in small ignition systems to provide power to the spark plugs of internal combustion engines, for example, in small aircraft, boats, and the like.

her out at once, the damage was done, and we had to run the rest of the day on batteries, the new ones I had bought from Scott at Rincón.<sup>131</sup>

The heat was terrific without the awning, but we wanted to keep the mainsail up to get whatever little help we could from the easterly breeze. This wasn't much as it almost died out altogether in the late afternoon. Toward evening, the engine began to miss occasionally and Charley, after investigating, said the new batteries had already weakened. There was nothing to do but hope they would hold out as far as Trujillo.

About nine, we were off the Patuca [River mouth]; there was no light ashore to advise us of this, but Hubert tasted the water and found it sweet. We knew then we must be in that great muddy flood, which sweeps for 7 or 8 miles out to side from this river in the rainy season before it is lost in the salt water of the Caribbean.

By this time, the engine was missing so much that Charley said it would be necessary to stop her so the batteries could rest, otherwise they would give out altogether. Fortunately, a fairly brisk breeze from the east sprang up about ten, and even without our engine we were making about 4 miles an hour. We had counted on reaching Trujillo tomorrow afternoon, but if we have to depend on these light easterly breezes, it cannot be done.

### **October 16, Tuesday**

At daybreak we were off Iriona, about 60 miles from the Cape of Honduras, Castilla Point,<sup>132</sup> and 65 or 66 from Trujillo. The batteries were so weak that we had to depend on the slight breeze, which all but died out about the middle of the morning, giving us a little more than steerage way 2½ to 3 miles an hour.

Our plight was in no way dangerous except in the event of a norther<sup>133</sup> coming on suddenly. In that case, we had nowhere to run or indeed nothing to run with. Dournoft and Hubert searched the sky for "signs" but everything indicated an indefinite continuation of the wonderful weather we have been enjoying throughout the trip. Charley had the fragments of another magneto aboard, one that he had bought secondhand in Bluefields, and he started tinkering with it in the hope he might cajole it into running a bit, since every inch nearer Castilla Point was time gained. Once around, Dournoft said if a norther did come, we could easily run into shelter at Rincón before its vanguard.

The trouble with this magneto was that its wheel did not fit our flywheel, and since the former was mounted on the bevel, Charley could not gear the two together, though he had already tried. He started making a new pulley but was handicapped for a saw. But here was where the White Knight was forever vindicated in carrying a mousetrap on his horse's back. For three years now, I'd been carrying around a handy repair kit, which Abercrombie & Fitch had

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<sup>131</sup> The Rincón toponym no longer appears on modern maps of the Department of Colón, but Held's map shows it very close to Puerto Castilla on the small peninsula north of Trujillo. Today, it shares a postal code with several other little communities.

<sup>132</sup> This town, on a small peninsula projecting from the coast into the Caribbean Sea, is shown on modern maps as Puerto Castilla.

<sup>133</sup> "Northers" are destructive cold-front storms that sweep across the islands with squalls of wind and heavy rain between late November and March to April (Evans 1966: 2).

unloaded upon me in an unguarded moment. It contained a small steel hammer, a small collapsible saw, a pair of pliers and wire cutter, and a handle with a half a dozen different bits, a screwdriver, a punch, a file, a gauge, and two gimlets. Charley gave a chortle of delight when he saw this, and at once set to work making a pulley. The first time this set had ever been used!

I was greatly interested in the promise of a speedier escape from the sea of glass about us, and in all the blazing heat, helped what little I could. Holding while he sawed, unravelling insulation from copper wire, and anything in fact I could do. We even delayed lunch until one—much to John's disgust—to finish the job and try it out. Alas, when we finally geared her on to the flywheel with the new pulley, it wouldn't turn fast enough to generate enough electricity to run the engine. Thoroughly disgusted and discouraged, we sat down to a lunch of blues.

Charley said he confidently anticipated a norther, as that was the only piece of ill-luck which had not befallen us in the past two days. At this time, mark you, the *Lilly Elena* was leaking like a sieve, and literally had to be pumped out every half hour to keep us from foundering.

But more grief was in store for us. The kayaks, or at least 6 of the 8, which had stood on the floor of the hold, had become wet with bilge water, and we felt it the part of wisdom to investigate whether this had done any damage to them interiorly or not. Campbell was called upon to unpack them and as the different bottoms were reached, the antiphonal wails from John and me announced the varying damages each had sustained. John's heaviest misfortune was the wetting and mildewing of his best trousers. Mine the soaking of a brand new pair of pajamas and a pair of khaki trousers. All the damp clothing was put out in the sun to dry, and the remaining things packed with a view to our coming separation, John going over to Bonacca while I stayed at Rincón.

The worst sufferer on board from the bilge water was the poor *payaso* [circus] youth, whose trunk had rested directly on the bottom. When he unpacked it, the whole lower half was soaked. Several suits, shirts, underwear, socks, handkerchiefs. One of the suits, a blue mohair, had run a bit and the shirts were blue in patches. He never uttered a word of complaint, but took the things out one by one and stretched them out on deck to dry.

I was so disgusted with all this, and the failure of our work on the magneto, that I got out the first chapter on the Copan inscriptions and Joe's new handbook [Spinden 1917], and tried to drown my sorrows in this light reading.

Charley kept tinkering with the pulley, and sawed it down to half size, so when it was geared with the flywheel it would run faster. After supper he made another trial, and this time it actually worked, and for 20 minutes we ran on this rehabilitated magneto doing two miles. Then it burned out. By this time, we were about 10 to 12 miles east of Point Castilla, and with a light easterly breeze. The sky looked fair and clear, and Dournoft said we could use the single cell we'd been saving to run over a bar in case that should be necessary. Charley connected this last hope up and it carried us another 5 miles before it burned out.

By this time, a fair breeze had sprung up behind us and Dournoft said if it continued, we would be around the point and in the Bay of Trujillo by midnight. The breeze stiffened and about ten the point could be made out. As there are shoals just off the point, we stood out to

avoid them. Here, suddenly the sea became quite rough, the *Lilly Elena* jibed without warning with a terrific bang, and nearly broke her boom. We all ducked pronto.

The strong breeze now carried us well out before the shoals, and around into the bay; but here, once inside the point, it died out, leaving us practically becalmed. We could see the lights of Trujillo and Rincón, but made little progress toward them. It did not matter greatly, however, as the *comandante* would not clear us until the morning, no matter what time we got in. Dournoft said there would be enough breeze before then to work us across to Trujillo, where we left just 5 weeks ago, tomorrow night.

With these assurances of a sure landing tomorrow, we all went to sleep, except Dournoft and Hubert, who between them took the wheel.

## CHAPTER 12

### TRUJILLO AND EL RINCÓN, AGAIN

#### October 17, Wednesday

When I awakened at the first streaks of dawn, the *Lilly Elena* was already anchored about a hundred feet off the Trujillo wharf. Another boat was just in from Bonacca, and Dournoft was anxious to get the home news. All his family were well, which took a great load from his mind, and then he wanted to know about everybody else. Bonacca is small and anybody's business is everybody's business. The biggest new items were that Manny Haylock—the captain of the *Memory* who had tried to hire her to me, by the way—had broken somebody's head, and one of old man Sixty's children had been drowned.

I was going to change into clean clothes from B.V.D.s<sup>134</sup> out, so took a bath. The water was delightful. Meanwhile, the sun was just coming up over Trujillo Mountain, and throwing its first rays across the top of the bluff where the town stands. From obscurity, the little place with its white houses, red roofs, and twin church towers, flashed into brilliancy. The grass around took on a lovely green, the old walls of the fort, dismantled by time and neglect, showed these ravages. Whatever there was of tawdriness and shoddiness, the inevitable accompaniments of these small Spanish-American places, was softened or effaced in shadow; in short, the whole place radiated charm and beauty in the early morning light.

Our water cask was empty and Dournoft hailed a passing Carib who took it ashore and filled it for us, since we were not yet received. The *comandante's* assistant by this time had come down to the dock, and motioned us to bring our boat alongside, which we did. While I was concluding my bath he came aboard, and took our papers off.

There was great news here of a revolution or strike at Omoa, Ceiba, and Tela of the Fruit Company employees, who were fighting over the high price of sols<sup>135</sup> and the increase in the cost of living which it entailed. The Cuyamel [Fruit Company] at Omoa, the Vaccaro Bros.<sup>136</sup> at

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<sup>134</sup> BVD is a brand of men's underwear, the name from the 1876 New York founders' initials: Bradley, Voorhees, and Day. BVDs are now made by Fruit of the Loom.

<sup>135</sup> A change in the exchange rate that devalued the dollar vs. the local currency.

<sup>136</sup> The Vaccaro brothers immigrated from Sicily to the United States in the 1860s and began importing coconuts from Ceiba in the 1890s. Success came swiftly and in 1906 they formed the Vaccaro Bros. Fruit Company (later Standard Fruit and Steamship Co.). They were the main rival to the United Fruit Company, both competing vigorously to dominate the New Orleans fruit import business. During World War I, they got a leg up on United Fruit by purchasing all the ice manufacturing plants in New Orleans, denying their competitor an essential resource. After the war, they expanded operations and by 1935 operated 35 steamships (Karnes 1978).

Ceiba, and the U. F. Co. at Tela had all suffered; none, in fact, was shipping fruit. At Ceiba, 28 are said to have been killed, all natives. The trouble, so far as Ceiba is concerned, was now outside the town in the fruit plantation, where a lot of damage has been done. The Vaccaro Bros. boat, the *Yoro*, came over here last week on Friday for Calix,<sup>137</sup> and all his *soldados* [soldiers]. It seems Calix is the most trustworthy military man the government has on the north coast, and he has been put in charge of the situation.

By this time, Dournoft and Hubert were overboard and reported that not only was our stuffing-box<sup>138</sup> entirely out—hence the big leak—but that also our keel was badly wrenched, and had sprung loose in one place. The boys had been afraid to go overboard to make this examination heretofore because of the number of sharks in the water. They put the stuffing box back in and stopped the leak, but the keel will require more extensive work in drydock.

I was out on the end of the wharf by this time. I noticed a khaki-clad figure coming toward me but thought it was one of the Fruit Co. people. My amazement was beyond measure when Arthur Carpenter<sup>139</sup> hailed me. I'd heard of him last through Gilbert, who had had him to lunch at the Cosmos Club. He was then working for some dye people in Santo Domingo. His surprise was not as great as mine, of course, because Gilbert had told him of my being down here, and he thought he would meet me somewhere.

I fancied he was on the trail of dye-woods, as he was. He is working for some Wall Street firm which has its contracts directly from the Quartermaster General's department. He was here with King, the chap I mentioned at San Pedro Sula both times and also at Puerto Cortés as having difficulties over his passport. There were two other men with him. They were en route for that patch of timber up the Aguan River, which Mr. Pearce told me of six weeks ago. It's not *mora*, i.e., fustic, but *palo de tinto*.<sup>140</sup> The Pearce boys told their father there was lots of wood there but practically impossible to get out without a railroad. Anyhow, Arthur was going up there to report on it. In fact, [he] was only waiting for the train from Rincón to carry him out to the end of the line.

He told me more of the Ceiba trouble, which seems to be more or less in hand now. He brought lots of word from the States, says Washington is in great confusion. Too many committees. One is sent hither and thither and gets nothing done. While this is doubtless true, it does not appear to me to be anything surprising, only the confusion of a great easy-going democracy getting down to business. We weren't ready for war, it isn't our normal business,

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<sup>137</sup> Calix was the head Honduran official in San Pedro Sula.

<sup>138</sup> The stuffing box is a device placed where the propeller shaft goes through the hull of a vessel. In Morley's time, it would have been stuffed with greased cloth to prevent water entry.

<sup>139</sup> Archaeologist Arthur W. Carpenter (1890–1951) was field director of the Peabody Museum (Harvard University) Central American operations. He accompanied Morley on the ill-fated expedition to Uaxactun in 1916, and was nearly killed himself. See Rice and Ward 2021: Chapters 21–22.

<sup>140</sup> *Mora* is a mulberry tree, *Maclura tinctoria*, known as old fustic, that produces a yellow dye. *Palo de tinto* ("red wood/tree"), *Haematoxylum campechianum*, or logwood, was widely cut in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Belize and elsewhere in Central America for shipment to Europe to make red dye. Spanish and English pirates plying the coast made this hazardous.



like Germany's, and there will inevitably be more or less creaking of the machinery before the country finds itself. Meanwhile, the big things, the draft, the food control, the Liberty loan have been put through efficiently and with dispatch, and we've more to be thankful for than not, under the conditions.

Meanwhile, the [United Fruit Co.] train had come in from Rincón, and we walked over to the station. Saw Keefer—the agent—and talked with Scott by telephone. He said to come over as far as Empalme on the train that was taking Arthur out to the end of the line, and he would have another train meet me there and bring me into Rincón. I told the engineer to wait while I went back to the *Lilly Elena* and got my baggage. While Campbell was carrying it to the train, I ate a small breakfast. Said goodbye to John, and we were off.

Arthur expects to be back in Ceiba in about ten days, just the time I want to be there, and if I am able to, I want to go on to Belize from there about the first of November. Arthur also wants to go over there and if the permission is given for me to go, I will take him with me in the *Lilly Elena*. At Empalme we parted. He stayed on his flat car to go on to the end of the line, and I transferred to another waiting on the other arm of the Y.

At the machine shop [in Rincón], Scott himself came out and said hello, asked me what kind of trip we'd had, etc., and how John was. He said that someone had carelessly turned chickens into the house we occupied before, and that I was to stop at their house. This was most kind and unexpected, and I told him I hoped I wasn't putting Mrs. Scott to any inconvenience. He said no, and to go right over to the house.

Mrs. Scott was there, and showed me my room, a cool luxurious place after the broiling hot and stone hard deck of the *Lilly Elena*. Rollins, whom I'd met in front of the mess, said there was a letter for me over at the office, and after seeing my bags in my room, I went over there. It was from Joe Spinden's friend, J. J. Perdomo of Panama, and I could not read it just then.

At lunch, I met everybody I left here five weeks ago tomorrow. The mess had not been increased or decreased by one. There were the two Scotts, the two Rollinses, Stuart, Ahern, Wright, Duval, and Mac, the engineer. After dinner, Rollins told me there would be a boat off to Ceiba and a chance to send mail by her. I wrote mother and A.D.J.

About four, John came over in the *Lilly Elena*. Charley had previously telephoned that he would need some batteries, and also that there was some trouble about bringing in McCollough's furniture<sup>141</sup> under 30 tons, we had no right to import from a foreign country, or something like that. I asked Charley if the furniture could not be removed from the boat to the Customs House pending an answer from Tegucigalpa, so that the *Lilly Elena* could go on over to Bonacca in the meantime, as we had originally planned. He conferred with his brother-in-law, Rosendo López, the *administrador de la aduana*, and he said it would be alright.

When the *Lilly Elena* got over, the boat for Ceiba, a small power launch, was just leaving. The *Lilly Elena* had acquired merit since I left her all right, since she was fairly bristling with soldiers; there must have been five or six aboard her. I asked John, "Why all the heavy armament?" and he said they only wanted passage across. They all proceeded to pile off on the wharf with their guns, baggage, commander, his woman, and her child. There was another woman aboard, one of the García girls, who was returning to the islands. She was a sister of the

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<sup>141</sup> See diary entry for September 8.

engineer of the *Atlántida*, whom I mentioned earlier in this chronicle. She brought the proverbial “feminine touch” with her in the form of a big bouquet of roses, which stood in a tin can near the gramophone.

They were in a hurry to be off, however, so I did not delay them. Passed over the batteries and got my sneakers and some papers and books John had for me, and then they pushed off with the stars and stripes flying.

I returned to the office and read J. J.’s letter; it covered identically the same ground as his communication to Joe. It was just suppertime when I finished. After supper, the Rollinses came over to the Scotts’ porch, and we sat there talking until bedtime.

### **October 18, Thursday**

Brother’s birthday; also left here just five weeks ago today, for the trip down to Bluefields. It doesn’t seem that long—the time has been so full—but the calendar says so. Brother is 29 years old today. On my 29th birthday, I was getting ready for my first regular job with the C.I.W.

The *Preston* came in this morning from the Bay Islands, where she had been buying coconuts, to [load] coal preparatory to the trip home. She brought firsthand news from Tela, which was the chief subject of conversation at the lunch table. There had been no deaths up to the time she left, but the situation was critical. The commissary, offices, and farms were closed, the white employees guarding everything. The Negroes and natives had both struck, and the whites had to do their own cooking. Fortunately, the strikers have few or no arms, and without firearms little danger is to be apprehended.

In the afternoon, I went up to the wireless station and went in bathing with Duval and Doctor Stowe’s little boy. The water was cool and refreshing, and I stayed in for about 40 minutes. Duval and the little Stowe boy lingered another half hour. Duval takes the *Literary Digest* and before I had finished dressing, I was lost in one of the last numbers. Feeling greatly refreshed after this bath, I returned to Scotts’ just before supper.

At supper, young Wright could scarcely restrain his happiness. He has been called back to Tela, and leaves on the *Preston* this evening. He took a cordial dislike to Rincón, and told me only yesterday he wished heartily he could go back to Tela. I fancied there were one or two others who envied him his opportunity, though assuredly not me. I greatly prefer Rincón to Tela, in spite of all the former’s sandflies. They joked him about going to his end at Tela, and tried to make him believe the strike was much worse than it is. But nothing could dampen his spirits, and he withstood their chaff amiably to the end, thankful only his chance to leave had come.

The Rollins family and Duval came over and spent the evening. After they had gone, Scott stayed up and we had a long, very friendly talk. He is a thoroughly interesting man, looks like an ideal “old American” in [the] Hrdlička sense. The same type as Uncle Sam, I mean: tall, thin, lanky. I told him the nature of the archaeological work we are trying to do on this coast, and he promised his cooperation whenever and however possible.

### **October 19, Friday**

I began on my diary this morning and wrote until about noon, when Rollins asked me to go

over to Trujillo with him on the motor-car. I wanted to send a telegram to Jack Belt and also see if any message had come from Tegucigalpa about McCollough's furniture. I took over with me a half a dozen batteries to the man Busch, from whom Charley had borrowed that number the day before yesterday.

The ride over was without incident, and we stopped in first to see Keefer. We went uptown next, and asked López if any word had come from Tegucigalpa, but he seemed quite confident that Charley hadn't even wired. At the telegraph office, they said there was a message on the street for me and this was presently delivered to me at Guillen and Dole, where we had gone to buy some candy. It was from Cordoza, the Minister of Hacienda, and told me my wire should have been sent to the Minister of Foreign Relations. Instead of turning my message over to Mariano Vásquez right there in the same building in Tegucigalpa, he wires me back here, thereby losing me three days to apply to Vásquez. I took the letter over to Rosendo López and asked him to frame an adequate reply in Spanish. He did this in a regular night letter of about fifty words, but there was no reduction in price. It cost me \$2.40 sols. I also sent a message in English to Jack asking about the news, and telling him of our safe arrival. By this time, it was a little after ten, and as we wanted to get back before lunch, we started for the station. There was ice and meat to take out, and we started at 10:25, reaching Rincón at eleven.

After lunch, Scott, Rollins, and I went out the line to where that jade<sup>142</sup> had been found when the railroad was built through. The first place we stopped was at a place where a shell heap had been cut almost entirely away. There were loads of potsherds in among the oyster shells, some showing incised decorations, and molded handles and pot legs, but no painted ware. While we were nosing around on the floor of this shell heap, Scott found a beautiful piece of jade, of a beautiful light green color.<sup>143</sup> It was a fragment of a long, cylindrical bead, ½" in diameter and 3" long. The hole through it was large, and at the unbroken end [it] was finished off on a rounding level. I collected specimens [of pottery?] showing incised decoration—found one whole top of a large jar—handles, legs, etc., and then we moved on to the next place. The mosquitoes all but ate us alive.

The next spot we stopped was where Red Henry and Mr. Cutter put up the archaeological hoax on Mrs. Cutter. They buried a piece of pottery with a jade bead in it, and so manipulated circumstances that Mrs. C. should find it, which she did. There was great rejoicing until she discovered the fraud that had been perpetrated upon her. Red told me in the Tela hospital that she never had forgiven him. Anyhow, the stuff itself was not faked, only the circumstances surrounding its second discovery by Mrs. Cutter. Scott tells me that all of it came from the mound through a corner of which the railroad passed.

This was probably a burial mound, as Red Henry uncovered five or six skeletons in the corner where he dug. The jades found, a number of pieces, Scott says came from nearer the top.

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<sup>142</sup> It is not clear what jade object Morley is referring to.

<sup>143</sup> The light green color of the jade suggests it was from the well-known jadeite source in the middle Motagua River valley in Zacapa, eastern Guatemala. From the description of the pottery—with incised but not painted decoration, and molded handles and feet—this "shell heap" might have been a Postclassic shell midden and mound. Morley's following description indicates that it was a burial mound and part of an extensive occupation.

They usually found it on the surface just after a rain. We got off the car here and poked around through the bush to get an idea of the extent of the mound. It was fairly large, perhaps 100 feet across and 6 or 8 feet high in the middle, as near as I could judge in the thick bush with which it was covered. The outline was irregular. Excavation here would almost certainly bring to light other burials. There was a riot of mosquitoes here also.<sup>144</sup>

The third place we visited was almost as far as the Chapagua ruin,<sup>145</sup> where the steam shovels had dug out a big depression like a canal on the north side of the track. Here, on both sides of this wide cut, 75 to 100 feet wide at a depth of from 4 to 6 feet below the present level of the ground, there was a well-defined layer of potsherds, very abundant. Amongst these, we also found small obsidian blades or flakes and a small grinding stone. The potsherds appeared to be of the same kind as those in the other two sites we visited—the same unpainted ware, molded handles and feet, with punched in or incised decorations. We walked along this cut for quite a distance on either side, and found these objects everywhere in greatest abundance at the same general level. Some river in the neighborhood had deposited 4 to 6 feet of alluvial soil over this stratum, subsequent to or coincident with the abandonment of the site.

What surprised me now was not the fact, but rather the extent, of the remains. Here were enough potsherds to indicate a fairly large population. This, coupled with the other two sites, and the immense pile of potsherds in the mound through which the railroad cut near the water tank just outside of Trujillo, would tend to indicate a former intensive population living in the locality.

But the mosquitoes here were worse than either of the other two places. It was quite out of the question to escape their attacks, and we were presently all bitten up. After examining both tanks, we scrambled up the bank and went on as far as the Chapagua, where Scott wanted to see one of his men. Had some good bananas here; small and just ripe enough. The sand flies were bad here and we did not stop long. On the way back, we came through without stopping.

After supper everybody seemed pretty well tired out. The Rollinses did not stop in on the way back to their house from supper; nor did Scott and I feel much like staying up late either, and we all turned in early.

## October 20, Saturday

Two years ago today, the courts gave Alice what she wanted. She didn't elect to stay single long, however, and had made another experiment at it within 48 hours. So far as either of us are concerned, I fancy we have both been happier since than we ever were during.<sup>146</sup> Remains to suffer poor little daughter. Judged from that point, even from this late date I am not sure whether it was not a mistake. We could never have been anything to each other again, but at least we might have played the game out together for little daughter's sake. When I saw Alice a

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<sup>144</sup> Not for nothing is this region known as the "Mosquito Coast."

<sup>145</sup> In his Fifth Letter to Emperor Charles V, Hernán Cortés mentions meeting with indigenous leaders of Chapagua and another nearby town (Pagden 1986: 424–425).

<sup>146</sup> These three sentences, and the remainder of the paragraph, provide some rare—perhaps the only—reflections in Morley's diaries about Alice's 1915 divorce from him. The oblique reference to her making "another experiment at it" apparently alludes to her marriage to Theodore Espe.

year ago now in Salt Lake City, I judged she felt much the same way. That we probably could have, and possibly should have, put up with each other for True's sake. Well, it's over now. Or rather that part of it. Someday there will have to come the final fight for little daughter. I cannot trust her to Alice, as I know Alice too well.

All morning, I wrote in this diary, which shows signs of at last catching up with the calendar. After lunch I decided to loaf. Saturday afternoons off. I gathered together the last five *Saturday Evening Posts*, and as the sand flies were impossible outside, I climbed into bed, pulled the *pabellón* down, tucked it in on all sides, and settled down to an orgy of reading.

I was interrupted only once, when Keefer telephoned from Trujillo that there was a telegram there for me. I got him to open it and read it over the phone. It was from Jack Belt, and contained a good bit of news. Corty had recovered, with prospects of arranging his affairs satisfactorily. I didn't get that last, but concluded it referred to his position there in the bank. Bo Long had been over for a visit, and was off on his vacation soon. Sam Lothrop had cabled from Panama that he was leaving there and to have all of his baggage at Amapala [Honduras], as he couldn't stop off. Either he is going home via Guatemala City or San Francisco; somehow, I imagine the latter. Finally, there was a big accumulation of mail for me at Tegucigalpa, and other letters had been forwarded to San Pedro Sula. I had Keefer hold the line, and sent back another message to Jack telling him to forward all our mail to Ceiba, care of the American consulate, as soon as possible.

I took a look out up the bay to see if I could see anything of the *Lilly Elena*. She is due tonight or tomorrow night, and I thought she might be rounding the point, but *no hay*. I ducked back under my *pabellón* and read until suppertime.

After supper, five of us, the two Rollinses, the two Scotts, and myself, played auction, five rubbers pivoting and one going out each time. The two ladies acquitted themselves much more creditably than the men. Mrs. Scott came out first, Mrs. Rollins second, myself third, Rollins fourth, and Scott fifth. The last rubber I was out, and Rollins and Scott, who lost it, went down heavily.

## October 21, Sunday

Still no norther, and we are entering the last third (week) of the month. I hope the weather don't crack before I get to Belize, sometime in the next fortnight. No sign of Charley this morning either. I cannot imagine what can be keeping him. He was to be here Sunday at the latest. The only thing I can believe is that the damage to the *Lilly Elena* was much greater than he thought at first, and that he had to take her to Coxen's Hole to haul her up.

It doesn't make so much difference now, one day more or less, as the Scotts have decided definitely not to go with me. Scott is afraid of the northers. Says he might get over there and have to wait for or five days to get back and he cannot afford to stay away that long. The Rollinses cannot go on account of their child, and so our little party over there is off. I am sorry, as I would like to have taken them with me.

My people deserted me today. The Scotts and the Rollinses went out to Bonita at the end of the line to have dinner with the Hegenbarths, the watchman out there. This left me alone at the house all day. The sandflies even inside the house, which is all screened, were the worst I had seen than at any time and justified the name the boys had given to Rincón: Sandfly Point. I tried

to read but couldn't. I tried to write and couldn't. I tried to lie down and couldn't. They were everywhere.

While I was reading, the house-boy came in and said that a good-sized sailboat was rounding the point. I felt sure it must be the *Lilly Elena* and waited a half hour for her to pass. When she failed to sail by, I took the glasses and went up beyond Rollins' house so as to get a good view of the whole outer bay and Castilla Point. There wasn't a sail in sight. Either the house-boy had suffered hallucinations—Mrs. Scott says he is very stupid—or the boat had put back behind the point again. In either case, it was not the *Lilly Elena*. I hardly look for her, now, before tomorrow morning.

At noon, I went over to the mess and nobody was around. Joe, the table-boy, said he thought no one would be but Duval, Stuart, Ahern, and Mac probably being over in Trujillo. As dinner wouldn't be ready for a half an hour, I went over to the Stowes'. They are the same. Duval came down and joined us for a few minutes. We went over to lunch at one and, as Joe had opined, had it all to ourselves. We planned to go in bathing about four.

I returned to the Scotts' to work on my diary but the sandflies had grown so voracious that it was impossible to write. A dozen would hover around my pencil point. Remembering that Duval said they were less numerous up at his place than anywhere else, I took my writing up there. He only has one room with a window on each of its four sides. At first it was alright here, but about four the breeze died out and the sandflies swarmed in droves. I have never seen them quite so bad.

He tried to talk with Ceiba about three, and took down a message I wanted put through to McCollough, but the induction coil he had mended wasn't working, or perhaps it was the "static"—it usually is, in any wireless humbug—at all events Taylor, the operator man at Ceiba, said he couldn't understand him. Duval said he would send the message over on his 11 o'clock schedule tomorrow morning.

We had intended going in bathing about 4:30, but a heavy rain came up about then from the east and we didn't go in. Duval thought it was the opening of the norther season as the wind swung around in that direction for a few minutes, but it again veered to the east where it remained, and it was obvious the squall was from that direction. I went back to the Scotts' between showers, just before six.

After supper, Ahern came over and he played some new gramophone records he had brought with him. The Rollinses came over also. They all stayed until about nine.

## **October 22, Monday**

Came over [to the U. F. Co. office] early, very early in fact, six o'clock, and wrote in this diary until eleven, pretty nearly catching up. I've kept a rough draft of what has happened, of course, day by day, and the details of the trip have been sufficiently varied and vivid to give me no trouble in filling in the skeleton of events; on the contrary, my chief trouble has been to keep each day's record down to a reasonable brevity. This diary has always been in danger of taking the bit in its mouth and running away with itself.

After lunch, I came back to the office and found Stuart was ready to make that map for me. We cogitated a few minutes over paper, scale, conventional matter, etc., etc. The important standardized matter, upon the proper decision of which rests the success or failure of any map,

and finally decided what we wanted. While I was finishing this diary to date, he was laying the map in pencil, and the coastline in ink.

Like everything else in this country, morals, men, and money, so even drafting materials deteriorate. Stuart complained that the paper was humid, drank the ink in fact, and the ink was too fluid. These with pen points that rust and erasers that desiccate make a draftsman's *trabajo* [work] here a work in purgatory.

At 4:15 I finished yesterday's record, and went up to the wireless station for a bath. Last night I had a preliminary itching and I was afraid the swamp water in the shower bath here was giving me a return of that fungid growth.<sup>147</sup> The salt water is good for it. I was lucky enough to find the last *Literary Digest* there, so hurried in and out to get at it. Then to a luxurious hour of reading what blackguards the Huns are, and how surely, though with many mistakes and delays, we are getting ready to do our bit.

About five-thirty, Duval sighted a boat which looked like the *Lilly Elena*. She was pitching about a good bit, but coming in straight. Just at dusk she was off the wireless point, and looked to us like my boat, yawl, rig, and no sails flying, but coming nevertheless. McCollough sent word that the *comandante* there said to tell the officials here that the furniture I brought belonged to the American consul and to admit it free of duty. As this information was strictly against rules, it cannot be used, and I don't know whether I will be able to take the things with me or not.

Mrs. Rollins has a touch of malaria and did not appear at supper tonight, nor did Rollins come over in the evening either. The Scotts and I talked until about ten and then turned in.

## October 23, Tuesday

I packed some before breakfast, and afterward as quickly as I could get hold of him over at the station across the bay, I talked with Charley. He reports John as delighted with Bonacca, and everybody delighted with him. He is well and having a fine time. Fancy we both enjoyed ourselves.

It seems we are still in a mess over the McCollough furniture. The first blunder was Dournoff's at Cape Gracias a Dios in consigning it to the boat, when he should have consigned it to McCollough in Ceiba. Since the boat was cleared at the same time for Trujillo, this furniture has to be entered there. Nor is this all. Even if we paid duty on it, we would still be in hot water since boats of under 20 tons—we are 18—are not supposed to "go foreign" or carry cargo from foreign ports. Having done this, we are subject to a fine of 500 sols. The whole thing is exasperating and is like to prove costly—certainly of time and probably of money as well—before we are through with it. This infernal furniture is a veritable albatross hung around our necks.<sup>148</sup> We cannot get rid of it by paying the required duty, because legally, we had no right to

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<sup>147</sup> Morley discovered that the rash he had suffered earlier was not prickly heat, as he had thought, but rather a fungal infection (see entry for October 4).

<sup>148</sup> In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a seven-part ballad-like Christian morality poem published by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798, a ship encounters a great albatross, a symbol of good luck to sailors, which brings a favorable wind. When the wind died, the Mariner killed the bird, after which circumstances grew grim. The sailors hung the carcass around the Mariner's

bring it in at all. Indeed, were it not for the fact that Charley's brother-in-law, Rosendo López, is the collector of customs, we would have been fined before this.

The present status of the case is that we are bombarding Tegucigalpa with telegrams asking permission to bring the furniture in without duty, and in the meantime running around in the *Lilly Elena* under solemn oath to return each trip to Trujillo. The McCollough furniture is no more to be got rid of than the object of the Ancient Mariner's ruthlessness. In short, we are indefinitely tied to Trujillo by the strings of our own friendly act, a nice reward for virtue.

Having brought my diary at last up to date yesterday, I started that criticism of Joe Spinden's book, number 3 of the American Museum's Handbook Series, this morning. Stuart was working on the map at the same time. He had reached place where he was ready to put in the settlements, and I read them to him from John's first map.

After lunch, Scott and I went to Trujillo in his motor [car]. On the way over we stopped a few minutes at that bridge near the water tank where the right-of-way cuts through a mound, and picked up some potsherds. Talked with Keefer before going out to the boat. He's been very kind about telegrams etc., and I owed him for the last one, so settled up.

Charley says that the McCollough's furniture matter is no forwarder. López will let us clear this afternoon for Oak Ridge, but only under Charley's promise that the *Lilly Elena* will return. Scott and I walked up to Melhado's. The other brother is back now, and I was introduced to him. It was not difficult to understand that he was the head of the firm. The talk turned on ruins and he told of a group down west of here, somewhere beyond Betulia<sup>149</sup> where their orange grove is. He also mentioned several others, one near his plantation of Presas.

I left Scott here, said adios to the Melhados, and walked over to López's place to get permission to photograph the old fort again. The photographs I took here last week were ruined in developing them before going down the coast. The emulsion literally ran from the film. The man selected to pilot me around—mark how just is the Wheel of Life—was none other than the insolent *sargente mayor*, who some 6 weeks ago refused even to look at the President's letter. I took some delight in dragging him in the sun all over the plaza, even down to the little *torreón* toward the sea. I took 10 exposures in all, saving the last two for the church.

I saw this time a pile of iron cannon balls some 4 inches in diameter. Scott says that during the last revolution, they had one of the old muzzle-loading cannons that fired these mounted on the hill behind the town, firing them at the enemy on the beach. They were so weak, however, that the balls only reached the town itself, not the beach at all, and Melhado had to ask the *jefe* to desist to keep him from destroying his store. The old fort still has its wonderful location, however, though interiorly it is now greatly debased, dirty soldiers and their soiled clothing lying about everywhere.

After taking all the exposures I had, I walked up the hill and dropped down the other side

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neck as punishment. The Mariner began to pray, the albatross fell into the sea, and he realized that all creatures are beautiful and loved by God; he had committed a sin by killing the bird. The ship sank but the Mariner survived with great guilt, only assuaged and forgiven by repeatedly telling his tale to strangers and teaching respect for nature.

<sup>149</sup> Betulia is a small town on the north coast of Honduras, between Ceiba to the west and Trujillo to the east.



into Crystales, the Carib settlement just west of Trujillo. All the houses here have high, pointed, thatched roofs and cluster close together, though not in any apparent order, facing in any which direction and scorning the regularity of the streets.

Everybody knew where the López Brothers store was, and I found my way thither without difficulty. One of the brothers was in Trujillo, but the other brought out their Victor records and I went through them. I can't say I thought too much of the selection, many of those whiny Spanish duets. There were a few unexpected things such as MacDowell's "To an Indian Lodge." I selected four discs: America, a whistling record with the Chocolate Soldier on one side, a marimba record, and a Tuskegee Institute double quartet piece including John's favorite "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Also bought some needles.<sup>150</sup>

By the time I had finished these labors, it was 4:15 and high time I was hurrying back to the boat if we were to be off by five. I avoided the hill and walked back by the beach, passing a number of Caribs returning from the day's work. Charley was not aboard when I got back to the *Lilly Elena*. I finally sent our new captain back uptown and, after some wait, they both showed up.

We were all ready to go. except for the ice. Charley had gone over about 4:00 and found the place closed. It seemed a great shame to go over to the Islands without taking them something, so Charley went back uptown to see if he could find the man. This time he was gone over an hour—it turned out later he had stopped with the Glynnns for dinner—and meanwhile I was seeing my hopes for supper at Rincón going a-glimmering.

Mrs. Humphreys and a Mr. and Mrs. Jassaway came out on the dock, and it turned out that Mr. J. was the "ice-man" for whom Charley was supposedly searching. He went off to open the ice house and Charley came back at the same moment. We bought 300 lbs at the modest figure of \$1.75 gold per hundred-weight.

While we were waiting for the ice to go aboard, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Glynn came down to the wharf. Although it was getting dusk, I thought she looked familiar, and presently it came out that we had seen each other nearly two months ago. She was the pretty little Hondureña who came across to Ceiba from Tela on the *Kate Esau* the same day we did. I say Hondureña, but *media* Hondureña would be more correct. Her mother is Mrs. García of Oak Ridge, who was one of the Coopers. Her father, however, was straight Hondureño. This young girl looks more Hondureña than Island, though you can see her Island blood, all right. Her brother, Carlos García, is the engineer of the *Atlántida*, on which I went over to the islands the first time, and another sister is Antonia, who went over to Bonacca on the *Lilly Elena* last week. She remembered me, and also some of the things I said. I thought she was a Hondureña and couldn't speak English.

The ice was aboard by this time, so, bidding goodbye to all these people, we cast off from the wharf and headed for Rincón. As it was seven o'clock, I saw dinner would be over before I could get over to Bonacca, so I had Campbell throw us something together on the way over. Charley, in spite of his dinner at the Glynnns, seemed to enjoy a fairly hearty appetite.

We reached Rincón at eight. We had some little difficulty in finding out which one of the

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<sup>150</sup> Interestingly, and not commonly known today, before the 1930s one had to change the needle of the record player after every single play. Needles were sold in packs of 100.

lights on the shore belonged to the wharf. As a matter of fact, we steered for Scott's house and when nearly in, had to turn east for a half mile to the dock. Charley and Campbell came down with me to help me bring my things back to the boat, but we lost Campbell in the shuffle and did not see him for an hour later. The mosquitoes and sandflies were out in force and we were all bitten up before we could reach Scott's porch.

The Scotts were looking for me, and Scott had some news that caused me to change my plans again. This afternoon, as he was leaving Melhado's, he met a young Scotsman by the name of Slater who knew about the ruins behind Betulia.<sup>151</sup> He had tried to find them and couldn't, but—and here is the important point—he was told there were several square monuments of stone with writings on them, also mounds and stone-paved streets. One man only knew just where the place was, a native living at Stevens River on the east bank. He keeps a little *estanco* [ranch] or place where the native grog is for sale. Slater himself had never questioned the man about the place, but he said everybody in the vicinity believed in its existence. To the best of his knowledge, it would be about a day's walk from Stevens River. The story had some promising points: the squared stones, i.e., stelae; the writing, i.e., the inscriptions; and finally, their occurrence in front of mounds.

Slater is going out to Las Presas with Mr. Melhado in the morning, and by going down to the Y [fork in the road] with Scott in the motor car we can intercept them and I can get his story at first hand. It would be so important to find a Maya site way off here to the east, 90 odd miles east of the [Río] Ulúa, that I decided to stay over until morning to see him.

Charley had been listening to all this conversation and Campbell came up before it was over. They both returned to the boat for the night, with the understanding that we would get off in the morning as soon as I could get back from seeing Slater. After they left, Scott and I talked until nearly ten about the possibility of there being a city<sup>152</sup> here, and if so, how the trip thither could be best made. He says he will go with me in about a week.

I shouldn't go in on any such slender evidence as the present, but if I could get in touch with the *estanciero* [rancher] at Stevens River, I might get more definite information from him, enough to warrant me taking the trip. I was so "het up" over the prospect of finding glyphs that I fished old Bulletin 57<sup>153</sup> out of my suitcase and fell to reading it. It was well on toward 11 when I finally turned in.

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<sup>151</sup> Probably the same ruins Melhado mentioned to him earlier (see October 23 entry).

<sup>152</sup> This is Morley's encounter with the well-known legend of the "White City" along the Mosquito (Mosquitia) Coast (or nearby) in northeastern Honduras (Begly and Cox 2007: 180):

The legend relates the existence of a large archaeological site, constructed of white stone, lost in the jungle, periodically seen by pilots or hunters, but never actually visited. Some stories suggest that the White City houses golden idols, stone sculptures and monuments, and would take an entire day to walk around. A letter sent in 1544 from a Spanish priest, Friar Pedraza, mentions a large, wealthy civilization that he observed in a vast valley from a hilltop east of Trujillo, on the north coast of Honduras.

All the locals claim to know about it and where it is, but haven't necessarily actually seen it and can't or won't take visitors to it. Two Indigenous groups have legends about the city.

<sup>153</sup> His *Introduction to the Study of the Maya Hieroglyphs*.

## CHAPTER 13

### EDITORS' INSERT: THE BAY ISLANDS OF HONDURAS

Morley visited the Bay Islands in early September for about a week (see Chapter 5), then again in late October, when he wrote about the islands and the people more extensively.

The *Islas de la Bahía* or Bay Islands of Honduras [Figure 13.1] are three aligned (SW–NE), exposed, coral reefs (also partially volcanic) in the Caribbean Sea, part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef system, 10–40 miles off the north shore of Honduras. Utila, low and swampy (mangrove) in the west, is the smallest and the closest to the mainland (18 miles opposite La Ceiba). Roatan (known as Ruatan in Morley's time) is the largest at 40 miles long (northeast to southwest) and 9 miles wide. Guanaja (Bonacca) in the east is the most distant of the three, and has hills rising as much as 1200 feet (Evans 1966: 1). The smaller Hog Islands or Cayos Cochinos lie closer to the mainland, between the coastal cities of La Ceiba and Trujillo. These consist of Cayo Grande and Cayo Menor, plus 13 tiny islets to their southeast. Some of the towns that Morley mentions along the south coast of Roatan are reminders of the area's history of piracy (Lord 1985: 52): Coxen's Hole (now Coxen; see Figure 5.1) in the southwest, possibly named for a pirate, John Coxen,<sup>154</sup> was a small community and shipyard (now a cruise ship terminal); French Harbor was a base for the French pirate Lafitte.

The Bay Islands' society that Morley encountered in 1917 had a strong class (even caste-like) stratification, based on race, heritage/origins, and socioeconomic characteristics. As Morley noted in his diary (October 24):

Each one of these island towns has its big, leading family. For instance, here at Oak Ridge no one would deny the social, industrial, and financial dominance of the Coopers. Nor at Bonacca of the Kirkconnells, nor at Ruatan of the Warrens. The Capulets of Utila are the Morgans, said by some to be descended from the old buccaneer of that name.

The islands were invaded and settled by various Dutch, English, and French adventurers (logwood cutters; pirates) in the seventeenth century (see Evans 1966: 13–16). Typically, in immigrant settlements, the "firstcomers" claim access to the primary productive resources—usually good agricultural land—and are able to accumulate wealth and prestige, and the same was true of the Bay Islands.

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<sup>154</sup> A 1775 map shows that the place was earlier named Calkett's Hole (Evans 1966: 15). Coxen may be a phonetic spelling of cockswain/coxswain, the helmsman of a ship's small boat.

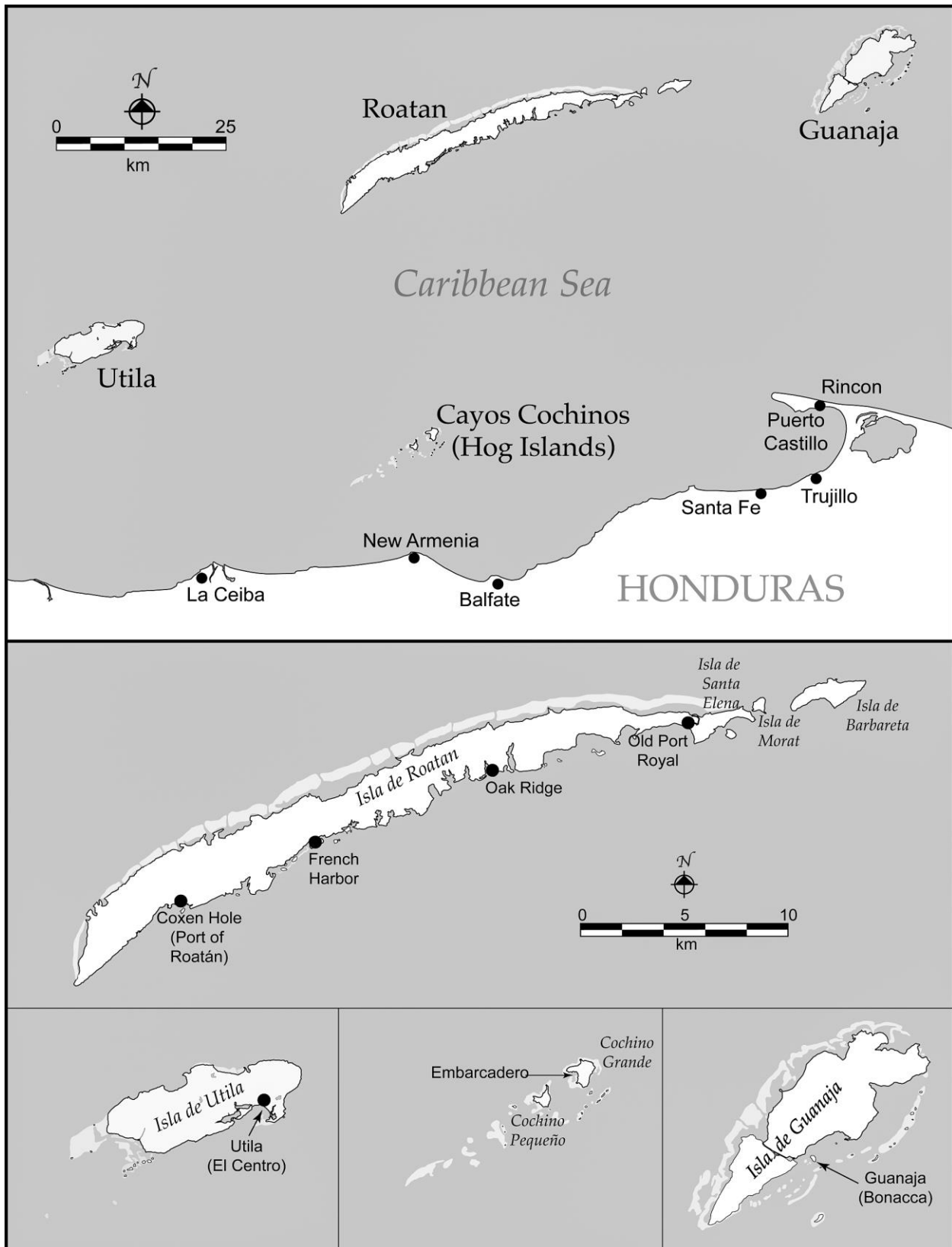


Figure 13.1. The Bay Islands, Honduras.

At least two of these prominent families, the Coopers and the Morgans, can trace their ancestry back to American and English founding fathers in the late eighteenth century: Ward William Anthony Morgan (Figure 13.2, left), a sea captain born in Virginia, and Samuel Cooper (Figure 13.2, right), who, with his family and two brothers (Thomas and John), left England for the “New World” in 1815. Samuel and family went to the Cayman Islands, then to Belize (British Honduras), and finally to Utila in 1836 (Evans 1966: 16; Lord 1985: 53). His descendants lived on Roatan, primarily in Oak Ridge. On Roatan, the immigrants settled primarily along the south coast with its good harbors, and continued to prosper during the “Fruit Boom,” resulting from the popularity of bananas in the United States around 1870 to 1900 (Lord 1985: 54), followed later by coconuts.



Figure 13.2. Ward Morgan (left) and Samuel Cooper (right), founders of two Bay Island familial dynasties.

The people Morley encountered on the islands in 1917 were a distinctive subset of Central American populations. The population is racially and ethnically heterogeneous, with whites (Euro-Americans), Blacks (“colored”), and Hispanic/Ladinos. Two anthropological studies give insights into the complexities of Bay Islands’ society: David K. Evans’ (1966) study of culture change at French Harbor, Roatan, and David G. Lord’s (1985) investigations at Utila, especially its endogamous vs. exogamous marriage practices. A critical aspect of that society throughout the twentieth century, as exposed by these researchers, is the contrast with mainland Honduras. The Islanders are primarily English-speakers and of Protestant religious affiliation, whereas the mainlanders are Spanish-speakers and Catholic. The Honduras government made numerous

attempts to bring the Islanders into the fold of mainland society, but all such efforts were met with ill feelings, mistrust, “fears, bitter resentment, and active resistance to the national government” (Evans 1966: v).<sup>155</sup>

“Whites,” descendants of the British or American founders, frequently intermarried among themselves (see Chapter 16). More broadly, to be “white” was to be “propertied, literate, professional” and part of “a homogeneous, proprietary class” (Lord 1985: 53, 59). The rest of the region, and the rocky north coast of Roatan, was (and is) mostly Black, locally called “colored”: some were descendants of Africans brought by Spanish colonizers, others Black Caribs or Garifunas,<sup>156</sup> and still others coming from the eastern Caribbean (Jamaica, Cayman Islands). Some were put there in the late eighteenth century as a penal colony by the British (Lord 1985: 52). The Spanish/Ladino segment of the Islanders, with origins on the mainland, constitute a third, outcast-like ethnic stratum. Islanders sometimes refer to them derogatorily as “Spaniards,” while people on the mainland may retaliate by referring to Islanders as “Pirates” (Lord 1985: 54).

Racial mistrust and fears were definitely there in the 1960s. In a conversation with a group of men from French Harbour, Evans (1966: 37) reported the consensus that “the Good Lord made blacks to work for whites, and that He made the Spaniard (1) probably by mistake, and (2) to rule themselves and perhaps the Indians.” By the 1980s, there may have been less antagonism. Lord’s study of marriage records, with ethnicity coded by surname, found that the groups are not strictly endogamous, but sometimes married outside their class (see also Evans 1966: 70–74). Women, especially white women, were “a vehicle for upward social movement” and “the most frequent cross-ethnic marriage type is Spanish males with white females” (Lord 1985: 59). White males, at the top of the social pyramid, tended to be more endogamous, but occasionally married Ladino (higher than “Spanish”) females. Whites and Ladino males did not marry “colored” females, and colored males did not marry white or Ladino females. The endogamy and inbreeding might be partially explained by island circumscription: Evans (1966: 66) cites an earlier ethnographer in noting that “cousin-marriage, because of extensive intermarriage in the past, is often necessary today since every white islander has a multitude of cousins, and thus there are few non-relatives available from which to choose.”

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<sup>155</sup> The antipathy between island and mainland Honduras goes back even farther, to complaints by English military men at Roatan about Spanish and Honduran harassment of English settlements there and elsewhere in the Caribbean (Evans 1966: 15–23). England ceded the Bay Islands to Honduras in 1860, but even through the early twentieth century many Islanders refused to acknowledge Honduran citizenship.

<sup>156</sup> Caribbean peoples of mixed—indigenous and Black or Afro-Caribbean—descent, and speak Garifuna, an indigenous Arawakan language.

## CHAPTER 14

### TO OAK RIDGE, ROATAN

#### October 24, Wednesday

Arose before six and finished packing. When I came out of my room, the faithful Campbell was already waiting to take my suitcase down to the *Lilly Elena*. Sat down to my last breakfast with the Scotts. The unpleasantness of our itinerancy came to mind forcibly when I had to take leave of these pleasant people. S., dry, whimsical, and capable, the best type of American we have bred, and Mrs. S., with all the proverbial charm and grace of the Southern woman. I had passed a swift and altogether delightful week under their hospitable roof, and it was hard now to say goodbye, but S. had to go down to the machine shop before we went out the line, so I took my leave from everybody.

We stopped for a few moments at the machine shop while Scott telephoned over to Trujillo to find out whether the Melhado car had left, and found that it had just set out. As our distance to the Y was shorter, we were in no hurry. As it was, we reached there before Melhado did. Scott and I walked down the track a few hundred yards picking up railroad spikes. These work loose from the ties, and are quickly lost in the sand ballast. Scott estimates quite a leakage right here.

We heard Melhado's car and started back to the Y. They came in six aboard: Alfred Melhado and Slater on the back seat. Scott introduced me to Slater, who is a young Scotchman, obviously as honest as he is reliable. I felt the story of the ruins would suffer nothing coming through his hands. Unfortunately, he had never seen the place nor talked with the only man that had. He said, however, that everyone believed in the existence of this ruin, and he spoke about the stones with writing on their backs, of the mounds, and paved ways. The one man who knows is an *estanciero* at Stevens River, and he thought I would do much better to see him. I daresay I will have to. There was nothing more to be gained here. Melhado was in a hurry to get by, and there was no reason why I should delay. We said goodbye, their car going out the main line and ours returning to Rincón.

The *Lilly Elena* was ready, so, taking leave of Scott and Stuart who was also down at the dock, I went aboard and we pulled out. As we passed the commissary, Rollins came out and I waved a large Turkish towel. Charley ran up the colors, and we left in proper patriotic atmosphere. Mrs. Scott also waved from her house, and Duval from the wireless station at the point. So near as I can make out from the casual time kept by my Ingersoll, it was 9:45 when we finally cleared Point Castilla and stood out to sea. Ruatan was not visible but the outline of Guanaja came out faintly through a blue haze.

The wind was dead a head [wind], and a choppy sea further retarded us. It turned out later that there was also a strong current to the eastward. Indeed, this carried us 5 miles out of our

course in the 30 miles between Point Castilla and Oak Ridge, and nearly brought us to the southern end of Helene [east end of Roatan]. Had we set our course for French Harbor in the beginning, instead of for Oak Ridge, we would have brought up nearer the latter. The afternoon was well along before we drew in close to the island [Roatan], and before we finally landed it was nearly five: seven hours on the way. Charley said this wasn't bad time considering the current, sea, and wind were all three against us.

There were three schooners in the harbor and I felt sure John was already in, but on landing I learned he had not yet got in. I was considerably surprised as Charley thought he was coming down on the mail [ship] Sunday or Monday. I met Mr. Bob [Cooper] and Mr. Lem [Lemuel Cooper]; the former took me over to his house where I am to occupy the same room as before, and told me to make myself comfortable. He said the preparations for the dance were in progress, and people coming from both Ruatan and French Harbor. Charley came in presently and said the hall was ready. Mr. Lem let the boys have the new store, a fine, big, single room, 30 by 36 [feet], with only one pillar in the center, an ideal place for dancing. The walls were painted white and there were many windows and two large doors: an airy, light construction.

The girls had made cakes against the occasion, and Charley engineered the ice cream. The 300 lbs [of ice] we had bought night before last had shrunk about 50 percent, but there was still quite enough for the purpose. But I get ahead of my story.

As Mrs. Cooper had been ill since my last visit, they arranged for us to eat over at Mrs. García's, the mother of the pretty little Rosa Glynn of Trujillo. Charley and I had supper about 4:30. By this time, several "out of town" guests were arriving. Earl Cooper, Earl McNab,<sup>157</sup> a Mrs. Watson—the wife of the English physician at Ruatan—and Mr. Spurgeon came in on a motorboat from Ruatan, and others came up from French Harbor. I still looked for John.

I met some of the Morgans from Utila. Each one of these island towns has its big, leading family. For instance, here at Oak Ridge no one would deny the social, industrial, and financial dominance of the Coopers. Nor at Bonacca of the Kirkconnells, nor at Ruatan of the Warrens. The Capulets of Utila are the Morgans,<sup>158</sup> said by some to be descended from the old buccaneer of that name. In particular, one very gracious lady, Miss Ruth Morgan, attracted me. Judge her to be somewhere between 40 and 50. A jolly, rather good-looking Island woman, whom everyone called Aunt Tutie and adored. She was obviously in great demand everywhere, and her spinsterhood was no reproach, having certainly resulted from choice and not necessity.

The two Earls and I were shaving in the same room, and they were already dressing for the function. I had to shave, and let them finish first. Indeed, before I was ready, I heard the fiddle scraping and the drums tom-tomming. Wallace Bowman, the old Negro from Helene whose name has already appeared in these pages [see September 3 entry], was the fiddler, and first and last, I think he enjoyed the occasion more than anybody else. He entered whole-heartedly

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<sup>157</sup> The McNabs were a prominent white (Scottish) family in French Harbour (Evans 1966: 66).

<sup>158</sup> An analogy to the Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet*, the two protagonists being from feuding noble families who fall in love: the Capulets (Juliet) and Montagues (Romeo). In one characterization, the Capulets are described as controlling, as "showcasing their wealth and power . . . materialistic . . . [and] treating [Juliet] as part of their property" (<https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/blog/montagues-and-capulets/>). See entries for September 2 and 3.



into his playing and what he lacked in technique was more than made up in spirit. His body swayed back and forth, his head wagged, and his foot tapped. His whole body and spirit moved to the twang of his bow, and after each dance he removed the dripping beads of perspiration from his big, black face with a gaudy handkerchief.

I daresay we had fifty people. Many of the girls are quite pretty, and several beautiful dancers. In their light dresses and white shoes, they make an attractive complement to the boys in light suits and coats. The island society is not formal, the fun was spontaneous, and everybody enjoyed themselves. There were of necessity many wall-flowers, because the girls outnumbered the men two to one, but nobody minded that.

At eleven, the ice cream came in and some delicious cakes. The man drawing the girl who made the chocolate cake will get a good housewife or I am mistaken. I ate four—let me hasten to add, not large—pieces.

I danced with most of the Cooper girls, one of whom, a pretty girl of 18, Mary by name, is the best dancer at Oak Ridge. Also danced with a Miss Maisie Morgan of Utila and Mrs. Watson of Ruatan. She was a trained nurse before her marriage three years ago, and had done her bit nursing the wounded in London. They had been at Ruatan for two years but were returning [to England] soon, he to enlist and she to Jamaica with her little daughter. She was young, I should guess about 28 or 30, and pretty, but unbecomingly and tastelessly dressed like so many English women. In this respect, several of the Cooper girls far outshone her.

The dances were the waltz, polka, and danza. I did not try any. The waltz looked like our old-fashioned waltz, which I believe it was. The danza seemed simple but I did not try it. Once in awhile they would play one-steps on the phonograph, and then I danced. Most of the girls dance both the one-step and the foxtrot, but few of the men do, so the native dances predominated. The hall was most brilliantly lighted with two large gasoline lamps, and the floor had been waxed. The elders sat around in chairs outside, looking on through the doors and windows. The genus “small boy” was ubiquitous without being in the way, and marvelously well-behaved. The moonlight outside was bright, and the swaying coconut palms, the scent of the wild lily, and the plashing of the waves outside made a charming ensemble, and will leave a pleasant memory.

I left the hall between one and one-thirty, but the dance continued until after three, when some of them adjourned to Spurgeon Cooper’s and had another installment of ice cream and cake. The last thing I remember before falling asleep was the twang, twang, twanging of old Wallace Bowman’s fiddle, the syncopated thrumping of two snare drums, and the rhythmic scraping of many feet on a gritty floor in time to the music.

### **October 25, Thursday**

Felt very much as though I had been dragged through a keyhole this morning when I got up. Burned out, as they say down here.

I went over to García’s for breakfast, but Charley had not yet showed up. Afterward, I walked down to the wharf and talked to a group of men around the *Alice E. Jones*, the Alitric brothers’ vessel, which goes on the ways<sup>159</sup> this morning for repairs when the *Harriman* comes

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<sup>159</sup> “Ways” refers to a standing structure of concrete and wood in a shipyard, where ships are

off. A number of men were gathered here waiting for the 6:30 bell to ring, indicating the beginning of the day's work. Among others was Mr. Louis Abbott, whose wife is a sister of the Cooper brothers. He is the manager of the shipyard, and takes actual charge and supervision of all construction.

The talk turned to coconuts, the heaviest local interest and practically the only export from the islands, and they talked of its diseases. Mr. Louis Abbott thought there were possibly two: a small weevil which bored in around the base, leaving a reddish rust behind them, and another which attacked the tops, turning the leaves yellow and eventually killing the trees.<sup>160</sup> These diseases or this disease, if the two are not indeed symptoms one and the same disorder, are—everybody agreed—on the increase, having cut into the exports heavily in the last five years alone. Mr. Abbott said the only way they kept abreast of it was by planting three trees for every one that died.

While we were waiting for the bell, the *Harriman* was stripped off the ways and slid down gently into the water. The bell rang and we all went across to the shipyard on the other side. I went with Mr. Louis, as he said he could show me some diseased coconuts near the yard, and also because I wanted to be on the other side to photograph the *Alice E. Jones* going on the ways. The disease carries off the coconuts swiftly—in a few weeks, Mr. Abbott says. We saw a number of blasted stumps in a swath through the bush. It runs in streaks through the walks, it seems. Returning to the yard, I found that the *Alice E. Jones* would not be pulled out on the ways for some time, so came back across to the point.

Charley said they were dancing again in the store where the *baile* was held last night, so I went over. Mrs. Forky, Mrs. Watson, and some of the girls were there. Earl Cooper was also there; Earl McNab, the other man who had occupied my room last night, having returned at the close of the dance to Coxen's Hole. We danced, played the Victrola, chewed gum, and chatted until lunch time. Mrs. García had a good lunch for us, and we did justice to it, the dance having sharpened the edge of my appetite, and Charley's always being keen.

After lunch I went over to the yard again and presently a boatload of ladies came over: Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Forky, Mrs. Baker, Miss Ruth Morgan, Maisie Morgan, and Mr. Forky. Miss Ruth, who seems to be the life of every party, hunted out a hog plum tree,<sup>161</sup> and came back with her hands full of this fruit. It is about the same size and shape as our common purple plums, but bright yellow or orange in color. The ones we ate were very sour but good. Maisie Morgan said they have very sweet trees on Utila. After eating our fill of plums and inspecting the band saw, the shop, and ways, we returned to the point via Mr. Alitrico's little motorboat.

By this time, I was very sleepy and, bidding the ladies adieu, I retired to my room for a snooze. Earl Cooper was already engaged in the same agreeable pastime. I was just dozing off when his father called to him that the ladies were ready to return to Coxen's Hole, so we both

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built and repaired. A ramp allows ships to be launched into and pulled from the water.

<sup>160</sup> Wikipedia lists a large number of diseases that affect coconuts: viral, fungal, bacterial, etc., many of which cause the fronds to yellow. A nematode, *Bursaphelenchus cocophilus*, causes "red ring" disease; insect pests include genera *Tagosodes* or *Sogatella*.

<sup>161</sup> The hog plum is *Spondias mombin*, a member of the same family as the cashew (Anacardiaceae), and is native to the tropical Americas and West Indies.

got up. They were going down on the *Trento* and everybody was down waving them off: Earl Cooper, Mrs. Watson, and a Mrs. Henderson.

It was suppertime next, and afterward I could not take my bath for the regulation hour [i.e., waiting an hour after eating]. While I was lying around the room waiting for my digestive processes to subside, Ennis MacTaggart came in and asked me if I were going to meeting. Mr. Bob presently came in and asked the same question. But I had to decline, Miss Ruth Morgan having asked me over to play 500. As it turned out, I could have taken in both meeting and her party, for everybody else went to the former before showing up at the latter. When everybody had at last gotten off to church, I found my way to the shower bath, and then got dressed.

I was the first guest to arrive. Miss Ruth and I taught Ward Greenwood a little of 500 and we played a few hands until the meeting contingent showed up. It was quite obvious that 500 would fall very flat, as nobody played it but Miss Ruth and myself. So, I suggested Everlasting, which has the double merit of being easy to learn and impossible to make an error in. There were 11 of us playing: all relations but me. Maisie, Miss Ruth, Gessner and Lemuel Cooper, Mary, Olive, Doris and Marie Cooper, Ennis MacTaggart, and Ward Greenwood. Maisie and Olive had made some delicious fudge, and the evening passed pleasantly. As tired as we all were, most of us contrived to keep awake until 11, although during the last hour Ward and Ennis were somnolent.

And still no John. The norther which blew this a.m. probably deterred them from starting early, but as this lifted long before noon, I cannot understand why they didn't come down after lunch. I surely look for him tomorrow. I lost no time in going to bed after the party broke up, and soon fell asleep.

## CHAPTER 15

### GUAVAS AND ANOTHER DANCE

**October 26, Friday**

Charley left for Coxen's Hole in the *Lilly Elena* early this morning to overhaul her down there. She's in a bad condition and will require some repair work. Campbell went along, too. Thought he would be more in the way here than aboard.

After breakfast I saw Miss Ruth, who asked me if I didn't want to go after guavas with them. I said the pleasure would be all mine, and to call me when she was ready. We got off about 8:30, five of us: Miss Ruth, Maisie, Mrs. Baker (who was also a Morgan); Miss Foster, the adopted daughter of the school teacher; a Mr. Hewett from Jamaica; and myself. The only person who knew less about boats than I did was the last. We went in Miss García's skiff, a clumsy, water-logged, unwieldy craft, with about as much responsiveness to oars as a banana lighter.

I was—truth compels me to confess—greener than grass at the oars, but nevertheless determined to see it through. Miss Ruth and Mrs. Baker sat in the stern and guaranteed to keep her in the course. Miss Foster stowed herself with Maisie fore, and I took both [oars] at center. I never saw such oars as those. When they were not interfering amidships to the imminent risk of my thumbs, and barking up my fingers, they were slipping out of the oarlocks and breaking up my stroke. My feather had no class, and frequently the oars would slide through the oarlocks up to their hilts in the sea. It speedily became evident that whatever small talents I may possess, no part of them lay in this particular direction. And soon Maisie Morgan suggested she take one oar. I fancy she worked on the theory that even if I couldn't manage two, I might possibly be able to hold my own with one.

She sat down beside me, and we each bent to the task. Although she made valiant and repeated efforts to synchronize her stroke with mine, it was to no avail. When I was not plowing the water three feet deep, I was feathering it so lightly as to send a needle spray fore. By dint of much struggling, we covered most of the distance and then, having exhausted Maisie with my bizarre technique, I persuaded her to surrender me her oar and try it again by myself. After having rowed as far as the west end of Utila, the girls sighted our landing, and I swung the boat in. It was time enough now, as I had already lost all the hide on my right hand. Made a clean cut of it right down to the flesh.

Landing, Mrs. Baker developed an inordinate fear of bulls, that she feared nothing more, etc., etc. There were none about, however, and we proceeded into the bush. It was a lovely morning. The sun came through the trees in little patches of light. It was cool, and soon we smelled the spicy, sweet fragrance of the guava fruit. There was a grove of it, and for every one we picked up, ten lay rotting on the ground. Soon we had those on the ground picked up, and

then went into the trees. This arboreal excursion quite finished off my hand. I lost what little skin was hanging and had three great, raw welts. The climbing was the most enjoyable part of the day, however. Guava trees never break, but the branches bend double. I climbed to the top of several trees and then out on the higher limbs, which I could force down to where the girls could pick the fruit. By keeping at it, we filled seven buckets and baskets full, all of good size.

It was now 11:30 and everyone was faint from hunger and thirst. On the way back to the boat, we saw some peaceful, innocent cows. Mrs. Baker at once took alarm. Grasping her buckets of guavas firmly, she hurried toward the landing, determined to reach it before the cows. If ever a face registered fear and determination, hers did: fear of the cows, and determination to hold on to her guavas and reach the landing before them. Her anxiety, however, was groundless, the cows were as frightened of her as she was of them, and they no sooner caught sight of us than they fled into the bush, even scrambling up a steep hillside in their haste to get away from us.

When our seven buckets and baskets were massed in the bow of the boat, they made quite a showing. Indeed, I estimated we had gathered more than a hundred pounds. Coming home, Miss Ruth and Mrs. Baker spelled Maisie Morgan and me at the oars. Maisie sat in the bow and looked ornamental, while Miss Foster and I sat in the stern and essayed to steer. Maisie and I had had all sorts and kinds of helpful hints from Miss Ruth and Mrs. Baker going out, but like many a doctor, they seemed unable to profit by their own advice. First, they blamed the oarlocks, then the oars, then the shallow depth of the skiff, and indeed, they were knocking each other's knees all the time—and finally they damned the whole skiff, for a worthless, water-logged, clumsy, old barge, which sentiments were warmly echoed in every breast aboard. First Miss Ruth, and then Mrs. Baker, nearly went overboard with their exertions at the oar. But I had my hands full keeping her in her course. Miss Foster proved a weak reed in this capacity, sticking her paddle in and never moving it, so that it remained in effect a lashed helm.

The ladies, by this time, were burned up with thirst. I was somewhat dry myself, but nothing compared to what I have suffered in the interior; so, we put into Albert River's place for a little H<sub>2</sub>O. There were said to be two deaf-mute daughters here, but these kept in the background and all the females I met had and used tongues. A wall-eyed dog of lowering aspect snapped and snarled at my puttees when I came in, but offered no further obstructive tactics.

The last stretch seemed the longest. It was now 12:30 and the rays of the sun came down direct. I relieved Miss Ruth at one oar, and Maisie Mrs. Baker at the other. Mrs. Baker observed she was not a strong woman and would never venture out in such an old scow as the García skiff again. The steering qualities of these two lades had also suffered deterioration, at least Mrs. García, who saw us coming in, wondered why we were tacking in a rowboat!

We carried our trophies of war over to Mr. Lem Cooper's where Miss Ruth is staying, and then I went to lunch. Afterward, I took a much-needed siesta, to replace various destroyed tissues. About three, I got up, dressed, and went over to Mr. Lem's. Maisie, Miss Ruth, and Mrs. Baker were knee-deep in guavas. Already, a number were pared and the work was going forward rapidly. After paring, the outsides are made into a preserve, like peaches. The seeds and pulp are stewed and the clear juice drawn off. This gives the jelly. The remainder, a thickish paste, gives the jam. All three are delicious, far sweeter and more highly flavored than the

corresponding peach preserve. If it were better known at home and less expensive, I think it would become a great favorite. The flavor is distinctive, like nothing else. It is spicy, agreeable, and healthful. Just now, the trees are in fruit and all the island housewives busy putting up preserves, jams, and jellies of it.

While we were sitting here laughing over the morning's experiences, the *Mozo* came in Coxen's Hole with Mrs. Willie Warren aboard. She was another sister of Miss Ruth and Mrs. Lemuel Cooper. She reminded me both in appearance and conversation of Mrs. Wilson of Santa Fe. She was soon pressed into service at peeling guavas, and the work went forward. About five, a motorboat was sighted coming from Bonacca, and I felt sure John must be aboard her. She proved to be the *Ora E.M.*, and John was aboard. He looks fatter—if that is possible—than 10 days ago, and he is burned much darker.

He was full of Bonacca, the hospitality of the Islanders, the fishing, the mountain climbing, the fiestas, and local gossip. Poor Dournoft lost his brother during the trip and was very depressed throughout John's visit. He stopped with Mr. Sandy Kirkconnell, the American consul. His experiences here were altogether delightful and he could not sing Bonacca's praises long or loud enough. I took him over to Mrs. García's, where I quickly discovered his appetite had not been impaired by his sojourn there.

Oliver Kirkconnell, the oldest son, brought him down. The attraction here for him being Spurgeon Cooper's oldest daughter, Olive, to whom he is engaged. Oliver was sore when he found we had had the dance without him, so another impromptu affair was arranged. Mr. Lem said the new store might be used again. They carried over the Victrola and hung up several lanterns. There were only a few out on such short notice, about twenty, but we all had a good time.

As the only music was the Victrola, the dancing was more American than Island, one-steps and foxtrots instead of danzas and polkas. I danced again with all the Coopers, but gradually singled down to Mary and Doris as the ones whom I got along best with. Indeed, at the end of the dance, only John and myself were left with these two young ladies, aged 18 and 16, respectively. John here showed his age, playing the one-steps like funeral dirges, 40 revolutions per minute. Whenever Doris and I started the machine, we slipped the speed indicator up to 80. John wilted under the strain. He got his revenge later, for afterward, when we finally got into bed and I was desperately sleepy, he insisted on recounting all of his Bonacca adventures at full length, and more, [and] on my keeping awake to listen to them.

Six months ago, this morning I left the U.S.A. It seems many years. I've met so many new people, and been so many new places. I wish I could record here that this diary had been faithfully kept throughout this half year, but alas, there are several lacunae. I have nothing from the day I left, April 26, to May 15th, the day I left Guatemala for the trip to Copan, about three weeks. Nothing from May 30th, the day we left Puerto Cortés to June 13th, when we left Guatemala City for San Salvador. These two weeks included our trip to Belize to see Gann, and his return with us to Quirigua to see the ruins, and his departure for Belize again on June 7th, my birthday, and also the night of the San Salvador earthquake, and lastly our return to Guatemala City the second time.

The next lacuna, and the last, was from June 16th to August 18, covering the period from our arrival in San Salvador the first time to our departure from Tegucigalpa, a fairly eventful

two months. We returned to Guatemala City via La Libertad, Salvador, on the 28th of June, were there until July 14th, came back to Salvador via Acajutla, thence to San Salvador, thence by automobile and train to La Unión on the Bay of Fonseca, and thence by motor boat to Amapala, Honduras [also on the Bay]. Here, the next day, we bid goodbye to Joe Spinden, and crossed to San Lorenzo on the mainland by motorboat, and thence by auto, a good Marmon it was too—over a beautiful road through to Tegucigalpa, whither we arrived on July 25.

We stopped here with Jack Belt, our secretary, and there was a flood of things to have recorded here, but again the diary fell behind. It was a pit too, as Tegucigalpa is interesting. The Minister, Mr. Ewing, is a decent old chap now almost at death's door, really too ill to fill his post efficiently. On August 18th we left Tegucigalpa for the north coast, and since then I have kept this record faithfully. I trust I will not fall by the wayside again.

### October 27, Saturday

John was completely done up, in fact I had great difficulty in getting him up for breakfast. We were late, just got in before eight, in fact. Afterward, we walked over to Mr. Lem's, where all the ladies were busily engaged in paring guavas or cooking them. It seems we brought home a good many yesterday. John grew sleepy toward the middle of the morning and excused himself to go off to sleep. I stayed on and assisted conversationally, at least in the guava jelly-making. The morning passed very quickly, and before I realized it, it was time to call John and go to lunch.

After lunch, we returned to our room, where I wrote for an hour in my diary while John read the *Saturday Evening Post*. He has an unerring instinct for nosing these out, and although I'd lived with a dozen odd copies behind my bed for four days, I never found them. Eventually, these proved too great a temptation even for me and, lying down, I surrounded myself with this typical American magazine. Twice I found the ends of my stories missing, the pages ruthlessly torn out, a literary tragedy. Read until supper time.

During the afternoon, Mr. Timothy Morgan of Utila came down from Barbarat [Barbareta Island] in the *Azelda*. He is Mrs. Baker's father, and also the father of Miss Elsie Morgan, the single survivor of that ill-fated murder ship, the *Olympia*.<sup>162</sup> Another sister, Indiana, Mrs. Walter Rose and her baby and husband, also perished in that holocaust. He is buying coconuts, and goes on tomorrow or the next day to Coxen's Hole and Utila.

In the evening we played cards and carroms<sup>163</sup> at Mr. Lemuel's again, one table of each. Olive Cooper and I played against John and Miss Ruth at 500. The younger ones, two McNab boys and Ennis MacTaggart, Doris and Mary Cooper, played carrom. Maisie Morgan joined later. We played five games of 500, Olive and I taking three, and the evening closed about eleven.

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<sup>162</sup> Note that in Morley's journal entry for September 25, where he relates the story as told by Charley, the survivor is named Miss Bessie Beaseley.

<sup>163</sup> Carrom is a board game that originated in India but became widely popular elsewhere after World War I. It has pockets in the corners, played with round pieces of various functions called strikers, carrom men (black or white), and a red disk called the queen. The goal is to move the disks into the pockets.

Charley did not get in from Coxen's Hole this afternoon, but I surely expect him tomorrow morning.

### October 28, Sunday

Wrote in my diary until it was time to shave and dress for church. John decided he was too tired to go, so lay down and went to sleep. Mr. Bob stopped by my door at 10:30 and asked me if I was ready. As we stepped outdoors, Mr. Spurgeon came along and said, "Your ship is coming," and sure enough, there was the *Lilly Elena* coming toward us. We walked on down to meeting. People in their Sunday clothes were coming from all directions, and we stopped in front of the church door to talk with the school teacher, Mr. Hewett, who was going to preach that morning. I had heard him just eight weeks ago tonight, when I passed through here on my way to Bonacca looking for a boat.

The bell was tolling and everybody passing in. I sat with Mr. Bob. His wife did not come, owing to a return of the fever. The choir was composed of the same attractive girls as when I was here before, with two exceptions: Maude Cooper, Mr. Bob's daughter, and Doris Cooper. The former was in Tela; the latter also had the fever, which certainly seemed an adequate excuse. Again, however little or much one agreed with Mr. Hewett's beliefs, one could not help but feel his sincerity and honesty of conviction. He certainly believed in the old orthodox tenets, heaven and hell, sin, a very personal God, redemption, and salvation. Every verse of every hymn was duly sung, no omitted stanzas being tolerated here, and the Psalm read alternately by the minister and congregation. All read slowly and deliberately, not at all like the hurried mumbled responses of our own church, which is more fashionable if less sincere. After "the discourse," a closing hymn and prayer, we all filed out into the sunlight, and walked leisurely back through the coconut trees to the point.

Charley met me in front of Mr. Bob's house and told me about his trip to Coxen's Hole. It was high time, he said, the *Lilly Elena* was being dry-docked. When he hauled her out, he found her false keel hanging by two bolts only at its front end. Another bar, indeed even another trip, and it would have dropped off. Aside from this major distemper, however, she was all right. Her hull was sound, no seams had sprung a leak, no loosening of timbers, no barnacles, though plenty of paint was scraped off here and there. The bottom of the false keel was scraped as with sand paper. He knocked it off altogether before putting her back in the water again.

After lunch we had a little outing planned in the *Lilly Elena* down to Carib Point, where the Forkys live and where Mrs. Forky wanted me to take her two little boys' pictures. Miss Ruth, Maisie, Olive, Lemuel, Gessner, John, Charley, and I went in the *Lilly Elena*. The ride was not long, hardly half an hour, and the sea was like glass. When we anchored off the point, Mr. McNab, Bob Forky's step-father, put out for us in a large dory into which we all crowded.

The Forky house is prettily located on a hill overlooking the sea. It has two stories with a commodious front porch on each. We were shown into the parlor, but later strolled all over the place. Mr. McNab, Charley, and I discussed the war, while others walked around the yard or played the Victrola. There was a rather pretty young girl from French Harbor, Starry Jones, who was engaged to a man up at Oak Ridge. This young woman was obliged to stand a lot of good-natured chaff about the imminent nuptials. By and by, the two little Forky boys, Charles and Earle, were dressed and led out for photographing. First and last, I took a half dozen odd family



groups. The sun was not too favorable, but I hope they come out all right. After this, Mrs. Forky served lemonade and cake, a delicious chocolate layer cake. John saw an old lithograph on the wall of City Hall, New York, and I spied its mate above my head, Washington's Tomb at Mt. Vernon, with the spirit of Washington in the foliage. This last artistic touch was not apparent at the first glance, but was pointed out in a line of small print at the bottom.

We started back a little after four. The Forkys came down their hill as far as the dock, and Mr. McNab put us aboard again. The run home was made without further incident, and we got back to Oak Ridge just before supper.

After supper, John and I sat for a long time in front of the Coopers' house on an overturned dory and talked with Miss Ruth about the murders on board the *Olympia*. It is terribly real to these Morgans, since one of the Morgan girls went down on her. She was an Indiana Morgan and was married to Walter Rose of Coxen's Hole. Mr. Timothy Morgan, who came in yesterday from Barbarat on the *Azelda*, was her father, Miss Ruth was her aunt, and Mrs. Harold Baker, of whom I have also written, was her sister.

She gave me many little incidents that Charley necessarily never even heard of, the coming of the first news of the tragedy, the discovery of the little Rose baby early on the morning after the tragedy, when indeed the little body had only been in the water 5 or 6 hours. How Bob MacField [the murderer] saw the man who found the body and did not kill him because it did not seem essential to his escape, so he hid in the bush until the man passed. How Miss Elsie came out of the bush, and frightened two boys, who believed she was her ghost. How the news of her rescue came to Utila. Of the end of Bob MacField. Many, many little incidents I cannot give here, but which I want to take down correctly. It was all terribly real to poor Miss Ruth, and as she told several parts, her voice broke. Surely in all the annals of crime, one would find few cases of greater depravity than this calculated and ruthless plan of murdering twelve people in cold blood.

Bob MacField's best friend was one of the *Olympia's* crew, and Bob tried to persuade him not to go that night, though unsuccessfully. This did not deter him from murdering him, however, when the time came. The fate of two of the ill-fated twelve remains a mystery. One jumped overboard and was never heard of again. It would seem that only two possible fates could have overtaken him: drowning or being eaten by a shark. The other whose fate to this day remains unknown was the cook. Miss Elsie thought he must have been locked in the galley and went down when the ship was scuttled.

Miss Ruth told us these things and many more as we sat on the dory under the coconut palms and looked at the blue, blue sea and the flaming western sky. The late afternoon shadows fell long through the trees, and the air glowed with a golden brilliance.

I persuaded John to go to meeting, and so at 6:30 he and Miss Ruth and I set out for the church. Through the moonlight, people were strolling toward the same objective, young men, young women, and the old folks. A greater number get out for the evening service because there is no dinner to prepare afterward. We sat with Mr. Lem Cooper, his wife, and her two sisters, Mrs. Willie Warren of Coxen's Hole and Miss Ruth. Charley came in just before service began and sat next to Mr. Bob in my old place.

This time, instead of Mr. Hewett, Mr. Louis Abbott, the manager of the shipyard, preached. Again, the service—or whatever they would call the exercises, probably not that—was

characterized by seriousness and earnestness. Again, one felt that the teacher was putting it over to his pupils. Mr. Abbott stated he believed in a very concrete heaven and hell, and I gathered most of his auditors shared this same belief. It doubtless suffices admirably for the spiritual requirements of this simple, unsophisticated, little God-fearing community.

By the time church was over, the moon had risen high in the heavens, and had become a magnificent ship of silver soaring so serenely above us. The point was flooded with light and the sea sparkled like burnished metal through the coconut trees. We all adjourned to Spurgeon Cooper's porch for a little while after church, but as John leaves before daylight for Ceiba, we went to our room after a short stay. We have decided that John shall go to Ceiba in the *Lilly Elena* early tomorrow morning, and get our mail, see McCollough about his furniture, and leave the films to be developed. If he can finish by tomorrow night, he will clear for Trujillo and pick up the furniture Tuesday. He will then clear from there for her *escala* [authorization to] Stevens River, and find out all he can about the alleged ruin group a day's journey inland from there. He will then come here and should be back sometime Wednesday.

## CHAPTER 16

### THE PICNIC

#### October 29, Monday

The sun gave promise of coming through the veil of clouds this morning, so about eight, Mr. Bob Cooper, Mr. Timothy Morgan, his two Baker grandchildren, and I all went over to the shipyard, to take pictures of the 3-master. The sun was not too brilliant, shining obscurely through a thinnish film of clouds, but the light was fairly well diffused and I hope for the best.

The Baker grandchildren proved too great a handicap for grandfather Morgan, and he gave up following me about. I climbed onto the stern of the 3-master,<sup>164</sup> and took her looking fore along her keel. This view should show her ribs and hold construction admirably as the sheathing timbers—surely that is not the correct nautical term; I really mean her epidermis—is not yet on. I next took a view from the stern of the *Alice E. Jones*, which is up on the ways having the barnacles scraped off, and being repainted and overhauled.

While I was thus employed, Mr. Bob was over on the hill behind the yard, looking for a place to take her from that side. When I was here before, I tried to take a picture from the cemetery, which is located on the hill, just behind the yard, but the low growth, bushes, and shrubs cut off the view. This time, Mr. Bob was looking for a tree. He had found one by the time I got over, but it was alive with ants. He said, if one even touched it, they swarmed out, and pumped fire into one. We did find one tree, however, on the hillside just northeast of the 3-master, which, with a little brush-cutting in between, gave an excellent view of the schooner.

I climbed this tree and took the picture. It shows—or should show, to be more accurate—the whole length of the boat on the starboard side, from keel to the unfinished rail. The light was fitful, but I opened the aperture way up and gave her all the time I dared. I took another from nearby, showing the port side, and on the way back across the point I took a fifth view from the bow of the government boat, the *Colon*, also here for repairs.

Before returning to the point, I stopped in McNab's store and got some tinned meat and chewing gum for the picnic, the latter the ubiquitous Wrigley's. When I got over to the point, I found the picnic party nearly ready to leave, [and] while the food was being stowed away in Spurgeon Cooper's big dory, I went in and wrote a note to Maude Cooper, who is at Tela. Her mother suggested that she would like to hear from me.

The plan for the day was to go across to the north shore, perhaps 2½ miles, to the Carib village there at Punta Gorda, and take our lunch with us. Most of the young folks on the point went, and we more than filled the Cooper dory: Miss Ruth might be said to have been the chaperone; Mrs. Baker and her little boy Harold, Olive, Mary, Doris and Marie Cooper, Leona

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<sup>164</sup> Apparently one of the three schooners in the harbor that he had mentioned earlier.

García, a Leila somebody, Ennis MacTaggart, Calvin McNab, and myself. We set out in the dory, putting in on the other side to pick up Calvin McNab, and then went on up into the Oak Ridge bight. We disembarked at the end, and the boys hid the paddles against possible tricks by small boys.

At first the path led through low, marshy ground. The undergrowth was plentiful without being thick. After perhaps ten minutes of this kind of going over a red clay soil, the ground began to ascend gradually until [after] about a half hour we climbed the first hill. The ascent was fairly steep, but as we got toward the top it became more gravelly and we found ourselves in a grassy stretch, which they said was used as a pasture. Forest-covered hills a little higher, with cleared patches of light green pasture land on their flanks surrounded us. A higher hill was just ahead, and our paths after the pleasant custom of the country led directly over this.

It was getting hot by this time, and when somebody spied a hog plum tree just off the path, we all came to a halt involuntarily and some raided the tree. The several I ate quenched my thirst, and we were soon on our way again. It was not long after this that we climbed the last hill and saw the Caribbean Sea, blue and green, in the distance, and sparkling in the mid-day sun. The hills come much closer to the shore on the north side [of Roatan] than on the south, and when once we had started to descend, we were soon in the Carib village of Punta Gorda. The settlement is like all of its kind: a few peak-roofed shacks of wood and thatch set in a grove of coconut, many blacks of all ages and sizes, and an odd assortment of dories on the beach.

Everybody was thirsty, and our first quest was for water. Nobody wanted to drink the Carib water, so we tried to buy some coconuts. The available Caribs were churlish, said they couldn't climb, etc., etc., nor would money move them from this stubborn stand. One big, hulking Negro in particular irritated me. He was large and strong, and could climb like a monkey. He said he was afraid of falling and breaking his head. As though that were possible. It was no use, neither money nor eloquence could induce these lazy fellows to go up the trees, and we had to walk a half mile down the beach before we found any.

At this place there was a school—in session—and Calvin McNab knew the school master. He said we could have some of his nuts, if we had someone to climb up for them. Young Lem Cooper took off his shoes and shimmied up the leaning trunk of a fairly good-sized tree, and soon had a dozen nuts on the ground. Ennis MacTaggart opened these and everybody drank of the sweet, cool water. Personally, I dislike the flavor [and] the water is too sweet for me, but it was wet and cool and quenched thirst. One thing I noticed about these Islanders: they were far less able to stand thirst than I am, probably because I have had so many long, hot, dusty days in the interior. After we had had enough, we took back a load of coconuts, and came [back] to the people of our party who had not come [along on our search for coconuts].

Poor Doris Cooper had had a chill in our absence, and the fever was already fairly high. She lay in a dory with her head on her sister Olive's lap. I wet my handkerchief in the sea and put it on her head, but it didn't help much, I am afraid.

With everybody's thirst quenched, all thoughts turned to lunch. The boys cut some coconut leaves for a table and we opened the baskets: hard-boiled eggs, Vienna sausages, sardines, country cheese, crackers, guava jelly and jam, and chocolate cake. It was a banquet, and everybody fell to, appetites sharpened for the fray. Young Lem Cooper in particular distinguished himself. He must have eaten at least half the chocolate cake.

After our lunch, I photographed the village—in installments. First, the children, black as ebony; then some belles, blacker almost, and frizzy-haired. These were dressed in starched clothes against the occasion and had flowers in their hair. One Black Venus called me an “old man,” which probably puts me in the class where I belong.

In addition to these groups, I took a lovely picture of a little naked Carib boy about 6 in a dory not more than 8 feet long, with a tiny sail. I also took some of sentimental interest. Ennis MacTaggart sitting beside Doris is a hammock. The point, all agree, is he is greatly infatuated with her, but she seems to return his passion but languidly if at all. Although her fever was going down, she still had a little and we thought we’d better wait until the heat of the day was over before climbing the hill. Until 3:30, then, we lay around on the ground or in the different dories drawn up under the trees, with our weather eyes always peeled for coconuts. The heavy green nuts are, of course, falling all the time, and woe betide the man on whose head they light. Miss Ruth nearly had her cranium split open by one falling on it earlier in the year, and I have heard of several others. A green coconut weight 6 or 8 pounds and dropping from a height of 40 or 50 feet gives no little love tap.

At 3:30 we started up the hill, Indian file, Ennis and Doris last. The trip back was uneventful. We stopped at the plum tree to eat a few of its fruit, and a little farther on to photograph the party. On the south side of the hill, the boys collected some cohoon nuts,<sup>165</sup> and for the first time I tasted the delicious, slightly acid meat of this fruit. The single seed is the famous nut, which carries such a rich oil, and which is so hard to break. In fact—to pardon a very raw pun—the breaking thereof has broken many a company. I’ve known several people, particularly in Belize, who have tried the [cohune oil] business, but they have all failed. On the boat I came down in, there was a young chap from Eastport, Maine, coming down to represent some concern. He was going to Guinea Grass to make his headquarters. He didn’t know what Guinea Grass was like and I did, but I didn’t disillusion him. I hadn’t the heart to.

When we got back to the dory, we found someone—small boys from the key, all agreed—had deliberately smeared guava on every seat. The job had been conscientiously performed, and no seat had been slighted. We wiped the mess off with leaves as well as we could, and all climbed in. The trip back by water was uneventful. We dropped Calvin McNab at his brother’s store, on the north side, and were soon on the point. We found Mr. Timothy Morgan had already left for Utila in the *Azelda*.

In the evening, we did nothing, for once. While we were sitting on Mr. Lewis’s steps in the evening, telling stories and talking over the events of the day, Mr. Spurgeon called across from his steps, and told me he had a good joke to tell me. I went across and found out he wanted to know if I cared for a “little something.” It was precisely that I lacked, and I accepted, though I couldn’t help but remember the potency of that little nip of his own brew which he offered me nearly two months ago in his schooner, that night off Barbarat.

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<sup>165</sup> Presumably this is the nut of the cohune palm (*Attalea cohune*, formerly *Orbignya cohune*), which grows in abundance in Petén (Guatemala) and Belize. It is surprising that Morley had never tasted the meat of the nut, which in Guatemala was sometimes shredded and made into a coconut-like sweet. Today the nuts are valued primarily for their oil.

He took me through his house to the back and handed me a bottle of my own favorite anisette. This was a pleasant surprise indeed, and we pledged each other generously. Afterward, he apologized for introducing me to such strong rum on board the *Azelda* that other night, but said it was all he had. He always keeps it on hand, he said, and invariably starts the day with a snack of it to tone him up. It would put life into a cadaver, is my opinion of it. He told me that he was going away in the morning but that I was to feel that this wine was at my disposal all the time, in fact all I had to do was ask Mrs. Cooper for it whenever I wanted it. This was indeed handsome, and I thanked him for it.

Turned in shortly afterward.

## October 30, Tuesday

Miss Ruth came over the first thing after breakfast, and we got to work on the island genealogies, which she promised to help me on last night. As she is a Morgan, we started with the Morgan family of Utila first [Figure 16.1]. The emigrant ancestor, her grandfather, was a Ward Grantham Morgan who [is said to have come] from Philadelphia to Utila about 1840.<sup>166</sup>

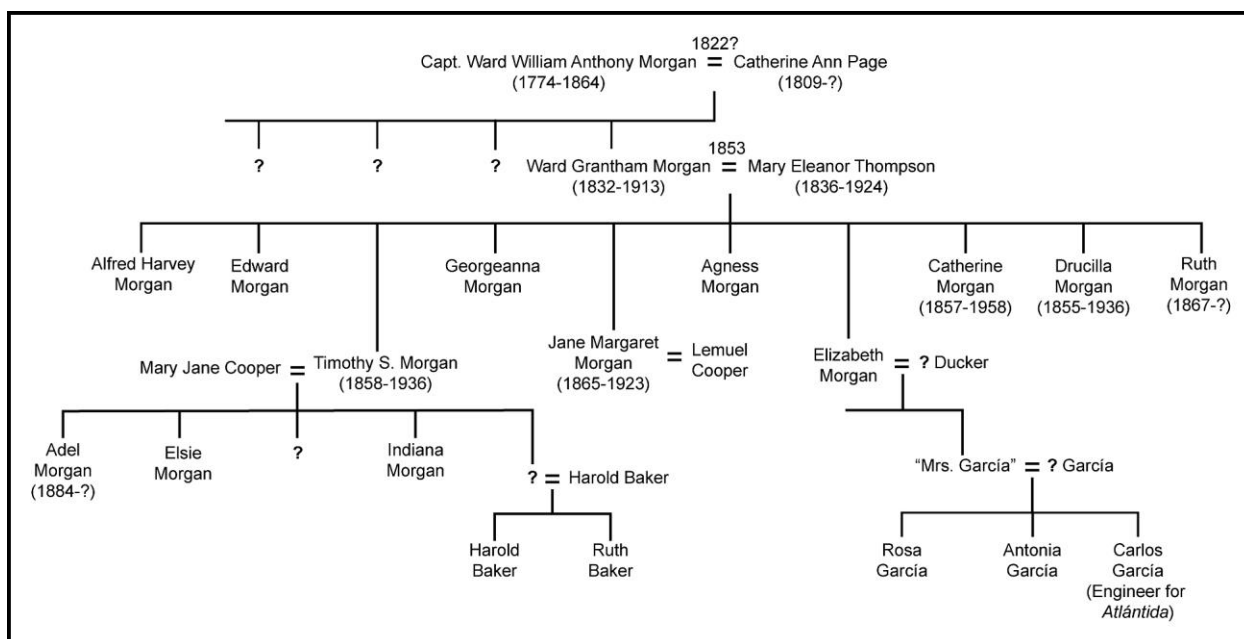


Figure 16.1. Genealogy of the Morgan family of the Bay Islands.

<sup>166</sup> Ward Grantham Morgan (1832–1913) (Figure 13.2, left) was born in the Cayman Islands and died in Utila, aged 81. His father was Capt. Ward William Anthony Morgan and his mother Catherine Ann Page. Morgan and his young wife, Mary Eleanor Thompson, had three sons and seven daughters. Of those listed online (<https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/L6QF-XXK4/ward-grantham-morgan-1832-1913>), only Timothy (1858–1936) and Ruth (born 1867) are mentioned by Morley. Daughters Drucilla and Jane were living in Orleans Parish, Louisiana, when they passed. The colorful stories about her grandfather that Ruth told Morley seem to be the stuff of fantasy (cf. <http://www.awarenessofnothing.com/capt-william-morgan.html>). See Chapter 13.

Two different and romantic traditions have come down in the family as to why he left his native land: one creditable to himself; the other a dark blot on the family escutcheon. The first has it that, in a drunken orgy, he betrayed certain Masonic secrets, of which order he was a member, and had to flee from the wrath of his confreres in consequence. The second is a more or less circumstantial account of a faithless wife and a treacherous friend. Mr. Morgan caught the guilty pair *in flagrante delicto*, and killed one or both in consequence, fleeing thereafter. Both had this last point, namely that he left the country in haste and under a cloud of some sort.

Miss Ruth believed the latter story, which was told [to] some Morgan aunts of hers by a seafaring man who hailed from Philadelphia, and who claimed to have known Mr. Morgan there as well as all the details connected with his hasty departure therefrom. One further point Miss Ruth could contribute. She said that whenever a vessel was sighted off Utila, her grandfather Morgan would take down his gun from the wall and go off into the bush, not to appear again until the vessel had left. He was a peculiar man always, she said, bore that name in the family, and appeared to fear to meet strangers. One felt there was a story about this old gentleman, not here perhaps but in Philadelphia three quarters of a century ago. Here on the islands, he married a Mistress Catherine Page, settled at Utila, and founded a large and prosperous family. There are 18 male Morgans in the fourth generation and already four in the fifth. The family is certainly the most prominent at Utila and probably in the Bay Islands.

The next tree we tackled was the Warren family, also originally from Utila but latterly of Ruatan. The emigrant ancestor here was of good old New England stock, no less than a Samuel Warren who was a powder boy at the Battle of Bunker Hill [actually the Battle of Lake Erie; Lord 1985: 53]. It seems almost certain that he was one of the Boston Warrens, perhaps some of his descendants are 5th or 6th cousins of Rachel Lothrop's. He left a numerous progeny running now into the fourth and fifth generations.

Miss Ruth could give me help about these two Utila families—indeed, her memory here was little short of remarkable—but when it came to the Coopers of Oak Ridge [Figure 16.2] and the Kirkconnells of Bonacco, she only knew the last two or three generations, and even these but imperfectly. However, we made a start.

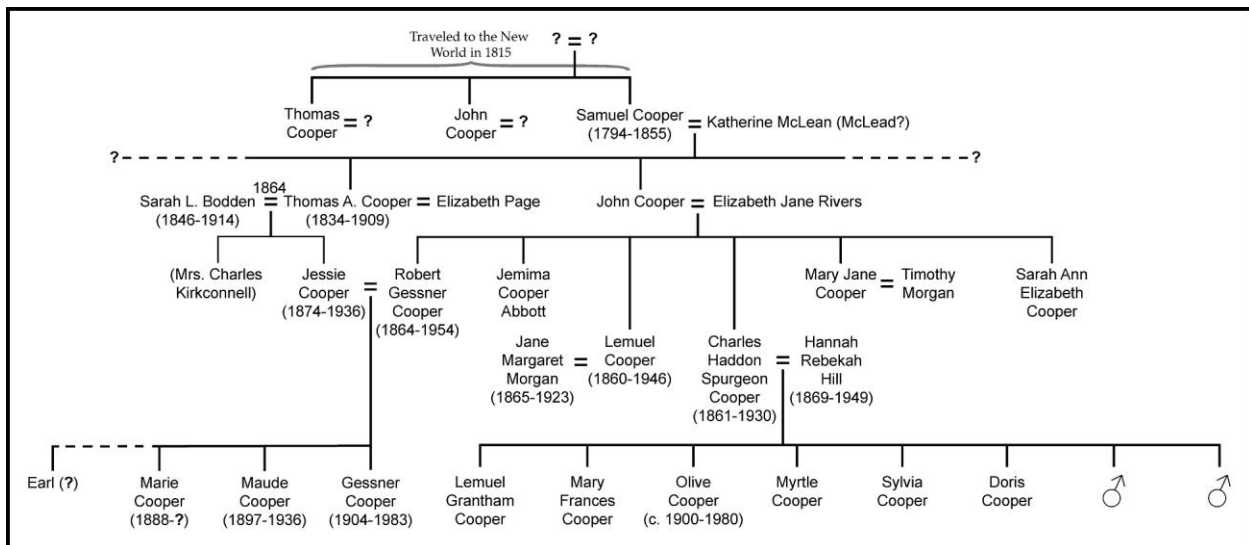


Figure 16.2. Genealogy of the Cooper family of the Bay Islands.

The morning passed very swiftly, and Mrs. García sent Leona over to announce lunch before I realized the day was half over. In the afternoon, Miss Ruth came back and we finished at least as much as she could give me. She had remembered all of the Morgans except one branch, which had settled in British Honduras, and here she only failed to remember the names of two young children. She had remembered all the Warrens, the two families combined making more than two hundred names. The four families whose histories I traced are the leading ones of the Bay Islands. They have repeatedly intermarried and are now closely related, usually through several different lines. There are several first cousin alliances, and numerous second cousin nuptials. The men are the leading citizens of the islands; the women their wives. Coopers have married Morgans, Warrens, etc., and vice-versa. It is a tight little group, geographically isolated and closely related.

After finishing this, I tried to catch up a bit in my diary, but did not get very far as we had supper at 4:30. A picnic up to Calabash Bight was planned for the evening, so we all tried to eat early. The plan was to paddle up after supper to Mr. Ducker's place on Calabash Bight, spend the evening there, and come back by moonlight.

We crowded fourteen in the Cooper dory this time. In addition to those who had gone on the picnic yesterday, there were Louis Abbott's two daughters, Alice and Helen, and one or two more Cooper girls. In addition to her son, Mrs. Baker also took her little daughter Ruth. There was, besides, an overflow dory of much smaller dimensions which carried some of the smaller McNab fry, and an odd Cooper or two. We were fairly well packed in the larger dory, some even sitting on the floor. It was a jolly crowd.

Miss Ruth's age for the past three days has been a storm center of discussion. She will not tell it, and has warned the few who are old enough to know, of her direct displeasure if they give her away. Tonight, at supper, Mrs. García inadvertently spilled the beans, and let it out that she was 53. After we were all stowed away comfortably in the dory and making good headway, under elaborate pretense of guessing, I narrowed my choice down to 53 and stuck to it. Miss Ruth stoutly denied this, even "praising God" that she was not so old. But she didn't shake us off, and we all teased her good-naturedly.

Six of us paddled, Ennis, Calvin, myself, Maisie, Olive, and Alice Abbott. There was no need for the strenuousities [sic] of last Friday, however: The Cooper dory was not the García skiff, and twelve arms were better than four.

Mrs. Baker was quite sure we would capsize and drown her two offspring, although she appeared to be the only one who harbored these gloomy anticipations. We had to go outside [the immediate shoreline] in one place for a short distance, and precisely here her fears registered their maximum. Nothing happened, however, and we entered a creek where the foliage met overhead. Emerging from this, we paddled into Calabash Bight. Ducker's landing was a mile up this estuary. It had now grown quite dark and the moon had not yet risen, though one could see over the hills by Port Royal where the sky already glowed with its first faint rays, and just before we reached the landing, the moon herself floated up from behind a ridge of hills, and threw into startling relief a grove of coconut palms along its crest.

Some diversity of opinion developed as to just where the Ducker landing was, Miss Ruth confidently taking the stand that it had moved its position since her last visit. Calvin said he



knew the way, however, and presently we made out a little wharf against the bank. We all disembarked and picked our way over a few odd planks and marshy ground to the dry path beyond. I carried little Ruth Baker in my arms. We climbed a hill, and entered a thick grove of trees, through which gleamed the lights of a house. The first story was built a good seven feet above ground, and a covered porch ran across the front or east side.

The Duckers were more relatives. Maisie, Olive, and all the girls of that generation called Mrs. Ducker Aunt Elizabeth. She was also Mrs. García's mother. Other of her children, grown up of course, lived there, as well as several grandchildren. We all found seats on the porch and admired the moon riding by in the eastern sky, now full and brilliant, now hidden and diminished by intervening foliage. All lamented that I could not have seen the place by daylight. In the brilliant moonlight, however, it seemed to me far more witching. Deep mysterious shadows, little glades flooded with white moonbeams, and spaces of semi-diffused light where weird and unreal shapes flitted back and forth.

Old Mr. Ducker, Ennis MacTaggart, Calvin McNab, and I walked out behind the house down a gentle slope through a fence and into a noble grove of coconut [trees] rising from a field of greensward. Here, they told me, Oak Ridge comes yearly for its good Friday picnic. We came to another fence with a pump by a gate, and here Mr. Ducker stopped a moment to draw water for his cows. The evening was so lovely that we walked on farther, before turning back.

When we reached the house, the visit was at its height. Everyone seemed loath to go. The night was too rare to miss. But we had to say goodbye eventually and turn back toward the landing. I carried little Ruth Baker through, this time asleep and no longer prattling of a big bright moon. The moonlight illuminated our way going home. We started singing and bent to the paddles in unison. The children got ahead of us at one time, but when we all bent to the paddles together, we quickly overtook them and shot ahead of them, in fact.

We got home about eleven, and the older girls made some fudge, a large plate of it. It was good fudge, too, and quickly disappeared. Finally, we all walked down to the Abbots to take them home. The evening was still so wonderful that we were loath to turn in, so six of us, Maisie Morgan, Olive Cooper, Miss Ruth, Mrs. Baker, Calvin McNab, and myself walked down to the bridge and sat there for awhile before finally turning back.

Bid them goodnight in front of Mr. Bob's and turned in.

### **October 31, Wednesday**

The first thing I did after breakfast was to get my packing forward against the possible arrival of the *Lilly Elena* this afternoon. There was enough of it to do, and there were many interruptions. I managed to find time to write some in my diary, however. After lunch, I turned myself into an itinerant photograph gallery. I had promised many people to take pictures of their children and I also wanted to take a few more views of the three-master.

Right after lunch, I got Victor Wood to put me over on the other side, and there I took four views of the boat, and two of the point from the stern of the boat. By the time I got back to the Point, my clients began to arrive. First, I took the child of Mrs. Dudley Borden, not particularly beautiful but her all. One of the Cooper children had an automobile bicycle which I used as a standard property for all my infantile pictures, much like the lovely, old-fashioned canvas balustrades and flower urns. The next infant was the little McNab girl, Hope, about 3 years old.

She was a good subject, grabbed the wheel of the automobile, dug her little feet into the bowels of the machine, and looked pretty.

I next switched from tender youth to hoary old age and took Miss Ruth's mother, old Mrs. Ward Grantham Morgan [née Mary Eleanor Thompson], aged 82. This required moving the old lady out of doors, a delicate and slow task. She is very heavy, uses a cane, but has to be moved about. Miss Ruth took one arm and I the other, and we helped her down the steps and out to a chair which I had placed in a sunny spot under a hanging flower basket on the porch. I took two views of this important old lady, mother of almost all the Morgans now living, and then we put her in her wheelchair and moved her around in front to see the rest of the photographic work.

Next came two little Coopers, Morgan and Virgil. Their father was that John Cooper who went with me to Bonacco early in September when I was looking for a boat. My last subject was Mrs. Baker's two children, Harold and Ruth.

When I finished this roll, I took it into the house and Mrs. Bob told me the *Lilly Elena* was in sight, coming from Stevens River way. I hurriedly finished packing, changed my clothes, and went down to the dock to welcome John in. The *Lilly Elena* swung around the slaughter house on the point and into the harbor; she passed the dock, made a turn, and was headed for the dock when her engine was stopped too soon and she fell short. The engine began coughing again—she had lost her headway—and she backed and tried it again, this time reaching the dockside all right.

John was on deck, fairly stoop-shouldered with a bag of mail, the sight of which "joyed and rejoiced" me, as the schoolteacher said in his sermon last Sunday morning. It was the first home mail, except my three letters in Bluefields, for two months. John threw the second-class mail ashore, reprints from *The Americanist Congress*, *New Republics*, *Times-Picayune*, *Art and Archaeologies*, etc., etc. We went right over to the room, and I ran through the envelopes hastily to see who was represented. Two from Alice in Salt Lake City alarmed me. One dated August 29th and the other September 9th. Both were marked "Please forward" and important. I read the most recent first. My only little baby [daughter True] had been operated upon for appendicitis and, oh so fortunately, recovered. Alice wrote that it had been a desperate case. One noon, little daughter had complained of a stomachache and had eaten no dinner. In the afternoon, she had become drowsy and feverish. Alice called a doctor, who couldn't come at once, and then another. Both advised immediate removal to a hospital and operation. This was on August 18th, the day John and I left Tegucigalpa. They operated at 11:30 that same night, and found the appendix had already broken and pus formed. Another six hours and it would have been too late.

Although nearly 11 weeks have gone by since, the awfulness of what so easily might have been has unnerved me, and gave me little inclination to read my other mail for the time being. Alice seems to have been badly frightened, and even at this late date when I know she is better, for I have two little cards and a letter in daughter's own hand, I am still upset completely. She is so truly all that I have. Alice has already started another family and formed other ties, but True is my only little one. It doesn't pay to put all one's eggs in one basket; perhaps we should have had others.

There was so much mail to digest including one from Mr. J. J. Perdomo that took time in

reading, that we decided not to leave until tomorrow noon. It was suppertime by now, and we went over to Mrs. García's. Afterward, returned to my mail. There were a lot of back letters from Jennie, two from Gladys, three from mother, none from Lybs except a few clippings from the *Digest*, a fine one from Eleanor, which shows she is going to be well satisfied with Sargents this year. I am so glad, for I was afraid last winter. From Raymond Morley, Carl Guthe, Alfred Tozzer, the CIW, Hewett, Alice Jackson [A.D.J.]. The latter tells me Wallace Springer covered himself with glory at the aviation school, and is now in France. Jesse joins soon and will go into the same service. The new building is to be dedicated in November. Hewett wanted a paper but couldn't get around to one, unfortunately, in time. The building is to be dedicated on the 15th, two weeks from tomorrow, and we won't be in Ceiba until the 2nd.

In the evening, a dance had been arranged, since we were leaving. I did not feel like a festivity, but we had to go. There were some 15 or 20 people there. After the dance, Miss Ruth made some limeade which went to everybody's heart, the evening was so hot. They didn't dance too late, though; afterward everyone adjourned to Spurgeon Cooper's porch where we sat and chattered for an hour more.

### **November 1, Thursday**

The good weather still hangs on. The sea is like glass this morning, and the sky all but cloudless. I had a great deal of packing left, and that occupied most of my morning. John played carrom with some of the Cooper girls. After lunch I paid Mrs. García what we owed her, and also bought some of her delicious guava preserves, some of each kind, in fact.

There were many farewells to be made. These kindly people had treated me with a royal hospitality, and to express our deep appreciation was a heavy, yet agreeable, task. I went from house to house bidding these good people goodbye, from old Mrs. Morgan down to the youngest chick just hatched. In the meantime, John was engaged in a spirited game of carrom with the Cooper girls and Miss Ruth, and here we all centered, pending Charley's last tasks, which I suspect included a long and possibly tender farewell at the Abbotts. He seems to be more than casually interested in Alice Abbott. He took several photographs of her this morning, with the Kodak.

While I was taking leave of her father, Mr. Louis Abbott, who is the manager of the shipyard, I found out from him further details about the business, and what it could be speeded up to under pressure. They could build probably four vessels at one time, with keels up to 125 feet long, and with a maximum tonnage of about 400. These vessels could probably be built for about \$35,000 to \$40,000 complete, and the firm stands ready to build them on a straight cost of construction basis, materials, labor, etc., plus 10 percent of the same, and to deliver the vessel or vessels within a year's time after ordering.

If such an agreement were reached with the firm, they would have to be permitted to buy and export from home yellow pine for the planking and sealing; and white pine, yellow pine, or spruce for the masts; cordage, canvas and fixtures, bolts, chains, anchors, etc. On the other hand, they would furnish all labor and their own bottoms to transport all materials purchased in the States, which they are prepared to call for at any Atlantic or Gulf port, Tampa, New Orleans, or Mobile being their preference, however. The hardwood for the timbers, keel, stem, and stern grows on the island—Santa María—and would not have to be imported. The labor

would be skilled ship carpenters from the Bay Islands, Belize, and the Caymans. They figure they would employ 35 men to a ship. By standardization of size, the work could be expedited and economies effected.

The plan<sup>167</sup> appealed to me particularly because these ships can be built outside of our own yards, which are already running at their maximum output, and thus represents a tonnage increased beyond the maximum domestic output. It requires no labor from home, no bottoms to haul raw materials, no executive or administrative overhead; only the right to export certain raw and manufactured materials, such as cordage, lumber, canvas, and fixtures, and some preliminary financial guarantees in the way of advances of some percentage of the total order. The plan simply would utilize a long-established firm in the wood ship-building business to increase the tonnage of wood ships. The firm has a well-equipped yard and long experience covering a period of 40 years. If the plan proved feasible in the case of the Cooper Bros., its operation could be extended probably to three other firms, the Kirkconnells of Bonacco, the Arches of French Harbor, and the Osgoods of Ruatan.

But this lengthy digression brings me down to the moment of leaving. With lots of handshaking and good wishes, we took leave, went out to the *Lilly Elena*, and soon were going around the point. All our friends were assembled in front of Bob Cooper's house and waved handkerchiefs to us as we passed. We dipped our colors in recognition of these courtesies, and saw the group of people slowly coalesce into a little white spot and finally disappear.

The trip down to Coxen Hole, whither we had to go for clearance to Ceiba, was without incident, save meeting the *Mozo* off Coconut Garden with Mr. Bob Cooper aboard. We drew aside only long enough to bid him goodbye, and were soon on our way again.

We landed at Coxen Hole at 4:45, just in time for Charley to run up to the *comandancia* and clear us for Ceiba before the office closed. While he was doing this, I bought some crackers for the ship at the shop of the two young Earls, Cooper and McNab, and then climbed up the Government Hill to see Mrs. Watson. I met her husband and saw her baby, and presently the lady herself. As I wanted to get on to Mrs. Willie Warren's before supper, I did not stay long, but promised to come back again in the evening.

I walked down the hill and met Charley, who had not yet been up to his home. I left him buzzing around about some cargo or other, and went on down the street to Mrs. Willie Warren, who lives in a pleasant house toward the east end of the town. After a short visit here, I returned to the *Lilly Elena*, where John was already guzzling tea and munching crackers and guava jelly, in which I joined him.

After supper, I went up to Charley's house with him. His father, George Osgood, is a typical New England small country-town carpenter, capable to his fingertips, and ingenious too. He hails from Epping, New Hampshire, and is one of a type fast disappearing from industrialized New England. Stayed here a half hour talking over the trip and its incidents, and then we left for Mrs. Leonie Warren, the young widow, who was Sylvina Cooper, Spurgeon Cooper's oldest daughter. Three young Island bloods joined us here and it was obvious the house was popular. A brother-in-law seemed to have a proprietary interest, and possibly a

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<sup>167</sup> This plan includes considerable detail, suggesting that Mr. Abbott didn't think it up on the spot. Morley had probably approached him sometime earlier to develop a plan.

wedding may not be far off. Mrs. Willie Warren lives next door and I went there next to say goodbye. I was introduced to her husband, a fat, red-faced, jolly fellow, the exact physical antithesis of neat, prim, thin Mrs. Willie.

The last call of the day and on the island was at Dr. Watson's on the hill. A young Darrell Hunter went up there with me. Carrom was in progress between Dr. Watson, some McNabs, and Myra Henderson, an Island girl. By the time I had reached here I was very sleepy, and so I did not stay long. When I caught myself nodding two or three times and, more important still, when Mrs. Watson had caught me several times, and even suggested I appeared tired, which was stating the case mildly, to say the least, I finally took my leave and returned to the *Lilly Elena*.

John had already turned in, but was not asleep because of the activity of the village band, which had been grinding out discordant numbers all evening long on the main street nearby. Campbell made up my bed in my old place between the engine room hatch and the companion way, and I settled down to sleep. A heavy, angry cloud spread up from the west like a giant's hand, but the north was clear and the sea a "glassy ca'm" as the Islanders say. As the north was clear, Charley decided to leave and we pulled out from the dockside about 12:30.

## CHAPTER 17

### HOG ISLANDS: A PORT IN A TERRIBLE STORM

#### November 2, Friday

I awoke at daylight and saw, to my surprise, the shores of an island slipping by. I sat up and asked Charley where we were, and he said "Hog Islands." The weather had begun to look heavy about three o'clock, and he had told the captain to change her course for the Hog Islands, fearing it would be too rough off Ceiba to land, even if we did get there. It was a wise decision, too, as the skies were completely overcast, and heavy, dark, leaden-colored clouds were massed to the north.

After breakfast, Charley and I went ashore to see what old Captain Jim Bush thought of the prospects of clearing. Cap. Bush has followed the seas for many years and, after losing his vessel in the hurricane that sank the *Marowijne*, he came here finally to recoup his fortunes. We landed on the beach in front of the *comandancia* and then walked over to the Bush house. The first place we passed was that of the son, Earl Bush. Nobody seemed to be up, so we went on a hundred yards to the other place, that of Captain Jim. Charley introduced me to him and his wife, and a daughter of 14 or 15 named Elizabeth, "Lizzie" to the family. There were several grandchildren about. They lived in a collection of three houses, two of boards, one the bedroom, the other the dining room, and a pole hut which was the kitchen.

Capt. Bush thought we could make Ceiba all right, and indeed the weather appeared to be raising. The sky was blue in the east and sunlight coming through. It was early—between nine and ten—and we decided to start for Ceiba. Charley figured that even with a little sea, we ought to get there by two o'clock, which would give him plenty of time to clear for Utila, and get off before nightfall.

We stopped at the *comandancia* long enough to advise the soldiers, whom we had brought from Ruatan, that we were going, and then went aboard. These fellows, two soldiers, a collector, and two Negroes, were going across to Ceiba for some government moneys and had asked us to take them over. They came aboard almost at once, we weighed anchor, and were off. We swung off south of the island and then headed east through the keys. I had still several unread *New Republics*—very good numbers, too, given their editorial comment on Wilson's reply to the Pope's peace message—and so I did not notice the weather much. I remember it rained repeatedly, and I had to hunch myself up under to boom to continue my reading and escape a drenching. John rigged up a sort of Bedouin's tent underneath the regular awning and managed to dodge the drops by sitting very tight in one position. We left the island at ten, and by eleven, just as we were crawling out of the shelter of the last key, it had begun to grow very rough. Charley called my attention to the sky. Great masses of heavy, dark clouds were sweeping over

us, perhaps as fast as 35 miles an hour from the north, almost a gale.<sup>168</sup> In that direction, the heavens were black and lowering. No open sky shone through there. It had grown perceptibly rougher as we crept slowly out of the shelter of the last key. In short, the stage seemed all set for a heavy norther: the wind, the sky, and the sea.

Everybody aboard was in favor of turning back at once to the shelter of Hog Islands. As Charley observed, even with the sea already running, we would be unable to land at Ceiba, if we were there. We put about her head and started back for the island. It was high time. The seas were now breaking over our bows and was all our little engine could do to drive her through the water. Although we had not made more than three miles from the island, it took us the better part of an hour to get back. As the wind had shifted from the northwest to the north, Charley sought anchorage on the south side of the island, just off Captain Bush's houses.

We had lunch aboard, and Charley then went ashore to see if the Bushes would board us for as long as we should be held up at the island. The *Lilly Elena's* larder was like Mother Hubbard's cupboard: "bare," a few leftovers, like macaroni, catsup, salt, etc. He came back by and by with word that what little they had was gladly at our disposal, the typical Island hospitality.

The wisdom of our course in turning back was already apparent. A heavy storm was brewing, in fact had already brewed. The sky was now black, clear over to the south, the coast and mountains had disappeared from view in a haze of gray mist and rain, and the sea was whipped into a myriad of whitecaps. The spray was already leaping high over the keys just two miles out to the northwest of us, and the reef about two miles out to the northwest was a long line of angry breakers, a continuous strip of feathery white.

Charley had hardly finished observing that we would have company before the afternoon was over, other boats running for shelter, when the *Merry Widow* sailed around the point of the island just east of us and sought anchorage under the lee of the south shore, sails closely reefed.<sup>169</sup> Later, the boys found out she had left Utila loaded with 40,000 coconuts—in truth, she wallowed in the water almost to her rails—[at] 3 o'clock this morning for Ruatan. At noon, she was so close that she could make out the houses on the shore, but already the wind was so high that she couldn't beat it—she is only a sailing vessel—and had to run for shelter instead to Hog Islands. Fancy being in sight of the houses and yet being unable to tack in against that north wind. By noon, then, outside it was a gale.

The *Merry Widow* got in about three. Two hours later, we sighted a boat off to the west; by her straight course toward us, a power boat. When this got in a little closer, the boys recognized it as the *Atlántida*, one of the Government's three revenue cutters. The same one I had ridden

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<sup>168</sup> The U.S. National Weather Service defines a gale as 34–47 knots (39–54 miles per hour) of sustained surface winds. The harrowing intensity of the four-day storm Morley describes in the following pages suggests the outer bands of a hurricane, or at least a tropical depression, but online records for the 1917 Atlantic hurricane season make no mention of such in in the Caribbean in late October-early November.

<sup>169</sup> To "reef" a sail is to reduce its wind-catching area, usually by folding or rolling one edge. Reefing is a safety precaution in strong winds and bad weather, improving the ship's stability and reducing risk of damage to it.

from Ceiba to Oak Ridge on, just two months ago yesterday. She came to anchor near us, and we found that my friend Workman Thompson was no longer aboard her, having been fired that very morning. He had left for Ruatan on the *Brilliant* immediately. The *Atlántida* had stayed off Ceiba until noon, when the seas were running so high that they were breaking over the Vaccaro Brothers' wharf. The Vaccaro steamship *Yoro* had been obliged to discontinue her loading and run out to either Utila or Ruatan, the *Atlántida* crowd did not know which. When they left, practically all the shipping had fled from this perilous open roadstead.

We went ashore about 5:30 and had a simple meal at the Bushes'. Mrs. Bush apologized, saying they were almost out of everything, but we were so thankful to be ashore and to have escaped the storm, that the simple meal consisting of beans and bread was more than appreciated. The Bushes gave us permission to sleep in their dining room, and the next trip Charley made ashore he brought my cot and bedding. There was one cot in the room already, and Mrs. Bush gave John some bedding so we were well equipped for the night. Charley had decided to sleep aboard and keep an anchor watch. If the wind should shift to the northwest, his present anchorage would become unsafe, and he would have to slip around the point in a hurry to keep from being driven on the keys or worse, out to sea.

The night came on early, and fell dark. A heavy wind had been blowing all afternoon and this increased after dark. Frequent rain squalls swept over the island, beating on our tin roof like a hail of bullets. The wind would blow furiously for a minute, then die down, and spring up again. It was to be a rough night at sea. We could barely distinguish the night lights of the three boats as they lay at anchor, and their forms were shrouded in the inky blackness. Between the howlings of the gale, we could hear ourselves talk, then came the wind, the shutters banged, the lamp flickered, and the house shook.

As we turned in, the old saying "God help the poor sailors at sea tonight" came forcibly to mind, and we earnestly hoped all had found a safe haven against the storm.

### **November 3, Saturday**

All night long, the gale blew its furious course across the island. The waves pounded on the shore, and even swept under our house. Just after daylight, we were awakened by voices outside the window. Someone was saying "a ship on the reef" and we hurried outside. It seemed to be so. There, against the dull, leaden-colored horizon, a mast stood up from the angry froth of the reef, all of two miles off to the northwest. We tried to hope it was anchored safe within, but it never changed position, and moreover squatted suspiciously low in the water. By her appearance, she was flat on the reef, her back probably broken and her mast upright above the swirl of the breakers.

Some of the *Atlántida* men were ashore, Carlos García the engineer, for one, and these quickly joined the little group standing on the beach under the coconuts, unmindful of the cold and wind and rain, eyes straining out on the waste of troubled waters toward that gaunt, solitary mast standing so straight against the dark gray skyline. Some felt she was anchored, but the majority knew she was caught on the sharp teeth of the reef. All agreed that we must reach her, and speedily. She appeared to be under full canvas as near as we could make out, which puzzled everybody. Why full canvas in such a dire plight? It was a time for closest reefing in that tempestuous gale.



We were perfectly willing that the *Lilly Elena* should go, but with her little 19 horsepower engine now carbonized down to less than 12, it seemed she could not make headway against the high seas breaking even within the reef. But the *Atlántida* with her 36 H.P Lathrop,<sup>170</sup> twice the rating of our engine and thrice her effective horsepower, could make headway against such waves. As we watched there under the coconuts, thankful that we had turned back in time to escape a similar fate, the *Atlántida* engine was started and we saw her point her nose toward Sandy Key,<sup>171</sup> and move slowly forward.

The seas were running very high. Against the cold gray background of the early morning, the little boat seemed lost. She would dip almost out of sight in a deep trough, only to rise high on the next crest, poised like a pelican on the point of diving. Twisting and rolling, diving and soaring, slowly she made her way out beyond Sandy Key, and here she appeared to lose her headway and, save for bobbing about, to remain stationary. We all thought she was unable to proceed any farther on account of the high seas running, and it seemed as if all those on the wreck must have already perished or, at least, they would lose their lives before long if any still survived.

After a while, we could see the *Atlántida* putting back and slowly working toward shore. When it had come in some distance, someone cried out, "The survivors are aboard her," and it was true. We could clearly distinguish a large crowd on the afterdeck of the *Atlántida*, and presently someone recognized the skiff, which was being towed behind, as the same boat belonging to the *Brilliant*, and soon they made out Workman Thompson aboard her. The unfortunate ship wrecked out there on the reef was, then, the *Brilliant*, the pride of the islands' sailing vessels, a craft of some 35 to 40 tons, owner John Yates of Bonacco.

When the *Atlántida* dropped anchor, the rescued crew of the *Brilliant* put ashore in their own small boat; seven men. The captain (Whitman Hyde), mate, cook, three sailors, and Workman Thompson, the ex-captain of the *Atlántida*, who was returning to Oak Ridge. It was a pitiful sight, indeed. These brave men saved by chance from the sea, drenched to the skin, blue with cold, faint with hunger, and haggard with strain. The captain, in a black oilskin no'easter cap and coat, showed more than the others, naturally, the drawn look of responsibility and care. All were barefoot, all cold, shivering, hungry, weary, and spent.

Good Mrs. Bush hustled them into the kitchen and gave all hot coffee. Bit by bit, the captain told his tale:

Early yesterday morning, the sea began to grow rough off Ceiba. Captain Hyde, even this early, felt uneasy and wanted to run for Hog Islands, but the owner, John Yates, who was along, wanted to wait for more cargo, and so they stayed on, losing precious time. By noon, the sea was running so high that Hyde dared wait no longer, and even though the owner was ashore with the ship's papers, he stripped anchor and stood out. About one o'clock, the wind checked

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<sup>170</sup> The Lathrop Engine Company of Mystic, Connecticut, made four-cycle marine engines, known for reliability, in the first half of the twentieth century.

<sup>171</sup> Although a named Sandy Key is one of the small islands off the southwest shore of Utila, Morley seems to be referring to one of the tiny little islets southeast of the two main Hog Islands, and visible from one or both of them. None is currently named Sandy Key.

[shifted] again to the southeast, and they put back to the point just east of Ceiba, but the shore was hidden by mist and clouds, and they could not even see the town.

The wind now checked to the northwest and, fearful of being driven on the shore if he delayed longer, Hyde turned and ran for it. By this time, it was too late to run for Hog Islands, and he headed the *Brilliant* north-northeast, hoping to get under the lee of Ruatan before the full violence of the coming storm broke. He followed this course for about four hours, from two to six, in a “nice little wind” from the northwest, carrying his whole jib,<sup>172</sup> single-reefed mainsail, and jigger. At six, the breeze died out, and Hog Islands were sighted, bearing east-northeast. At seven, the breeze sprang up, again from the southwest. The sea was very high, running from the north-northwest, and all hands agreed they were in for a dirty night.

Hyde set his course north by east, thereby leaving Hog Islands far off to the east and making directly for Ruatan and the shelter of its long lee. It was dark and blowing strong from the southwest. He took in his mainsail and one jib, running under the jigger and jib until the former began to complain. The obliged him to hoist the mainsail again, but he had to take a double reef in her, as the *Brilliant* could stand no more canvas in the rising storm. About eight, the wind pulled around to the northwest.

A squall from the northeast next struck the *Brilliant*, and Hyde changed his course north-northwest for about an hour, under double-reefed mainsail and standing jib. The wind had now risen to a gale. The jib really required a reef, but it was so old they dared not take one. The hour was now nine. Again, the wind checked, this time to the northwest again. With equal difficulty, Hyde was able to bring her around to the north-northeast to meet this latest blow of fortune. He was able to hold her to this course for about a half an hour, but the gale was rapidly proving too much even for this close reefing, and about nine thirty he was obliged to take in the jib. All the *Brilliant* now carried was the single double-reefed mainsail, indeed she had now passed out of control altogether, and drifted before the tempest.

The sky was black. No light of any kind illumined the waste of angry waters, neither moon, nor stars, nor beacon ashore. The moon was up, but no ray of hers could pierce the thick, inky, blanket of the storm. The sea was running mountain-high. The closely reefed mainsail—the greatest spread of canvas she dared to carry—was only able to keep her laying to, and did not help her one inch forward in her course. The good ship literally drifted at the mercy of the sea.

Although there was anxiety aboard her because of the tempestuous night, all felt reasonably secure under the courses Hyde had made, and in this connection, it should be remembered another excellent captain was aboard her in the person of Workman Thompson, who approved of Hyde’s courses in every particular. Indeed, all hands felt they were safely clear of Hog Islands, and that they were bearing north toward the lee of Ruatan. We can well imagine them praying that they would soon make the quiet waters of this shelter.

The captain was at the wheel, and had been since noon, never leaving his post of duty. The mate was forward as lookout. About 10:30, he sighted not a hundred yards ahead a vast wall of white looming ghostlike out of the darkness. It was the sea breaking over the reef, throwing spray fifty feet high into the air. Although she was drifting toward the reef, i.e., east, her head was still east-northeast. The mate shouted their imminent danger above the tumult of the waves

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<sup>172</sup> A jib is a triangular sail in front of the foremast, its tack rigged to the bow.

to the captain at the wheel. Hyde tried desperately to tack, but she refused to answer her helm, indeed nothing under canvas could have beaten about into such a gale as was blowing by this time. He threw her helm the other way, but the doomed ship again refused to answer, only wallowed deeper in the heavy seas. The reef here bears northeast by north, and the *Brilliant*, as already mentioned, was headed just a point northerly of this. Indeed, had she been making any headway against the seas, she could have yet saved herself from her dire peril. But she had long since passed beyond control of the captain and crew and, barring the holding of her head in her course, she had become the plaything of the elements.

Hyde says she drifted on the reef so gently that he did not know when she struck. The mainsail was hurriedly lowered and hitched up, and within 15 minutes the hold filled with water. The small boat was made ready for putting overboard, but all were loath to go off. One can easily understand the two-fold fear that was distracting: fear of staying aboard, lest the *Brilliant* go to pieces under their very feet and all drown; and fear the small boat [would] capsize in these fearful waves and all hands go to the bottom. The night was so black, the sea so high, and they know so little where they were, or what reef or part of the coast they had struck, that in the end they decided to wait before putting overboard in the small boat. They stayed by the *Brilliant* thus for two hours, the seas breaking over her hull, the crew clinging desperately to the rigging to keep from being warped overboard, and the ship literally breaking up under their very feet.

The Island people, I have written elsewhere, are God-fearing folk. Most sea-faring men are, I think. Probably because they realize the helplessness of man in these great crises of the sea. They know how pitifully inadequate are their most tremendous efforts to save themselves when the tempest really rages; and, when rescue comes, a chance bit of driftwood or the unexpected lifeboat, how miraculous it seems and is, something sent of God, not man. And so, the people of the sea believe in a very personal super-being who guards their lives, rescuing or not as it pleases His inscrutable will. In the extreme peril, the *Brilliant* falling apart under them and their ignorance of where to make for if they did not take to the small boat, an act of God was vouchsafed them, all agree.

The black wall of rain and mist and spray surrounding them parted for an instant only, and they saw Sandy Key about 500 yards due east of them. Hastily they abandoned the *Brilliant*, climbed down into the pitching, twisting small boat, and frantically bent to the oars. Right here occurred their most dire peril. The small boat nearly swamped in the seething waters of the reef, and before they had finally won clear of the deadly "white waters," it was full, the gunwhales [sic., gunwales: upper edges] awash. Two men bailed desperately all the time, four pulled on the two oars, two to an oar, and one stood aft. It was just by the breadth of a hair they escaped death here, the difference between a half inch of water less inside the small boat than out.

They pulled to the east and, after a hard fight, made Sandy Key. The breakers were going clear over the key then, and they had to draw the small boat into the middle of the coconut walk. They turned it upside down, and all crawled under for shelter from the rain. And here they spent a raw, cold, wet, cheerless night, thankful enough to have been saved from the sea. This morning, when they saw the *Atlántida* putting out, they rowed out from the key to her when she got within 50 yards and went aboard, and later came ashore.

After hearing Captain Hyde's story, all agreed he had done his best, and although his ship was lost, all lives were saved, a clear gain in view of the fearful fury of the storm. The courses he took should have carried him well to the north of Hog Islands with a safe margin to spare. The calamity seems to have been caused primarily by the ship getting out of control, and secondly by a tremendous set of the current to the east, which finally carried the *Brilliant* onto the reef, and thirdly by the direction of the gale, i.e., from the northeast, which cut down the northerly progress the captain thought she was making, almost to nothing—at the same time the current was hurrying her eastward to destruction. Talking of the catastrophe consumed the rest of the morning, and we were eating lunch before the subject was half exhausted.

The rain and wind continued all afternoon, and the gale showed no signs of abating. Many times, we congratulated ourselves in making the shelter of this island. How ill it would have fared with the *Lilly Elena* out in such seas, it took no vivid imagination to realize. But for Charley's sagacity and caution, we might well all be at the bottom of the sea.

The night closed in dark and stormy. We could hardly make out the lights of the three boats anchored less than 100 yards offshore. Charley said, just before he went aboard, that he was going to keep an anchor watch out, for if the wind checks around to the west any farther, all three of the boats will have to run aground on the east side.

We went to bed early. Charley Cooper shared our room with us. It is a cold, gloomy night with the rain beating madly on the tin roof.

#### **November 4, Sunday**

When we woke up and looked out the window of our little house, all three boats had disappeared; we felt they had run for shelter around the point. Charley turned up for breakfast on time, as usual for this function, and confirmed our speculations. The wind had checked after midnight around to the northwest, and the anchorage off the Bush houses had become untenable. The *Lilly Elena* had led the way in this hegira<sup>173</sup> about two a.m., and was followed almost at once by the *Atlántida*. The *Merry Widow* did not go around until nearer dawn, by which time the breeze had stiffened amply to carry her through between the point and the keys.

I wrote on the diary all morning. For dinner in honor of the occasion, Sabbath, we had chicken, a welcomer fowl was never plucked. While we were eating this, Workman Thompson came in breathless with excitement: another wreck was floating by. We hurried out on the beach and, sure enough, out beyond Sandy Key there was a spar floating by. When this rose on the crest of a wave, those with better eyesight could decry part of the hull attached.

Was it part of the *Brilliant*, which had disappeared from the reef shortly after breakfast, or was it another boat? Could any survivors be aboard her? Or was it only a tree? By its course, we could see it would pass outside of Sandy Key and off to the westward. The possibility that survivors might still be aboard indicated the necessity of immediate investigation.

Ponce, *comandante* of the *Atlántida*, was more than willing to go on this possible errand of mercy, indeed, it appeared a quasi-obligation for the little revenue cutter, and the boat soon set

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<sup>173</sup> "Hegira" is a transliteration of the Arabic word meaning departure, migration, or escape. Its original use is for the flight, in AD 622, of Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers from his homeland in Mecca to Medina, where he is entombed, both cities in western Saudi Arabia.

off. By this time, the wreckage had drifted southeast of Sandy Key and was passing just in front of us, although pretty far out. John called my attention to a couple of smaller fragments, one with an iron hoop floating by nearer the shore, obviously pieces of the broken *Brilliant*.

The *Atlántida* was putting back. Although this is the third day of the storm, the wind continues to blow a gale. The *Atlántida* was tossed here and there like a bobbing cork. Seas broke clear over her, and she was badly buffeted by brutal blows. We all went down to the *comandancia* to get the first news of the “new wreck.” Hyde came ashore before anyone else and said it was the stern of the *Brilliant*, with adjacent bulwarks and jigger mast. Ponce offered to tow her in, but there was little left to salvage, and the wreckage was allowed to float off to the westward. If it does not make Trujillo Bay in due time, no one can say where it will eventually fetch up.

The south side of this island, where we are now stranded, is a long narrow strip of sand covered with coconut trees; back of this, precipitously rises a rocky cliff, the true island, for I take it this low strip is of recent coral and sand formations. Walking through this grove is a dangerous business in this high wind; several trees have already been blown over, torn up by the roots, and the coconuts are dropping all the time. Imagine a shower of solid nuts, the size of footballs and weighing from 5 to 8 lbs each, falling from a height anywhere from 10 to 80 feet, and you can perhaps approximate the damage a single nut can do. People have been killed by falling coconuts, and in weather like this, a coconut walk is an actual menace. Whenever I have to go out—and we have to take exercise occasionally, I walk with both eyes heavenward, ready to dodge this aerial shelling.

Toward the close of the afternoon, John and I walked up toward Marshall’s Rock, the westernmost point of the island, to see if the gale had gone down any. This rock juts out to sea perhaps 15 feet and is perhaps 15 feet high. It is a point of the rocky backbone of the island, which here comes right down to the sea. The sea was breaking against it in a fury of white spray when we climbed over its slippery black surface. On its exposed top, the gale was blowing so fiercely that I could not stand up without steadying myself against the rock. Out to the west where the *Brilliant* went down, not a trace of her remained. All we could see there was a continuous line of white spray where the sea was crashing over the reef. This storm has had many phases, some more terrible than others, but the one which will stay by me the longest, I think, is that wicked line of white booming over the reef against a dull gray background. That epitomizes the destructiveness of the sea in these parts more than any other one thing.

We returned to the house, dodging agilely through the coconuts, to a supper of beans and bread. Save for its monotony, the food problem has not become serious as yet. Beans, bread, and tea three times a day pall less than one would think they would, when that is all there is between us and eating raw coconuts. In other words, we might be far worse off.

Again, the evening closed down early and heavy. Rain squalls and furious gusts of wind beat against our house, and at times seemed on the point of carrying it into the sea. We sat around the dining room table, reading by a single flickering oil lamp. I was interested in Kroeber’s [1917] article “The Superorganic” in the last *Anthropologist*, whilst John perused the Bible. He began at First Genesis and read until after I had turned in. His attitude seemed to be as toward a literary curiosa rather than the revealed Word.

## November 5, Monday

There was less rain last night, but I cannot honestly record that the wind has [died] down much. I repeatedly asserted it was subsiding throughout the day, but more to whistle my courage up than from any real conviction in the truth of my contention. It seems to have settled down into a no'wester, and is blowing like the devil from there.

Beans for breakfast, both fried and boiled. I did not know that any one thing could taste so good so continuously.

John's cigarettes have given out, and he is now smoking Lucky Strike [tobacco]<sup>174</sup> rolled in Carnegie Institution stationery. He has tried out all the other papers we have with us, some yellow Trujillo Railroad stuff and some white scratch we bought in Bluefields, but prefers the C. I. Bond, says the rag flavor is quite tasty. There is only one tin of Lucky Strike, however, and when that goes it looks like coconut fiber or total abstinence.

Wrote up my diary to yesterday describing the storm. I had Whitman Hyde and Workman Thompson give me the itinerary and history of that last voyage of the *Brilliant* from the time she left Ceiba at noon on the 3rd until the *Atlántida* took them off Sandy Key on the morning of the 4th. In writing it up, I followed their wording as much as possible, though here and there I permitted myself a few interpretive touches.

Beans, bread, tea, and guava jam for lunch. Read, wrote, and rested, three Rs in the afternoon. Toward evening John and I walked down to Marshall's Rock again.

Here at the house, the gale seemed to have abated a bit, but out there on that exposed point it still raged with utmost fury. I could scarcely stand erect against it. The storm is closing its fourth day without any appreciable sign of abating. Sometimes we think the sea is not so high, and clearly there is less rain, and once in a while we see the mainland or catch a very small and fleeting glimpse of a tiny patch of dull blue sky, but until this furious gusty gale from the northwest goes down, we can have no fair promise of better weather.

Charley brought ashore the phonograph yesterday and we have been having some consolation out of that. The Bush grandchildren and three other semi-adopted kiddies, one black as the midnight sky, take great pleasure out of it. One of these, a little gringo girl of 9, half gringo I should perhaps have said, is very charming in a totally unkempt way. The father is an American carpenter on the mainland, the mother was a Hondureña and is dead. I cannot make out whether this little girl is an "outside child"<sup>175</sup> or not. She has a piquant little gringo face, hazel eyes, tousled mop of brown-gold hair, and pretty little hands. The father has left her with Mrs. Bush for keeping until he can take her to his sister in the States.

There was some talk of organizing a hunting expedition tomorrow to go to the other island to kill a 400-lb hog there. It escaped several years ago and would make good eating.

Beans, bread, plantain, tea, and guava jelly for supper. *Que sabroso el primero*. [How tasty the first.]

In the evening, I read my account of the last cruise of the *Brilliant* to her captain and Workman Thompson to see if I had omitted or misstated any essential points, but they agreed I

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<sup>174</sup> Lucky Strike is a brand of tobacco (introduced 1871) and cigarettes (by the early 1900s), the name inspired by the gold rushes and striking gold.

<sup>175</sup> "Outside" is a term for illegitimate children, born outside of wedlock (Lord 1985: 56).

had not. I read *Art and Archaeology* until nearly ten, a late hour for this island. The weather seemed slightly better when I went to bed, although it was raining again.

### November 6, Tuesday. 0 Xul

It undoubtedly is getting clearer, but the storm is a long time in dying. Our diet was unexpectedly varied today by some game, called locally a rabbit, but like no rabbit either of us ever saw. During the course of the day, Workman Thompson killed four of these. They are about as large as a good-sized cat, reddish yellow, something like the red in a red fox. The legs are short, thin, and three-toed, the ears are very small, and there is no tail. He is clearly a rodent and looks a great deal like the tepiscuintle or gibnut [Figure 17.1].<sup>176</sup> The one we ate was fat as butter, indeed Mrs. Bush fried quite a lot of lard out of him. The meat was fair, though not rich in flavor.



Figure 17.1. A tepiscuintle, also known on the Bay Islands as a “Royal Rat.”

Today was the first day we have been here that it did not rain almost continuously, and John was able to make four sketches between showers. Unfortunately, he lost in the sand—he says they blew right out of his pocket—two of his best, and at present unduplicatable even at home, brushes. His paints are even in a more demoralized condition that we are. Although the best that Bourgeois and Windsor and Newton can make, they have been unable to withstand the vicissitudes of this hostile environment. In the Zacapa plains, his wax cranes ran down into a many-colored fluid, which stained his khaki jacket like Joseph’s famous coat of many colors.

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<sup>176</sup> The *tepscuintli* (Nahua *tepezcuintl*) and gibnut are also known as a lowland paca (*Cuniculus paca*), formerly called an agouti (*Dasyprocta*). The meat is tasty and mild-flavored.

The same day, heat dried the glycerin out of the watercolors, while the jogging of the cargo-mules ground the pastels to the consistency of dust. Down here, the humidity has actually dissolved the water colors. He tells me almost tearfully that it is the most expensive colors which have the highest coefficient of deliquescence.<sup>177</sup>

His sketches of the aftermath of the storm are fine. He seems to have caught the cold, menacing gray of the horizon, the restless green of the sea, and the cruel white of the surf, admirably. One sketch bears a delightful new technique, a sort of watercolor Ben Day, caused by the dappling of a fine spray like rain, to John's disgust. I suggested another, a selective use of sand, which is blowing all over the place; all he would need is a body which would hold it in varying intensities.

I wrote all morning, and finally brought my diary up to date, but this filled the morning, and it was time to sit down to beans, guava, tea, and bread before I had finished. After lunch, I started to finish that criticism of Joe's new book, which I started two weeks ago at Rincón. I brought this fairly well toward its conclusion when Mrs. Bush announced lunch. It was early, about half after three, but she wanted to sew after lunch so we had it early.

John and I took a long walk afterward. It must have been all of a mile, but in comparison to what we have been doing the past five days, it seemed like 20. We walked eastward, i.e., away from Marshall's Rock, down by the *comandancia*. Outside, the three boats were riding and rocking at anchor. The *Atlántida* was just getting ready to tow the *Merry Widow* a little closer to shore so the wind from the west would not beat against her so. We walked along the shore, a good distance beyond the *comandancia*, and were getting somewhere near the northeast corner of the island before we finally turned back. We climbed around one rock jutting out into the sea at great risk of being drenched by the spray. We literally dodged between the supposedly high seventh waves.<sup>178</sup>

Around this point, there was a lovely stretch of beach and a tall, prosperous-looking coconut grove. Beyond, another ridge of rock came out to sea, and as it was getting dark, we decided not to attempt to climb around it. I should like to go around the entire periphery of the island and believe it can be done, but it would require at least a couple of hours, more time than remained before dark. We got back about five thirty and, as it was too early to light the lamp and start to work, I lay down.

About six, I walked down to Carl Bush's house and joined a group discussing the weather, ships' courses, etc., etc. The bearing of this island from Ceiba seemed to be the chief bone of contention. Stayed here for nearly an hour and then returned to our house. By this time, the lamp was lighted and I could get to work. Finished the criticism of Joe's book, and also wrote out the first rough draft of some memoranda on the wooden ship-building industry at Oak Ridge.

Charley Cooper<sup>179</sup> and John had already turned in before I had finished. It seemed about midnight, but in reality, it was just nine o'clock. I looked out before getting into my cot to see

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<sup>177</sup> Deliquescence refers to the tendency of a substance to absorb atmospheric moisture and liquefy.

<sup>178</sup> Reference to an old belief that waves travel in groups and the seventh one is the highest.

<sup>179</sup> Morley mistakenly names Charley as a "Cooper"; he was actually an "Osgood."



whether it was clearing, but the sky was mistier than ever, and in fact it was raining again. The weather is too discouraging to even think about. This is the end of the fifth day that we have been storm-stayed here, and it looks as though it might be another five or even ten days before we get away.

### **November 7, Wednesday**

The sky and wind have cleared up, and right here in the lee of the island the sea looks “glassy ca’m,” but outside, the boys all think it is still very rough. Meanwhile, the monotony of a frijole diet is getting on everybody’s nerves, and I fancy some of the boats will be slipping out. It has become the fashion to abuse Hog Islands as the most unspeakable place on earth, but to me, when I remember the terribleness of the past six days, it is a haven of the first order. Perhaps it is because I have work to do, and most of the boys stranded here have not. At all events, I have managed to keep busy and contented. I think I have minded it less than John.

I pounded the little Corona almost all day. In the morning, I finished that memorandum on the wooden ship-building industry at Oak Ridge, and started type-writing it. Finished about four, just before dinner. After dinner, I walked down to the *comandancia* to see Justo Ponce, the *comandante* of the *Atlántida*, and asked him if he will take us to Ceiba when he goes. Charley says the *Lilly Elena* is too short of fuel to go to Ceiba direct from here, and will have to put back to the Islands for fuel before she can make the trip. Ponce says he will take us with him to Ceiba, and that if the weather is as clear tomorrow as it has been today, he will try to make the trip Friday.

With this understanding, John and I returned to our *casa*. Later, Charley came up and said Ponce had changed his mind again and was going to go to Ruatan and not Ceiba first, and was planning on leaving tomorrow instead of the next day. What a weather vane. Truth is, I fancy he regrets having promised to take me, and is using this way out of it, because he knows I do not want to return to Ruatan. *Vamos a ver*.

Charley says a new ship is in, the *Conductor*, from Coxen’s Hole, which came over to see if the *Merry Widow* had made here safely when the storm broke, and to take some of her forty thousand coconuts. Both the *Merry Widow* and the *Conductor* are planning on returning to Coxen Hole tomorrow. Charley’s people have not been very much worried about him, as they surmised he would run for the Hog Islands in the face of that black and threatening sky of the night of the first. Even if he hadn’t come here first, they knew he couldn’t stay off Ceiba in what followed. He says Earl Cooper in the *Snake* hasn’t been able to get back from Oak Ridge either.

Some boat as yet unaccounted for is said to have left Utila, the afternoon of the second. I hardly think it can be true, however, in the face of the gale which was blowing by that time.

### **November 8, Thursday**

When we looked out the window the first thing this morning, all four boars were riding at anchor just off Cap. Bush’s beach. The wind had shifted to a “no’easter” in the night, and they all had to slip around here. That is why the Hog Islands is considered by the sailors of this coast to be such a poor haven. There is no harbor here, properly speaking, and they have to maintain anchor watches practically every night, for whenever the wind checks to a different direction,

they have to hoist anchors and slip around to another side. It's a sort of ring around the rosy game with the wind, and the island in between.

At breakfast we were a perturbed council. Food running low, the boys wanting to get away, and Ruatan the only place they dare go. That won't do John and me any good. Indeed, I would rather wait here than have to return to Coxen Hole again, for it would only mean we would have the trip to do over again.

Last night the *Atlántida* couldn't get her engine to start, and Charley had to tow her around with the *Lilly Elena*, to save her from drifting on the shore. Ponce has so little fuel he says that he is afraid to risk Ceiba, but is leaving this morning for Coxen Hole, where he can get more. I think I have mentioned before that the *Atlántida* has a 38 h.p. engine, whereas it is doubtful whether our engine is now developing any more than 12 h.p., insufficient to make any real headway against the high seas all agree are still running. I tried to draw out of John whether he wanted to take this chance of going to Coxen Hole or staying here, but his only contribution was, "I am ready to do anything you say"; willing, but hardly helpful.

I told Charley to ask Ponce if he would give us a tow, and if he will, we will go when they do. It would seem, after being saved from going down on the beach by our boat last night, he would hardly refuse us, and then we would delay him so little, not more than an hour at the outside, for we would be using our engine, too. Charley saw him, and he said he would do it. Everybody wanted to get off early, so we hurried; got ourselves packed, and Charley took the things out to the *Lilly Elena* with Workman Thompson in the dory.

I found out what I owed Mrs. Bush, or rather she left the matter up to me, and I suggested paying her what Mrs. García had asked at Oak Ridge, 50 cents gold a meal. To be sure, Mrs. Bush's meals were not so elaborate as Mrs. García's, through no fault of hers, however, but what they lacked in variety they more than made up in kindness of spirit, and having dropped in on her quite uninvited out of the sea, we thought it none too much.

The time had apparently come to say good-bye to these hospitable people. Shook hands with everybody, thanking them for housing us so comfortably, and got into the dory, and were soon aboard the *Lilly Elena*. Campbell and the captain, whom Charley calls Sen-sen, I take it after the famous breath perfumers of that name—look positively sleek and fat. Charley has been sure all along that they have had a secret hoard of food aboard. They have made no complaint all these six days, and plantain in all conscience is a monotonous enough diet by itself. No, we've figured it out that they saved all that last food Charley bought in Coxen Hole, and have been flourishing on it. Neither one of them has been ashore, and both look fat and sleek as an alderman.

Preparations were going forward rapidly for leaving. Our big hawser, about a 2-inch cable, was made ready and we pulled abreast the *Atlántida* and flung it over to her. The latter's engine was already going and, as the hawser tautened, our own little wheezer got into action. We waved to all the Bushes ashore as we pulled around the point east of our anchorage, and headed out between the two islands through what they call the bogue [waterway].

At first, everything went merry as a marriage bell. The sea wasn't too high—yet—the *Atlántida* did not even keep the hawser taut, and we felt we were no great drag on her. When we got out into the bogue, we could see the *Merry Widow* and, farther on, the *Conductor* apparently having not too easy a time of it. The wind was from the northeast, and they were

having difficulties beating over to Ruatan in the face of it. As we swung fair into the sea beyond the beam, the waves increased, and also the wind. Workman Thompson was at the wheel, and Charley everywhere. I sat astride the boom, well forward, in fact just behind the main-mast, and John on the deck just aft the hatch.

The boys raised the jigger sail first, and then her jib. When the *Atlántida* saw us getting up our canvas, they raised their one sail, a small mainsail. Charley thought he would be smart next, and raise our mainsail. The breeze was by this time blowing pretty stiff, and the waves rolling in 15 [feet] high from the northeast. I moved from the boom, and they started raising her. She was almost up when r-r-r-r-rip, and the edge tore loose, and the whole sail flapped wildly in the breeze. They dropped her quickly and investigated the damage. It seems she had caught on the stern of the dory going up, and the wind had done the rest.

But we soon had other troubles to think of: as we got farther and farther away from the islands, wind and sea grew higher and higher. The *Atlántida* would toil laboriously to the top of a tremendous wave, and then would almost disappear as she rocketed down the other side of her. More often, now, the hawser would tauten, as sometimes we would be in the incline up, while she was slipping down. All in all, however, we were not holding her back much. Suddenly the cry went up, "the hawser's parted." We could hear faint yells from the *Atlántida* and see a waving of hands. The boys hauled rapidly in on the hawser to keep it from fouling the propeller, and when they dragged the end aboard, we were amazed to see the knot, a running bowling, was intact. In short, we had been deliberately cast off by the ungracious Ponce!

He was roundly cursed by everyone, and we had saved him from going on the beach not a half a dozen hours before, when his engine wouldn't start, and the *Lilly Elena* had towed him around to the lee side. In addition, Charley estimated that he had given him at least four gallons of gasoline, first and last. This was *paisano* gratitude, they all said, and Workman Thompson, who is noted for his hindsight pre-vision, said he "knowed he would all de time." By this time, although we'd been out less than an hour, I was utterly miserable from the sea, and did not know whether I would be able to hold on to my breakfast until we got back through the bogues or not. By battening down my hatch, however, I managed to contain myself, and within a half hour we were back in calmer water.

The Bushes were greatly surprised to see us, but apparently not surprised at Ponce's ingratitude. Mrs. Bush said it was no more than one would expect of "a Spanish man." Everybody vowed they would get even, and I fancy Charley has it in his power to refuse the *Atlántida* help often. They're always broken down, those government boats, and getting the Osgoods there at Ruatan to help them.

At dinner, the decision was reached that they would patch the mainsail, and leave for Ruatan early in the morning. They would get the first boat out of Ruatan for Ceiba to call for us, and in the meantime, Charley would get a new mainsail made at Oak Ridge and overhaul and clean the engines, both of which are very necessary, the mainsail now being in shreds and the engine developing no more than two-thirds of her power. They brought some of our stuff back on shore before lunch, and after lunch I went aboard the *Lilly Elena* again to bring ashore a few other things we wanted. The only delicacies in the larder that I could find was our guava jelly and jam, and one lone tin of asparagus tips. I told Campbell he was to stay by the ship, and then come back to shore.

Not long after, Whitman Hyde, Cap. Jim, and Harry Bush got back in the Bush dory, the *Miami*, from visting the wreck. They brought back a door of a locker, the only thing they salvaged. Whitman had the knob of this in his pocket; he called it "her jewelry." He says her spars and ballast are still out there. The reef is not long, and if she had gone 50 feet farther west or 30 feet farther east, she would have been safe and only have drifted on the beach, where at least we could have salvaged her, if not saved her. What a costly ten yards.

John made an excellent watercolor of Whitman in his so'wester. Caught the expression and coloring just right. He rendered Whit's week's growth of beard so realistically that I wanted to get at it with a Gillette.

We all sat around and "swapped lies" under the coconuts on the beach after supper, telling hair-breadth escapes which had passed us by, etc., etc. Workman Thompson told how he had nearly met death by a machete right here on Hog Islands because of some jealous Negro. All with common accord passed the palm to Charley, when it came to telling a "real one": in any catch-as-catch-can lying match, Charley has 'em all gasping with admiration and envy.

About nine, Charley, Workman, and Whitman bid us goodbye to go aboard, as they are going to leave about two o'clock. Whitman gave me a letter to take to John Yates, owner of the *Brilliant*, when I got to Ceiba. He read it to me. I was in hopes that it would contain a few real dramatic touches, but it was very uninspired, not to say heavy-going and downright illiterate, a very unpicturesque variety of it.

Cap. Jim, who is the prize pessimist of the Bay Islands, predicts a heavy norther. Mrs. Bush says "Never mind wot Jim Bush tells you; if I'd 'a listened to him he'd 'a had me in my grave long ago. I calls him a Job's comforter." I must say he hasn't given vent to one cheerful sentiment since we struck the island; perhaps that's why.

## CHAPTER 18

### STRANDED ON HOG ISLAND

#### November 9, Friday

We heard the engine of the *Lilly Elena* sometime about two in the morning. When we looked out our one window she was gone.

For me it was a working day. I wrote all day long from seven in the morning until ten at night, literally, only laying off twice for beans and tea at lunch and dinner, and for an ocean bath in the late afternoon.

I finished, re-read and corrected that criticism of Joe [Spinden's] new book.<sup>180</sup> It is a good piece of work and as I said in the review, "It should fill a long-felt want in the literature of Middle America Archaeology, namely that for a popular, concise and general presentation of the subject." He takes a shy at me on page 127 about certain writers regarding the stelae being primarily time-markers set up to mark the successive *hotuns*<sup>181</sup> "as an unnecessarily narrow view." As I also pointed out, as so stated, this thesis is unnecessarily narrow since none of the early monuments in the Peten cities, Stelae 9 and 3 at Uaxactun and Stelae 3, 10, and 17 at Tikal, record *hotun* endings. The earliest *hotun* ending in the region is 9.8.15.0.0. on Stela 25 at Piedras Negras. In the south, however, the earliest is on the newly discovered Stela 24 at Copan, 9.2.10.0.0, 125 years earlier.

My own feeling is that the Maya monuments were always erected, first, last, and all the time to mark the passage of time.<sup>182</sup> That at first, they may have been erected at any time during the *hotun*, this is certainly true of the north as we have seen from the earliest stelae at the two oldest northern cities, now known as Uaxactun and Tikal, and may also have been true in the earliest times in the south as well. But as early as the second or third *k'atun* of Cycle 9 (9.2.10.0.0) at Copan, at least, the practice of erecting the monuments on the *hotun* endings had already commenced.

Joe's book, however, is so generally excellent that it is hair-splitting to raise issues like this, particularly when justifiable differences of opinion exist, and I tried to give it well-merited praise. After finishing it, I typed it out—a lengthy job I did not complete until just before dinner.

In the evening I wrote a long letter to Carl Guthe in reply to his of June 3rd, which reached

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<sup>180</sup> Morley's review (1918b) of Spinden's (1917) *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America*.

<sup>181</sup> A *hotun* is a five-year interval, or quarter, of a 20-year *k'atun*.

<sup>182</sup> This erroneous view, reinforced by J.E.S. Thompson, cast a pall over Maya studies for the next forty years, broken only when Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960) discovered that the stelae held historical information about real persons. This launched the modern phase of Maya epigraphic studies, which have proved that the inscriptions were much more than mere time markers.

me on October 31, just five months late! This isn't to be interpreted as a kick against the postal authorities—on the contrary. I am thankful enough for having gotten it at all. I told him all about the discoveries in that first Honduran trip.

### November 10, Saturday

Today I had planned a real piece of work, no less than bringing my expense account from August first to date, a veritable cleansing of the Augean stables. It covers all our expenses at Tegucigalpa and since, down to San Pedro, and Puerto Cortés, across to Tela and Ceiba, thence to the Islands, to Trujillo, down the Mosquito Coast to Bluefields, back Trujillo, the Islands, and before I wind it up I will include the closing of our charter of the *Lilly Elena*. What I wanted to do today was to strike a trial balance, and see how many millions of dollars I would have to dig out of my own pocket this time to make the wretched thing balance. Last time it was two hundred. One spends money and forgets to put it down and then there is no record of it, or recourse other than one's own slender exchequer. All I hoped to do today, therefore, was to see how much or little I was out.

It is a very human trait to put off disagreeable tasks, and all morning long I succeeded in inventing a number of smaller tasks to stave off the big one. These small duties carried me up until lunch, but afterward there was nothing to do but get at it. All the ingredients were present—bills, vouchers, etc., etc.—so I started in. Turned myself into a Burroughs adding machine, consumed reams of paper and tons of gray matter.

At one awful moment it looked as though my contribution to the cause would have to be \$250.00, but I discovered my Tegucigalpa checkbook with four stubs aggregating \$374.00 *sols*, and this brings me down to about the \$100.00 gold I thought I owed. Having come out this satisfactorily, I desisted for the afternoon. It was high time, as Elizabeth Bush was already waiting to set the table.

After supper, Carl Bush came up to say that one of the government cutters, the *Colon*, was off the *comandancia*. This was the same one we had left at Oak Ridge ten days ago overhauling. John, Carl, and I walked down to the *comandancia* and I hailed the captain, Charley Borden, and asked him to come ashore. Presently, he put off in their small boat and landed. I asked him where he was going next and when he said Ceiba, asked him to take me out to the *comandante*, López, to see if he would take me. Carl Bush rowed me out.

The *comandante* was below in the forward hold where the bunks are, and did not look too happy. It seems the passage over had been exceedingly rough. It was perhaps an inauspicious moment to ask him to land us in Ceiba, but there was no help for it.

I explained who we were, and latter by the light of a smelly oil lantern, showed him my letter from President Betrand and also the one from Mesa Calix at San Pedro Sula to [Governor] Inestrosa.

He seemed to say "yes," said it was "*muy delicado*." I called his attention to what the president had ordered all the coast authorities to do, to lend us every aid, and he said to come around in the morning and we would talk it over further. He seemed ill, indeed I learned later from Charley Borden that he was sea-sick all the way over, and as there was nothing further to be gained by staying, I got Carl and we went ashore. Even in this more-or-less sheltered anchorage, a fairly good swell was running.

John and Charley Borden had walked back to the Bushes' in the meantime, and we joined them there to hear the latest news. First, two vessels are still missing, the *Kate Esau* and the *Beatrice Adele*. It is probable that one or even both may have made Rincón, although some, indeed considerable, anxiety is being felt over the former. She was last seen a week ago yesterday (Friday, Nov. 2) about two in the afternoon making for Utila. The *Tegucigalpa*, a yawl, was running for Ruatan and the *Kate Esau* crossed her bows heading for Utila. The *Tegucigalpa* herself did not make Port Royal until the next afternoon when she was towed back to Oak Ridge by the *Gloriosa*.

A boat reached Coxen Hole Monday or Tuesday from Utila saying the *Kate Esau* did not reach there. The only hope for her seems to be either that she put back to Port Sol, or else made Rincón. If she had done the latter, she certainly would have let Tela know, and the *Frontier*, a U. F. Co. boat from there says she has not been heard of. They fear she could not have made Rincón with her poor engine, which even in good weather is all the time breaking down, and in the full fury of Friday night's gale, when the *Brilliant* struck the reef, it seems highly improbable that they could have carried her that far.

The damage at Tela through the storm is said to reach a half million dollars, the wharf was badly damaged, the bridge between the two towns washed out, and a lot of the railroad in the interior. They lost a hundred thousand coconuts at Bonacca. The gale must have been high, as the *Excelsior*, which left Tampa, Florida, on Monday with the wind at her heels made Bonacca in 3½ days! The *Colon* left Oak Ridge on Thursday taking the Forky's back to Carib Point, and Bob told Charley Borden he scarcely ever remembered seeing higher seas, and that was right under the lee of the middle island. As reports begin to filter in from here, there, and everywhere, it is evident that the storm was a very heavy one.<sup>183</sup> We asked about the *Lilly Elena*, and learned she left yesterday for Bonacca. This was news to us, as she was only going to Oak Ridge when she left here. The *Atlántida* did not stop long at Ruatan, but went on to Utila.

And so we are gradually picking up news of the outside world. Charley doesn't know whether they will leave for Ceiba in the morning. He says the seas were very high today between here and Coxen Hole, so high in fact that he doesn't know whether they could have landed at Ceiba had they been there. We asked him to use his influence with the *comandante*, which he promised to do. I have misgivings, though, that he will not take us. He seemed so ready to lie about where he was going when he knew I wanted to go to Ceiba.

Wrote on my diary for about an hour before going to bed.

## November 11, Sunday

We woke up early, looked out our window and saw that it was a lovely day. Such a day in fact as we could make Ceiba. After breakfast, walked down to the *comandancia* to learn our fate, but no life was stirring aboard the *Colon* and we had our walk for our pains. The boys, Charley Borden, captain, and Willie Kirkconnell, both from Bonacca—came ashore later and said they weren't going today because being Sunday, the *comandante* was afraid the stores would all be

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<sup>183</sup> As noted earlier, on-line reports of the 1917 Atlantic hurricane season do not mention one in late October or early November, nor do they mention a tropical depression in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, this must have been a locally heavy and dangerous storm.

closed and even if they did get to Ceiba they would be unable to buy any oil. They need oil badly and the chance was too big to run.

I went down later in the morning and interviewed the *comandante* himself. He was ashore at the *comandancia* visting Rosa, the Hog Island *comandante's* black lady. Her lord and master went on the *Atlántida* to Utila when it left Thursday. We talked the matter over and he said to come back this evening and he would let me know. He seemed pleasant enough, but the equation is against us and I fancy he will turn us down in the end.

The Bushes are all dressed up against the Lord's Day [Figure 18.1]. Elizabeth has a clean middle blouse, Captain Jim is resplendent in clean khaki trousers and bright blue shirt, and I fancy I detect few layers of dirt on the kids. Lottie even has a clean dress. Only Othiella does not seem to have been affected by the general furnishing up.



Figure 18.1. The Bush family: Lenare standing in the center; Capt. Jim seated next to his wife.

I think I haven't gone into the Bushes' heretofore, and being Sunday and a day of rest, I had best describe them. They are great adopters, the Bushes. They are now raising, in addition to their own children (the youngest of whom is only six), two grandchildren, 3 and 6 respectively, another little girl about 4 or 5—no relation—and a black girl, Othiella, 10. The oldest son, Carl, in addition to his own year-old baby, has a little girl, Lottie, 10, of whom more later. This coconut grove looks like a day nursery when they are all out.

Captain Jim is a confirmed pessimist, a Job's comforter, according to Mrs. Bush. When a fair easterly breeze is on and not a cloud in the sky, he will shake his head and say "Bod, Bod no'wester comin'." He is very dry and inordinately fond of his grandson, Jim Fisher, who indeed calls his grandfather Daddy.

Mrs. Jim must have been a fine-looking girl in her day: tall, beautiful red-black hair, and good features. She is very fond of talking, telling her troubles, raising her eyes heavenward and



calling on the “dear Lord.” She has a heart of gold withal, is hospitable, friendly and kind, and has literally saved the lives of two gringos whom an unfriendly fate cast upon her shores.

Carl, the eldest boy, is married to a Beatrice Hill, they have a little girl, Lulu. He is perhaps 26 and is a fine upstanding example of the Island men. He’s a Bush, according to Mrs. Bush, “just that set.”

The next child, Lenare, is off in Utila with the baby, Annie. She, I judge from Mrs. Bush, is the wheel-horse of the family. She’s 25, hates marriage, disbelieves in love between man and woman, wants to be a nurse, and manages this household, Mrs. Bush freely admits, both her nephew, niece, the adopted children, brothers and sisters, and I suspect even her mother and father. If the children are reprimanded or even spanked, Lenare does it; if they are sick, Lenare pours down the castor oil, every morning and afternoon, and here is indeed the remarkable part of it—she has all those children at a little school she teaches herself! Fancy finding time for that in her multifarious household duties; nieces, nephews, brother and sisters obey her to the dot, and love her too.

Mrs. Bush says she never interferes with Lenare and the children because she knows Lenare’s always fair and just. With Lenare gone, she is lost, she avers, the children go dirty, untaught, get sick, are disobedient, and the whole household is at sixes and sevens. Everybody, in fact, wants her back and Mrs. Bush scans the horizon twenty times a day looking for the *Gypsy*, on which they will return.

Nellie, the one who is having trouble with her husband, comes next. She does not like the Hog Islands and lives in Utila. Her two children, Jim and Marie, have been practically raised by Mrs. Bush—Jim indeed, since he was nine months old, and they regard their grandparents as father and mother, rather than Nellie and Jim Fisher. I understand from Mrs. Bush Nellie is on the point of getting a divorce.

Jim, the next child, is 20 and is in Utila. Mrs. Bush says of him that he is the handsomest of her family. If we stay here as indefinitely as we appear to be going to, we may meet him yet.

Harry, a boy of 17, comes next. He is here. Very good looking, and dreamy. He works spasmodically, but more often sits and looks at the sea by the hour. I asked him the other day what he was going to do with himself, and he said, “go to sea.” He cannot help it, I daresay, born with salt water in his nostrils. His mother fears the sea. She has cause to—they lost their ship and fortune in the great hurricane of 1915 which sunk the *Marowijne*. Carl was aboard her with his wife, and nearly lost his life that time.<sup>184</sup> Mrs. Bush says the sea is a woman’s sorrow. In the Caymans there are no men’s graves: they all perish at sea.

Annie, aged 6, comes next. She is now in Utila with Lenare, who is practically her foster mother, having taken all the responsibilities of raising her since she was a baby.

That finishes Captain Jim’s immediate family, three sons, Carl, Jim, and Harry, and four daughters, Lenare, Nellie, Lizzi, and Annie. Bless me, I’ve left out Liz. She comes between Harry and Annie, is about 16, and is very much here. She is at the coquettish age and flirts and makes eyes at all the good-looking young Islanders who come ashore. She is rather pretty,

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<sup>184</sup> The Great Hurricane of 1915, a Category 4 storm, tracked through the Caribbean in late September, making final landfall near New Orleans, killing 275 people.

would be quite so if it were not for a disfiguring and prominent gold-crowned tooth, and a rather slovenly appearance. She has lovely eyes and her mother's lovely hair.

Captain Jim and his three sons have rented the Hog Islands from the Melhados at Trujillo, \$3,500 *sols* a year, and the Melhados will only lease by the year. And they [the Bushes] are trying to recoup their fortunes by coconuts. They sell about 20,000 a month from the islands and keys, and if the present price of coconuts holds, they will make good.

I've spoken about Carl's wife and baby, Lulu, and a little girl of 9 named Lottie, to me the most pitiful object on the island, half Hondureño and half either American or Swede. Sweden via America I fancy. I cannot even find out the last name. Mrs. Bush calls her father Uncle Johnny, "old Uncle Johnny," to be accurate. He is 52 and a carpenter across at Armenia on the mainland. I take it he is not American, as Mrs. Bush says he has a noticeable foreign accent. He has sisters living in the States, however.

Lottie's mother was a Hondureña who deserted her when she was 9 months old. One day when Uncle Johnny was off at work, this woman, who was young I understand, locked Lottie up in the house and disappeared. Her father tried to raise her, but for the last five years has kept her over here on the Hog Islands with whoever the custodian might be.

The Bushes have only been here since April, but before that another white (Island) family had the islands and they allowed Lottie to grow up. She seems to have had little or no training, a little white Topsy. Uncle Johnny tried to have her over with him on the coast, but there was no one to take care of her and he had to send her back. He is very fond of her and clothes her, the Bushes feed her, and Lenare is teaching her. She is a bright and rather pretty little thing, wild, shy, and hopelessly illiterate. She doesn't show any Hondureño blood, however. What can the future of such a little waif be? Her father talks vaguely of taking her to her sisters in the States after "the Christmas," but somehow it seems as though it would not materialize. So much luck could hardly overtake little Lottie.

Let me hasten to close up the rest of the Bushes' adoptives. There is a little girl, Elmie, about 5. I am a bit vague myself how she came into the family, but she is here to stay apparently, and a black girl Othiella, not one syllable of whose name Mrs. Bush ever slights, O-thi-el-la. She was inherited from somebody and is a part of the family.

The two Bush grandchildren I have already spoken of. Marie has some scalp troubles at present and they have had to cut the child's lovely hair off short. Little Jim has boils now, and is fretful and feverish, not to say very badly spoiled by his grandfather.

That finishes the Bushes. When they are all home there are 15 of them, kindly Island people.

To get back to the day's events. A great disappointment was in store for me at its close. After supper, I walked down to the *comandancia* with Willie Kirkconnell to see if the *comandante* would take us on the *Colon* when she leaves tomorrow. Old black Rosa said he had just gone out to the boat and said he would. My hopes were high, therefore, and I put out with Willie Kirkconnell, but, unhappily, too prematurely. When I asked him what decision he had reached, he said he wouldn't take me. Nor from that position could I stir the churlish fellow. I talked of the president's letter, our own destitute condition—his instructions to aid sufferers—and urged him strongly to take us. At first he lied, said he wasn't going to Ceiba for three days, i.e., until the 15th, but finally came out point blank and refused.

I left him with a warning that I would give myself the extreme pleasure of reporting him when I got to Ceiba. We appealed to him on two legitimate grounds, first the general ones—as sufferers from the recent storm—and the specific one, holding a direct letter from the president bespeaking every courtesy from us from the north coast officials, nay more ordering the same. The Island boys came ashore in the evening and Charley Borden says that he is worried, sits by himself forward, and speaks to nobody. These boys think it is as much to spite them as us that he refused, as they have been urging him to take us. I blew off steam by writing him a letter in my atrocious Spanish and warning him that if he left without us, I would report him to the president and also his immediate superior, Gallardo, “*sin falta*” [without fail].

I see now where I made my original blunder. If I had offered him a little money the day I had him ashore by himself, he would have taken me like a shot. It never occurred to me at the time, and of course when he had once taken his stand before the crew, it was too late.

### November 12, Monday

Another lovely day and we should have been on the way to Ceiba except for my error in judgment in not bribing the *comandante* of the *Ceiba* [sic., he meant to write *Colon*] before it was too late.

Early in the morning, Cap. Jim, Harry, and Carl went out in the *Miami* to see what they could salvage from the *Brilliant*. While I was writing to Washington, Mrs. Bush came in the door and said, “ship ahoy.” Everybody appeared from everywhere at once and we looked out to the sea, but no sail. The children playing up around Marshall’s Rock had given the alarm, and we all repaired thither. Sure enough, there was a small boat a long way out, yawl rigged, heading apparently for Ceiba or Armenia. Elizabeth thought it was going to Ceiba, but it headed more toward Armenia. We watched it for a long time but it avoided us like a lazaretto and made off toward Armenia and our hopes sank.

John spent almost the entire morning in sketching and I in writing.

Toward the close of the afternoon, the wreckers returned from the *Brilliant* with a heterogeneous booty. The salvage included: 50 bottles of beer; between 60 and 90 bottles of pop (*refrescos*); 4 odd shoes, no two mates, very, very much the worse for submersion in the briny deep; an old block; a quadrant; a piece or two of iron; some ruined rope and rotten canvas. Her main mast is still out there roped to the reef by her rigging, anchor, and ballast. And this is all that is left of the *Brilliant*.

We all had some “pop.” John and I split a bottle of white liquid as being the least malevolent in color. The favorite with the Bushes was a villainous looking red, which fairly shrieked of coal tar origin. Mrs. Bush is worried where the *Gypsy* is. This is the third lovely day, almost a “glassy calm” in fact, and she cannot understand why Lenare—always a home-body—stays [away] so long.

I am looking for the *Conductor* myself tomorrow. Charley was to tell her to call for us on the way to Ceiba from Coxen Hole, and she usually leaves there late Monday afternoon or evening. So, we are looking for her here in the morning.

The sunset was lovely, though hardly gorgeous. The west was illuminated by a brilliant golden orange glow, a flat color with no shading, high or low lights, a flat field of luminous golden light, yellow at first but later deepening into orange. Against this the coconut palms on

the point just west of the house pricked a sharp black silhouette against the horizon, so unreally beautiful as to have been specially "composed" by a master hand. The mountains off to the landward were a gray lavender, an unobtrusive tint one scarcely notices as one's eye unconsciously focused on that graceful clump of palms etched in black against the flaming background of the western sky.

### November 13, Tuesday

I was awakened by "ship ahoy" and through the window I could see a sailboat riding at anchor off shore. At first, I thought it was the *Conductor*, but I heard Captain Jim say it was the *Gypsy*. Before we got up, a dory put off.

Poor Mrs. Bush was doomed to a great disappointment. Lenare, for whom she had been longing, did not come! Jim, "the handsome son," was in fact the only one who did, and he brought news of the others. Little Annie has been ill with the fever since they got there, and still ill in fact, and Lenare did not want to leave with her in such a condition, least of all to return to such an out of the way place as Hog Islands, so she stayed until the next boat over.

They introduced me to young Jim, who is as handsome as his mother's picture of him—one of those faces, finely cut, that everyone instinctively likes. He does not look as strong as the other two boys, although he is far more intelligent. There is an indefinable air of sadness about his face also, that seems to be due to his deep-set hazel eyes. He brought all the Utila news. The storm was terrific over there, not a plantation on the island but is down. No boats from Ceiba since the storm, 11 days when he had left, and the town is getting hungry. We had counted on fat days when the *Gypsy* came in, but all she could bring was 12 lbs of rice and 2 dozen tins of milk. Jim says things are getting low over there, and until some boat gets over from Ceiba there will be no relief. Two Vaccaro Bros. boats took refuge in Utila during the worst of the storm.

Friday afternoon—a week ago—they sighted the *Tegucigalpa* going eastward, but the wind was already so high that they couldn't get in. This was the boat that brought up finally at Port Royal, Ruatan, the next morning, partly "mashed up," as the Islanders put it.

It was quite an event opening the packages that Jim had brought, and seeing the several letters delivered. There were shoes for Captain Jim and Mrs. Jim. There was some difficulty in telling which was which, however, as both were of native make, and there seemed little choice in size. Mrs. Jim said she had ordered 5s, but 8s came. There were *paisano* straw hats all around, and some knickknacks and apples. These latter, with the "pop," made quite a fiesta. Generous people as they were, they tried to force some of the apples on us at lunch, but we resolutely refused to eat them. It would have been a crime to have done otherwise.

After the excitement had subsided, the three brothers went off in the *Miami* to see if there was another thing they could salvage from the *Brilliant*. I had some hopes that the captain of the *Gypsy*, Ellsworth Borden, might be deflected from his course so far as to take us to Ceiba. He was supposed to be going to Armenia for coconuts and then back to Utila. But when he came ashore, I saw this was hopeless. He is going to Belfate, not Armenia, and must be back in Utila by Friday, when his big coconut steamer calls. However, I was able to make a sort of arrangement with him for Thursday or Friday. Now that the *Conductor* is not coming, and the *Lilly Elena* is Lord know where, it looks as though the *Gypsy* is our best chance of getting back somewhere.

Captain Borden plans to return here from Belfate Thursday afternoon or Friday morning. He will then pick us up and carry us to Utila where we will have a much better chance of reaching Ceiba than from here. They have three or four boats a week over from there to the mainland. This seems to be after all our best chance of getting away from here, so we must contain our souls in patience for another three days. If by some chance we should get off then, it would give us just a fortnight to the day on Hog Islands. Captain Borden is a 6'1" Islander and has a son only 18, who is 6'2" in his bare feet, tall and strong as a Royal Palm.

After "the turn of the day," the Bordens went out to the *Gypsy* and she put out. There was just enough breeze to fill her mainsail and she seemed to soar away from us as if on wings. John tried to sketch her as she went out, but she was moving too fast even for his facile hand. Since the good weather set in, he has been working like a beaver. It's a poor day indeed when he doesn't make three or four watercolors to say anything of innumerable pencil drawings. He seems at last to have settled into a steady stride and is turning out some good things. His drawing as a rule is always better than his color, but even here he has struck a happy vein. He has the pale rich green of the inshore water, the less pronounced and dirtier water where the grass begins, and finally the deep sapphire blue of the Caribbean all down cold [Figure 18.2]. He is happier too for this work, and less restless. He is using himself up in this way, rather than damning the country, heat, bugs, food, and people. The only danger now is that his paper will give out. He is getting down to some delicate pale mid-Victorian sheets, grays, blues, and yellows, which he refuses to use, but I fancy before we turn our back on Hog Island he may have to.

As for me, I read Chap. 1 of the *Copan Inscriptions* on and off all day, making corrections and additions. Mr. Barnum will raise his editorial hand in horror when he sees this proof.<sup>185</sup> John calls it "half hours with my favorite author."

The days here are uneventful. We are still eating beans, and I have indigestion now almost every night in consequence. It is an open question which will last the longest, the beans or Eno's Fruit Salts, the only antidote we have.<sup>186</sup> The odds seem to be on the beans, as both John's bottle of Eno's and mine is running low

Toward the close of the afternoon Carl, Jim, and Harry returned from the *Brilliant*; this time they had only been able to salvage 6 bottles of beer, so I fancy they will go out to her no more. In the evening, Jim and Harry came into our house and visited us, where earlier impressions of Jim were strengthened. He is intelligent, young, and ambitious. In all of the time we have been here and all the people we have seen, he is the first one who has asked us what we are doing! As soon as the skiff is completed, which he is now building—about 4 or 5 tons—23-foot keel, he and Harry are going to take a cruise up to Caratasca and take some land up there and put out a coconut walk. Jim is anxious to know about the region—distances, character of the country, people, etc., so I read him my notes on the lagoon. He now thinks he will take up land on the strip between Tapacunta and the mouth of the lagoon. His skiff will draw less than 2' and he can get over the Tapacunta bar in her almost any time that it is open.

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<sup>185</sup> William Barnum was head of the CIW Division of Publications until his retirement in 1925.

<sup>186</sup> A sodium bicarbonate drink used like today's Alka Seltzer, Eno's Fruit Salts are still made by GlaxoSmithKline for the market in India.



Figure 18.2. John Held's watercolor of one of the Hog Islands.

Just before bed, John and I had a great to-do chasing Allee out of the room. This is a miserable, dirty, little, long-haired, white-once, Maltese terrier, which smells unto high heaven. The poor dog is always in grief of some sort, a sand burr in her foot or fleas or general despondency. She'll begin crying at night for no particular reason and moan and whine until one's nerves are raw. Several times she has tried to sleep in here with us, but she is too "high." Without seeing her, I can tell the instant she comes into the room. Tonight, she eluded us and took refuge in the pantry. I at last discovered her by the aid of the lamp, but before we finally dislodged her and evicted her, the room was in an uproar.

For the first time now in four days, the sky looked threatening again, and Capt. Jim predicts “bod weather.” It is too provoking to think about, that no boat should have come when we could have worked “Ceiba beach,” and now heavy weather is about to settle in on us again.

### November 14, Wednesday

No sail in sight this morning, indeed the sea is now rough again, flecked into white caps whichever way the eye reaches. I bethought me something I could do to forward the publication of No. 219,<sup>187</sup> namely write up the new monuments discovered at Copan, Stela 24 and Altar W', and at Tegucigalpa, Structure X'.

I settled down then to the task of writing up Stela 24, with various interruptions. I had just made a good start when I sighted a Carib craft just offshore. This sailed by under a jib, main mast, and jigger, just breezing along in front of the stiff so'wester blowing. Another heaven-sent opportunity for leaving. I dropped Stela 24 in a hurry and lost no time in getting down to the *comandancia*, off which they anchored.

Rosa hailed them and asked them where they were from. They replied Utila, where they had been storm-stayed for 12 days. They were then on their way to Port Burchard, which is just beyond Iriona. I asked the captain if he would consider taking us to Ceiba, but he said he couldn't possibly beat back there in the face of the so'wester blowing. It seemed so indeed. A stiff breeze was blowing from that point of the compass, and it seemed that nothing with sails could work in the face of it. I had to give up the idea as unfeasible, therefore.

Returning to Cap. Jim's, I went out and watched young Jim work on his skiff for a while. He is a remarkable young man in many ways. Here he is, working without experience, without tools, and without lumber, knocking together a five-ton skiff that will obviously be sea-worthy, to go off and seek his fortunes, another “Golden Fleece.”

Everything has been against him. His father and Harry only laughed at him. His lumber has been the chance flotsam and jetsam thrown up on the beach by the sea; his tools, he told me, are a machete and a hammer. In spite of all these handicaps, he has gone ahead and now has her frame built. I stayed and watched him work for a while before going back to Stela 24.

John's frenzy of work continues, sketching and drawing still fills his time. I am literally holding my breath for the weather to change.

Sometime after lunch, while I was writing, Cap. Jim shouted “ship ahoy.” Everybody piled out on the beach only to see the *Gypsy* returning from Belfate. Cap. Jim says it was undoubtedly too rough to work off there today, and they ran for shelter. There goes our last hope of leaving for Utila tomorrow or Friday, for Cap. Jim says she will lay here until the weather is over—an unknown equation—and then go back to Belfate for coconuts. It is impossible to tell when she will get to Utila. We are pursued, it seems, by an adverse fate: as soon as a chance appears to leave the island, something comes up and we are left here high and dry as before.

Later in the afternoon, John and I walked down to the *comandancia* to see if Captain Borden had come ashore yet, but he was still out on the *Gypsy*. We stopped for a few minutes to pass the time of day with Rosa, the First Lady of the island. She says her “stomach is soured of beans.” We hasten to assure her that she is not the only one suffering from this distressing

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<sup>187</sup> CIW No. 219 is his *Inscriptions at Copan* (1920).

disorder. She doesn't know what is going to become of us Hog Islanders if a boat doesn't come from Ceiba soon. We didn't either, and leaving this all-important question still open for future discussion, we returned to Cap. Jim's.

After supper Captain Borden, his mate, and son came ashore. It was as Captain Jim had surmised—too rough to work off Belfate, so they had to run back here. This maneuver knocks into a cocked hat any chance of our getting to Utila this week. Indeed, we have no strings left to our bow now, no arrows in our quiver. We have just got to sit by and wait for a friendly sail to waft us hence. With plans to burn, we are still here; perhaps if we drift, we may possibly get away sooner.

John's heart was gladdened by the presence of some tobacco from the *Gypsy*, one long dirty leaf—which smelled good, I must admit—and three unspeakable cigars. John confessed these didn't satisfy. It was any port in a storm, however, for him, and he was glad enough to get them. I am glad I stopped [smoking] the first of September.

### **November 15, Thursday**

Too late, too late. Charley should have come these last three or four lovely days, for now the weather has settled down on us again. When we looked out the window, the sea was whipped into a myriad of white-caps and the mainland lost in a gray haze; and rain, rain, rain all the day long. We are quite discouraged. The *Gypsy* was the latest string to our bow and since that is broken God only knows when we will get away from these *Islas de los Puercos*. We now have no special hopes and are living from day to day.

Tea gave out last night, and we are now on one small tin of cocoa that cannot last over two or three days. Cap. Jim announced this morning that he was opening the last sack of beans, and we have been on our last sack of flour for some time. Sugar is almost finished. Charley's prediction that we would be eating coconut roots before we were through with the Hog Islands bids fair to be verified.

Spent all morning and about half the afternoon writing a long letter on the typewriter to Jack Belt. Every one of these epistles that I clear off here means just so much less for Ceiba. This quite used me up. I had a rotten headache to begin with, nausea, etc., too much *frijoles*, undoubtedly, and when I had finished about three, I felt like loafing. The day was so dark, intermittent showers, that writing was out of the question. If you left the window and doors open, the wind and rain blustered in; and if you closed them, the light--what little of it there was—stayed out.

John made a number of pencil sketches between raindrops, of the homely little details of our immediate surroundings: Cap. Jim, sitting on his haunches—a characteristic and chronic pose—Harry chopping wood, Jim at his boat, which I have suggested he call "*The Golden Fleece*," chickens, pigs, ad [in]finitum. It is astonishing the life and action, the verisimilitude, he can crowd into a few short strokes of his pencil. On close analysis they look and are crudely drawn, very sketchy, but they hang together, are never uncertain, and convey a sharp impression of what he is delineating.

All of the children are under the weather. Jim Fisher Lawrie started it; Elmie followed suit, then Lulu turned up down at the other house, and now poor little shorn Marie has it. Mrs. Bush says Marie's hair was beautiful before this scalp infection made it necessary to cut it off. The



children's trouble seems to be colds. If it were anywhere else but here, pneumonia would long since have developed, the way they run around barefooted in this deep sand. Lottie and Othiella are the only two who have escaped. We turned in early on account of the cold, gloomy, dark evening.

### November 16, Friday

A fortnight ago this morning we anchored off the *comandancia*, waiting for the norther to blow over, which we have been doing ever since. The sky this morning still looked squally and dark; indeed, it rained shortly after breakfast. This seemed to be the proverbial clearing-up shower, however, and toward noon began to clear off, and the sun was shining shortly after lunch.

While I was writing after breakfast, the Bordens from the *Gypsy* rowing by called out "ship ahoy." I hurried out on the beach, but could raise nothing, not even a Carib craft. Went up to Marshall's Rock, but as far as my eye could reach there was nothing. The Bordens were still waving vigorously off to the westward, and made me to understand that whatever there had been, had passed around the next point. I returned to the house very much crestfallen. I am beginning to realize all poor old Robinson Cruso's hopes and fears. How sails rising on the horizon would cause hope to flare in his breast, only to sink lower than before as they went below. Of course, our situation isn't serious, only exasperating, but we'll be glad enough to get off, however.

Thinking perhaps this Flying Dutchman had gone around the north side to the *comandancia*, I walked down there in about an hour. Rosa was swinging in her hammock at ease. She said a boat had been in, the *Winfield*, for firewood. They hadn't come ashore at the *comandancia*, however, but up at a plantation near the northeast point. There is a cane patch up there and I suspect that was part of the attraction. Carl, who was out in the *Miami* fishing, went along side of them. Rosa's inferior half was aboard going to Ruatan for food—Rosa thought it high time, she told me—she was bound from Ceiba to Ruatan. Carl had the forethought to tell the captain to tell Charley if he saw him there in Coxen Hole that we were still languishing forlornly on the Hogs. It is no use, though, if he isn't here by tomorrow morning, we won't see him at least before Monday, as he'll never leave Oak Ridge on Sunday, with two meetings and his inamorata, the organist.

I felt too miserable with Rosa's complaint to work, and persuaded Elizabeth to look for some more old magazines. Presently she came out with an armful of old dilapidated *Saturday Evening Posts*, two- or three-year-old *World's Works*, a July 1917 *Review of Reviews*, which must have felt very youthful in that hoary company, and a maverick *Outlook* or two. The *Posts* were in the most deplorable condition. The first and last three or four pages had been torn out of all of them, just as one used to start at either end of an old Montgomery Ward<sup>188</sup> catalogue in tearing them up for papers to start stoves with. We were thankful enough for these, however,

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<sup>188</sup> Montgomery Ward was large national retail operation founded in Chicago in 1872 to cater to rural customers through mail order from a large catalog. In 1926, it opened its first brick-and-mortar store. The company filed for bankruptcy and was liquidated in 2001.

and John was able to get three fragmentary consecutive installments of *Picadilly Jim*.<sup>189</sup> After finding the thrilling end of two of my stories missing, I lost heart and turned to *The World's Work*. This piece-meal reading is too casual.

John was far more industrious than me today. He bullied Cap. Jim into working on the kitchen floor, for which Mrs. Bush has been pining ever since we got here. John pitched in, not only working himself, but enlisting Cap. Jim and Harry's rather reluctant efforts. Out of driftwood reaped from an old Fruit Co. skiff which had blown ashore in the storm, they knocked together a fairly passable floor. Owing to the bulging shape of the skiff's sides, this tended to belly up in the middle and lift the joists from the ground, but when they got the kitchen stove up it seemed to anchor it down. Mrs. Bush is proud as pumpkins. They've taken out a lot of the supernumerary chairs in our room and everybody is happy.

Poor Jim Jr. is having the devil of a time with his boat. The timbers are so stiff, and he has no facility for steaming them out, that they break when he bends them to the sternpost. The first three on the port side are starting to crack in this way. He is real courageous, however, and plugs steadily ahead. For some reason, John was very happy and sang and sang and sang after supper. Suppose it to be due to the reaction after his carpentering labors.

Before going to bed I started to write the description of [Copan] Altar W', the Great Period Altar (505 AD) [775 GMT] which John and I found in that little court about a kilometer east of the Main Structure on the west bank of the river [see May 18; Figure 18.3]. It has several interesting features, one that there is an error in the original, another that the glyph blocks on the back are the very unusual full-figure variants, and third that its closing date is only 120 days later than the closing date on Altar Q—indeed, I think both probably date from the same *hotun* ending.



Figure 18.3. West side of Altar W' at Copan. Note the full figure variants, especially clear in the first glyph on the upper left.

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<sup>189</sup> *Picadilly Jim* was a serialized, light-hearted, comedy/romance novel written by P. G. Wodehouse. Film versions were made in 1936 and 2004.

I am afraid we cannot claim the right of discovery here, as I believe the Peabody Museum photographed the front of this monument way back in the nineties. Curiously enough, the part showing the inscription, the back and side, was buried, and they never seem to have dug the altar out of the alluvial soil in which it lay buried, front only exposed, and so never discovered the inscription. This, I believe, we brought to light for the first time.

### **November 17, Saturday<sup>190</sup>**

This morning is lovely, the lowering weather of the past three days is brushed clear from the sky, and there is not a cloud in sight save for those hovering over the mountains along the coast, which are rarely wanting. Such wonderful weather, scarcely a ripple on the lee shore, and the sea practically a glassy calm, makes me furiously impatient. Why didn't Charley come? Bad weather may break at any moment and then we are penned in another eight or ten days with a norther. I begrudge every minute of this weather that we stay here.

Today John continued his drive against the thousand and one unfinished jobs hereabouts. It was somewhat harder to hold Cap. Jim down to the grindstone, and Harry was more evanescent than ever, but somehow, he managed to get them pulled together long enough to fix the kitchen stove, which heretofore drew but indifferently, and to rebuild the caboose. The latter is a large sand box on legs where the baking is done in a Dutch oven. After getting this piece of work finished in the late afternoon, he fell to on a dovecote, which he finished by supper time.

My day went in little odd jobs, writing a bit, reading a bit, and bossing a bit, Jim's skiff, John's caboose, a little bit of everything and a great deal of nothing. In the middle of the afternoon Captain Borden came ashore from the *Gypsy* and gathered up his son and mate in order to leave at once. He is convinced the good weather will stay on now for a few days, and he wants to get over to Belfate as soon as possible. They put out about three, but the breeze is so light they made little headway.

About five, I walked down to Rosa's on the off chance that a boat might have come in, and also to enquire of her "stomick" and larder. She was reading aloud to herself in the hammock under the coconut, a laborious proceeding I judged. I climbed into the new dory, which is waiting for its coats of paint, and we passed the time of day. Rosa confessed to three "husbands" during her life and four offspring, of which latter only one survived. She is fat, 160 or 170 odd I should say, and there are a few silver threads among the black. I should have placed her at 40, but she shyly admitted only 30. I told her she looked somewhat older, but she said she had had a hard life. Mrs. Bush told me later she was 50 if she were a day; that she knew her as a young pickaninny in Utila, hired out to Sarah Morgan. I let it stand at 30, particularly as she said I "suttinly didn't look 34."

Her larder is about empty. She ate oatmeal all day yesterday, and killed a fowl last night, which even as we talked was "parbiling." She doesn't like the lonesomeness of the island, and pines for Coxen Hole or Trujillo.

The afternoon was lovely, the sunlight golden green through the coconuts, and scarcely a wave breaking on the shore. Rosa says the Carib craft which passed Wednesday morning, and

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<sup>190</sup> On November 17 an earthquake was felt just south of Guatemala, the first in a series of tremors of increasing intensity through late January, 1918. See Chapter 22, below.

which has anchored in Mitchell's Cove over in the other island—stealing his coconuts, Cap. Jim says—left this morning for Port Burchard. Everybody seems to think the weather is picking up, but Charley Osgood, apparently. After talking for a while, I returned to the house where Elizabeth was already setting the table. The sunset gave promise of being unusual, and we walked down to Marshall's Rock the better to see the west.

The sky was flecked with thin clouds, not as regular as herring, but scattered here and there, more particularly in the south. There was a heavy mass of cumulus clouds above the mountains on the coast off to the southwest, and these played a large role in the extraordinary effects we were to see. It wasn't a trite red-gold sunset either. The sun itself set like a ball of fire, sort of pinched out like a "close up" movie fades. About fifteen minutes later the effects began. A pencil of deep blue shot out from behind the bank of cumulus clouds in the southwest, across the lemon-yellow western sky to the deepening blue above our heads. This ray of blue was a deep turquoise, Nile green, where it swept across the yellow, deepening until it lost itself in the blue of tropical twilight above. Most beautiful of all, however, was the extraordinary shade of lavender, pulsating rich, and for a light delicate shade like lavender, even deep. This was made by the orange-pink glow in the west spreading eastward and tinting over the evening blue, an exquisite color, deep and delicate, intense yet pale. The clouds drifted across this as tufts of blue-gray, light and feathery. Both color-scheme and cloud-technique were essentially Nipponese, and carried us both to the land of the chrysanthemum. It held for a long time, as sunsets go. Very slowly the pencil of blue swept across the field of orange and into the lavender overhead, and slowly the latter melted into the serene blue of the evening sky. A three day's old crescent moon rides high in the heavens, and nearby the evening star was scarcely diminished by its silvery splendor.

We had gone to the rock in part to talk over plans—what we will do when we reach Ceiba, bootless enough conversation in all truth, since we can make no definite arrangements until we have seen our mail. We stayed to watch and admire the waning day and waxing night. We stayed until the last of the wonderful lavender had disappeared, and then at some risk to our bones, we climbed back down off the slippery rocks and came back to the house.

We sat on the steps and talked to the Bushes for a long while, and then when I came in to write, Mrs. Bush followed me in to show me the family Bible, an elaborate edition with the sayings of Jesus Christ printed in red. I had never seen the idea before. Later, I showed her the Chichen Itza pictures and Bulletin 57 [Morley 1915] and John showed them to Jim and Elizabeth when we had finished.

Carl and Harry, who had gone out for lobsters early in the evening, returned about this time with five big succulent fellows. While we were all thus variously engaged, Cap. Jim sang out "light ahoy!" I looked out the window and there, due south of us quite a way out, was a light moving from east to west.

I hurried out doors to have a consultation with him. We could not hear any gasoline exhaust, but the light moved too quickly to be only wind propelled. She appeared to be heading toward Ceiba, however, and passed behind Booby's Key. I had made up my mind she was going by, when on the other side of Booby Key she came around so we could now see her starboard light, headed towards us, and most extraordinarily of all, whistled once, a real steam

whistle. She seemed to be feeling her way in and presently dropped her anchor, not too far off Marshall's Rock.

We were on fire with curiosity as to who and what she was. Jim Jr. thought by the whistle of her she was the *Sevilla*, a small steamboat which plies between Armenia, Ceiba, and New Orleans carrying bananas, and owned by Doctor Reynolds and Mr. Robert Reynolds of Ceiba. There were no other conjectures and his guess carried by default. We could not imagine why she should be anchoring off the Hog Islands.

Cap. Jim and Carl put out in the dory and the rest of us sat down on the beach to wait. In the interim, Mrs. Bush developed a mild case of "histricks." She says she is no good under worry and she now proceeded to borrow all the troubles in the world. Annie had died in Utila, something had happened to Lenare, etc., etc. Othiella contributed to her nervousness by munching some sugar cane until Harry threatened to box her black ears if she didn't desist at once.

Fortunately for Mrs. Bush's nerves, we saw the light coming back over the water, and soon Carl loomed out of the darkness with a load of people in a skiff: our old friend Whitman Hyde returning from Ceiba, a member of the crew of the *Sevilla*, which the boat proved to be, two Ceiba girls, one the wife of a German at Armenia, and a Negro boatman. Cap. Jim had stayed on to visit for a while with the captain, Ed. Sánchez of Utila.

The *paisana* ladies were seasick and wanted to come ashore for the night. Whitman Hyde came back with the owner of the *Brilliant*, poor Johnny Yates, to see if there was anything left of the ship to salvage. Another—we almost felt—old friend aboard was old Uncle Johnny, Lottie's father, who was returning here with the remains of his boat which had been mashed up on the Ceiba beach during the storm. The *Sevilla* was carrying her on davits, and Uncle Johnny was planning to repair her here. He didn't come ashore himself tonight, but was coming first thing in the morning.

The *Sevilla* came here to blow her boilers and will wait until early Monday morning, and then go over to Armenia, load bananas, and thence back to Ceiba. At last, here was our opportunity. Carl piped in here and said the captain was a Mason, and so I knew we would have no troubles.

One good piece of news we heard was that as soon as the *Colon* had reached Ceiba last Monday, the government had fired her surly *comandante*, López. Some of the boys said Charley Borden had told it about that he had refused to obey the president's letter, with these consequences. However much we might have liked to believe this, we could hardly swallow such a "camel." Rather, it seems this López had his "let out" coming for a long time, his judgment was long over due, and the ax fell on this occasion without any reference to us, though we had liked to have claimed credit.

The war news is very, very dismal. Russia suing for a separate peace—the Germans tearing through Italy as though the latter's lines were so much paper, over 500 guns and 90,000 prisoners in 10 days and the work of 2½ years gone at the same time. The age limits at home [are] to be raised and lowered to 15 and 18 respectively, and married men from 21 to 30 called back after having been exempted once.

Cap. Jim came ashore at this juncture with at least one good item of news—Captain Sánchez will be glad to give us a lift to Ceiba when he goes. He also brought a paper of May 7th,

which we devoured. Kerensky says Russia has not even asked for a separate peace, but must have assistance, money, munitions, and men. Evidently something had gone before, which we missed. An American scout boat, the *Alcedo*, a converted yacht, was destroyed by a submarine, one officer and twenty men lost. Japan and the U.S. reached an agreement on China; and the Germans really are rolling up the Italians. We were very much disgusted to learn that Hylan beat Mitchell in the New York mayoralty by 100,000.<sup>191</sup> The news was disquieting enough, particularly since Miller said there was a cable the day they left, Thursday the 8th, to the effect that Russia was suing for a separate peace. This one solitary *Times-Picayune* was a poor sop to our three-weeks curiosity, and we long to be back in Ceiba where we can get some items that are only a week old.

John had meanwhile gone to bed, and I found myself reading to him. But I was tired, so after reading the more important items, I handed the paper out to Cap. Jim and turned in myself.

For a long time, I could not get to sleep. I had indigestion again—or rather, as usual—and just as I was dozing off a familiar though unpleasant odor stole in through the window—a polecat [skunk]. Jim had just told me day before yesterday they didn't have them over here. I wakened John up, who said it was on the mainland and was being wafted thither by a land breeze. My olfactory organ, however, advised me that the center of distribution was far closer than 8 miles. I should have thought 8 yards would have hit it closer. We didn't discuss the matter, and it faded away, which is the last thing I remember.

### November 18th, Sunday

The island hardly knows itself: so many people running about, new faces, full dinner pail, etc., etc. The captain of the *Sybilla* came ashore—my previous spelling [*Sevilla*] is incorrect. He brought lots of news from the States. He left there, in fact, only ten days ago. The Second Liberty Loan was over a billion over-subscribed.<sup>192</sup> This was most encouraging. The last I had seen in a paper of the 23rd [October] was that it was in danger of failing. He [the Captain] had been all over the northeastern U.S. looking for boats, and had found none. Everything, even including old hulks on the scrap-heaps, has been pressed into service.

I asked him if he would take us to Ceiba and he said he would be glad to. He will leave here about 3 a.m. Tuesday morning, make Armenia before daylight, load bananas as soon as possible, and ought to be in Ceiba by one or two o'clock in the afternoon as he is planning on getting out the same afternoon for New Orleans. We spent the entire morning in chatting, while John painted. The noonday meal was a big banquet, many and choice new viands appeared we came near to forgetting an old one: the *frijol*. We partook of these unexpected and choice dainties lengthily and pleasurably, happy that the seven lean years are at last over.

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<sup>191</sup> John F. Hylan was the William Randolph Hearst-supported Tammany Hall candidate; John Mitchell, a reform Democrat, was the sitting mayor.

<sup>192</sup> The WWI Liberty Loans—similar to the War Bonds of WWII—were a difficult sell to the American public. In order to boost sales, the Treasury Department enlisted a number of airmen to fly across the country to perform acrobatic shows in support of sales.

After dinner I wrote in this book whilst John continued to try to pull together the picture of the Bonacca cliff. He has helped it greatly, but it is lacking somewhere yet. About the middle of the afternoon, Captain Sánchez (of the *Sybilla*) asked me if I would like to go aboard with him, and I accepted with pleasure. I was curious to tread the deck of a real steamship once more, after all the long weeks on a converted sailboat.

The *Sybilla* is 33 years old and was built for one of the Busch family as a private yacht, for use chiefly on the Great Lakes. I suppose Adolphus<sup>193</sup> must have been her original owner. Later, she became a floating gambling hall. I understand during this phase she was very much be-gilt, be-mahoganied, and be-mirrored. In this reincarnation, she saw high life and high old times. Now she has fallen on less luxurious, but more honorable days. She is now a rather dirty little tramp engaged in carrying bananas from the north coast of Honduras to New Orleans. Her gross tonnage is 110, her net tonnage about 70. Overall, she is 100 feet with a 17-foot beam, speed about 11 knots. She rolls heavily, so the Bushes claim, but Sánchez, who is a part owner, says she is as steady as any liner even in heavy seas. They cannot bring freight out in her because she has been condemned by the underwriters, and none of them will insure her.

In the captain's cozy little cabin forward, we spent the afternoon looking over his charts and his coasting directions, publication No.130 of the Hydrographic Office.

Johnny Yates and Whitman Hyde got in from the reef where they were trying to salvage more of his *Brilliant*. They found about a hundred more bottles of pop and a glass, ax, and mauls. They cut loose the main spar and got it safely ashore. They made no attempt yet to try and save the ballast and 3 anchors. That will not wash away anyhow.

I stayed on board to supper, at which all hands attended, no Jim Crow scruples being in evidence, though there were several *casi belli*, therefore. They have a comfortable little salon, rather dirty. There was some kicking over food. It seems they had shipped a new cook at Ceiba just for the trip, and he wasn't giving satisfaction. To me, the meal tasted like a banquet, corned beef and cabbage, spaghetti, tea, bread, and pickles.

Captain Sánchez told me a lot more about the Bob MacField<sup>194</sup> tragedy; in fact, he was the ring-leader of the lynching party that strung that beast up. He told me many more details about the affair. Curious how I continue to pick up threads of that wholesale homicide. It was pretty awful. Sánchez says that he put it to MacField quite brutally: "Bob, we're going to kill you. If you confess everything, hold back nothing, I will guarantee you as man to man to give you a clean straight death, but if you refuse, we'll burn you slowly." Bob confessed. Just before he died he said, "Well, I'll meet all you good people in paradise." He then whispered a few words in his brother's ear, and they broke his neck. What he whispered to his brother was this: "As soon as they go away, cut me down and I will be all right." So he died unrepentant to the end, more brute than human.

While we were thus chatting, or rather Sánchez reminiscing and I drinking it all in, the former suddenly remembered he had promised to send the big dory ashore for the Bush family,

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<sup>193</sup> Adolphus Busch (1839–1913) was a German immigrant who established, with his father-in-law, the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1865.

<sup>194</sup> See details of this crime in Morley's entry for September 25.

and we could see an aggregation of the white shirts on the shore. A dory went off for them, and brought out a boatload of Mrs. Bush, Carl, his wife, Lulu, Lizzie, Elmie, Marie, Lottie, Othiella, and the two *paisanas*. They all came up on the bridge where we talked until about eight. The new moon was beautiful, and just under it is a wonderfully brilliant evening star, apparently suffering little by its juxtaposition. The crescent holds water and it should not rain, but tonight is so remarkable, so calm and even, I mistrust tomorrow. I do earnestly hope this weather will hold for another 48 hours until we can get to Ceiba.

We returned to the shore a little after eight, all of us in the *Sybilla's* dory, but John, who paddled in solitary state in the Bushes' little dory. After reaching the beach, we stayed out there under the coconuts eating oranges and talking Spanish. At least the two *paisana* girls and I did. John talked with Lizzie. I was tired and soon went in. The *paisana* girls left and I talked with Mrs. Bush a bit. She is far more interesting. We turned in early.

If I were in a moralizing or sentimentalizing vein, I could point out that just 12 years ago tonight (November 18, 1905), I met Alice in Cambridge at a Sargent School dance. This opens up a whole chapter of mistakes which, however, has one all sufficing justification and recompense: little daughter. Better to have undergone all that trouble and strain and to have had her, than not to have had her without it. If that is the price, I have had to pay for her, it is cheap, cheap, cheap. In the exchange of what I have gained and what I have lost—and the loss has been heavy too—in the end, with her I win. If I could only have her always before her mother succeeds in estranging her with that new child as a lever, and her unfair methods. Is little True old enough to understand what her mother is striving to do?

### **November 19, Monday**

Spent the greater part of the day writing diary and Copan inscriptions. Finished the former to date, and finished the discussion of Altar W'. The day was overcast and rainy with free predictions of heavy weather from Cap. Jim and Harry. I must say the evening closed down heavily, rain and a disconcerting high breeze about from the northwest to west. I gave Jim ten dollars to help toward the *Golden Fleece*, poor fellow. He needs encouragement both spiritual and material. His father never helps and Harry only semi-occasionally.

In the morning, John and Uncle Johnny Erhander repaired, or rather better, rebuilt the steps leading into our casa, while I wrote and finished packing. After five—we had a very early supper—John and I walked down with Cap. Jim to look for some costly and irreplaceable paintbrushes he had lost almost the first day we came. Cap. Jim found two the day before, and we went back to look for the third. Cap. Jim knew where he had found the other two, and John found the third nearby. He was elated over their recovery, as he says he could not replace them today on account of the war. Afterward we walked up to Marshall's Rock for what we hope may be the last time. The sky was very much overcast and leaden color. John thought the clouds were coming from the west, but to me it looked more as though they were moving southeastward. We squabbled over this good-naturedly for a while, the difference of opinion being no less that where was east and where south.

Returning to the house, I saw the two *paisana* girls. Went out under the coconut [trees] to talk to them and the conversation turned toward food. I was indeed pining for some bacon when Miss Pizzati said they had some, as well as fresh butter and bread! They lacked, however,



sugar and milk. It was proposed that we adjourn to Rosa's, where they were doing their cooking, and have a little impromptu meal. It was about seven then, and we were all hungry. I gathered in the milk and sugar and we walked down through the coconuts to Rosa's. That good-natured black lady started her stove by the flickering light of her last two inches of candle, and we had some bread and butter, some fried bacon that fairly intoxicated the salivary glands, and some delicious tea, which Rosa "shore does brew."

I sat on an upturned starch box, Miss Pizzati, who is as nice as she is homely, fluttered between stove and table, and Mrs. Bornheiser, a Comayaguezi, draped herself on a stool. The 2 inches of candle just lasted out the feast, and it was flickering and sputtering in its leas when we bid Rosa goodnight and goodbye.

The girls returned to our house, where the Bushes had already assembled. John was quite peeved when I told him of what I had partaken. Said I'd treated him shabbily, but I couldn't help myself. The party was the *señoritas'*, their bread, their butter, their bacon. We all sat around our room until I fell asleep. We thought Eduardo Sánchez would send word ashore whether he was going out early in the morning or not—it really looks that ugly and we know only too well the hoodoo hanging over any attempt of ours to leave here—but no one came ashore.

I thought Miss Pizzati would never go. Harry and I sat on the cot which broke under us, letting us floorward violently. Finally, they put away their crocheting, or rather Mrs. Bornheiser did, and we went out to take them down to Carl Bush's, where they are stopping, when we saw two lights hurrying over from the mainland—another bad sign. One was the poor *Gypsy*, which like a moth seems condemned to flutter twixt here and the mainland interminably. The other, we found out later, was a Carib craft en route for Ceiba, and so tomorrow, if the weather is good, there will be two boats for Ceiba! An embarrassment of riches.

After I had gone to bed, the old Carib who sailed her came ashore and asked where the owner lived. I referred him to the Bushes' house. Later I heard him bringing some Carib women and a child ashore.

## CHAPTER 19

### TO CEIBA, THEN TO GUATEMALA

#### November 20, Tuesday

We were awakened at four by a long blast from the whistle of the *Sybilla*. We tumbled out of our cots hurriedly, dressed, and rolled up our bedding, and indeed before the dory came in from the steamer to fetch us, we were ready. When we unlocked the door of our little driftwood shack for the last time and came out, we found most of the Bushes astir. Mrs. Bush and Cap. Jim were up and the children were stirring. Presently the two Hondureñas came up from Carl's, and said their baggage was ready. Jim, Harry, and I went down for it, and by the time we got back, the rest of the family and John were getting our dunnage out of the house and into the dory.

The time had at last come to say goodbye to these kindly people. They had taken us in out of the cold and rain and storm nearly three weeks before and had given us nothing but the kindest treatment since. It was with real regret that we finally shook everybody's hand and climbed into the dory over our baggage and put out in the darkness in a chorus of goodbyes.

The *Sybilla* showed signs of life in plenty, lanterns were moving about her decks, and smoke pouring from her smokestack. We were soon aboard, where Uncle Johnny greeted us the first over her side. We went up forward and sat down by the forward hatch. About sunrise, John and I began to feel hungry, and I persuaded Miss Pizzati to go into some of her numerous paper bundles and see if she didn't have something. They called us presently to the Captain's cabin, which they have appropriated, and there were biscuits and cheese. This staved off the pangs of hunger indefinitely.

We made the trip over to New Armenia in less than an hour. I decided to go ashore after the captain got permission for me to land, to look the place over. There is a wharf here, and we lay off about half a mile. Soon a tug and lighter put out of the Popolotapa River, and came toward us. When they drew alongside, the *comandante* and another official came on board. The captain was expecting 2500 bunches of bananas, but found there were only 1800 ready. The storm had washed out all the bridges and the trees were down. He asked the *comandante* if I could go ashore, and the permission was cheerfully given. When the tug came out with the second lighter of bananas, I went back in the first one empty with Uncle Johnny.

The bar here looked bad, and I understand that it is usually closed, but the recent heavy gale and heavy rains in the interior have opened it up. A lot of wise-looking pelicans were sitting on the remains of an old wharf as we crossed over the bar. The town is around a corner of marsh and swampland. It is squalid and uninteresting. The plaza has a few wooden shacks around it, but the air is that of shabby disreputability. We went directly to Mr. Bornheiser's store and I presented the captain's message requesting Bornheiser to put our names on the

ship's papers. Bornheiser's s wife was one of the two Hondureña girls who had come with us from the Island.

Bornheiser is a little rat-eyed German, pro-German I suppose, though his conversation was pro-Ally. I talked with him and with a Mr. Gross of Fredericksburg, Virginia. He talks very broken English, is certainly of German extraction and probably of German sympathy, though he says not. Uncle Johnny came in and offered a diversion from these alien enemies, and we walked over to another store where I bought some cheese of the country, some knickknacks, and cigars. By the time I got back to Bornheiser's, the ship's papers were ready and we went out to the *Sybilla*. He came with me.

We found one more lighter remained to be unloaded. The weather had in the meantime grown worse. The sea was flecked with white caps and it looked as though we would have to run again for Utila. The captain hurried the loading forward and about twelve they had finished and the lighter cast off. We all sat down to eat as the *Sybilla* got underway. The weather was the chief subject, and each speculated differently concerning it. Some were cheerful enough to say we could not land at Ceiba even if we were there now, others said it would be too easy, etc., etc. When old salts disagree, how on earth is a mere landlubber to get the right of it?

The engine was acting cranky among other things, and with the persistent hoodoo which has been hanging over us I even began to lose heart and feared we wouldn't get to Ceiba that night. Happily, about an hour out, the sea began to go down and Captain Sánchez said we would be able to land all right [Figure 19.1]. When we finally rounded [Río] Cangrehal point we could see a big Vaccaro steamer in, the *Yoro*. Just as we rounded the point, we saw the *Pearl Marie* leave for Hog Islands. What a pity we were not sooner, as now the poor Bushes will have to wait longer for food.

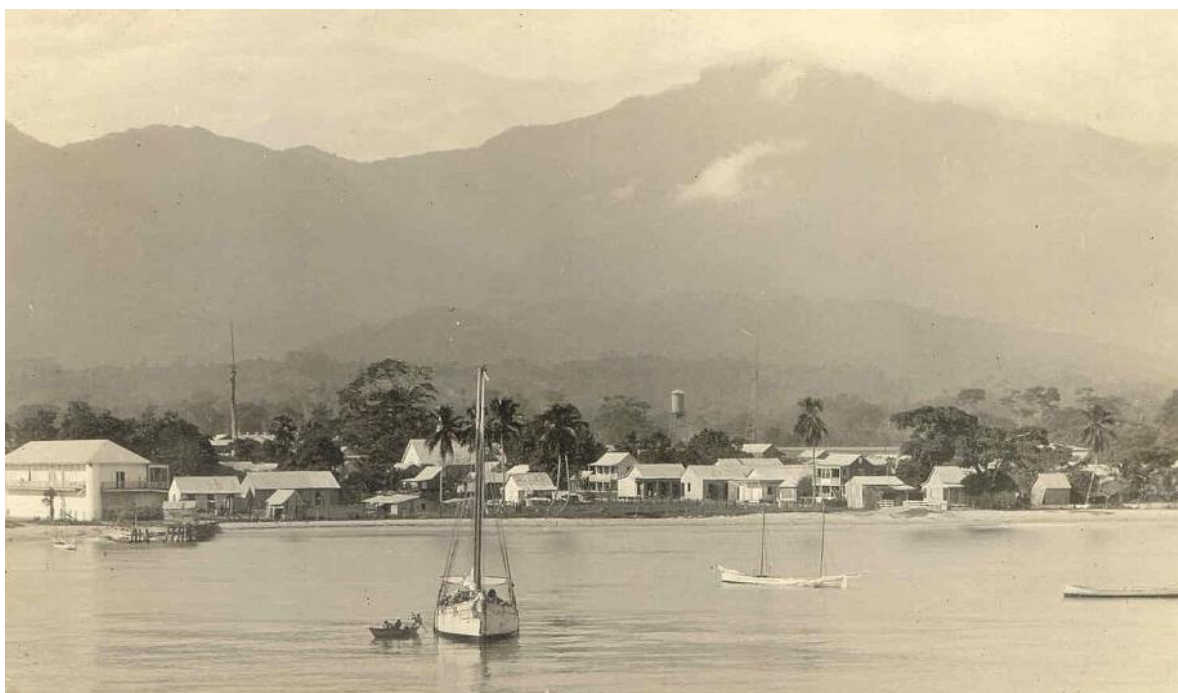


Figure 19.1. Postcard of the La Ceiba waterfront circa 1915.

The captain went ashore first and stayed for an interminable time. He finally sent it [the dory] back with Charley Cooper aboard her. We literally stormed the latter with queries. Where was Charley Osgood? Why had he not come? Etc., etc. He could tell us nothing except that he had been in Oak Ridge. The boys put our baggage into the dory, and we went ashore.

The waves were coming pretty high, and I had visions of a good drenching, but the boys negotiated the landing successfully and we made the beach dry-shod. John stayed to guard our baggage while I went in search of a cart, which I presently found. The baggage was speedily loaded on this and we set off for the Hotel Paris [Figure 19.2]. On our way we stopped for a moment at McCollough's<sup>195</sup> new office to get our mail. Mrs. McCollough said they had been greatly worried over us, and had glanced a thousand times down the coast, but could not raise the *Lilly Elena*.



Figure 19.2. The main street in La Ceiba—note the Hotel Paris on the extreme right edge.

We had a tremendous mail. I think I must have had a hundred letters; some were written way back in June and had followed us about from Guatemala City to San Salvador to Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula and then over. I heard from everybody I ever knew almost, including a lot of back letters from Jennie which had been following all over the map of Central America. Perhaps the most satisfactory letter of all was one from Washington, saying that we had done the right thing in the Bluefields trip, and that our work was not only approved, but also appreciated by the Board. Further, that the Belize trip is approved and also that up the Yucatan Coast. This is most satisfactory, both spiritually as well as practically, since it revived our—I must confess—drooping spirits and enabled us to make our plans forthwith.

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<sup>195</sup> See Chapter 4, note 55.

Charley Osgood is not yet here in the *Lilly Elena*, but when he comes, we will go over to Tela, give up the boat there, and then take the next Fruit Co. boat for [Puerto] Barrios. We will go up to the city [Guatemala City] for about a week and then back down to Barros, over to Livingston, and up the Rio Dulce and into the Golfo Dulce. After a few days there, we will leave for Belize, which we fervently hope we can reach by Christmas. And then for Yucatan and after that, Oh Boy, 'ome. But that is yet three months off and many a weary league on land and sea still separates us from the land of the free and the home of the brave

The Paris Hotel has not changed at all. Even the same room looks as before. This time Miss Helen, the much-bepowdered and be-corseted landlady, put me down at the east end in No. 4 where a large puddle of water collects in the middle of the floor whenever it rains. John has a dry but interior room several doors up the corridor, No. 7. After dinner, I came up to my shower bath and read my mail, large and satisfactory, a card from my namesake<sup>196</sup> informs me that his wife presented him with a son on October 25, one Thomas Morley, named after his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather—the first of our race in America. Raymond [Morley's brother] has a son, David, but the three of us really born Morleys—William Raymond, brother, or myself—either have nothing, like brother, or daughters like Raymond and myself. I sometimes think this is to be the last generation of male Morleys.

Mrs. McCollough passed along some cheerful news to us. Four different people or institutions claim to have money for us: the Banco Atlantida; Dr. Reynolds, representing the Banco Comercio; De Vaux, representing the Banco Honduras; and a Mr. Maldonado, representing *quien sabe* who. This was particularly welcome news, as we are all but broke, on our uppers. I think between us we could muster 10 or 12 dollars, hardly more. Tomorrow, though, the fountain should run full.

### November 21, Thursday

Until three o'clock in the afternoon I was constantly on the go, chiefly looking up money. I went first over to Mr. McCollough's and he took me down to the Banco Atlantida, where I found a draft of one thousand dollars awaiting me from the Carnegie Institution. I only took a receipt for this, leaving the cash there until we go. They charge  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1 percent for the actual cash. They tried hard to persuade us to take their paper instead, but it's discount, discount, discount whichever way you turn with that sort of collateral, particularly in Guatemala City, and we stuck by our guns.

John split off here and took the films up to Ugarte's for developing and printing. I continued on over to De Vaux & Co. where more money awaited me, I thought. When I got there the man in charge, a little fat Frenchman named Castaigne, showed me a letter from the Banco Honduras saying that they had a draft from Costa Rica for Sylvanus G. Morley. Castaigne did not know how much it was. It was finally agreed that I should wire them.

After leaving De Vaux's, I went over to Dr. Reynolds' office, and Mr. McCollough returned to his own. I did not meet the Doctor when I was here before as he was in the States. He is the Fruit Co.'s righthand man when it comes to securing favors from the government of Honduras. He owns a charming little *casa* high on the hillside in Tegucigalpa. Yes, there was five hundred

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<sup>196</sup> The other Sylvanus Griswold Morley was a cousin—a specialist in Spanish literature.

for us here, sent down from Lazarus in Tegucigalpa. Here we were becoming *parvenue, nouveau riches*, who had lately been but paupers. After chatting here awhile, I went up to the telegraph office to telegraph, but as I hadn't any *sols*, only despised gold, I couldn't buy any blanks and so had to postpone sending my messages until after lunch, time for which it now nearly was.

Went back to the hotel, picked up John and went over to Mr. McCollough's office—we were lunching with him—and the three of us walked over to his house. Such a *comida*. It was more dinner than lunch in truth, with a soup, entrée, salad, and dessert course. Such a meal, *hombre mio*: there was a roast which would make the mouth water, two kinds of potatoes, macaroni, peas, rice, gravy, a tomato salad with old friend mayonnaise, and fruit gelatin, and real coffee. To us malnourished bean-eaters, these viands appeared the height of culinary possibilities, and they were. We did sound justice to this feast, though large visions of acute indigestion loomed in my mind, but it was one day off our bust, and we did kind Mrs. McCollough's cooking full justice. Afterward, the master of the house had to return to his office, but we stayed on for an hour.

On my way back to the hotel, I stopped in at Mr. McCollough's and got a few *sols* and then went directly up to the telegraph office where I wired the Banco Honduras to get me my money as soon as possible, to Jack Belt that we had arrived and that everything is '*sta bueno* and "*no hay molasses*," the later of which has a very esoteric meaning all its own, Jack, Sam Lothrop, John and myself being the only ones initiated into these inner mysteries.<sup>197</sup> To Red Henry<sup>198</sup> at Trujillo, that we would be here for a week, and to Stuart at Rincon to send any additional mail that might show up for us.

Returning to the hotel, I plunged without further delay into the really big job ahead of me, completing the long report to Washington which I had started on Hog Island. The *Yoro* happily doesn't go out until tomorrow at four, and I can finish it and get it off on her. My expense account I decided to let run over until my next letter. So, the rest of the afternoon I stayed in my leaky room and wrote, and ditto during the evening until 12:30.

### **November 23, Thursday**

A week from today is Thanksgiving. I wonder where we will be, probably on the *Lilly Elena* eating sardines and saltines, somewhere between here and Tela. That would be our luck.

Immediately after breakfast, I plunged into my writing and did not stir therefrom all morning. I had, of course, quite a big mail already finished which I had written at the island, but now was busy pounding out my report on the typewriter. Several telegrams came, one from Stuart saying that he as yet had no opportunity of sending my letter, but would get it off as quickly as he could. Another long one from Banco Honduras, saying that inasmuch as the draft was payable to Sylvanus G. Morley, they could not pay it until the error had been rectified in Costa Rica. I there and then decided I would wire Jack Belt to look the matter up for me and press it forward to some conclusion.

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<sup>197</sup> Morley and his other agents used code words when communicating with ONI officials.

<sup>198</sup> "Red" Henry was a local American who had recently made a private trip along the Mosquito Coast. Earlier in the year, Morley had mined Henry for information in anticipation of his trip to Bluefields.

John took up the great bulk of our mail at three and came back with the report that the mail for the States closed at 4. But I had nearly finished with my long report and had time to write a letter to True also, before it was closed. We spent the evening at the McColloughs'.

### **November 23, Friday**

We are still speculating on where Charley is, and when he will show up. The weather, of course, is unsettled and likely to blow up a norther at any moment, but we cannot believe he will wait indefinitely for an "easterly breeze." I continued writing at a great rate. Started another report for Washington, as well as a number of personal letters. I cast a Maya horoscope for the latest Morley, in fact drew the glyph, and John engrossed it on fine paper. Also wrote Dr. Jameson of the C.I.<sup>199</sup> He wrote me early in July—letter received October 31—asking me to see whether I could get copies of certain manuscripts, two Kearney proclamations—in the possession of The State Historical Society at Santa Fe. I answered that I would take the matter up with Kenneth Chapman and see what could be done. I wrote to Lucia Miltonberger asking her to execute a commission for me in New Orleans.

In fact, the departure of the mail steamer yesterday, instead of helping me, just cleared my decks for action. I have a big mail to answer and only close attention to my knitting will enable me to clear it off. The weather is abominable. There is a big puddle of water in the middle of my bedroom floor, and all the skies seem to be able to do is weep, weep, weep.

### **November 24, Saturday**

Charley showed up early this morning with a long tale of woe. How he had waited nearly a fortnight for his mainsail at Oak Ridge. The *Tegucigalpa* had got there ahead of him, and he had to wait until her job was done. I told him we were pretty damn indignant at such shabby treatment, to be deserted for two weeks when he knew that all the food on the island was beans. For all he could tell, we might be rotting there yet. He said he had tried to get the *Pearl Marie* to stop for us, and the owner said he would, but he did not. I think the truth is he was delayed by the sail, but that he was having a good time at the Ridge with that Abbott girl, and our problem did not weigh very heavily on his mind. Well, it was ancient history and after letting him see we had been angry—and indeed for those days we will not pay him—I dropped the subject. There was enough else for him to do, in all conscience.

I am going to send him right back to Hog Islands with some food for the Bushes, and thence on to Trujillo to take a letter to Scott, as well as to get the letter Stearns mentions and to bring back with him McCollough's furniture. We lost no time in starting the machinery to accomplish this in immediate motion. Charley went up to the *comandancia* to clear the boat, and presently returned with the word that they couldn't clear from here for Hog Islands with cargo, but that he would have to clear first for Trujillo, and then drop the supplies for the Bushes on the way back. He disappeared again to clear the boat according to these onerous regulations.

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<sup>199</sup> J. Franklin Jameson, an American historian who later served as first president of the American Historical Association, worked at the CIW during the war years supervising a series of guides to archival resources relating to American history.

I went up to the drugstore in the meantime to buy some toys for the Bush children: for the three white girls, Lottie, Marie, and Elmie, I bought dolls, for Lulu a rattle, for Othiella a set of dishes and for young Jim Fisher Laurie, a drum. These I had wrapped in separate parcels and marked each with the name of the infant for whom it was intended. I also bought some candy and cookies for them, and John tried to get some apples, but they were all gone.

By the time this shopping was done, Charley was back with a new grief. The morning had grown so late that the officials told him they could not fix him up before two in the afternoon, and to return at that hour. But the sea was beginning to pound the beach, and Charley said he could not load the cargo without getting it wet. This new factor threw us on to the horns of a new dilemma—either he would have to stay over another day until the surf should go down in the morning, or else risk wetting the cargo for the Bushes: rice, oil, flour, and sugar, the last two of which would be ruined. In this dilemma I suggested loading from the Vaccaro wharf, but Charley said it wasn't permitted. I decided to ask Mr. McCollough to ask them so we could get the *Lilly Elena* off without a loss of time. He came over to the hotel to telephone them, but the hoodoo still held, for when he tried to telephone them the operator recognized his voice and at first refused to connect him. It seems there is a trifling bill of 60 cents, which the Telephone Company claims he owes them and which he claims he does not. It has become with him “a matter of principle” not to be held up in this way by them, and they have retaliated by issuing orders that he is not to be allowed to use any phone in town.

Finally, by getting Charley to call up, we got the desired connection, as well as the desired permission, so Charley set to work loading at once. I went over to Reynolds to get some money and drew out \$250.00, paid Charley \$200.00 on account, and also settled with him for a bill of gasoline which he had to buy at Coopers. He finally got off. He will touch at Hog Islands going, will then go to Trujillo, load the furniture, and take a letter I have written to Scott<sup>200</sup>, and bring back an answer. Weather permitting, he should be here by Tuesday morning.

### **November 25, Sunday**

I wrote all morning. Mrs. McCollough asked us over for dinner, and we got there just after noon. She is one of those delightful hostesses who at once makes you feel her home is yours, and that you have come home. We sat down almost at once to a delicious chicken dinner with all the accouterments: gravy, dumplings, rice, potatoes—sweet southern style and mashed white—peas, asparagus tip salad, and preserves for dessert. I forgot a delicious vegetable soup and some hot soda biscuits. Pardon me if I dwell thus on these gustatory delights.

Mr. McCollough was called away at one-thirty sharp to his poker game over at Governor Inestrosa's. It seems this is a weekly event. The governor, John Vaccaro, Mr. McCollough, and several other leading citizens play the great American game every Sunday afternoon at the G's house on the beach, just next to the Customs House that the Vaccaro Brothers are putting up for the government. I excused myself almost immediately thereafter [after dinner] as I had a lot of work to do, and left John with Mrs. McCollough to show her his watercolors.

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<sup>200</sup> Harry D. Scott was the United Fruit Company manager at Rincón; Morley recruited him as an informant for the ONI.



In the evening we had the famous (?) chicken dinner of which Miss Helen had been talking for three days. It was, alas! a sad travesty on the one we had enjoyed at noon.

### November 26, Monday

I went over to Mr. McCollough's the first thing to see if we couldn't see the governor that morning. I want to present my credentials to him, and to allay any foolish talk that may be about.<sup>201</sup>

On our way up we stopped into De Vaux's to see if they had received notice of our draft from Tegucigalpa. Mr. Castaigne said a telegram had come authorizing them to pay me \$975.25, which must have originally been \$1000. The commission for handling this sum, even if it did come from Costa Rica, seemed unnecessarily high, practically 2½%, but I could do nothing about it, however. We went from De Vaux up to Lafitte's, where Mr. McCollough had an errand, and thence to the Governor's, who was out.

We are still uncertain whether to go on over to Tela by the *Lilly Elena* tomorrow—if she gets in—or stay on here to Thanksgiving dinner with the McColloughs. So far as furthering our purposes, it makes little difference since in any event we cannot leave Tela until a week from today or tomorrow for Barrios, Dr. Reynolds tells me. In view of this we have about decided to accept the McColloughs' invitation and stay over, particularly in view of the fact that it gives us one more mail here, probably the last that will come for us, as I notified Gilbert on the last mail up November 22; he ought to hear by the 28th and possibly this will head off any further forwarding here.

We went over to McColloughs' for supper, a delicious home-cooked meal, and spent part of the evening. These intervals or escapes from the Hotel Paris cuisine are lifesavers for us. I am accumulating a lovely attack of indigestion, which will break just about Thanksgiving morning. And John, whose stomach would shame an ostrich, cannot stand Miss Helen's coquetry. Nor can I, except that it irritates him, so I delight in egging her on.

The pair that keep this hotel are a bit extraordinary. Two Greeks, John and Helen Vilas, who claim to be brother and sister, though Dame Rumor has it otherwise. I must say it appears maliciously. The scandalizing factor seems to be that they both occupy the same room, which Miss Helen explains as a Greek custom. The native mind, always salaciously inclined, seems to balk at this explanation and assign a less naïve reason therefor. Whether the custom is Hellenic or not, I believe the pair are what they purport to be as they look very much alike in the first place, and in the second place he treats her when drunk too unkindly for her to have remained his mistress the five years they have been in Ceiba. Only a sister would have submitted. He is fat, chronically sick as to his "leever," and a firm believer in alcohol as a panacea for all ills the flesh is heir to. He has a wife, a "Cuban," whom he has left and whom he accredits with having run through two-hundred-thousand gold for him.

Miss Helen is fair, fat, and forty, literally, although she only confesses to thirty. Her hair is of a suspiciously brilliant black, and her body full of opulent curves. Miss Helen is molded on

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<sup>201</sup> Because Morley and Held had been snooping around and taking notes, rumors were spreading that they were engaged in espionage. Morley was concerned that their "cover" was being blown (Harris and Sadler 2003: 120–121).

generous lines—a heaving bosom, extensive hips, and arms scarce restrained by sleeves. John cannot bear her, as I have said, which gives me a malicious delight in drawing her to our table. She chatters on and on, and John scowls and scowls. To see Miss Helen serve dessert at dinner is the climax of the day, a ceremonious function carried out with great impressment. Then she comes and beams and beams whilst one eats it or tries to appear to eat it. “You like? You like?” One would not dare to do otherwise. If it cannot be endured, a stomach disorder may be trumped up in subterfuge, but the truth? Never. She told me the other day that I needed some new clothes, and even a very cursory examination of my wardrobe advised of the truth of her criticism. Miss Helen’s wardrobe is extensive, varied and wonderful.

### **November 27, Tuesday**

At breakfast, curiously enough, met a Cosmos Club man by the name of Pack, who had been with the Geological Survey—had, in fact, just left. It was quite unexpected and surely justified the old saw in which, however justified, I refrained from indulging. He has been down here on some sort of mineralogical tour for Doctor Reynolds. He had been up around Yoro in the Department of Clancho. Had left the States in September and was going to Barrios before finally returning home. He tells me the gray-headed, rather good-looking man [with] whom I have been commiserating because of his tubercular cough, is a shoe drummer by the name of Hopping, who is very pro-German. Before Pack had finished breakfast, Hopping sat down and I had a chance to establish this extraordinary bias in him for myself

John is working hard on new ideas for comic pages of war stuff. He is getting away with it, in a rather whimsical way of his own. He’s undoubtedly awfully clever at this sort of thing, and infuses into his “stuff” a sort of sophisticated humor, which must appeal to the worldly, smart New York palate.<sup>202</sup>

Again, we had dinner in the evening at the McColloughs’. I do not know what we would do if it were not for these interludes of hers. John worked until after midnight.<sup>203</sup>

### **November 28, Wednesday**

Doctor Reynolds sent word over early that a Fruit Co. steamer would call for him here about two to take him over to Tela, and he would be glad to have us go with him. But we have made up our minds to wait for today’s mail as well as stay for Thanksgiving with the McColloughs, so we thanked him and declined. The mail didn’t get in until twelve. McCollough and I walked up to see Governor Inestrosa again in the morning, but he was not in. Later he came down to the former’s office, and he advised me by a note, so I went over.

I thought I had met him when we were here early in September, and it was even so. We remembered each other perfectly. After I had presented my credentials, both from Doctor

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<sup>202</sup> Prophetic words indeed—Held would soon become the defining illustrator of the Jazz Age and one of New York’s premier “society” artists.

<sup>203</sup> Morley’s diary entry for November 27 is unusually short. Most of this day was consumed in drafting and finalizing an extensive report to the ONI detailing his travels along the Honduran/Nicaraguan coast (Harris and Sadler 2003: 126).

Woodward and President Bertrand, he at once pooh-poohed the idea that we were spies. The idle story had arisen through Charley Osgood putting our names on the list of the *Lilly Elena's* crew instead of as passengers! This fact, coupled with another—namely that we had money—had caused Rosendo López at Trujillo great unquiet, and he had telegraphed the Minister of War at Tegucigalpa asking about us, and for instructions. The latter wired back to Inestrosa as we had, in the meantime, started for Ceiba. So, when we finally reached Ceiba, a round month later, we found ourselves under a slight cloud of suspicion. This was happily quite dispelled when Inestrosa saw our letters and we were restored to grace, so to speak.

I made a date for John to go up and show him his drawings for three in the afternoon, and when he came back he brought word that the registered mail wouldn't be ready for another hour. Incidentally, his nibs<sup>204</sup> the Governor wasn't in, for which I was undisguisedly thankful.

About four-thirty we went up for the mail again, and found two big envelopes. To our great disappointment, however, these only contained second-class matter, mostly scientific separates, an *Anthropologist*, and *Art and Archaeology*, and several *New Republics*. One paper in particular incited our ire, "The Distribution of the Reindeer." But why down here? It was a poor substitute for the letters we had been anticipating. This mail was thus altogether unsatisfactory. Moreover, the *Banan*, the Fruit Co. boat, did not leave until nearly dark, and we could have had this unsatisfactory mail and made her to boot, but we would have lost a Thanksgiving dinner with Mrs. McCollough thereby, and on the whole we didn't complain.

Pack ate supper with us, and when John found he hailed from Frisco he suggested at once that he must play "Solo."<sup>205</sup> Pack thought he had [played it] in some vague past and after supper we all sat down to it. For the first time since John and Joe taught me the game, luck ran steadily with me and I won. We played until about ten and then went up to that cantina on the east side of the plaza, in the foyer of the moving picture place, and had a drink. To John's disgust, I took *anisado*. I am becoming a *paisano* in every detail. Think I have been away from home so long that I have surely lost my American citizenship.

## November 29, Thursday

Thanksgiving Day and the first clement one since we've been here. A deep sapphire blue sea, no white caps, no waves, and I must add no Charley either. I feel sure he will be along soon, however, and in any event we will go on to Tela tomorrow by land. To this end Mr. McCollough took me up to see the Vaccaro Bros. offices [Figure 19.3] and introduce me to the General Manager, an Italian, Mr. D'Antoni, who had married in some way into the Vaccaro family. He very kindly offered to place a gasoline car at our disposal to take us out to the end of their line tomorrow, and said he would make the necessary arrangements to have mules meet us at the end of the line, and take us over to Cebollita, the nearest U.F. Co. plantation in the Tela Division.

I went down next to the Banco Atlantida and drew out \$997.50 in cash on the Carnegie draft, and then walked back to De Vaux's and told them I would return at two for the \$975.25 they had for me from Costa Rica via the Banco Hondureño in Tegucigalpa.

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<sup>204</sup> The term "his nibs" is a derisive term used to describe a self-important person.

<sup>205</sup> See Chapter 8, page 134, note 89.

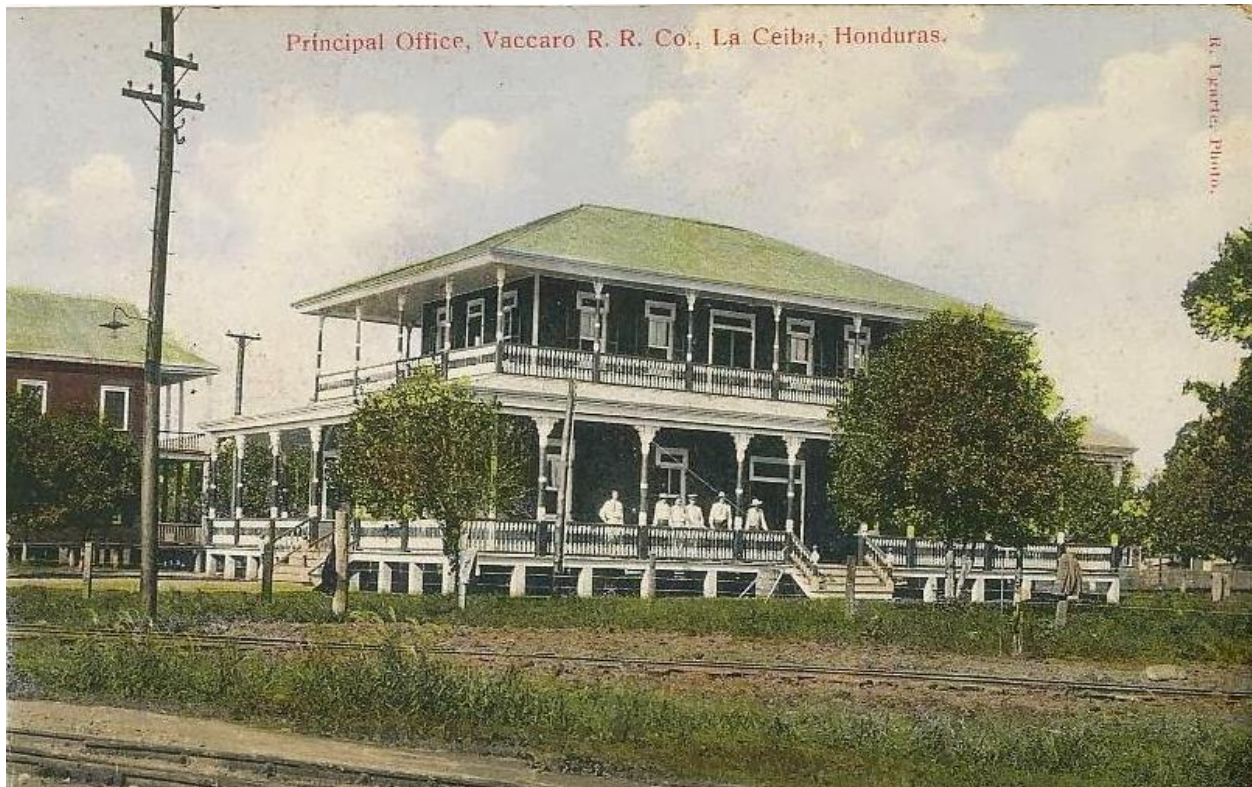


Figure 19.3. Postcard of the headquarters of the Vaccaro Brother's company in La Ceiba. This is one of a series of postcards of the Honduran north coast published by Rafael Ugarte.

The clerk at Doctor Reynolds' was out, so I could not pick up the \$700.00 there. I returned to the hotel and found Pack playing solitaire. I had asked him yesterday to mail my letters for me in the States. His plans are completely changed by cable, which came yesterday. He is going back on the Vaccaro boat this afternoon to New Orleans, and thence direct to Washington and Philadelphia. My mail was all ready, so I went upstairs, got it, and making liberal allowances for the new war postage rates, I paid him for the requisite number of stamps. Also took over some Hondureño money he had left.

By this time it was noon, the hour set for the great repast. Mrs. McCollough had outdone herself. To be sure, we had no turkey, but we had a wonderful chicken instead, with real cranberry jelly, and oodles of vegetables, a real tomato salad, and mince pie. In spite of the fact that both of us are upset as to our "leavers," we managed to do fairly well. I forgot to add there was real crisp honest-to-god celery. We lingered after dinner, loath to leave such a pleasant table.

After leaving McColloughs', I went over to De Vaux's and got the money from there, and then returned to the hotel. While I was talking to Pack, Gomez, the clerk from Doctor Reynolds, came over with my balance, which amounted to \$647.50. About this time we both began to feel very miserable with indigestion and lay down. Pack had already gone off to his steamer, which was sailing at five. We envied his going.

Toward supper, we both got up and about, finished packing, before we went over to McColloughs'. Mrs. McCollough had kindly asked us to dinner in the evening, and this meal we both contrived to enjoy much more. *The pièce de resistance* was a hashed chicken stew in gravy.

After supper I went back to the hotel and finished packing and engaged a big, burly Negro to carry our things over to Mr. McCollough's office, which he had kindly opened to let them in. Afterward we returned to the McColloughs' and stayed for a couple of hours chatting pleasantly. I had paid our bill at the hotel just before supper, so there was nothing further to do but to go to bed.

I forgot to add that two craft came in from Trujillo, Zuborg's *Lone Wolf* and a boat belonging to Mr. Wilbur of New Armenia. They reported Charley had sought the shelter of Ruatan the first day of the *norte*, and had been gone for Trujillo for nearly a week. Also, in the afternoon, saw Mr. Pearce in the bar of the Paris. Reports everything there is satisfactory. Was glad to see the old man, whom everybody on the north shore likes.

### **November 30, Friday**

We rose early against the adventures of the day, and had finished breakfast by six-thirty. Just before we left the hotel, John spied the *Lilly Elena* coming into the offing. It seemed ill-advised indeed to go off without first seeing Charley and telling him to follow immediately to Tela, as soon as he could unload the McColloughs' furniture and clear again for Tela. John, therefore, went down to the beach while I walked over to the Vaccaro offices to see about our gasoline car. Mr. D'Antoni said it was ready, and we could start at any time. Within a half hour John came, bringing a letter from Scott. He was sorry we were to miss Thanksgiving dinner with him. The letter was written a week ago, but Charley had been lying in Oak Ridge waiting for the norther to either "put up or shut up." John had told him to hurry his unloading and leave today, if possible, for Tela.

Besides ourselves in the car, there were three others—the chauffeur (a Negro boy), Mr. Hill (Chief Engineer of the Vaccaro Railroad), and one of the master mechanics, whose name I did not catch. The roadbed was excellent, and we breezed along about 20 miles an hour. The plantations appeared to be somewhat better kept than those of the U.F. Co. The houses were better painted, more signs of improvement and efficient occupation. One should add that the Vaccaros have been here fully twice as long as the U.F. Co. on this coast. The bridges were substantial and adequately provided with water barrels in case of fire, excellent telegraph poles, in short, the equipment and rolling stock both appeared to be in first class condition.

We started at seven and reached the end of the line, 42 miles, in a little under 3 hours. The country is flat and traversed by many small streams. We passed a large sugar refinery, one of the Vaccaro properties representing the investment of a million dollars, and it is in this way we have conquered the tropics.

On my way out, Mr. Hill and his chief mechanic told us the Vaccaros have about two dozen odd Germans in their employment, many of those that were dropped by the U.F. Co. They were quite exercised over the activities of a certain German-American trio, Lock, Stock, and Toussant, who I fear from their descriptions are more German than American. These three individuals were part of old Doctor Hellman's colonization scheme up the Patuca River, but they became

disgusted with the life and returned to Ceiba for other work. We encouraged them to keep their eyes on these uncertain citizens, and to report at once any suspicious activities on their parts.

At the end of the railroad, we bid goodbye to these gentlemen and were introduced by a Mr. Nichols to our native guide and our animals. John drew a mule and I a horse. The guide reported the trail as very muddy. He called the distance four leagues, and I judge it to have been about ten miles. At first, the trail wound through banana plantations, but finally worked itself into the bush, the deep virgin forest of the coast plain. Where the path was dry we trotted, but more often we could only slosh, slosh though the mud and water. In one place where a bridge was washed out in the recent storms, we were obliged to dismount and lead the animals across. Half way over, we passed a small rancho of thatched huts, perhaps eight or ten, in a clearing in the banana fields. The owner was a somebody García. After leaving this place, the road became much worse and we dipped into the bush again. After nearly an hour of this going, we came out on to more banana fields, which our guide said belonged to Cebollita, and in a few minutes we saw the León River and the farm house. Two and a half hours en route.

The *mandador* [person in charge] of this farm proved to be the son of an old acquaintance, Mr. Bruner of Black River. He asked us in and offered us smokes, which we both declined. He had with him a Caiman [Island] boy named Borden, the *mandador* of the next farm below Oropéndolas.<sup>206</sup> I asked him how we could get on for Tela, and he very kindly put a motorboat at our disposal. Borden was to take us down.

The river appeared to be at flood tide, angry and swollen, and they said it would take us under an hour to reach Oropéndolas, where the Tela R.R. touches the river. Bidding goodbye to Bruner and Borden, John and myself and two small native boys [including Borden's son] climbed down the bank and into the boat and put out. The banks slipped behind us swiftly and at one place a big blockade of debris—bamboo, banana trees, brush-wood, etc.—completely closed the channel. Fortunately, there were two channels at this point, a small island of sand and brush dividing the stream, and extricating ourselves from the cul-de-sac we put back up around the island and tried the other channel. Although shallower, we were able to get through and continued our way down to Oropéndolas without further interruption.

Landing here, young Borden got ahold of Mr. Goodell for me on the phone, and I made myself known to him. He said Dr. Reynolds told him we were coming over, and I added that I also had a package of mail for him. He spoke with young Borden, and told him to bring us in on his gasoline car. We started then for Tela without further delay.

The recent storms played havoc with their right of way also, washed out the roadbed, bridges, etc. At one place where we stopped for orders, another car came up with a very fiercely red-mustachioed Englishman. He spoke to me by name, but I couldn't place him. It wasn't necessary, however, as in the next breath he informed me his mother was now with him, and had been since he left El Cayo. Even this mental peg did not help me recall anything. His name is Sharp, but the association, the background into which he fits, is entirely gone, though I remember his face very clearly.

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<sup>206</sup> A Honduran town named after the oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*), a large, distinctive forest bird of the tropics. Black, with a red beak and yellow tail, the oropendola builds woven, basket-like nests that hang from tree branches.

Three quarters of an hour's ride brought us to Tela and we went straight over to the office. Both Brown and Beaseley were in, and it was a pleasant meeting. Beaseley was very much the worse for wear as they had a champagne dance last night over here in celebration of the glorious Thanksgiving. He estimates that over three hundred dollars worth of the juice of the grape was consumed. Judging from his description, everybody must have been more or less edged. I was glad enough we had missed the orgy, as otherwise we would surely have had to participate.

We finally saw Mr. Goodell and introduced ourselves and our business to him and made an appointment for a further conference. We were put into the hands of a Mr. Purdy, who took us over to a new quarters—at least new for us, east of the office building on the bank of the river. Beaseley and Brown were in the same building, indeed I drew a room next to the latter. We went from there to the commissary to buy some crackers and cheese and onions, in lieu of the lunch which we had not had. At supper, we sat at our same old places in the corner with Mr. Gooch and Brown. Cully, the steward, came up and offered to make an oyster cocktail with oysters from the States! It was good but not equal to the Bluefield's ones.

After supper, I shaved and dressed and went over to Mr. Goodell's to spend the evening with him and Doctor Reynolds, and had an agreeable time.

### **December 1, Saturday**

The *Lilly Elena* was in the offing when we woke up, indeed we learned later from Charley that he got in last night just too late to enter the boat, though it was just after six. After breakfast we walked over to the commissary and bought some shoe paste to oil up our shoes and puttees.<sup>207</sup> Just after getting back to the room, Charley came in. It was the first time I have seen him since he left for Trujillo a week ago.

He said he would have to get a permit to land our baggage and that later he would come around to settle up. I told him Mr. Goodell had given me permission to land it on the Fruit Co. wharf, where it could be stored until we leave on Tuesday or Wednesday. It was agreed that when we saw the *Lilly Elena* move around to her anchorage off the *comandancia* to the other side of the wharf where the landing stage was, I would go out to the wharf and arrange with the wharf master to permit her to land. In the meantime, I had a long wireless message to prepare, which was driving both John and myself insane.

About an hour after Charley had left me, we saw the *Lilly Elena* weigh anchor and move around to the other side, and simultaneously we sallied forth. The wharf master was willing, and I got a crew of Carib boys from him when another quandary arose. We could not move the baggage from the ship until the *guarda* had inspected it. Charley said the *comandante* had told him this individual had started for the boat long since. We felt it would be unwise to proceed with the matter until the *guarda* had showed up, so finally decided to leave the landing in Charley's hands entirely, and return to our distracting wireless message. This was the first I had seen of old Campbell since the 9th. He looks fairly well nourished. One of the Carib boys on the wharf was kidding him and said, "How are they coming, Doc?" and Campbell came back smartly, "One sided, sir, one sided."

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<sup>207</sup> See Chapter 4, page 73, note 46.

After lunch our baggage began to arrive, and we were able to get at some much-needed changes of clothes. We still continued to spill gray matter over the wireless, which could not be composed so as to fit all conditions. About the middle of the afternoon Charley came in and reported himself as ready to settle up accounts. We sat down to the table, drew out our books and got down to business. I still owed him in the neighborhood of \$600.00 even after the several advances I had made.

I delivered to him all the island mail, photographs, etc. that we had and finally said goodbye. Before leaving we talked over the feasibility of using the *Lilly Elena* for our trip up the Mexican coast. He is going to see if he can get a more powerful engine and let me know in Belize what he finds out. After he left, we finished the wireless message and will give it to Mr. Goodell for transmission in the morning.<sup>208</sup>

Beaseley told me he had a game of Pirate<sup>209</sup> arranged for the evening with Doctors Nutter and Whitaker. After supper we walked up there and I was initiated into its mysteries. It is new and therefore perplexing, and obviously very different. The single factor that two partners may, in fact do, over half the time play one after another, introduces an entirely new element into the game. These occasions, all our old finessing rules go by the board. From this one experience, I cannot tell whether I am going to like it as well as auction or not. We played until after twelve.

## December 2, Sunday

About nine, we walked over to Mr. Goodell's office and had a long conference with him; also gave him our message for the wireless. We talked over many things, including cabbages and kings,<sup>210</sup> and reached a very satisfactory understanding. He gave me a letter of introduction to the wireless operator, a Mr. Rennard, and after leaving him we both walked up there. The station is located way up beyond the hospital, which is itself at the other end of nowhere, and must be a good mile from the office. Beyond the hospital, the path peters out and one has to drag through the sand of the beach; heavy going. The path peters out altogether before you get there and we wandered around through a milpa until John spied a gate in a barbed-wire fence. We went through and over to the station. Both Rennard and his assistant, MacGregor, were on the job, and we had a satisfactory interview. They had certain recommendations to make concerning additional equipment, and before we left we had reached a very pleasant and agreeable understanding.

It was almost dinnertime before we got back to the mess. Afterward I worked hard on my expense account. John read me the several items and I pounded them off on the machine. We had numerous interruptions, friends dropping in, but finally by sticking to it, I managed to get

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<sup>208</sup> Morley enlisted Goodell as an ONI sub-agent, thus trustable with confidential information.

<sup>209</sup> Pirate was a new version of bridge in which partnerships were established with each deal of cards, by whoever made the first bid.

<sup>210</sup> From the 1865 poem *The Walrus and the Carpenter*, by Lewis Carroll: "'The time has come,' the Walrus said, 'to talk of many things: of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—of cabbages--and kings—.'" The phrase "cabbages and kings" was the title of a 1904 novel by O. Henry, said to be inspired by having spent six months as an expatriate in Honduras, and which was the origin of the term "banana republic."



it nearly finished by suppertime. After supper we got in on it again and wound it up. Turned in early.

### **December 3, Monday**

Gooch had spoken of some fine English cloth over in the commissary and so after breakfast John and I walked over there to have a look at them. A grey homespun in particular appealed to me, and I think I will buy enough for a suit and have it made in Belize by Smith when we get over. John liked a heavy stripe tweed, and we both liked some fine blue serges they had.

Returning to the rooms, we found Campbell already on the job. He didn't show up yesterday at all. There are suits to be taken to the hospital laundry to be pressed and cleaned, shoes to be oiled, and much packing out on the deck to be done.

For my part, there was a lengthy addition to be made to my already long letter from Ceiba, covering what had happened subsequently. This necessitated several conferences with Mr. Goodell, who very kindly provided me with a lot of maps showing the locations of the seven different railroads along the north coast—fancy that number: the U.F. Co. at Barrios, the Cuyamel at Omoa, the Ferrocarril Nacional de Honduras at Puerto Cortés, the Tela R.R. at Tela, the Vaccaro Bros. at Ceiba, the New Armenia R.R. at Armenia, and the Trujillo R.R. at Trujillo. Quite a chain of small systems ranging from 5 miles to several hundred. I had detailed maps of each system, and John made a small general map showing the location of each.

In the afternoon, I finished writing the report, and it did not take me too long to copy it on the typewriter. Unfortunately, this broke down just before the end and I had to finish it in lead pencil. And in this manner, I spent the evening.

### **December 4, Tuesday**

Many things. We found we had arisen too late for breakfast, but as I felt miserable anyhow, that was no hardship for me. It pinched John, however. We went into Rose's office to see if he had any data on the boat, but he knew nothing yet. He said, moreover, that there was the usual *paisano* humbug about selling tickets, this time in the shape of a ruling from the Guatemala Government to the effect that no passengers could land at Puerto Barrios unless their passports were visaed by the local Guatemalan official at the point of embarkation, and Guatemala has not one representative on the whole north coast of Honduras. However, Rose thought there would be no difficulty in our cases, and we left him ardently hoping so.

From here we went to the commissary and I bought that gray homespun I mentioned yesterday, and three shirts. Afterward, I returned to the room and finished packing. Campbell had in the meantime brought our laundry back, and I changed into a traveling suit, and he took all the rest of the stuff down to the dock. I went over to the office next with our mail, which I gave to Mr. Goodell, and also had a closing conference with him. Paid some bills to Beaseley and had a talk with Staples. He is the auditor of the division, and popularly supposed in the islands to have a terrific crush on Maude Cooper.

Heil put his office at my disposal, and I wrote a long letter to True on his typewriter, also sealed and sent the map of the Mosquito Coast by Stuart. I felt so altogether miserable that I passed up dinner. About two, John and I walked over to the *comandancia* for our passports. The

*secretario* was pretty well tanked up with cognac. He had been *secretario* at Santa Rosa Copan and had heard of our coming thither from Mariano Vásquez' telegram months ago. We secured our passports, and on the way back to the U.F. Co. side of the river, we stopped in at the American Consulate. Mr. Rivers, the Consul, was very military appearing in a white duck suit, military collar, and brass buttons, and somehow carried a more convincingly consular air than any other representative of ours we had met along the north shore. We could not help but contrast him favorably with Shields, for example.

Returning to the general offices, we bought our steamer tickets and then started to go up to the wireless station. We met Campbell coming back from the wharf to get the last of our things, however, so John returned. I walked on up the beach to the station and had a long talk with both the operators. They took a final message for Scott, telling him to use Panama in all conditions.<sup>211</sup>

On the way back to the room, I stopped in at the hospital and said goodbye to Doctors Nutter and Whitaker. They were out playing tennis and I found them on the court. Coming back farther down the line, I stopped for a moment to see Mr. Goodell, but Mrs. Goodell said he had not yet returned from the office. I stopped in at the mess and paid Cully, the steward, for our meals, and by the time I finally got back to the house it was nearly the hour set for our dinner at the Heils'. Gooch is going and we stopped at his little casa to pick him up.

Mrs. Heil is very beautiful. She was a Miss Helen Cottone of Guatemala City, an Italian family there. Heil made some delicious cocktails—Pink Ladies, I think he called them—and then we had some Victrola. They've a very good machine and a number of new discs. Under the mellowing influence of one Pink Lady, Gooch was constrained to dance, a thing I had never seen him do before.

The dinner was delicious, being washed down with burgundy. Under these pleasant circumstances and the easy flow of conversation to which they gave rise, we sat late at table, in fact until a phone call from the wharf announce that the boat was going soon.

While Mrs. Heil was getting her coat, I slipped over to Mr. Gooch's to say goodbye, but found he was already out on the wharf. As a matter of fact, going out we met him coming back. On the wharf all was confusion. Campbell was there guarding our baggage, and this was soon inspected very perfunctorily and passed. We said goodbye to everyone—the Heils, Gooch, Stables, Beaseley, Rose Brown—and went aboard.

What magnificence. The *Sixiola* is a floating palace along side the *Lilly Elena*. We didn't stay up, but went to bed at once, well fatigued with the various labors of the day. Through a stupid blunder, our suitcases were put in the hold, and we slept without our pajamas in consequence.

### **December 5, Wednesday**

We must have made Puerto Cortés early in the morning, for when I woke up, we were alongside the dock. I ate breakfast with a Mr. Cook of Guatemala City, who knows Pete Wilson well. It was announced that we would sail at nine o'clock. We both wanted to go ashore, John to see whether his puttees were still at the Hotel Palma and I to see Consul Boyle. I was up first, and on my way to the consulate, stopped at the hotel to ask for John's puttees. While talking to

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<sup>211</sup> ONI Central American activities were run from Panama City.

Craik, a short Semitic looking individual in a shepherd plaid suite and a crush linen hat—very bizarre—came in and asked her if she knew a Mr. Morley. That was my cue and so I spoke up, asking him in turn who he might be. To my utter amazement and dumbfoundment, he replied J. J. Perdomo [Figure 19.4], Taro’s old friend, who I had imagined a thousand miles south of here in Panama.<sup>212</sup>

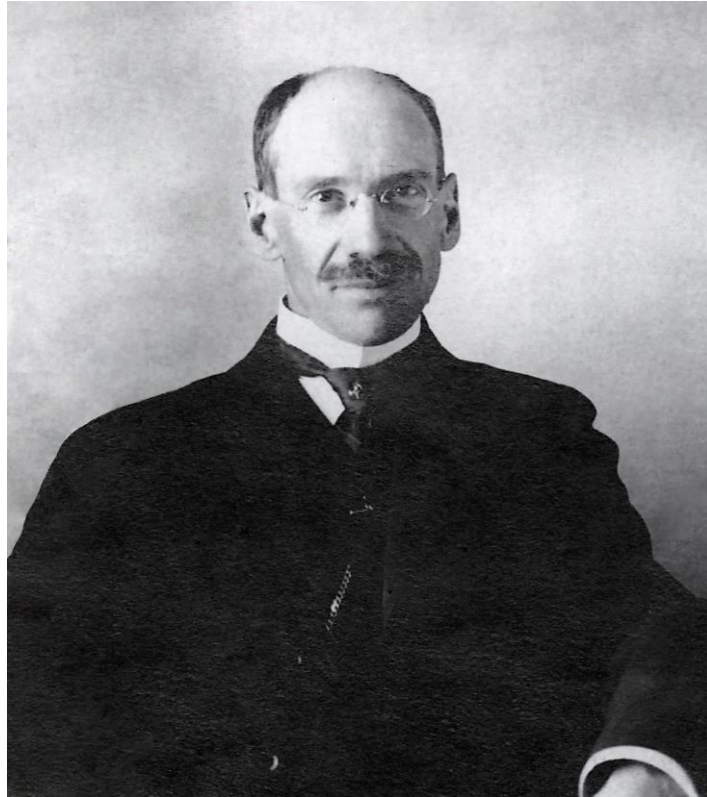


Figure 19.4. Joseph J. Perdomo.

It took some moments to recover myself, and then we passed out on to the street. I made myself sure of the little man’s identity and he set forth his tale of woe.<sup>213</sup> He assured me the United States of America had been insulted in his person. His baggage had been opened and kept overnight, and his private letters read. He was very indignant. I fear he was suspected. We adjourned to Boyle’s for a private conference, and later John joined us, who was as amazed as I was. We all three had a hurried junta about Perdomo getting off on this boat with us. It seems the *comandante* was holding up his permit to sail. It was decided that he should make one more application, and if the *comandante* still persisted, I was to go up and show him my letter from

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<sup>212</sup> Perdomo was a high-level American agent. Although based out of Panama City, he travelled throughout Central America and met at one time or another with nearly all of the principal ONI agents (Harris and Sadler 2003: 178).

<sup>213</sup> Morley seriously doubted Perdomo’s identity. In an ONI report he noted that he was finally convinced because the man purporting to be Perdomo knew “such a mass of information about me, Held, Spinden, Lothrop, etc. that I was convinced” (Harris and Sadler 2003: 132).

President Bertrand. With this arrangement, Perdomo left to try his luck.<sup>214</sup>

It was a tremendous surprise, and left both of us staggered. We talked for an hour about the situation and all its developments, and then the old man not showing up, I went out to look for him. He had finally secured the necessary permit from the *comandante*, had secured the release of his trunks and was even then undergoing the inspection necessary for leaving. I took his passport back to Boyle for visaing. The purser of the *Sixiola* was there in a stew for his papers, which Boyle was holding up until we could get old Perdomo aboard. Soon after this we bid Boyle goodbye and he went ashore and we pulled out. It was my first experience in holding up a big boat!

Before lunch, John and I made friends with a distiller who tells me the taxes have gone so high that he cannot afford to distill whiskey any longer. He sees the handwriting on the wall clearly enough, and is preparing to withdraw from the business. Just before lunch I inveigled don Joaquin Alvarado, the gringo-hating collector of customs at Ceiba, to partake of a cocktail. He is en route to Tegucigalpa with his wife and child for the opening of congress on January first.

After lunch, Perdomo came into our room and we had further conversations. About four, we reached Barrios, which looked very pretty and pretentious in the bright afternoon light. It was one of the very few times in my life, I think, when I have seen the place in sunlight of any kind. It rains here almost all the time, a tiresome, persistent drizzle.

The collector of customs, *comandante*, doctor, etc., all came aboard, and we were summoned to the salon to answer to our names before we were finally permitted to go ashore. I found out from the Fruit Co. man who came aboard with them that Mr. Shaw<sup>215</sup> was coming down on the evening train, so we could see him that same night. The inspection of baggage was the usual humbug and turmoil, unpleasantly complicated now by the fact that all trunks have to go to the capital for inspection. They looked over our hand baggage but the trunks were checked through to the *aduana* [customs house] in Guatemala City. Here, John and Perdomo fell afoul the inspector. The latter took two revolvers from John and one from Perdomo, the same being their total armament. I was more canny—shoved mine in the pocket of my slicker and carried it across my arm.

Perdomo was in hot water generally. They inspected his papers and were going to prevent him from having them, but he finally out-Spanished the inspector. John and I were fixed up in two contiguous rooms at the Fruit Co. offices. Perdomo went over to the Occidental [hotel] where, with difficulty, he secured the kind of room he wanted. He ate there while John and I ate at the Fruit Co. mess. After supper, I went down to meet the train and Mr. Shaw. I arranged for a conference in his office with Perdomo and myself when he should have finished dinner, then went over and got Perdomo at his hotel.

Our conference was most satisfactory and I imagine we all understood each other perfectly definitely. Dispatched a message to Goodell for repetition to McCollough, via the wireless on the *Sixiola*. The extraordinary excitement and denouements of the day had quite tired us both out, and we went to bed early. We walked over with Perdomo, who found he was locked out of

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<sup>214</sup> Morley variably identifies Perdomo (J.J.P., J., Purdy), which we standardized to "Perdomo."

<sup>215</sup> G. M. Shaw was the manager of the United Fruit Company Guatemala division.

his hotel. With difficulty, he aroused a female guest, who let him in. He seems to be the kind who is always pursued by "*mala suerte.*" Before turning in, I sent a wire to Walter Thurston telling him to order supper for four at the Leon private dining room.

## CHAPTER 20

### TO QUIRIGUA

#### December 6, Thursday

We were dressed before six, and before the dining room was open. About 6:10 we went in and sat down, however. While I went over to buy tickets and parlor car seats—it appeared as though the latter would be full—John saw to getting our baggage down to the station and aboard. As I was going to the ticket office, I saw Perdomo returning to the hotel. He said he had his accommodations. The parlor car was sold full. I tried to hold three seats together, but couldn't do it. I got John as a vis-a-vis, but Perdomo drew a seat on the couch. Both were lucky to get anything, as neither showed up until just before the train left. Saw Mr. Shaw for a few minutes before we pulled out, and promised to stop over a day with him at Virginia on our way down [return trip to Barrios].

The trip up is always one of two things—either you're on time or you're late. Fortunately, we drew the former. At Quirigua, I saw all the boys, Doc MacPhail, Doc Wynne, Landry, Schultz, Sara, and was challenged to plenty of auction when I come back down. Hope I can squeeze in a game or two.

John changed places with Perdomo, so we had an opportunity of talking together all the way up. At Zacapa, the hotel seems to have changed hands. The service and food were both better. I never pass through without a real longing to go over to Copan, the well beloved. We began to climb toward the close of the afternoon, and rolled into Guatemala [City] at 6:40, on time to the minute. There was much crying at the station as we had aboard a cadaver, Kle by name. His family was at the station to meet the body, and there was a great deal of grief. Walter met us, and also Perdomo's friend, Watts.<sup>216</sup> Perdomo introduced us to the latter, but he found himself unable to accept our invitation for dinner.

In the bustle of cabs, autos, and mule cars, we could hardly exchange a word, but we made arrangements for a later and fuller conference. We drove first to the [Hotel] Imperial,<sup>217</sup> where

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<sup>216</sup> Joseph Henry Watts was a key ONI agent in Guatemala City. He had been active in Guatemala since 1913 when, in his capacity as an electrician for the U.S. Navy, he was loaned to the government of Guatemala as chief electrician for the purpose of building a radio station in Guatemala City. Watts became very close to President Estrada Cabrera, who entrusted him with complete oversight of the capital's radio communications. Later, in 1918, Watts began showing erratic behavior that by 1919 year landed him in a series of stateside mental institutions.

<sup>217</sup> The Hotel Imperial, built in the late 1800s, was Morley's regular housing in Guatemala City. It was located at the corner of 8th Avenue and 13th Calle in what is now the south part of the city (Zone 9), north of the airport and close to Avenida Reforma.

we were registered, went to our rooms and washed our hands. And thence to the [Hotel] León<sup>218</sup> where a fine dinner was awaiting. Here we had another valuable as well as profitable conference. Coming out, someone introduced us to General Lee Christmas [Figure 20.1] and a party, and nothing must do but that we should sit down and have further drinks with him. The general and I were quite *simpático* and he told me a few anecdotes of his abundant store.<sup>219</sup> After this session broke up, we returned to the Imperial and went to bed.



Figure 20.1. General Lee Christmas.

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<sup>218</sup> The Hotel León was located several blocks away at the corner of 9th Avenue and 8th Calle.

<sup>219</sup> The general indeed did have an abundance of tales to tell given his long career as an American mercenary in Central America. His claim to fame was as a leader of the 1910 coup in Honduras that installed Manuel Bonilla as president (Deutsch 2012).

## December 7, Friday

Early next morning I went over to the Club to meet Watts, who puts me up there, and we had a long conference. He is an interesting chap, has been in the navy, and is now head of the wireless station here. He is still a good American, however, and a good man in every way and one of us. In fact, I talked to him all morning. About four, I went up to Rafael Aparicio's and just followed doña Josefina going in. She looked very, very stunning with her golden hair, pink and white skin, and black dress and hat. The *de Luto* [mourning] is nearly over, I believe. She was, of course, greatly surprised to see me. We went into the *sala* and sat down, and I showed her the profiles of Gladys Shehan's pictures. She liked those with the hat best, a choice I could not see. She had a date at five, and just as we were leaving, Rafael's wife came in, and I stayed on with her until nearly dinnertime.

They all wanted to know whether I had been to the States or not! No such luck, I hastened to assure them. They wanted the latest news of Gladys, of course, and I gave them what I had, not more than a month old.

Finally, about seven, I returned to the Imperial, picked John up, and went to dinner at the León. Originally, I had planned on going down with Watts, but there was to be an organizational meeting of the Red Cross at the Legation at 8:30, and it seemed rather as though we should go. Perdomo, John, and I therefore all showed up at the Legation at the hour set.

It seemed to me most of the Americans were there. There were the Owens, Jessups, Clarks, Simmons, Roaches, Coffeys, and many others I knew only by sight. Our ornamental and unutilitarian minister opened with a very inapropos speech on the function of the Legation as opposed to those of the consulate. He tries, of course, to be just as disobliging as he knows how, but it did seem going a bit heavy giving offense gratuitously, to rub it in on such an occasion as the present. He is a pompous, opinionated old man, with other faults, which it is better to leave unmentioned even here. After this inappropriate introduction, which had about as much to do with the work in hand, i.e., the organization of a local Red Cross chapter, as the Kaiser has with gentleness, he called the temporary chairman to preside, Consul Fee, who Perdomo tells me is a mighty good man. I judged so myself, in fact. His remarks were dignified, apt, and to the point, and we were soon at the election of a slate already prepared by the organizing committee. Mr. Clark, General Manager of Mr. Keith's railroads here, was elected permanent chairman, and in a few well-chosen words hit the situation off right. He has that dry, unconscious type of American humor—unfortunately fast disappearing in this hyphenated age—and he brought down the house several times. The meeting was finally adjourned pending the arrival of more definite instructions from Washington.

Saw the Roaches as they went out. After the meeting, Walter and John and I went over to the American Club for a drink.

## December 8, Saturday

Met Watts at the Club right after breakfast and spent almost the entire morning with him there. He gave me an intelligent first-hand view of the local situation and when I left him, gave me a card to Armstrong, the British Consul General, and during the minister's absence, now acting for the latter.



After leaving Watts I hailed a cab and returned first to the hotel and thence up to the British Legation. I saw Armstrong and also the consul Melville, and had satisfactory conversations with each. Armstrong thinks that there is a systematic crying of the wolf going on here as to El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, and indeed Watts had the same opinion. Personally, it seems to me more than likely, but I believe the vital thing is to keep M.E.C.<sup>220</sup> convinced that his interests and our interests are one, his friends our friends, and most important of all, his enemies our enemies. Keep him keyed up to this point of view and the most important matter of all will take care of itself, namely, the maintenance of the status quo in Central America.

Guatemala is the keystone of the arch between the Rio Grande and the [Panama] canal, and with her as our friend, the Centro Americana Unionistas, the German propagandists, and the anti-gringoistas can weave their devious plots as they will, and nothing will come of it. Sustain the keystone of the arch and the structure stands; desert it and it falls. I believe that clearly indicates the rational policy for Central America during the war. Before leaving Armstrong, I made arrangements to see him again.

At lunch John said Mrs. Roach had asked us up for tea, but I had already accepted an invitation to doña Josefina's. The latter is now living in the palatial Panchita Aparicio house, which the Hitts occupied while R.S.R.H.<sup>221</sup> was minister here. I had dinner with them there one day and remembered the place. She is leaving for her husband's *finca* Monday, with Frances. We had an agreeable tete-a-tete of about an hour. I showed her True's pictures. She thought she was very, very dear. She had first heard of my former marriage from Mrs. Roach, and expressed herself as dreadfully hurt that Gladys had concealed it from her. I must confess she looked as though she had recovered.

I returned to the room about six, and an hour later went over to Rafael Aparicio's where I had been asked for dinner. I got there just as some visitors were leaving. At supper there was Rafael, Elvida, Maria, and the three children, besides myself. They all said they missed Gladys greatly, a sentiment in which I heartily concurred. There were only one or two nice Spanish dishes, and I missed tortillas. Had a thoroughly delightful time. Little Conchita grew tired long before we were through and finally was taken off to bed.

After supper, we went down to see Conchita in her new home. She married Alfred Aguirre (son of the Minister of War) about a fortnight ago. There was another supper on there—two people whom I did not know, Josephine, Frances, and Richard Aguirre, whom I fancy is already the *comprometido* of Frances. Nothing must do but we all join them at the table and have coffee and liqueurs. Finally, the conversation switched around to the war, and as the unknown man was pro-German, really a young Guatemalan, no more, it waxed warm. The men adjourned to one room, the women to another, and we argued the thing out hotly back and forth for two hours. Alfredo was a very hospitable host, warming the fires of argument by a continuous service of cordials and liqueurs. And thus we argued until after ten. I learned many things, what they thought of their own army, for example, and what they thought Guatemala could do in case of a simultaneous attack against her by Mexico, Honduras, and Salvador. All thought the old man could place 50,000 properly equipped troops in the field in a minimum of time.

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<sup>220</sup> Manuel Estrada Cabrera, Dictator of Guatemala from 1898 to 1920.

<sup>221</sup> Robert Stockwell Reynolds Hitt, U.S. Minister to Guatemala from 1910 to 1913.

We broke up shortly after 10 and walked almost home with Josefina, Francesca, and Ricardo. I returned to the hotel afterward and turned in.

### **December 9, Sunday**

I went over to the American Club early to meet Watts, but he did not come in. During the course of the morning, Mrs. Roach called up and asked me to come to dinner at noon. "Try pot luck at a kidney stew" was the way she put it. Returning to the hotel, I found Watts in Perdomo's room, where the three of us went into executive session.

I later went over to the Club with him, and then we walked over toward the Plaza. In front of the Grand Hotel I ran into Erb [Herb?], whom we had last seen on the wharf at Amapala [Honduras] way back in July. I was somewhat surprised, but more so when I learned from him that Joe [Spinden] had come on up to La Union, El Salvador, and by this time had probably reached the capital. This was news indeed as Perdomo and I had been imagining him in Managua, or at least somewhere in Nicaragua. Erb says he may go overland to Zacapa, and thence to New Orleans with him! More news. He fancies John and me in the States. How he possibly could, after having spent three days with Jack Belt in Tegucigalpa, is more than I can understand, but that is what Erb reports.

But surprises of this order were not yet over. Not ten steps after leaving Erb, whom should I bump into but Seymour Larick. The last time we saw him was at the end of August when we left Puerto Cortés to go down the Mosquitia. He had since been back home, and is now here for a month, as is old Peter Wilson. Larick joined Watts and me, and we walked over to the plaza where Watts had to leave us to join his wife. Larick and I returned to the Imperial, where John was as greatly surprised as I had been. We could not stop long, however, as it was lunchtime, but we made a date for dinner tomorrow night with him.

Mrs. Roach's kidney dinner was "*sta buen.*" I could not stay afterward as I had to look up Walter Thurston, who is living with the Clarks just around the corner from the Roaches.<sup>222</sup> After seeing him, I returned to the hotel via the Legation, and tried to get in there, but could raise nobody. In the late afternoon, John and I and Joaquin Alvarado, my anti-Americano Hondureño, walked over to the American Club and had cocktails there. I saw poor Fernando Cruz there. His brother committed suicide about a fortnight ago, because of the death of his wife just a month before. Fernando was left executor of the estate as well as guardian of his three little nieces, aged 4, 6, and 8, respectively. He was already raising four cousins' children—seven children and no wife is an experience that does not come to everybody. He asked me to come up about six tomorrow evening.

John and I ate at the Leon with Erb and a Dutchman. I suspected the latter of being pro-German, but could get nothing definite on him. He was with Joe Spinden also. Erb reports that Joe bought a Corona and lost his 3a Eastman at the same time. Guess I am not the only absent-minded scientist afloat.

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<sup>222</sup> Thurston was the Secretary at the Guatemala City American Legation.

## December 10, Monday

The first thing this morning I went over to Dr. Hamilton's to find out what he could do for my tooth. He decided he would have to crown it before we leave at the end of the week.

Last night, Lee Christmas asked me to come around this morning to his room and see a pair of French dueling pistols he had bought. After Doctor Hamilton had finished his work for the morning, I went up to the León where the General is stopping and had a long visit with him. He is an interesting character who has powerfully influenced current history in these countries, particularly in Honduras. He is a large man physically, a strong face, and very, very blue clear eyes. His complexion is ruddy, his hair now a fine white. His blue eyes are the most notable feature of his face, though the *tout ensemble* is strong and almost handsome.

As for the man, he is first and foremost in this great world crisis a loyal American. Whatever Lee Christmas may have done or been in the past, today he is 100% pure American. There could be no mistaking that. The pride with which he showed his passport from the State Department was too obvious. Some few years ago he lost his citizenship because of his participation in the Bonilla-Davila revolution in Honduras,<sup>223</sup> but now he is rehabilitated in his citizenship and glories in it. Some of the scientific experts in Washington urged him to go into the shark fishing business. It sees the hide makes a very remarkable leather [called shagreen], and a good oil can be tried out of the liver, which in a good-sized shark weights 200 pounds or more. There are other byproducts—the backbone into canes and the teeth into chicken food and even fertilizer. He is here now about his concession, which the president has promised him. Dame Rumor says there are other reasons: something alleged to be brewing between Mexico and Salvador along the lines of a possible attack against Guatemala. Lee himself told me that the president had hinted at such a thing, and had asked him to stay around for a week or so, in case his military services might be required.

From this, we drifted to other things. He told me at great length with a great wealth of detail of how he took the north coast towns in the Bonilla Revolution. And of how, after he had all but lost the battle of Ceiba, he bluffed the English and American captains of the *Brilliant* and *Marietta* into believing the day was his, and they in turn persuaded his opponents to surrender and lay down their arms "to prevent further bloodshed."<sup>224</sup> The General should be a good poker player. This and other anecdotes he told. He claims Bonilla was just a pawn in a much larger game, that of the flotation of the J. P. Morgan loan to Honduras, which, if it went through, was to mean two million dollars for Philander P. Knox, the then Secretary of State—a disgusting

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<sup>223</sup> Christmas conspired with Samuel Zemurray (president of the Cuyamel Fruit Company) to return deposed Honduran President Manuel Bonilla to power, an action that contradicted U.S. policy. The plotting began in 1910 in New Orleans, where Christmas recruited a number of mercenaries, but was thwarted by U.S. Secret Service agents. Eventually, he and Zemurray ended up in La Ceiba where, with the help of new automatic weapons, they were victorious on January 25, 1911. Bonilla repaid Christmas by appointing him his military commander, but the return to power was short-lived, as Bonilla died in 1913 (Deutsch 1931).

<sup>224</sup> The January 25, 1911, Battle of Ceiba had significant ramifications well beyond the borders of Honduras. It was the first time that machine guns were used in battle, setting the stage for the extensive use of automated weapons later in the decade on the fields of Flanders.

revelation, if true. Christmas claims Knox tried to double cross Manuel Bonilla for Davila, but that the old Negro *presidente* (with Christmas' aid) put the revolution over in spite of the combined State and Navy Departments against him. And thus the morning passed with incidents from his numerous battles, etc. He is probably going over to Puerto Cortés with us on the *Florencio*, when we go at the close of the week.

From the General's, I went up to the Legation to see Walter Thurston. After lunch, John and I went shopping. About six, I went up to Fernando's. He has a fine library, particularly of Guatemaliana. Poor fellow, his is head over heels in work settling up his brother's estate, and as we sat there talking he was subjected to several interruptions. On my way up I stopped in the Foreign Relations office, but Adrian [Recinos] was closeted with the Minister, Toledo Uriarte, and I did not wait.

We had planned for a foursome at dinner—John, myself, Peter Wilson, and Seymour Larick; Science and Trade, the C.I., and the Singer Co. But poor Peter was laid up with the *paludismo* [malaria] and could not come, so at the last minute I had to substitute General Christmas, with some misgivings. Somehow, I couldn't imagine the General and Seymour "mixing much." Dinner, in fact, was a bit dull, and I nearly went to sleep over it. The general left as soon as it was over, and Seymour, John, and I walked back to the hotel. I was so sleepy I turned in at once, leaving John to entertain our guest.

## December 11, Tuesday

I got up very early to keep an 8:15 date with Watts at the American Club. John went over with me. I left them at 9:30 to keep an engagement at the dentist's. After an hour's session here, I returned to the hotel until it was time to go down to the station to meet young Austin, who was taking me out to the Guarda Viejo to have dinner at his agricultural station with Wilson Popenoe. He is tall, lanky, and thin, and I had no difficulty in picking him out at the station. The ride to Tivolo, his station, is pretty, passes right by Watts' wireless towers. The agricultural station, which is really their home, is located on the summit of a little rise in a fragrant grove of evergreens.

Popenoe came out to meet us, and it was pleasant indeed, meeting this efficient young man [Figure 20.2].<sup>225</sup> We were full of mutual plans and *noticias*, and indeed he gave me a beautiful Maya vase which came from Hempstead's place in Alta Vera Paz.<sup>226</sup> Although this specimen is badly broken, I could make out a representative of God D<sup>227</sup>, in fact two, one rather incomplete.

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<sup>225</sup> F. Wilson Popenoe (1892–1975), a tropical botanist, worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and United Fruit Company in Central America. He and his wife restored an old colonial mansion in Antigua, Guatemala, now known as Casa Popenoe. While with the USDA, he was an ONI agent and continued in service with the spy agency until 1922. He and Morley remained friends after the war (Harris and Sadler 2003: 205). His daughter, Marion Popenoe de Hatch, is an archaeologist and lives in Casa Popenoe.

<sup>226</sup> The wealthy Hempstead family owned huge properties around Coban (Alta Vera Paz) and were prominent coffee growers and business people.

<sup>227</sup> Maya "God D" (Schellhas 1904) is a designation for Itzamnaaj, a Classic and Postclassic aged creator and sky god. Itzamnaaj was the inventor of writing, a curer, and patron of the day Ajaw.

It was made of a fine-grained clay. The background is cream or buff, the upper and lower bands red, and the design incised. While we were trying to assemble this, Mrs. Austin announced that dinner was ready, and we adjourned below.



Figure 20.2. Wilson Popenoe.

Popenoe is going back to the States tomorrow. It seems that he contacted a bad case of malaria in the Alta Vera Paz, which pulled him down greatly, and caused him to abandon his idea of going to Costa Rica. Then too, he has been down here since August, 1916, nearly a year and a half, and it is high time he was going home. As we had a great deal to say to each other, I persuaded him to stay in to dinner with me, which he agreed to do; we then separated until six.

I went up to Fernando's office. He holds some position in the Division of Mines. I reached this rendezvous before he did, after winding in and out of a number of passages. Fernando came in presently, and we went over to the archives. These are located in a little interior room opening off of the *cabildo*, the *sala de sesiones*. I had been here before. They have some wonderful manuscript treasures: the original of Bernal Diaz del Castillo; the original Fuentes y Guzman's *Recordación Florida*, and the first book of the *Actos del Cabildo*. The latter covers the proceedings of the Cabildo from 1524 to 1530. It must have been composed at Ciudad Viejo [Antigua, the colonial capital of Guatemala]. The writing is very clear, but the chirography [penmanship] unintelligible in places because of the cryptic abbreviations. Unfortunately, this was particularly true of the dates. We had no difficulty in deciphering the month and day, the *del año* and the *Nuestro Señor*, but the year itself was unintelligible though perfectly legible in almost every case. I saw Pedro Alvarado's signature in one place.

These priceless historical records are kept in airtight tin boxes in a safe. The guardian is a nice old man, always ready to show his treasures. The walls are lined with cupboards wherein repose *legajos*, bundles of documents. This little room shelters the archives of the City of Guatemala, which is now almost four hundred years old (1524). This bundle treated of a cholera

outbreak in 1857, that of jails in 1793, etc., etc. The wealth of material in this little 12-foot square room for the reconstruction of Guatemala history passes comprehension. We would have lingered longer here, but we both had other dates, and so had to leave. They are pulling down the front of this building, in fact the old *portal*<sup>228</sup> and structure along this whole side of the plaza to put up a new building for the municipality.

I returned to the hotel and met Popenoe just going in. We talked things over for a while, and then went up to Fernando's, who had expressed a desire to meet him. On his way up, we met Adrian just leaving the Foreign Relations Office, and we all walked together. We stayed at Fernando's about an hour looking at his books, the Maudslays, Peters, Sappers, etc.

We came back down to the León, where we found supper for four ready, but no John. I suggested going over to the hotel to look him up. While Popenoe was washing up, I looked in on our Perdomo. He was feeling very frisky. His interview with the president had been very satisfactory, and in some state. The president had sent for him in his own carriage and had sent him home in the same. He had been received in a hall of state, and by himself. The president apparently promises everything. I joined Popenoe and went back to the Leon where we found John and Jim Roach. The happy idea of making Jim our fourth occurred to him and I asked him. He said telephone Toxie, and it did not take long to arrange it.

We were a well-mated quartet; Popenoe proved a charming dinner companion and thawed out greatly. He had to leave early to walk out to the Guarda as the last train leaves at 5:30. We bid him goodbye with real regret. Afterward, the three of us joined a party in the next room: Allen, the leather chap from Atlanta; a fat cattleman, Jones; a bald-headed obscene chap named Henderson; and a fourth I do not remember the name of. I saw they were getting ready to make a night of it, and I did not care to go with them; Jim Roach shared the same sentiments, but we had a difficult time in getting away. I did not see John until about 3 a.m. the next morning.

### December 12, Wednesday

Guadeloupe Day. In the morning, I worked out with Watts and Perdomo a cable for the states, until 9:30 when I had to run for the dentist's. This used up much of the morning, but I went to the club for a while and just before noon started up to Adrian's, stopping at the Buen Gusto for a box of candy for his *señora*. Adrian is the same courteous, friendly compadre as of old. Marriage does not appear to have changed him. Later, when Maria and the daughter came in from the photographers, I could see he was very much the father. Both of them are proud as can be over this little addition to the family tree, a bright, pretty, little thing too, who does not resemble either greatly, but look more like Adrian and Maria. The lunch was a pleasant homey affair, just the three of us. They go Friday to Huehuetenango for a three-weeks visit, Mr. and Mrs. Recinos Viejo are already there.

On my way back to the dentist's, I fell in with Richards and Weyerstall, the two young Fruit Co. boys who are up from Quirigua for the malaria, and they asked me into the Buen Gusto for tea. I volunteered to get them invitations for Mr. Roach's *bailecito* [little dance party], they looked so forlorn.

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<sup>228</sup> Morley seems to favor the Spanish *portal* to refer to a main entrance, often with an elaborate door and framing, to a colonial building.

I was an hour late at Doctor Hamilton's but he gave me the closing appointment of the day, and so I am that much nearer the perfect crown.

Afterward, I dropped in on the Robles. Rodolfo, as per usual, was swathed in a huge very white and very starched apron and immersed head over heels in work. I saw him for a moment only, and he asked me to dinner tomorrow night. I was desperately lonely and leaving Rodolfo's there was Rafael's, just across the street. I walked around the corner and knocked at the *zaguán* [entrance hall]. None of the ladies were in, but Rafael and his brother, Eduardo, were, and I had a good chance to become acquainted with the latter. We talked of the black list and its ramifications. Eduardo says putting Topke & Co., the big German hardware house, on will work a big hardship on the coffee *finqueros* here. Most of their machinery comes through them, and there seems to be no allied or even neutral house to take their place.

About seven, I walked over to the Club where I met John and Jim, and we all returned to the León, where we had some drinks. After supper we walked down to Watts', but found he had just left. It was too early to turn in, so walked back around by the Roaches'. Carlos Castañeda was there, and we talked and danced a bit until ten. I felt and was blue as indigo.

On our way back, we could see a great red reflection in the sky, coming from the façade of the Guadalupe Church. It was her day today, and the city has been in fiesta in consequence: many little children dressed in Indian costume, or rather what their fond mothers conceived to be Indian, processions, services, much bell ringing, flag flying, and the ubiquitous *bombas*, without which no fiesta is complete.

### **December 13, Thursday**

We got up early so as to squeeze some shopping in before my 9:30 dentist appointment. John located a lot of art supplies cheap, fine Italian watercolor paper, and he bought quite a supply. The book-worms had penetrated these in places but the damage was inconsiderable, though because of it he secured a handsome reduction. At 9:30 had another session with the dentist, measure being taken for my crown. The work Dr. Hamilton promises me will be completed in time.

After leaving Hamilton's, I met Perdomo and walked with him down to the Consulate. He wanted me to meet Mr. Fee, the new Consul, and from all accounts a good man. Someone said he was in the \$7,000 class. An American like he must, per se, be good. We talked over the work a bit. Erb was in the office and apparently in hot water. It seems he holds only an Emergency Passport, which is not supposed to be visaed by consular offices, which very thing, Moos, our German consular agent at Amalapa, had done. Fee, who is obviously a stickler for form, had promptly taken up the passport because of this irregularity. He also found another; it had no revenue stamps. Indeed, it was invalid because of some third defect, which I didn't grasp. Anyhow, it was lifted, leaving poor Erb dangling in mid-air in Guatemala City, waiting for another. His name is against him, poor chap, though I am confident he is no hyphenate.

At the Consulate there was a telegram to Perdomo from Arthur Carpenter saying he hesitated to accept without more definite information.<sup>229</sup> Perdomo will wire him I am coming

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<sup>229</sup> Morley was trying to recruit Carpenter as an agent for the ONI, but Carpenter, who had accompanied Morley on the ill-fated Uaxactun expedition of 1916, was reluctant to join up. As

over next week. Arthur makes me out of patience. If he had been frank with old Perdomo in the first place, we would not now be in doubt as to who he is, and I might not even have to go over to Puerto Cortés at all. But no, he loves mystery so that he fenced about, leaving Perdomo to believe everything or nothing as he chose. I suspect there is nothing to believe, only Arthur's innate love of mystery, and Perdomo's proneness to suspect the world.

I stopped at the Legation for a few minutes on my way back to the hotel. Nothing has been heard from Joe. Met Julia Robles returning to the hotel, who reminded me of my dinner engagement tomorrow night. Lunched with Erb, who had more passport troubles to dwell upon. He doesn't know when the matter will be fixed up and of course he has to stick around until some sort of passport is issued to him. I repeat my fancy his German name is proving a humbug. He is very anti-English, too, though fancy that can have nothing to do with this trouble. He has the same kind of concession from Nicaragua that Lee Christmas is getting from here: exclusive right to the shark fishing in those waters. I wonder if there really is anything in it. Lee, of course, oozes enthusiasm over the project, but he would be expected to, being its promoter. Erb tells me that in addition to oil from the liver and leather from the hide, the flesh is good for chicken food and fertilizer, and this takes no account of Lee's more fanciful products—shark-tooth necklaces and shark back-bone canes. He wants to meet Lee, and find out his plans. Two West Indian oilmen, Grey (the new manager) and Simmons, also had lunch with us. The former went to technology—or so he says—also Annapolis.

Everybody down here these days tries to tie up with Uncle Sam. Jones, this man, everybody is very mysterious. Popenoe told me the other day that Austin told him that Simmons, the American Grocer, told him that there were 14 U.S. Secret Service men in Guatemala City right this very minute. It seems that those who are not know most, but *quien sabe?* Pat is my middle name. Erb returned to the Imperial with me and I told him what I could of Lee Christmas' project. He did not stay long, and after he left I spent the entire afternoon writing.

### **December 14, Friday**

Dr. Hamilton tried on the crown and it fits. Tomorrow morning, therefore, he will put it on. After a long session here, John and I went over to the *Centro de Sport* and heard the records he selected yesterday. Bought them all.

Real late, about 7:30, I went up to Robles' and was shown into their little downstairs waiting room. Presently Julia came in, and then a Mr. Reeves, whose name I did not catch at first. Owing to this, I made a gauche blunder to begin with. He looked Latin enough, in all conscience. Small black eyes, an imposing black *bigote* [moustache], and he spoke almost faultless Spanish, so faultless in fact that I was quite deceived; and not hearing his name—which would have saved me, perhaps—I fell into the capital blunder of asking him almost at once if he spoke English! And he turned out to be an Englishman. He might have taken it as a compliment to his beautiful Spanish, but instead I thought was a bit stuffy. Later at the table, he made what I thought was a deprecatory remark about the U.S. and I told him it was devilishly

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seen in his diary entries below, Morley would make a trip to Puerto Cortés to personally persuade his old expedition mate to join the cause.



lucky for his country that we were at last in, otherwise the allies would have lost the war. I fancied he did not relish that, though heaven knows it is true enough.

I always enjoy dinner at the Robles'. Rodolfo is jolly, *simpático*, and entertaining, and Julia always a charming hostess. She always serves the cocktails herself in the dining room just before we sit down, and Rodolfo is always interrupted a thousand-and-one times by the telephone. This gives me the cue I always take, namely, that a doctor is everybody's servant, and Julia agrees and we are off. It is a pleasant home-like atmosphere, and that's the way I feel there. Spanish is spoken, though I feel in my boots that Julia's English is better than my Spanish. But she wishes it otherwise, so I struggle along in *castellano*. Sometimes I rush along speedily—if a bit incorrectly—and then I'll fetch up short groping for a word, stuttering like a mute.

Julia has quite come to the conclusion that I should marry a Latina. Thinks American girls do not make good wives, and with my interests all lying in these countries, she believes an *esposa Latin-Americana* is indicated. There is much in what she says from an academic point of view, *pero quien?* General advice is easy enough to give, it is when one becomes specific that the semaphores fly up. I told her the only one I could think of was her own pretty sister, Margarita, whom I understood was engaged. This was a very unexpected Roland for her Oliver, and she did not come back at once.<sup>230</sup> She finally said the engaged part was wrong, that there was "nothing doing" in that line. Was glad to hear that, at least, for the man they had engaged her to is reported fat and stubby, surely a case of Queen Titania<sup>231</sup> and her grotesque lover; for whatever else may be said about Margarita, she is beautiful and very sweet in manner.

Mr. Reeves rather thawed out under the red and white wine, and the liqueur, and we sort of made it up after my original unfortunate blunder.

We came away about ten after a very pleasant evening.

## December 15, Saturday

Our last day in the city, and terrifically busy. Nothing much could be done until after I had finished with the dentist. However, before my appointment, John and I went over to the *Centro de Sport*, heard the records he selected yesterday and bought them. We also got the phonograph down on the *Calle Real*, an eight-dollar Stewart, which has one decided advantage over our little Columbia, namely that it takes a 12-inch record as well as a 10-inch.

By the time I had finished the musical end of our outfit, it was time to go to the dentist's. He finished this morning and also cleaned my teeth. John came in from the Legation just as he was finishing, and brought me the envelope I had left in the Legation safe. We returned to the hotel, where I took a *coche* [hired car, taxi] to expedite my calls. Went first to the *Centro de Sport* to pay my bill. Leaving here, I ran into Eduardo Aparicio, his wife, and son. They wished me a pleasant journey, and I asked them if I might do myself the pleasure of calling upon them on my return.

Stopped at the Legation to say goodbye to Walter and the Minister, in that order. The latter leaves next Thursday on his vacation. He has been delaying, hoping that Walter's confirmation

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<sup>230</sup> A reference to the stories of Roland and Oliver, two equally skilled knights; an idiomatic phrase meaning an equal response, akin to tit for tat.

<sup>231</sup> Titania is the queen of the fairies in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

as secretary might come from the Senate, but it hasn't yet. He will, therefore, go anyhow on the next boat. He wants me to wire the Legation how I find the Cuyamel situation.

The next jump was a long one, clear across town and almost out to the Souci, where the British Legation is. I first telephoned making sure Armstrong would be in. We had another very satisfactory conference. I learned something of his troubles over the Black List and how the listees are trying to evade its consequences already. I got his views on the general situation, which I find coincide with mine, except as to the settlement of the boundary dispute, which I believe should go over until the end of the war. We really cannot permit ourselves to be jockeyed into a position where we would have to choose between two friends. My suggestion that Mr. Zemurray be advised that his aggressions were obnoxious to the State Department, and that they must be discontinued, he liked.<sup>232</sup> If the cause of the irritation is removed—if only temporarily—the friction between the two countries would quickly subside for so far as the two countries interest are concerned, the dispute is not a lively issue, having been in doubt ever since Spanish times.<sup>233</sup> I stayed until 12:30 talking over various matters and then had to hurry back to the hotel to meet John for lunch.

Right after lunch I packed and at three sallied forth in the same *coche*. I went first to Clodeveo Berges',<sup>234</sup> but had the misfortune of finding him out. His servant, a man I remembered having seen in Flores, said he was going to the States next Wednesday, on the same boat with Leavell. From there I went around to Fernando's office in the *Division de Minas*, and not finding him in, I went on up to his house, but he was not here either. His man let me in to his study, where I wrote him a note of farewell and enclosed the list of Peabody Museum publications, which he had asked for the other evening.

On my way down to Calle Real, I stopped at Manuel Cisniego Otero's house. A drunken Indian servant came to the door, a man, in fact two, and man and a woman. They were so pickled I could get nothing through to them or from them at first, but after giving them Spanish for "wot's wot," I learned that don Manuel is in New Orleans, Biriato in La Libertad, and Manuelito here in town. I was sorry to miss him, but the drunken servants could give no definite information either as to his return or present whereabouts.

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<sup>232</sup> Samuel Zemurray founded the Cuyamel Fruit Company, the main competitor to United Fruit, taking control over the latter during the great depression. The competition between the two companies, especially during the late teens and early 1920s, often resulted in sabotage and violence. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam\\_Zemurray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Zemurray). His daughter, Doris Zemurray Stone, was a pioneering archaeologist in Honduras and Costa Rica, with many publications.

<sup>233</sup> The Cuyamel Fruit Co. had recruited workers from El Salvador and brought them to Honduras with permission of the government in Tegucigalpa. The company used these workers to rapidly expand banana cultivation in the floodplain of the Motagua River, which was the exact territory in dispute between Honduras and Guatemala. This activity, exacerbated by the presence of a large number of El Salvadorans, significantly raised tensions between all three Central American republics. The long simmering border dispute between Honduras and Guatemala was finally resolved via arbitration in 1933.

<sup>234</sup> Lic. Clodovego Berges was the *jefe político* of Flores and later the governor of Petén (see Rice and Ward 2021: 126).

I went next to the U.F. Co. and got Mr. Bruni to send a telegram to Mr. Shaw advising him that John and I would be down tomorrow. Next, went around to the Clarks and saw Mr. Clark, who kindly consented to look after our interests here. Anent [regarding] German propaganda in Mexico, he said it was all being paid for in hard German cash; and that as quick as the Teutonic breast runs dry, the Mexicans will speedily drop the Teutonic dugs—I am obliged to paraphrase a little as the original was a bit broad, though in so doing I lose the flavor of the epigram.

From here, I went down to Cottons. They are Heil's Italian in-laws. I introduced myself as recently from Tela, and met two sisters, one distinctively pretty. I told them all I could of their sister, and of what a pleasant evening we had had with the Heils at Tela, but as it turned, they had heard more recently than our visit there.

I bid goodbye to Rafael's family, doña Marie and doña Elvida, and then across the street where I saw only Julia. All three ladies wanted to know why I did not marry. True is the strongest reason I can think of. I met John and Jim Roach just leaving the Club, and we all walked up to the León where we had some cocktails. John and I ate here. Afterward, by appointment, we went down to Watts'. Perdomo had already preceded us thither, and we had a last conference behind closed doors, very mysterious. By and by, Mrs. Watts and the little girl came in. The child is blue-eyed and light-haired, while both of the parents are dark. We bid goodbye and walked back up town. John left me to go direct to the Roaches' while I returned to the León where I had an appointment with Richardson and Weyerstall at 9:30. They were not there when I reached the Leon, but came in presently and we all walked down to the *bailecito*. There were only four girls: Mrs. Roach, Mrs. Mann (the San Francisco queen of whose beauty and style everyone had been talking; she is undoubtedly attractive, though had no especial appeal for me), Miss Castañeda—Carlos' sister, and Mary Owen concluded the list. As there were three times as many men, we did a lot of sitting—and shivering, for it was cold.

I came home before John—about twelve—as I had a lot of packing to do. Bid the Roaches goodbye for what I thought would be nearly six months, but returning to the hotel I found a note which changed our plans considerably. There was a note in the tray where the keys are kept, saying that Mr. Bruni had telephoned during the course of the evening that Mr. Shaw came in tonight. This will completely change our plans as we will have to stay over tomorrow and see him instead of going down [to Puerto Barrios], I was half glad, because my packing looked discouragingly large, and I was very tired. So, I cheerfully changed schedule and turned in. There were two other notes, one from Fernando Cruz saying that he would be down to the train in the morning to see me off. This gave me a twinge of conscience because I would not be there, also an extra twinge for Walter, who had promised to come down also. The other card was from Clodeveo Berges with a package of mail which he requested me to leave at Carlos Melhado's in Belize.

John came in after three, and I told him of the changes. He was dead tired he said, and welcomed the extra hours of sleep. So everybody was pleased.

## **December 16, Sunday**

While John slept in the early morning, I packed. After breakfast, which I ate by myself, I telephoned Mr. Bruni, and found that Mr. Shaw was at the León barbershop, where I found him a few minutes later. After his shave, we walked over to the Fruit Co. offices, where we had a

quiet talk. I asked him if I could have the Fruit Co. launch at Puerto Barrios, the *Florencio*, for three or four days. He was quite willing and gave me a note for Pollan to that effect. I returned to the room, and then went out to see if I could get a couple of seats to the concert tonight at the Colón. It is an amateur affair for the benefit of the earthquake sufferers<sup>235</sup>, at which La Monzon is going to dance esthetically. After getting two good seats down in the orchestra, I went back to the room and finished packing. John was still sleeping, so I went to the Club, where I met Watts. We went in, sat down and talked for the rest of the morning. Mrs. Watts took pity upon my lonesomeness and asked me to lunch with them, which invitation I gladly accepted.

They drove home, dropping me for a few minutes at the Imperial, though I followed them shortly on foot. I took True's picture down to show Mrs. Watts. Their little girl speaks only Spanish, though she can understand English. The dinner was good, chicken, *aguacate*, and nice hot tortillas, of which I ate more than anything else.

I had intended writing, so left the Watts' right after dinner. On getting back to the room, however, I found John and Carlos Castañeda on the point of driving out to the Reforma,<sup>236</sup> and nothing must do but that I accompany them.

On the way out we passed the Herrera machine, a new Packard. Carlos says Margarita was on the front seat with the chauffeur, but we passed so swiftly I did not recognize her. Turning right at the Reforma, we came around through the Guardia Vieja and stopped off at the cantina there for a drink. It all came back to me, a rather bedraggled little place in a grove of pines, dusty and rather down at the heel with funny little outdoor arbor-like booths. Carlos was too fastidious to drink here, so we looked up a new emporium—no better—and slaked our thirst at the new place. While we were thus engaged, a party of square-headed Huns came in, swaggering arrogantly with pig-like faces. Lord, how I hate 'em. We left in disgust.

Returning by way of the Reforma again, we passed one of the president's 16-odd mistresses, a fat, rather ill-favored woman—not too young. If he must emulate the late King Solomon, why not exercise some of that monarch's reputed good taste? Carlos, who knows everybody and everything here, says not one of the lot are better looking than the lady we saw this afternoon. His gesture of contempt was magnificent. These Latins can get more into the shrug of a shoulder than we can crowd into an hour's conversation.

We stopped at Mrs. Roach's for tea, and found my friend Mr. Reeves there. I had met him earlier in the afternoon returning from Watts, so I rather expected him. Toxica was resplendent in a blue Chinese Mandarin robe, which went very well with her fair hair and peaches-and-cream complexion, her best points, by the way. This time, Mr. Reeves and I got along together

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<sup>235</sup> The November 17 Amatitlán earthquake destroyed rural settlements a few miles southwest of Guatemala City, beginning a series of quakes that lasted into late January 1918 and razed much of the city as well as Antigua. These tremors, and their massive damage, were witnessed by Morley and are detailed in entries beginning on December 25.

<sup>236</sup> While he was in Guatemala City, Morley frequently mentions "the Reforma." This refers to both the Palacio de la Reforma and the Paseo de Reforma, one of the new grand boulevards constructed in the 1890s by President Barrios. The Palacio was located at the southern end of the boulevard. A Hotel Reforma exists today in southeastern Zone 1 of the city, the old and rather shabby Historic District.

famously. In fact, when we finally started off for the plaza to join the Sunday afternoon promenade, he and I fell to each other. On our way thither, we met Jim, who turned around and walked back with us, making us three couples.

The *paseo*<sup>237</sup> was at its height. The band was playing, and both seats and the promenade were filled with people. I saw many people I knew. The custom is very pretty. The yellow slanting sunlight, falling on the façade of the cathedral made a rich effulgence of golden light there. The color of the stone is a yellowish cream, and in the afternoon sun it becomes indescribably beautiful. The really good music, the many beautiful women, the flowers, trees—everything: one cannot forget these pictures, and in our colder north they irresistibly draw a tropical-bitten gringo back, back, back. We walked round and round and round the plaza until 6:30 when I had a date with Fernando at the Club. He had come early in the morning while I was dressing, and arranged to meet me at this hour.

John went to the Club with me, where we found Richardson and Weyerstall. I asked them to supper with us, and the former to the concert with me. Carlos Castañeda had asked us to a box party [at the concert], but as I had neither dinner coat nor full dress, I would not accept. John, however, had the former and he decided to sit with Carlos in the box, so I had to look for a new companion. Old Perdomo had already turned me down, so I put it up to Richardson, who said he'd be pleased to go.

Fernando came in just then and asked me to dinner, said he understood I was to eat with him. Here was a pretty kettle of fish. We finally arranged it that John should take Richardson and Weyerstall to dinner, and that Richardson should meet me in the lobby of the Gran Hotel at 8:45. However, lest I should be late, as appeared highly probable to me knowing Fernando's royal hospitality, I gave him the ticket and told him to wait no longer than 9:00 for me. After drinking we broke up, John bearing Richardson and Weyerstall off to the León, and Fernando and I walked up to the house next to the Parque Estrada Cabrera.

We dined well and long. First, there was a liberal foundation of cognac, and then a big cold turkey dinner. It was to be admitted that I did high and low justice to the viands. Conversation turned on an interesting subject—marriage, and why we both found ourselves single. From a very ripe experience, Fernando, speaking with great frankness and seriousness, advised against my marrying down here. His analysis of the situation was very searching and he demonstrated pretty clearly how it could not be. I believe he is right. "The east is east," etc., holds down here. After the flame of physical attraction has burned itself out, there is too little left of mutual interests to make the thing a success. But they are devilishly good looking, for all of that. We discussed the situation from every angle, not omitting personalities, but we got nowhere. And time passed. I had promised to meet Richardson at 8:45, but when I had finally torn myself away from Fernando's hospitable roof—there were only us two, and hailed a hack—it was nearly ten. In fact, I was an hour late for my appointment.

Richardson had, of course, gone on to the theatre, whither I followed him. The first part of the program was at its closing number, La Monzon, a Spanish dance, so I did not go down to

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<sup>237</sup> The *paseo* is a Spanish custom of a late-afternoon stroll around the plaza, an opportunity for community socializing.

my seat. During the intermission, I visited Carlos Castañeda's box party: Mrs. Mann, Mrs. Roach, Jim and John, and Mr. Mann. The men, all but Carlos, were out in the foyer.

I saw Margarita Herrera in a box with the rest of her family. She is very pretty. Also recognized the Perosinis and Mr. Reeves with them. Found Richardson and we sat together for the second half. I missed him going out, however.

On the way home I fell in with Walter Thurston, Alfred Clark, and a mining man, and we all went down to the Italia for a light lunch. Carlos Castañeda's brother was there, highly illuminated. After a mediocre eat, came back to the hotel, finished packing and turned in. John didn't show up until far later or earlier.

## CHAPTER 21

### PUERTO BARRIOS AND BELIZE

#### December 17, Monday

We left early without incident. There was no one up at the Imperial to pay our bill to, so we had to settle with Mario, the chauffeur at the station. I found later, on the train—I overpaid by \$280.00 *billetes*. John laughed at me over the money confusion. The trouble arose over the fact that the Imperial keeps two kinds of accounts, gold and *billetes*, and Miss Gillett had already included my *billetes* in the gold account of the bill.

Fernando was down to see us off, bringing a choice jar of cranberry sauce and some delicious cold turkey, part of last night's feast. It was with genuine regret I bade him goodbye, a fine fellow under tremendous responsibilities: seven little children and no wife!

The trip down was no more monotonous than usual, or no less in fact. Grey, the West India Oil man, and Pérez Ora from Belize were our only through companions. It was arranged that John should go on through to Puerto Barrios to arrange with Pollan about the *Florencio*, and I should stop off at Quirigua and see Doctor McPhail. This program was carried out. I left the train at Quirigua. "Reddy" Smith was there, and when he saw John he tried to drag him off the train. His *mozo* did get John's coat, under Smith's orders, and when the train finally pulled out we only got it back on in time by throwing it on the rear platform.

Schultz was also down at the station and told me that the famous leaning monument had fallen [Stela E]. It went down in September without breaking, happily, just pulled itself out of its foundations and slumped over. He arranged to take me over to see it tomorrow.

I stopped with Doctor McPhail up at the hospital [Figure 21.1]. There were five of us at dinner, Doc. McPhail, his two assistants, Doctors Winn and Smith, Reddy Smith, and myself. After supper a Mr. Shaw<sup>238</sup> of the railroad came in and we played auction. I won a little. Turned in about ten, in a most immaculate bedroom with bath and toilet attached! It was almost too much grandeur for an itinerant "bug hunter," as they call all scientists down here.

#### December 18, Tuesday

Mac gave me the "once over" after breakfast, and diagnosed my "itch" like the others. He gave me two salves, one sulphur and the other *quien sabe*, and I am to use them generously. After breakfast I went over to see Louise Silas, Andrew's sister, to get from her his address.<sup>239</sup> I

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<sup>238</sup> Art Shaw, not to be confused with G. M. Shaw, General Manager of the United Fruit Company's Guatemala division and one of Morley's ONI agents.

<sup>239</sup> Andrew Silas had accompanied Morley on the ill-fated Uaxactun expedition of 1916 (Rice and Ward 2021).

dropped in on Mrs. Landry and the children. Sadie Marie is now shooting up like a banana stalk—seems to have grown inches since I last saw her in June.



Figure 21.1. The hospital at Quirigua, the largest in the region.

From Landry's I went over to the office to see Schultz' archaeological treasures, two really magnificent *incensarios* [pottery incense burners] over 16 inches high. They were found in a most interesting way. A pine tree blew over on the ridge up near Toltec Farm and in its roots there was caught a fragment of one of these *incensarios*. The man who brought it in to Schultz dug down into the hole where the tree had stood and found not only the remaining pieces of this one, but another of the same size and general design almost entire. Each has a little figure modeled in clay and applied against the outside. One has a pronounced Roman nose and may be intended for God D, Itzamma, the other has filed teeth and may be God B,<sup>240</sup> the Old Empire precursor of Kukulcan. We carefully carried them out on the porch of the office, and I took 4 pictures of them, saving the remaining two for the fallen monument. When I got back to the hospital, I found Barnes had come up from Cayuga for the day. He is English, and a companion of Shaw's.

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<sup>240</sup> Maya "God B" (Schellhas 1904) is a designation for the Classic and Postclassic deity Chaak (Chac), the rain and storm god. He caused lightning with his fiery ax, with which he is typically shown. Like many Maya deities, Chaak had four aspects, in this particular case associated with the colors and directions: red/east, yellow/south, black/west, and white/north. Chaak was also patron of Ik' days and the number 13.



They are butterfly hunters and have lived in the tropics—Costa Rica in particular—a number of years. Shaw's father made a fortune in antiques on 5th Avenue, New York, and Shaw and Barnes travel all around together. We talked war a bit before lunch. Afterward, I went down to the section house, met Schultz and we went down to the [Quirigua] ruins in a little gasoline car, one of the very ones that belonged to us when we excavated the city five years ago. It still seemed to be very much in commission.

The instant I stepped into the plaza at the north end of the city I noticed something missing, something different: the leaning monument [Figure 21.2], which had given the city such fame, was leaning no more. In fact, it was prostrate [Figure 21.3].<sup>241</sup> It had pulled up a big piece of sod with it, but even then, the butt was not exposed and the foundations were not clear. I could take no measurement and made arrangements with Schultz to have it dug out and plan to return next week to measure it.



Figure 21.2. Quirigua Stela 4 (E) before it fell over.

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<sup>241</sup> Stela E (Stela 4 in the Maudslay era) is the largest monolithic monument erected in the Americas during pre-Columbian times. It stands over 10 m high, not including the additional buried 3 m that form the undersurface foundation.



Figure 21.3. Quirigua Stela 4 (E) as Morley found it in late 1917.

Some malicious person had knocked off the nose of the figure on the north side, which Maudslay had stuck on with plaster of Paris thirty-five years before. I searched around in the grass below the monument and had no difficulty in finding it. This face was the best preserved in the city, and fearing that its nose might be carried off by some curio fiend, or worse, smashed my some drunken *mozo*, I gave it to Schultz to put in the safe at the office, pending the re-erection of the stela, if that ever is undertaken.<sup>242</sup>

It is hard to say why this monument should have fallen just at this time. It fell during the last days of September. Landry says a shallow lagoon stood around its base all through the rainy season in August and September, but this same thing must have occurred many hundreds of times since the city was abandoned in the sixth century.<sup>243</sup> The earthquakes may have helped it, although the heavy shocks did not occur until two months later.<sup>244</sup> Rather, it seems to me, the tremendous thrust of that vast leaning weight finally proved too much for the foundations, and

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<sup>242</sup> During a 1934 attempt to re-erect Stela E by the CIW team working under Gustav Stromsvik, steel cables failed, sending the half-raised stela crashing to the ground, breaking it into two pieces. It was repaired and re-raised and today stands vertical, sadly without its nose, on the Main Plaza (Looper 2003).

<sup>243</sup> In fact, Quirigua continued to flourish well into the early ninth century, with the last hieroglyphic text inscribed in 810. A secondary occupation occurred during the early Postclassic with evidence—including a reclining chacmool—of strong ties to Yucatan (Martin and Grube 2000: 225; Sharer and Traxler 2006: 579).

<sup>244</sup> Morley must be referring to the November 17 earthquake that struck near Amatitlán.

the monolith fell, after more than fourteen centuries of service. It had survived long, long after the bones of its sculptors had returned again to earth, a solitary sentinel in the bush, guarding the ancient city. There are not a few of us who will miss it.

By the time we got back to Quirigua [town], I had to hurry up to the hospital to pack. John had telephoned up from Barrios in the morning that everything was arranged about the *Florencio* and we were to leave at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning, and that he had already secured my passport. This was agreeable news, as I did not want to lose any time in Barrios, which I have always disliked.

Shaw was on the train going down and I rode with him until he left at Virginia. He is much worried over a spell he had in the city. Mac tells him it acted like gallstones. I earnestly hope he is not in for that. Barnes went down to Cayuga. We talked chiefly of food. It seems he is the chef of their ménage, even prepares the food himself. Somehow, he doesn't visualize as a cook, a big husky Englishman puttering around amidst pots and pans. Sara and his father-in-law to be, Doyle, were also on the train. The wedding is to be day-after-tomorrow evening, but I am afraid John and I will be in Puerto Cortés.

John met me at the train with the unpleasant news that the Puerto Cortés trip, at least so far as the *Florencio* is concerned, was off. It seems the boat is not registered under any flag, and when she goes out on the high seas, or in fact anywhere outside of Guatemalan waters, is subject to seizure and confiscation by anybody at any time. So, she was quite out of the question. The *Harriman* is going to Puerto Cortés, probably tomorrow, and we can probably get on her.

I saw Lee Christmas at the hotel. He has been waiting for several days for a boat and was counting on the *Florencio*. We hope to get off in the afternoon for Puerto Cortés. I turned in early, pretty well tired out.

### **December 19, Wednesday**

I saw Willie Coe, a Utila boy, the captain of the *Harriman*, long before John was up. He told me he was only waiting for a permit to load some sugar, and then he would be off. Later in the morning, Lee Christmas disclosed the Ethiopian in the sugar bowl. There is now an embargo on shipping sugar out of the country, but every once in a while, the president, as a special favor, gives permits for specific shipments to his agents or friends. Pérez Ora, a man who came down with us from the city day before yesterday, is one of these, and even now the *Albert F.* of Belize is loading 1500 sacks of sugar for him, on each sack of which he stands to make a clear profit of \$3.00 gold--\$4,500.00, a tidy sum. Willie Coe is working for another confidential agent of the president, a rascally Colombian named Ferro. The later, instead of working with Pérez Ora, is fighting him, and in consequence his permit is being held up. He tried to steal a thousand sacks from Pérez Oro last month, and Pérez Ora struck back by getting the president to hold up his shipments. So, Willie Coe is cooling his heels waiting here, losing time and money as he most tearfully tells you.

Lee introduced me to another veteran, a General Drummond, an old companion-at-arms, and very cock-eyed as a result of a former wound. Also, to the wife and daughter of Bennaton of San Pedro Sula, who wants to get back there in time for Christmas. The child, a little girl of seven, is beautiful. I quite lost my heart to her deep brown eyes and smiling face.

Waiting for a special permit from the president to ship sugar out of the country in the face of a general embargo looked very interminable to me, so I decided to go over to Livingston first, particularly since both of the generals assured me that I would find Willie Coe still waiting for his sugar day after tomorrow when I planned to get back. I saw Willie, and he promised to wait for me until Friday noon, at which time he said he was going to leave whether or not. He would wait no longer than that for Ferro's permit. It should be understood the sugar was already in town and waited only for the president's permit to load it. Ferro had wired from the city he was bringing this permit down with him tomorrow.

I saw Pollan and asked him to let me have the *Florencio* to go to Livingston [Figure 21.4] for a couple of days right after lunch. We had very little luggage to carry aboard, a suitcase apiece, and we got off about two. The ride over is about an hour and a half, skirting the shore, and then into the mouth of the Rio Dulce, the bar of which is about 5½ or 6 feet deep. Livingston is built on a bluff on the west side of the river and, with the exception of Trujillo, has the best location of any town on this coast from Progreso, Yucatan, to Bluefields, Nicaragua.



Figure 21.4. Postcard of the main street in Livingston circa 1920.

I had been here before in April 1915 with Percy Adams when we started in to the interior, and I finally walked over to the [Río de la] Pasión, and out by Flores, El Cayo, and Belize,<sup>245</sup> while Percy returned through Livingston and thence home to the States to be present at the delivery of his first-born, arriving in Santa Fe only a half day before that interesting event—nice calculation.

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<sup>245</sup> See entry for April 27, 1915 (Rice and Ward 2021: 225).

The town did not appear to have changed any in the past 2½ years. They were, to be sure, cutting down the street up the hill so it could be used by *carretas*, a necessary civic improvement.

We first looked up Mr. Edward Reed, our Consul, and also Great Britain's, an American who has lived in Guatemala for 25 years. I met him two years ago when I was here. His mother was then living, but she has since died. We concluded our business with him, and then returned to the waterfront to the offices of the Alta Vera R.R. Co. and saw Captain Owen.<sup>246</sup> He asked us up for a toddy at 5. We strolled up the main street, made a few purchases, saw our captain drinking some beer and urged him to indulge no further as it was imperative we should get up to see Mrs. Potts tomorrow and back to Barrios again all in the same day. By the time we had returned to the hotel and washed, it was five, so we set forth again for the Owens'. Mrs. Owen and a Mr. Dyer, the auditor of the company, were there. We had one toddy and then another and the tea merged into dinner and Mrs. Owen very kindly insisted on our staying.

After supper Mr. Reed came in and we spent the evening very pleasantly with more toddy and conversation. Mrs. Owen wrote a short note to her aunt, Mrs. Potts, which I undertook to deliver tomorrow. We left about ten, and stopped for a few moments at Mr. Reed's house for a paper he wanted to give me. We retired by the light of a single smoky lamp. Fortunately, both beds in our one room had *pabellones*.

### December 20, Thursday

We rose about 6:30 and had breakfast at 7:00. The captain of the *Florencio* brought some boys up to carry down our bags and I paid our bill and we left. The boat was ready to go and as soon as we were aboard, the engine started and we pushed off. Unfortunately, the morning was misty, and all of the beauties of "The Sweet River" did not come out. It was, however, lovely enough even in the mist. The foliage draped over the white limestone cliffs, which in places rise precipitously from the water's edge, the placid green water itself, the low-hanging clouds floating across the mountains, now hiding their tops, and now revealing them. Keyed to a low note it all made a lovely picture. Presently, the Río Dulce opened into the Golfete, a long rather narrow lake dotted with many small swampy islands, and then closed in again. John and I both went to sleep in the Golfete and, when I awoke, we had already passed the old Spanish fort of San Felipe and were in the Golfo Dulce or Lake Izabal proper.

The farther shore was shrouded in mist; nor could we make out the lofty ranges rising behind it. We were hugging the west shore as Mrs. [Lucy] Potts' place, "Jocolo" is on this side, five or six miles from the mouth of the lake, where San Felipe stands.<sup>247</sup> We soon reached Jocolo and landed. A nephew of Mrs. Potts met us at the wharf and took us up to the house. The old lady has been very ill, in the Quirigua hospital, but to me, who had not seen her for two years, she appeared unusually bright and spry for her years, 75. She is probably the oldest white

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<sup>246</sup> William Owen, manager of the Northern Transportation Company at Livingston. His wife, Mary, an amateur anthropologist, prepared a volume of Guatemalan folktales, which today resides in the Archive of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology.

<sup>247</sup> The Potts estate, Jocolo, was first mentioned in the early seventeenth century as a site on the Golfo Dulce where Dominican friars engaged in the sale of sarsaparilla (Sherman 1979).

person in Guatemala. She first came to Belize in 1867 and first to Guatemala in 1872. Her husband, with a Negro named Knight, owned the Las Quebradas Mine which was sold two years ago to Theodore N. Vail [President] of the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. for a price said to be around three hundred thousand.<sup>248</sup> The old lady is comfortably off, therefore, and in spite of her years, as sharp as a whip. The house is a two-story wooden affair, overlooking the lake, [and] has a beautiful view when one gets it, which owing to the frequency of mists and rain, particularly at this time of year, is almost never.

Going in the central room, dining and living room combined, one is struck between the eyes by a magnificent hand-carved Italian chest several centuries old. There it stands amid more humble furniture, a thing of rare and exquisite beauty. It was the first thing I noticed when I entered, and the last thing when I left, and all the time I was there it fairly sang to me. Mrs. Potts had bought it many years before from some impractical Italian immigrants who had brought it with them from the old country. That was long before the day of the northern railroad, when freight had to be landed at Izabal, just across the lake from Jocolo, and hauled on mule back over a terrible mountain trail into the Motagua Valley, and thence six *jornadas* up to Guatemala City. Such a bulky article could not be carried inland in this way, and the owner sold it to Mr. Potts.

We delivered Mrs. Owen's letter, and were asked to lunch after the hospitable fashion of the country. Mrs. Potts introduced me to an old Guatemalteco, don Roberto Pultero, who was *comandante* of Livingston 40 years ago. He remembers well the Dutch engineer de Braam, who had dug the canal from Graciosa Bay to the San Francisco mouth of the Motagua River, and by a little thinking was able to give me the date as 1862 when this work was done. So, after all these years I find when the famous Leyden Plate was discovered.<sup>249</sup> He thinks the only place where it could have been buried, i.e., where there was sufficient solid ground for people to live, was at the eastern end, near the San Francisco River. He gave me also interesting information about a cave, or rather rooms in a mound, somewhere behind Las Animas, or Cayuga, on the west bank of the Motagua. His memory was very remarkable as to dates, and he knew at once what he remembered or failed to remember.

By the time I had gathered the information from him which I was after, it was the lunch hour. Afterward we waited only long enough for Mrs. Potts to write a note to Mrs. Owen. She gave us lots of delicious grapefruit when leaving. We bid her goodbye on her porch, surrounded by her Indian peons, a veritable feudal queen mistress of the eighty-odd souls and some 5,000 acres. On the way back we stopped, against lazy John's wishes, for a few minutes at the Fuerte de San Felipe [Figure 21.5].<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> The Quebradas Gold Mine worked rich placer deposits near the surface.

<sup>249</sup> The Leyden plate today resides in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkerkunde in Leiden, Netherlands, hence its name. The artifact, a jadeite belt plate, is inscribed with one of the earliest examples of Maya Long Count dating. Morley, together with his second wife, Frances, published a paper on the Leyden plate (1938), which remains the most exhaustive study of the artifact. In that publication, Morley states de Braam discovered the plate in 1864.

<sup>250</sup> Today, Castillo de San Felipe de Lara, originally constructed in 1644 but modernized both in the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, is on the UNESCO World Heritage Site



Figure 21.5. Castillo San Felipe de Lara.

It is now quite dismantled, even the guns have been carried away. The walls are still standing, perhaps 15 feet high, and the end where the cannon formerly stood, which command the narrow channel into the lake, are also fairly well preserved. In its time, it has doubtless seen a number of brisk engagements.<sup>251</sup> When I was here two years ago, the place was deserted, but now there is a *comandante* and a few soldiers encamped on the rising ground behind the fort in a few thatched houses. I asked the *comandante* if he knew of anyone having found any old coins or other relics in the fort, but he did not, and we left at once.

We slept most of the time on the way back to Livingston, which we reached about 5. Captain Owen, Mr. Dyer, and Mr. Reed were down at the dock. Captain Owen had a letter of introduction for me to Mr. Greely, manager of the Cuyamel Fruit Co., and we found Mr. Dyer was to be a passenger with us over to Barrios. We did not delay long as it was getting late, but came right on over to Barrios without incident. We had dinner as quickly as we got in. Afterward, I walked over to the hotel, saw my two general friends, who assured me that the *Harriman* was still waiting, that Ferro came down on the train, and that we might get off sometime tomorrow.

I changed my clothes, shaved, and about 8:30 walked over to the married quarters where, in Mr. Pollan's apartment, Sara and Miss Doyle were going to be married. The rooms were decorated with branches of the manaca palm, or corozo as it is more properly called, which were most effective. At one end of the porch, there was an altar with flowers, candles, and greens. Some fifty people, mostly Fruit Company employees from different farms were assembled when I arrived. And not long after, the ceremony took place. The orchestra struck up the familiar strains appropriate to the occasion, and first came the bride's sister in pink something, who took her position at the right of the altar, then came Mrs. Pollan, also in pink, who took her place at the left. Then came the bride on her father's arm.

First came the civil ceremony. Don Carlos, the *comandante* resplendent in gold braid, performed it, assisted by a clerk. This took place not at the altar, but at a little table at one side.

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Tentative List and is a popular tourist destination.

<sup>251</sup> The fort, built to protect the Gulfo Dulce from incursions by English pirates, never saw significant military action. Its mere presence was a successful deterrent.

Then a padre appeared, Padre Novella from Guatemala City, and in front of the altar joined them before his God. Afterward, we adjourned to an adjoining room where the wedding cake was cut, eaten, and washed down with champagne. After an hour of felicitations and eating and drinking, the company moved over to the mess hall where a dance took place. More champagne was broached and all had a merry time. I danced only once or twice.

John and I, who are always changing plans, doped out a new one in this festive atmosphere. As it is uncertain when the *Harriman* will be off for Puerto Cortés, and since John really has work to do at Quirigua, we decide he should go up by himself in the morning while I go to Puerto Cortés, do what I have to there, and return in time for the tramp on Monday or Tuesday. We stayed at the *baile* until about midnight and then retired, though the dancing continued until three. Padre Novella proved himself *muy simpático* by playing the organette himself before the evening was over.

### December 21, Friday

Got up early enough to see John off for Quirigua. Many of the wedding guests, the bride and groom and padre, were going up to the city [Guatemala City]. Mr. Shaw was going as far as Virginia, the Hughes to Quirigua, and Sara and his wife to Guatemala City for their honeymoon. After the train left, I went over to the hotel where the prospective passengers of the *Harriman* were all stopping. Ferro, the would-be sugar exporter, explained that he had not brought the permit to load the sugar with him, but that it surely came in by telegraph last night.

Later at the *comandancia*, nobody knew of it and we were all up in the air. Willie Coe was furious, he had lost three days waiting for this shipment, and he was no nearer getting it than when he arrived in Barrios on Tuesday. He promised us all that if Ferro could not produce his permit to load the sugar, he would not wait for him any longer but would leave without it.

After lunch we all got our passports and, about three, went on board the boat. To the last Ferro protested the permit was on the verge of arriving. Truth is, I suspect the old president was disgusted with their bickerings and decided to give neither any more favors.

We got off about four. As passengers, beside myself and Lee Christmas, there were Mrs. Bennaton and her little girls, a Mr. and Mrs. Bannister of Belize with son and daughter, and a native girl and her *marido*. Long before we went on board, little Luisita Bennaton and I were fast friends, and throughout the rest of the voyage, which save for its discomforts, was without incident. We were together all the time.

We had supper on deck and the evening was delightful. Little Luisita went to sleep in my arms. Just about dusk we rounded Manobique Point, Cape Three Points I think they also call it. A Carib craft without a light slipped by us in the dark, an unreal flying Dutchman. Our engine was acting very cranky. Something was the matter with the exhaust, and heavy smarting fumes of kerosene belched out of the hold. By and by, they fixed it partially, though the trouble was by no means entirely rectified.

Lee Christmas had brought a hammock, which he strung up between the rigging, and wrapping himself in a blanket, lay down. Foolishly, I had brought no bedding, not a cover even, and so had to get into my raincoat and lie down in that. Mrs. Bannister arranged herself in a deck chair of her own, and Mrs. Bennaton and Luisita slept in the stern.



I lay down on the roof of the cabin and managed to fall asleep on this hard and uncomfortable bed. Sometime about midnight a heavy rain broke and drove us all below. Fortunately, Willie Coe found an inner bunk for me and amid the multitude of snores and heavy kerosene fumes I fell asleep. The shortest day of the year had seemed one of the longest.

### December 22, Saturday

We were anchored in Cortés harbor when I came up out of the hold, but as soon as daylight broke the captain weighed anchor and worked the *Harriman* in alongside of the dock, just in front of a fine, three-masted, steel schooner, the *James Williams* of the Barbados. After a short wait, the Inspector of Customs came along the dock and told us we might take our baggage to the *aduana*. I walked down with Mrs. Bennaton and the little Luisita. At the customs house they only gave my bag a cursory examination, but they went through Mrs. Bennaton's trunks systematically, they said "looking for silk." Mrs. Bennaton told me when she got their baggage through that she had a great deal of silk hidden here and there through her two trunks.

I left the Bennatons at the Hotel Lefebvre [Figure 21.6]. Arthur Carpenter saw me passing and came out. I told him I was going over to see Boyle and would come back after breakfast. Passing the Hotel Palm, I went in and ordered breakfast from Craig on my way to the Consulate [Figure 21.7]. Boyle was on the lookout for me, as he had received my two wires. He gave me some interesting information about Perdomo. It seems he set San Pedro Sula agog. Everybody took him for a German spy, indeed Bennett, who regards himself as a sort of Vigilante Committee of one, wrote to Bennett [i.e., Boyle] about it. Even Arthur Carpenter, because of that long talk he had with Perdomo, is under suspicion. Boyle told me several people had told him [Carpenter] was openly pro-German. I cannot believe that, even of sensation-loving Arthur.



Figure 21.6. The Hotel Lefebvre at Puerto Cortés.



Figure 21.7. The American Consulate at Puerto Cortés.

After washing up at Boyle's, he walked with me back to the Palm where Craig gave me a good breakfast. We next walked out to the dock to see when the next boats left for Belize, and on the way met Arthur Carpenter coming up to see me. The Belize sailings I found were very unsatisfactory, two boats today and none afterward for ten days. I tried to get Willie Coe to stay over until tomorrow night, but he says if he doesn't go tonight, he will not leave for ten days. It about made up my mind to go back by land.

Arthur went back to the Consulate with me where we had a long talk. Owing to his having fallen under suspicion as being a German spy, the Americans in San Pedro Sula will not give him any credit, and he can get no funds through from home. I advised him to return to Washington at once and get himself properly rehabilitated, and loaned him \$15.00 cash. Also got Boyle to give him a letter saying that the suspicions which had been directed against him were unjust. Arthur thinks with this kind of letter, Kolman will give him credit again and he can go home. Boyle told me the manager of the Cuyamel Fruit Co. was in San Pedro Sula, but was coming back at noon on a gasoline car, and that I could go over to Omoa in the afternoon with him.

While I was talking with Arthur on the porch upstairs, Boyle called me down and said there was a boat just in from Omoa bringing news that Guatemalan troops were invading Honduras and occupying the end of the Cuyamel Co. R.R. line. Boyle was pretty much het up over this latest item, and immediately decided to go over with me to investigate. He asked Arthur and me to stay and have dinner with him, and while he was getting into riding clothes, Arthur and I continued our interview. If Arthur loved mystery less, he could be more useful.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Besides seeking first-hand information on the border dispute, the point of Morley's trip to

After lunch we walked down the track and met old Major Burke and Mr. Greeley, the manager of the Cuyamel Co., who had just come in from San Pedro Sula. We all walked up toward the Fruit Co. office. Boyle and Greeley went on ahead while I stopped off at the Lefebvre to write a letter of introduction for Arthur to a friend in Washington. Also, to say goodbye to my little Hondureña friend. She very prettily asked me to come to her home in San Pedro Sula for the “*noche buena*” [Christmas Eve]. Unhappily, I could not accept.

Boyle sent down word he and Greeley were ready, so, bidding Luisita and her mother goodbye, Arthur and I continued on down to the Fruit Co. building. The motorboat was ready and we went right aboard. I waved adios to Arthur and we headed right across the bay for the opposite point, behind which lies Omoa.

The boat rolled like a log, and by the time we rounded the point I was indisposed. I think its only eight miles across. The town lies on the other side of the point, and when we got around it we saw a typical little Fruit Co. port: wharf, railroad terminal, office buildings, living quarters, etc., and now, considerably back from the playa, the old Spanish fort of Omoa, a perfect quadrant with the arc side toward the sea.<sup>253</sup>

As quickly as we landed, Greeley learned from one of his employees that the threatened Guatamaltecán invasion was bosh, but that they were building a road and telephone line on this side of the Motagua to intersect the Fruit Co. railroad about at Rio Nuevo.

The three of us went over to the *comandancia* where I met Col. Gallardo, the *Inspector General de Hacienda* for the north coast. He is supposed to be very anti-American, and I dare say he is. He said there had been no clash between the troops, but confirmed the building of the telephone line in “*territorio Hondureño*” he claimed. I wanted to see the old fort, and he sent one of his orderlies with us. It is now used as a *cuartel* and has about 100 soldiers in it. The walls are massive, and perhaps 30 feet high [Figure 21.8]. At intervals, there are little towers. One of these was missing, shot off by an English gunboat, I was told. All along the ramparts lay old dismantled iron guns and piles of iron balls. The rooms around the sides of the court in the middle were dripping with moisture and dampness. It looked an ideal place for chills and fever. The old chapel had just been repaired, and an iron door fitted into it so that it could be used as a jail. When the fort was built, the Caribbean had washed the base of its walls; now the beach has made out so that the water’s edge is 150 yards away.

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Puerto Cortés was to recruit Carpenter as an agent for the ONI. Morley had not originally suggested him, largely because Carpenter had strong anti-English, and thus potential pro-German, sentiment. After the U.S. entered the war, Carpenter was as patriotic as Morley himself. Ultimately, however, he did not join the ONI (Harris and Sadler 2003: 139–141).

<sup>253</sup> Fortaleza San Fernando de Omoa, built between 1756 and 1775, is the largest Spanish fortification on the Central American coast between Campeche and Castillo San Lorenzo at the mouth of the Chagres River in Panama (see Zapatero 1997). Omoa fell to a British squadron in 1779. It served as a prison well into the twentieth century, and more recently was the center of rescue operations after Hurricane Fifi destroyed the entire town in 1974. Today, it is a popular tourist destination.



Figure 21.8. Fortaleza de San Fernando de Omoa.

Our visit was necessarily hurried as we wanted to be at Cuyamel for dinner. Boyle, at the last minute, decided he would return to Puerto Cortés "since there was to be no show," he said. A boat was just on the point of leaving and I hurriedly wrote a telegram for him to get off to Jack Belt. He went down to the wharf and Greeley and I got into the gasoline car and started for Cuyamel, 15 miles distant. The first eleven miles are along the coast, and then about four miles from the bar of the Motagua the railroad turns inland.

Cuyamel is quite a little settlement, typical fruit company headquarters town: R.R. shop, electric light plant, hospital, commissary, mess, clubhouse and individual houses. When we got in, just before six, we went first to the main office where I met Mr. Greeley's secretary, Bradley, whom Walter Thurston had told me to look up. After some business here he took me over to his home, where I met his wife and son, a young man of about 24 or 25. Their house seemed to me far nicer than those of the U.F. Co. managers. The verandas are much broader and the atmosphere was homier.

After a delightful supper, we went over to the engineering department where we examined some of their maps. Late in the evening we played auction, Mrs. Greeley against her husband and son. All three play a bully game and the necessity of my having to move on tomorrow grieved me. They said I would surely have to spend Sunday with them, but I told them I feared it would be impossible. I went to sleep in a real bed on a real mattress with a real porcelain bathtub in a real bathroom adjoining.

### **December 23, Sunday**

Much as I should like to have stayed under their hospitable roof, it was necessary for me to continue my pilgrimage. It always is, when I find a pleasant spot to rest. Immediately after breakfast Mr. Greeley and I walked over to the main office where we had a long and to me, at

least, satisfactory conference. It put me in possession of the essential facts of the case and, while it gave me a closer insight into their position and, through this pleasant personal contact, a keener sympathy for them, it in no way changed my opinion that they were the aggressors. In fact, during the course of the morning, Mr. Greeley admitted as much in so many words. He said, "We want to get as much railroad built and as much land under cultivation in the disputed region as possible, so as to strengthen our claims thereto by possession when the matter is finally adjudicated."

It was getting on for eleven when we finally finished, and I went over to the house to say goodbye to Mrs. Greeley and George. Three of us went out the line on the gasoline car: Mr. Greeley, his secretary Mr. Bradley, and myself. Their farms appeared to be in excellent condition—and in this connection Mr. Greeley tells me they have no banana disease here, and their equipment is up to date and excellent. Cuyamel is at Mile 15 and the switch where I was to get off—the point nearest Sinchada on the Motagua—is at Mile 31. Their road runs 3 miles farther to the Rio Nuevo, but more southerly instead of westerly.

The Honduran government only had 9 soldiers at this switch when I passed through. The original intention of the Cuyamel Company had been to build their railroad the two miles down to Sinchada, but when they had laid the track for 200 yards, the Guatemalan troops built a trench across the right of way and defied them to build farther. In order to avoid a clash, which was imminent, they abandoned this line and built in a new direction, i.e., more southerly, mentioned above, toward the Rio Nuevo. We left the handcar at the switch as the 200 yards of line toward Sinchada was blocked with flatcars. Just beyond we could see the smoke of the Guatemalan campfires and the roofs of their *champas*.

The railroad comes to an end at a little stream and just beyond, we could see a guard of 20 old men and a lieutenant. Mr. Greeley asked to talk with him and he invited us on the other side via a bridge his men had built. When we had crossed over and shaken hands, Mr. Greeley explained my desire to be permitted to pass through to Sinchada and thence to Tenedores. The officer asked for my passport, which I showed him. He took it and withdrew, he said to telephone its contents to the chief at Sinchada. I had not expected the convenience of a telephone out in the bush, and it bid fair to expedite my matters greatly.

Presently the *teniente* came back and said I could go through to Sinchada under escort, to present my passport to the *comandante*. We therefore returned to the switch for my bag, and Greeley and Bradley came back with me to the bridge again. Here, I bid them goodbye and turned myself over to the Guatemalans, not without a certain feeling of misgiving—I hadn't even a revolver—and much regret for the pleasant circumstances and a big Sunday dinner Mrs. Greeley had promised.<sup>254</sup>

I found about 75 men, all told, in the camp. They had built a lot of *champas* on both sides of the trail to Sinchada, and two were told off to accompany me: a private to carry my bag and a corporal to boss him or watch me, *quien sabe* which. For nearly a mile beyond the end of the rail, the Cuyamel Co. had cleared the bush for their right of way and even had built the roadbed. This part of the road, though very muddy, was not as bad as that part which lay beyond. It

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<sup>254</sup> No doubt Morley's near death at the hands of Guatemalan soldiers in an ambush just a year before was not far from his thoughts (Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 22).

should be remembered I was on the floodplain of the Motagua River, and while it was wonderful banana land, for *Homo sapiens* it was grief. Giant bush rose on either side and the trail was a sea of black mud and standing puddles of water. Through this, we waded on. When the roadbed came to an end, we struggled through the virgin bottom lands, untouched by men except for the few trees felled to clear the line and the under-brushing. The going was abominable. Walter Thurston, who had taken this trip a month before on mule, complained bitterly of the mud. On foot, it was a thousand times worse. I was soon well plastered with mud up to the waist, so that my shoes, puttees, and trousers blended into one slimy black mass.

The mud was slippery too. The corporal went down once, and I fell and clutched a *guisoyol*, thereby running a dozen small poisoned little barbs into my flesh.<sup>255</sup> Indeed I was well fed up with it long before it was over. Mr. Greeley had told me that by their survey, it was only 2 miles. It took us exactly one hour of floundering through the mud to make it, so one can judge the condition of the trail from that.

Arrived at Sinchada, I saw many more troops—I later found out that there were 125—and was taken to the *comandante*, one Nicolas Ferguson. The name was English enough, and the fellow himself looked more like a Belize Negro than a Guatemalan. Later he told me his father was from Belize, but his mother was from Zacapa, a Guatemalteca. He examined my passport and said I might continue my "*marcha*." The next question was how? I asked him if he would telegraph to Tenedores for the Turk there to send up his gasoline launch, and he said he would send off a wire at once. Also, he ordered one of the native women to prepare me some food, and finally told me to make myself at home in his room in the *comandancia*, a long, thatched hut with pole sides.

While he was away dispatching my message, my meal arrived: fine hot tortillas, black beans, eggs, and coffee. As I had eaten nothing since seven, I did it justice. After dinner, I changed my clothes and the *comandante* had one of his men clean the boots and puttees. To my dismay after, it was too late to stop, I found he had washed the trousers also.

About 4 a message came from the Turk that he would send his launch for thirty dollars. The price seemed a bit stiff, but there was no *remedio*, so I told Ferguson to wire back yes. I walked over to the office with him and sent a message to Shaw asking him to ride up to Quirigua with me. The *telegrafista*, a funny little fellow with a shaved head, pled earnestly with Ferguson to remove a soldier who stood guard at the door. It seemed he wanted to get drunk, and had the bottle with him, but the soldier was stationed there to keep him from drinking. Ferguson said he didn't dare let him get drunk in spite of his pleas, as he was his only connection with Guatemala.

We sent our telegram and returned to the *comandancia*, where we discussed the organization of the Guatemalan army. There are eight generals of divisions, the highest rank, and I learned my old friend, the *jefe politico* of Sololá, General Flores, is the ranking general of these. Champagne was therefore none too exalted for him. At five-thirty came the answer, "We are leaving in these [?] minutes." Ferguson calculated the launch would be in between nine and nine-thirty. About sunset, they came in a *canoa* from Tenedores loaded with beans and rice for the garrison, and we went down to the riverbank to watch the *soldados* unload it. Came also a

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<sup>255</sup> *Huisoyol*, a thorny palm of Petén, is the name given to at least two species of *Bactris*.

young telephone linesman from the Division General in Guatemala City to install the new line up the Río Nuevo to Corrientes. Ferguson told me this was about completed as far as the Cuyamel Co. R.R. and he hopes to build across a day after tomorrow.

After dark, in the light of a brilliant moon, they placed the guards for the night. The *comandante's* second-in-command superintended this. He was far from a military figure, tall, awkward, and slouch-hatted. He held his sword in a burlesque manner and stood very casually in receiving salutes. The guard was posted and supper was served, the same as lunch and equally delicious. The rest of the evening, I lay in Ferguson's hammock, looking at the moon and listening to the soldiers' chatter.

Exactly at nine-fifteen, we heard the exhaust of the launch, and I gathered up my belongings, which a *soldado* carried down to the riverbank. The owner of the boat himself came up on her. She is a good-sized dugout *canoa* with an 8 H.P. engine. We started back at ten sharp, but a breakdown in the first 100 yards delayed us another half hour. I bid Ferguson goodbye and made up a bed in the bottom of the *canoa*. My pajamas and a dirty shirt wrapped in a towel was my pillow, and my raincoat was my blanket. It was bitterly cold. A white mist settled down on the river, and notwithstanding the brilliant moonlight, at times we could not see the farther shore.

### **December 24, Monday**

The night passed very uncomfortably. I sat up at times to relieve my aching joints from the unyielding hardness of the floor of the *canoa*. On the way up, I managed to lose one of my puttees, a real regret: one of the boys had put it on the engine to dry—the *soldado* had also washed them as well as my trousers and shoes—and it fell overboard. I was angry enough but it could not be helped. Toward morning—indeed within half a mile of Tenedores—we ran aground on a shoal in the river and lost a half hour before we could get off. We landed at five, seven hours coming up, just twice as long as going down. We went to the Turk's house, where in due time we had coffee, bread, beans, and peccary liver. The boys had killed the animal to which this last belonged on the way down.

As soon as the railroad station was open, I went over and telephoned Shaw at Virginia. He was surprised enough to hear from me, and most of all at Tenedores. His first question was "Where the devil are you?" I asked him to come down to the station at Virginia, and he said he and John would ride down to York in his car and come back to Virginia with me. After paying for the launch, I went over to the station and did not have long to wait for the train.

At York, John and Shaw got on and I told them of my adventures. The latter got off at Virginia, but John rode on as far as Quirigua. As I had to see Walter Thurston in the city, and as there was no tramp to Belize this week, I decided to spend Christmas in Guatemala City. It was decided between us that John should go down to Puerto Barrios tomorrow—he is going to take Christmas dinner with Shaw at Virginia—and come back to the city on the 26th with such of our baggage as we need.

He [John] tells me that he made two fine watercolors of Schultz's *incensarios*, and examined the foundation of the fallen stela. The latter is 8 feet 6 inches from the bottom of the sculptured part to the base of the monument. And this, added to the 26 feet 6 inches of the sculptured panel, makes a total height of 35 feet, a tremendous monolith. John says there were no big

stones used in its foundations, only smaller irregular shaped blocks closely packed together. The part below the sculptured panel is rough-dressed only. He took a number of measurements from which it should be possible to estimate the weight.

John left me at Quirigua, but will come up to the city day after tomorrow. The ride up was very monotonous. I had asked John to send a telegram to Walter Thurston asking him if he could meet me at the station, and take dinner with me. He was down at the station when I got in, but said he could not come to dinner. We went up to the hotel together and arranged that I go to the Legation after dinner. He had pleasant news for Christmas in the shape of word from Washington that he had been appointed Special Agent of the Department of State and Chargé d’Affaires. This carries a tidy reimbursement and I am glad enough to hear it. He certainly deserves this recognition of his unusual ability and faithful service.

He told me also that Watts wanted to see me tonight. I decided to see him before going to the Legation. After he left, I phoned up Toxie Roach and asked her if I might come up to dinner, disreputable as I was, and she said yes. I found Carlos Castañeda on hand, and we had a jolly foursome. They all commented on my disreputability, and indeed it was so. I had lost my garters, in consequence my socks hung down over my very muddy shoes. My linen was muddy and I had a very decided air of *tristeza*.

I did not tarry long after dinner, as I had to see both Watts and Thurston before turning in, and after last night’s experience, the Hotel Imperial looked good to me. I found Watts at a task which gave a tug at my heart—trimming a Christmas tree for his little daughter in his own home. That is what I should be doing in mine instead of wandering all over Central America on this mission, but it is my bit. Instead, a stranger is trimming her tree for her. I hope my presents and letter got there in time. It is far off down here.

Watts told me not to trust Carpenter. It seems Boyle had telegraphed him to that effect after I left. As I had seen Boyle since he had sent that wire, I could largely discount its weight. Watts says old Perdomo finally got off without the United States being insulted in his person again. He was busy with the tree, which made me too homesick to care to stay long, so I left in half an hour and came back on up to the Legation.

Walter delivered an invitation to me for Christmas dinner tomorrow noon from Mrs. Clark, a very great kindness, and Toxie Roach had already asked me for dinner in the evening. This thoughtfulness for a lonesome man in a strange land touched me deeply, and made the day much less lonesome to look forward to. Walter and I talked over the Cuyamel situation. From independent investigation, we both had reached the same conclusion, namely, that the Cuyamel Fruit Company on the one side should cease its aggressions and development work in the disputed territory, and that the Guatemala government, on the other side, should withdraw its troops from the west bank of the Motagua. By such a solution neither side would be considered as forfeiting its claim to the disputed territory, but friction between the two countries would immediately cease for the time being—the end most earnestly desired by our government. He made these recommendations in an excellently worded cable that he wrote while I was with him, and I will embody the same in one I am getting off tomorrow. I left them early as he was busy, and I was very tired.



## CHAPTER 22

### CHRISTMAS AND EARTHQUAKES

#### December 25, Tuesday

Christmas Day, but entirely different from our own northern Christmas: no snow, no ice, not even cold, no holly, no mistletoe. I spent the greater part of the morning preparing a cable for the States. What with this and shaving and changing my clothes (happily, I was able to get my suit pressed early this morning), it was after one before I got up to the Clarks, but even then Walter had not come over from the Legation. We were to be seven: Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Alfred, myself, and Mr. and Mrs. Sara, whom I saw wed only five days ago. By the time cocktails came in, Walter turned up and we went into the dining room. After Sinchada, a *manaca* [crazy] shack, bamboo tables, and frijoles and tortillas, this mahogany environment—silver, linen, crystal, turkey, and etc., etceteras, including champagne, was a great and deeply appreciated contrast.

We lingered long over dinner and it was four before we finally left the table. We had intended going out to the Hippodrome<sup>256</sup> to the races, but could only get one *coche*. Alfred and the Saras took this, promising to send it back as quickly as they reached the Hippodrome. In due time it returned, and Mr. and Mrs. Clark and I drove out that way. When we got out there, we decided not to go in as it looked dusty and tawdry, so we came back to see friends of theirs, the Cooks.

I had met Mr. Cook at Puerto Cortés the morning we passed through there on the *Sixiola*. The great American game [poker] was in progress, and chips were rapidly changing hands. Also, in a generous punch bowl nearby were considerable quantities of a very delectable eggnog, which was served from time to time and to which the assembled guests did ample justice. I did not join the game as I had but a few minutes to stop. I talked with the ladies a few minutes, and on the arrival of the next guests, a Swiss named Kohler with his ponderous French frau, I took my leave.

I went next to the Herrera's to pay a Christmas call on Margarita, but no one was at home, and so I walked over to the Club. It was deserted and for the first time today I had enough minutes to myself to feel lonesome, though not long.

I went up to the Roaches about six-thirty and found their other guest, Carlos Castañeda, already on hand. It was a friendly, merry party, appropriate to the occasion. We sat long at the dinner table and afterward in the *sala*, where we took a turn or two at dancing. As I only half

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<sup>256</sup> This hippodrome, located in Zone 2 in the northeast part of the city, is now known as the Hipódromo del Norte. A new one, the Hipódromo del Sur, was built in the 1920s near the airport in the south. The northern facility became part of the Ciudad Olímpica in 1946, when Guatemala City hosted the Sixth Central American and Caribbean games.

made up my loss of sleep from night before last, I felt sleepy and took my leave early. Carlos, who was very splendid in high silk hat, frock coat, and cane, came too. It was between 10:15 and 10:30 when we left the Roaches’.

We walked swiftly, as it was cold. The evening was still young, so I decided to go on to the American Club and have a nightcap before returning to the hotel. Carlos said his family were so nervous over the quakes that when he was out late, they always worried, so he thought he would not go to the Club.<sup>257</sup> We parted at the corner of 11th Street and 8th Avenue<sup>258</sup> at the hotel. He continued down 8th Avenue and I turned into 11th.

I had reached the next corner, diagonally across from the Carmen Church, when suddenly the street began to lurch and sway and the buildings to rock back and forth drunkenly. An arc light down beyond the Club flickered, went out, came on and went out, and came on again.

I reacted instantly. My first fear was not of falling buildings but of falling live wires, and I dodged into the nearest doorway. At once, however, I perceived the imminence of a general collapse here, and darted back into the street. It came to me, too, in the same instant, that the nearest safe place was the Plaza de Armas,<sup>259</sup> and I set out running thither incontinently. As I passed the American Club, there were spewed forth from the *zaguan* perhaps a dozen highly excited men. The only one I knew was Doctor Johnson, the dentist.

While we stopped for a moment’s counsel, the shocks continued. The lights flashed on and off and the street swayed. All agreed the Plaza was the nearest “city of refuge,” and thither we all ran at the top of our speed.

Other people were already pouring into the Plaza from all directions and presently we were a crowd. Many had on their nightclothes, just as the shock caught them with no other protection than an overcoat or a blanket. I separated from the throng, walking aimlessly around the square with several friends: Erb, whom I met in San Salvador; Reeves, whom I met at Rodolfo’s; and several other men I had met just casually. We all continued walking around, waiting for something to happen.

I was very cold. In fact, the quakes seem to be accompanied by intense cold. The moon, though nearly full, was only shining half heartedly and the sky looked peculiar. I can describe it in no other way—dusty. The first shock was at 10:30 or 10:32. The live wires still bothered all of us and we gradually gravitated toward a place on the west side, opposite the Palacio Nacional, where there were less of them.

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<sup>257</sup>A series of small earthquakes hit with growing frequency in late December. By Christmas, quakes were felt on a daily basis.

<sup>258</sup> In Guatemala City, broad avenues run north–south, and narrower streets east–west.

<sup>259</sup> The Plaza de Armas, also known as the Plaza Mayor or Central (Main Plaza, Central Plaza) and Plaza de la Constitución, dating to 1776, is located in the Historic District (Zone 1) of northern Guatemala City. An enormous open space, with the adjacent Parque Centenario (Century Park) to its west, it is framed by the Palacio Nacional (National Palace) on the north and the Catedral Metropolitana de Santiago de Guatemala (completed in 1868) on the east. Today’s Palacio, now a museum, was built in Baroque style between 1939 and 1943 to be President Ubico’s home, and is not the one Morley would have seen.

Suddenly, at 11:30, one hour after the first shock, the ground rose up under our feet, stayed up for a moment, and then shook violently. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I prevented myself from being hurled to the ground. Indian women everywhere dropped on their knees in groups and commenced praying and telling their rosaries, in that plaintive sing-song so characteristic of Roman Catholic services in these countries, "*Maria Santissima*, etc."

Two wires under the *portal* of the Palacio Nacional short circuited, and a great spluttering and flashing resulted. Also, as we watched, the northern end of this *portal* crumpled and fell like a house of cards with great clatter and clouds of dust. We could also hear other walls in the vicinity crashing down and the air was filled with very finely pulverized adobe dust, which also obscured the moon.<sup>260</sup>

Considering the vastness of the catastrophe taking place on every side around us there was very little hysteria, and no disorder. The Indian women, to be sure, continued their prayers, there were a few cries of terror and tears, but on the whole the population behaved remarkably well and self-contained. The second shock had the virtue of putting all the lights out of commission, and thenceforth there was no danger from that source. And as this waiting for the next big shock, for little *temblorcitos* continued all the time, Christmas Day passed into the day after Christmas.

### **December 26, Wednesday**

I waited there in the Plaza de Armas until nearly one, growing colder and colder and colder. Finally, Dr. Johnson offered to go down to his house with me and get me an overcoat. We walked first down to the Imperial Hotel, which we found locked. This did not intrigue me any, however, as I had no desire of climbing two flights of stairs on such a night. Superficial damage, fallen cornices, wires down, etc., was noticeable, but it was too dark to tell whether the walls were really in a critical condition. We returned by way of 8th Avenue. He let us into his building, and we climbed a flight of stairs to his office. He found me a warm overcoat and gave his rooms a hasty examination. It was too uncertain to linger long, and we groped our way back to the street.

Going up 10th Street to 7th Avenue, we turned into the latter and someone called me by name. It was Rafael Aparico. "But the family?" I asked him. "All inside," he said, "in the patio

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<sup>260</sup> The Guatemala Christmas Night earthquake is estimated to have been a 5.6 on the Richter scale, a moderate tremor that caused massive destruction owing to poor construction and extensive use of adobe. Morley and others commented that this earthquake featured vertical motion, quite distinct from those that followed over the next weeks, which were characterized by horizontal motion (and more common building collapse). Oddly, given the historic nature of the disaster, only three published accounts of these earthquakes exist: the first by Morley himself (1918a), with numerous photos, covers only the Christmas night quake; the second is by Marshal Saville (1918), who cites Morley's publication as a principal source. The third account, of unknown authorship, covers all four quakes and has additional photos and appeared in the *Pan-American Magazine* (Anon. 1918). In 1919, Spinden offered his own first-hand account of the January 24th quake (which Morley did not witness) and coverage of destructive volcanic activity in the region (Spinden 1919). See Chapter 1 for further discussion and pictures.

of don Antonio Aguirre's house. Come in." Johnson and I went and there they all were. Elvida and María sat in the back seat of Alfredo Aguirre's automobile, with Jose, little Elvida and the baby on their laps. It was close quarters. Alfredo and his wife (Conchita) sat in front, the latter holding the little Conchita in her arms. Rafael stalked around outside with two of the Antonio Aguirre boys, both rather foolish, I thought, one actually a fool, and about a dozen Indian servants crouching on the ground. The patio was very large and we all appeared safe. They were all full of the catastrophe, how it has struck them, and they seemed more excited than the children, who bore the whole thing without either crying or complaining.

By and by, Dr. Johnson returned to the Plaza, but I stayed on with them for the rest of the night. About one, don Antonio showed up with a daughter, I think, and we got into the house then. It was bitterly cold and we all wanted some whiskey. Don Antonio had a bottle and, looking for this occasion, was taken to inspect the house. Several saints had fallen from their pedestals in the *sala*, and I personally assisted in the salvage of several damaged Virgins and Niñas.

At 2:10 a.m. came the third great shock of the night. Again the earth lifted up under our feet. The automobile swayed until I thought it would turn over, and the patio and house rocked. More walls fell in the neighborhood. The Indian girls fell to praying and the air was filled with dust. Sometime later—I judge about three, in the long night of uncertainty and fear—a great reflection of fire spread itself over the sky in the direction of Cerrito del Carmen. Every one exclaimed "*El Volcan.*"<sup>261</sup> Emilio Aguirre and I, arms linked, set off to investigate.

The moon was now almost totally obscured and the streets were filled with people. I only saw one wounded man, a *mozo*, lying on his back with his head bound up. We soon discovered the reflection was from a fire, and after walking interminably we reached the block where it was. The blaze itself was about over, though people on both sides of the fire were hastily dragging their furniture and belongings into the street—cheap chairs, tables, beds, bureaus, and the inevitable pictures and statues of saints, Holy Mothers, and Christs these people always possess. We returned to Emilio's house without further incident and, as I was very tired, I lay down on the running board of Alfredo's automobile with my head on the mud fender and slept until morning.

It was just after dawn when I awoke, and found the court already astir. Rafael Aparicio was going down to his house to investigate the damage, so I went along with him. His home had suffered but little, a few vases, bric-a-brac, mirrors, etc., broken, but no real damage to the walls. I left him to go down to the Imperial.

The place was still locked, but I could see from the street below that my third story room had suffered heavily. There was a big hole in the wall between the two windows, and the roof obviously sagged. Mario, the assistant clerk, showed up while I waited and opened the front door. Neither he nor José, the bellboy, would go upstairs, so I had to go up by myself. My room was a wreck. On top of the bed was a pile of bricks three feet high, even covering the pillow. I had no doubts as to what could have happened to me had I been there. Plaster was down

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<sup>261</sup> Just six months earlier, in June, the massive earthquake that hit El Salvador came in conjunction with a major volcanic eruption, so it is no wonder that fire on the horizon raised fears of a similar eruption of Volcán Pacaya, south of Guatemala City.

everywhere, and a vase of flowers was on the floor. I did not linger long. I looked in the Saras' room as I passed and it had the appearance of a wrecked florist shop. Flowers were scattered everywhere on the floor, over the bureau and tables, roses, gardenias, violets, orchids, and sweet peas. It bore every evidence of hasty abandonment.

Returning to the street, I set out for the Roaches to see how they had survived the night. Cornices were down everywhere, tiles strewn the streets, and occasionally a wall had caved in [Figure 22.1]. This first walk through this part of the city did not lead me to believe the damage was as severe as in San Salvador.<sup>262</sup>



Figure 22.1. Postcard showing damage to the Guatemala City telephone office after the Christmas earthquake.

The Roaches' house was closed tight, nor could I raise anyone by calling, so I continued around to the Clarks, just around the corner, and here I found both families in the street on mattresses. We exchanged mutual experiences. The Roaches had not retired when the first shock came and thus made a hasty exit. Mr. Clark got out in a nightgown and bathrobe. Between the first and second shocks, Alfred Clark and Walter Thurston had ventured into the house and dragged out some mattresses. Indeed, the second shock had surprised them in this very act, and they had a close call. As there had been no heavy shock since the 2:10 one, although slight tremors continued almost without cessation, we ventured back in the Clark house to see what could be done in the way of breakfast. As the Indian girls had not deserted,

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<sup>262</sup> Morley (1918a) later wrote that the damage in Guatemala City was much worse than what he had seen in San Salvador, but his published assessment may have been referring to the cumulative damage of the series of four major earthquakes that hit the capital (December 25 and 29; January 3 and 24) which grew in severity, the Christmas Day earthquake being the weakest.

they soon had coffee steaming, and with the aid of Mrs. Clark and Roach we soon had a delicious breakfast on the funeral baked meats of yesterday—cold turkey with dressing, jelly, bread, butter, and coffee.

At breakfast, we held a council of war. To sleep under any house was obviously foolhardy, if indeed not downright perilous. But where to go was another question. One could not contemplate sleeping in the streets indefinitely. In this dilemma, Mr. Clark came forward with a happy solution. Why not live in his private [railroad] car down in the yards at the station? We turned this over from every point of view and it seemed an excellent idea. It was arranged, then, that six of us would occupy the car, Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Roach, Alfred, and me. During the morning, the ladies were to pack in their respective houses what they wanted to take and in the afternoon we were all to move down.

Jim, Toxie, and I went over to their house after breakfast to get a few necessary articles, and then I went back to the hotel. I ventured into my room again and hastily packed my single bag and came down again. A *mozo* was found and he carried it up to the Clarks'. I saw Rafael Aparicio for a moment. He was moving his family out to the Reforma. Everybody indeed is getting out of the city; it is such a death trap.

Returning to the Clarks', I found Jim Roach and Alfred were there together and the three of us set out on a tour of inspection forthwith. We walked down in the northeastern section of the town near the R.R. station. Here, where the poorer people lived and the construction was poor, the destruction was far more serious. House after house has collapsed, the walls falling out into the street and exposing the interiors. The streets are filled with people who are trying to salvage whatever possible from the wreckage. As always, in such catastrophes the articles saved are most casual. Parasols, parrots, pictures, pianos, etc.

The station is badly damaged [Figure 22.2], the impossible Roman-arched portico partially fallen. The Corrida de Toros, the bullring adjoining, is completely demolished. We heard of six people killed in a lodging house nearby, Meson Model was its misnomer, and went thither, but the bodies had already been removed.<sup>263</sup>

We walked through the station yard and saw the car we are to occupy, No. 225. It is the general manager's car, a big observation platform and parlor car at one end, toilet and single compartment at the other. We will do very well here, I think.

We continued our walk out over the right of way to the bridge under which passes the Paseo de la Reforma. This is of solid masonry and sustained not one crack. Returning by the Paseo, we passed the penitentiary, which is badly demolished. It is said the five hundred odd prisoners escaped. Stumbling over fallen walls, adobe bricks, tiles, and timber is tiring business, and we were glad to be back to the Clarks' house.

Lunch was not quite ready, so Alfred and I set out to look for a cart. Fortunately, I sighted an antediluvian Ford limousine. It really was a 1908 model, but still in commission, in fact going strong on all four cylinders. The driver was a Trinidad Negro, George, and I promptly engaged him for the afternoon. He took us back to the house and promised to return at two sharp.

We finished the Clarks' turkey sitting on the edges of our chairs, for the shocks still continued. George showed up promptly at two and we loaded in the first of our baggage:

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<sup>263</sup> All told, the December 25 earthquake took 200 lives.

mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets, dishes, glasses, silver, cooking utensils, a gasoline stove, and the limited personal baggage we were taking. When we got down to the station, I found a couple of *mozos* to carry this material from the machine [automobile] to the [railroad] car. We made three trips with this impedimenta and two with ourselves. It was now nearly five, with an hour or more of daylight left. There was nothing we could do around the car—we were, in fact, only in the way—so Alfred and I made a more extended tour of inspection.



Figure 22.2. Two views of the train station, both taken by Morley. Top, the damage suffered by the December 25th quake; bottom, additional damage from subsequent quakes. Morley's temporary quarters were in the rail yard immediately behind this structure.

We went first out to the Hippodrome, meeting Fernando Cruz on the way. He was in a fearful hurry so gave him a lift back to the Plaza. He was nearly distracted last night, he said, with four of his wards at one end of the city and three at the other. He is out at a brickyard of his uncle's, Doctor Guillermo Cruz, with his seven little wards, and asked me to visit him there. We dropped him at the Plaza and returned to the Hippodrome. The rococo villas of cheap modern Italian construction are almost completely demolished. They grew up like mushrooms and fell like unsubstantial houses of cards. The Temple of Minerva, contrary to my expectation, came through unscathed. We went next out in the other direction [south] to the Reforma. The several public buildings, grandiose in proportion but cheap in construction and tawdry in effect, dating from this administration are in ruins: the Escuela Práctica, the Hospital Militar, the Casa de Convalescientes, and the Museo Nacional, and off the Reforma to the north, the Hospital de Maternidad.

We stopped at the Villa Margarita, whither the Carlos Herreras fled last night. Margarita was not in, but we left our regards. Later, returning to the Reforma, we passed Margarita and her two sisters, Elena and Sara. Personally, I think Margarita the most charming as well as the most beautiful, but Elena with her striking red hair is popularly considered to be the beauty of the family. All four of the girls—that is, including Julia Robles—have a rather Indian nose, strong and more than aquiline. We chatted with them for a few minutes and then returned to the car.

We found Mr. Clark's [rail] car insufficient to accommodate ourselves and all of our belongings; Mr. Clark had had a baggage car switched on behind us, and to this the kitchen was transferred. We ate this first meal in the little compartment of the private car, but it was so crowded, Mrs. Clark decided to transfer our dining room to the baggage car in the morning.

None of us had been to bed for the past thirty-six hours, and some of us had not even had our clothes off in that period, so we were all ready for bed immediately after supper. Mr. and Mrs. Clark took the little room, and Jim, Toxie, Alfred, and I shared the parlor car end. We slept on mattresses on the floor. Every one of us was undressed and in bed before seven, and snoring peacefully by half after the same hour.

## **December 27, Thursday**

We had breakfast in the baggage coach. No chairs and table yet, but they are coming. Everybody feels very much rested, and now that the worst of it is apparently over, ready to pick up the business of life where it was interrupted day before yesterday.

On my way up from the station, I saw MacPhail and Smith and arranged to have lunch with them at the Jardín d'Italia, which is open again. I believe it, with the Grand and Hamilton, are the only three hotels in the city still doing business. I walked over to the hotel and thence on down to the Plaza. Already little temporary houses, of canvas, *lámina*,<sup>264</sup> and wood are going up both inside and out the fence, and a busy little community—fruit stands, barber shops, cantinas, restaurants, and boot blacks—doing a thriving business.

At twelve-fifteen, I met Smith and MacPhail at the Italia. The meal was fair under the circumstances. Once during the meal we had a real good shake. Smith and I started for the door

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<sup>264</sup> *Lámina* refers to corrugated sheets of galvanized metal (iron), used for roofing.



precipitously, the more phlegmatic Scot never turned a hair. He says he wishes he could be more frightened and his *sang froid* [lit. cold blood; cool composure] may yet cost him his life. I left them for a quarter of an hour after to see if Doctor Hamilton was in his office, and met them at the Legation at two, where George appeared a moment later.

Smith, Mac, and I climbed into the faithful Ford and started off to see the city. As we have only 12 exposures, a six-exposure film of Walters and another Alfred found, it was important to waste none, in fact only to take the highlights.<sup>265</sup> We started out on the [Avenida] Reforma, where I took one picture of a destroyed villa, one of those cheaply constructed Italian affairs, which have suffered so heavily throughout the city [Figure 22.3].



Figure 22.3. Morley's photo of the ruins of the Villa Earnestina on the Paseo de la Reforma, the former residence of President Reina Barrios.

Next went around by the British Legation, the whole back of which is out. It was a morning view, however, so passed it up. The Recollection Church<sup>266</sup> nearby is in almost complete ruin. The roof collapsed and also the two massive towers flanking the façade [Figures 22.4 and 22.5] It made the most picturesque ruin in the city, and I took two views of it, one showing the temporary huts in the foreground. Two people were killed there when the towers fell, the sacristan and a woman in an adjoining house. Also, took some [photos of] terribly demolished houses on Sixth Avenue. We went next out to the Reforma, where we stopped for a drink at the

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<sup>265</sup> Morley's photos are some of the only images available showing damage immediately after the disaster (and perhaps the only ones showing the damage specifically of the Christmas quake). We have liberally illustrated this section of the diary using many of Morley's original images.

<sup>266</sup> The church of the Recollect Franciscans, in the historic district of Guatemala City, Zone 1. The first stone was laid in 1797, soon after the colonial capital was moved from present-day Antigua into the valley of Guatemala.

cantina there. This had poignant memories for Mac and Smith, who were playing roulette here when the big shock came. This stopped the game and they all lost. Mac said if it had only come one half hour earlier, they would have won several hundred dollars instead of losing seventy-five.

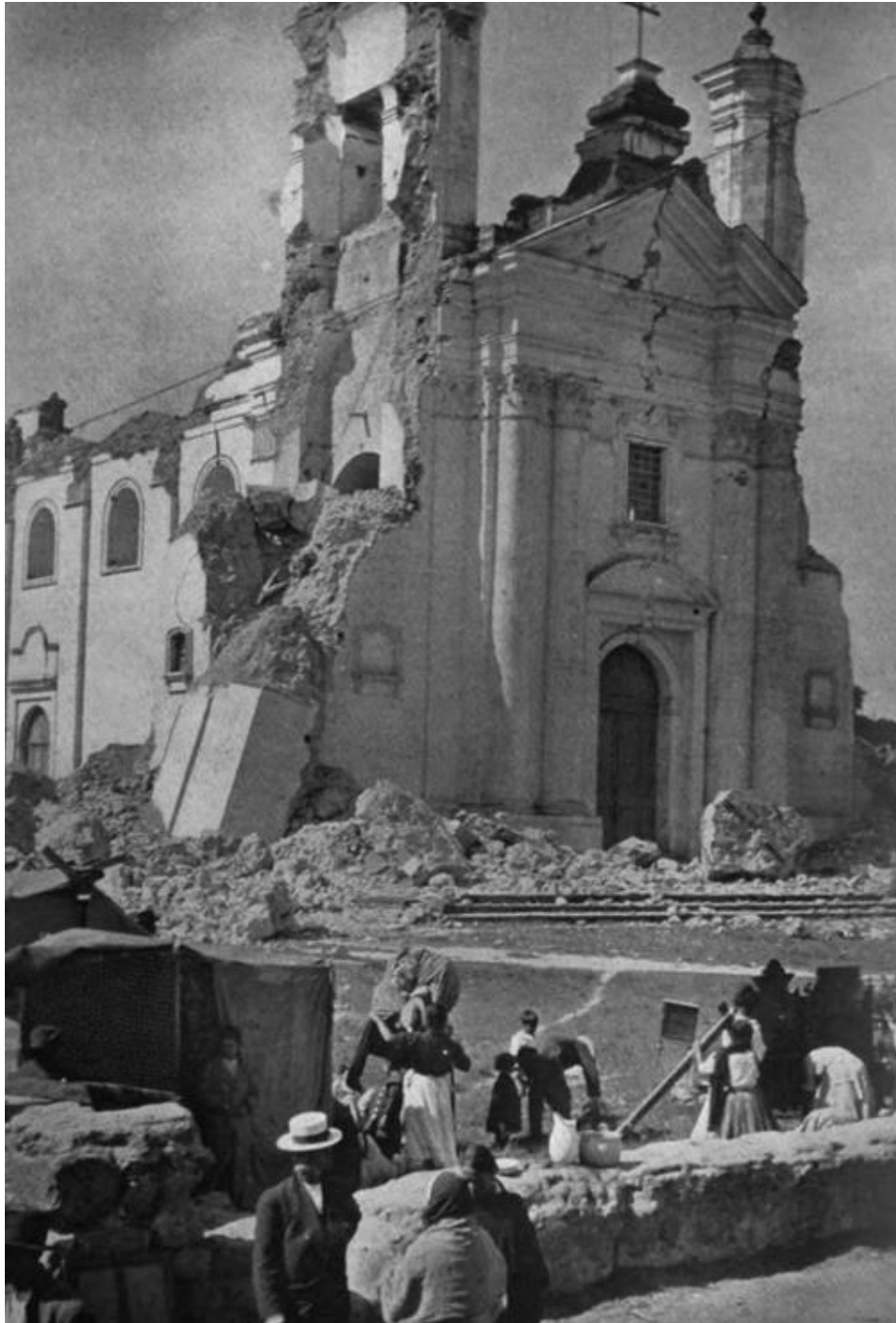


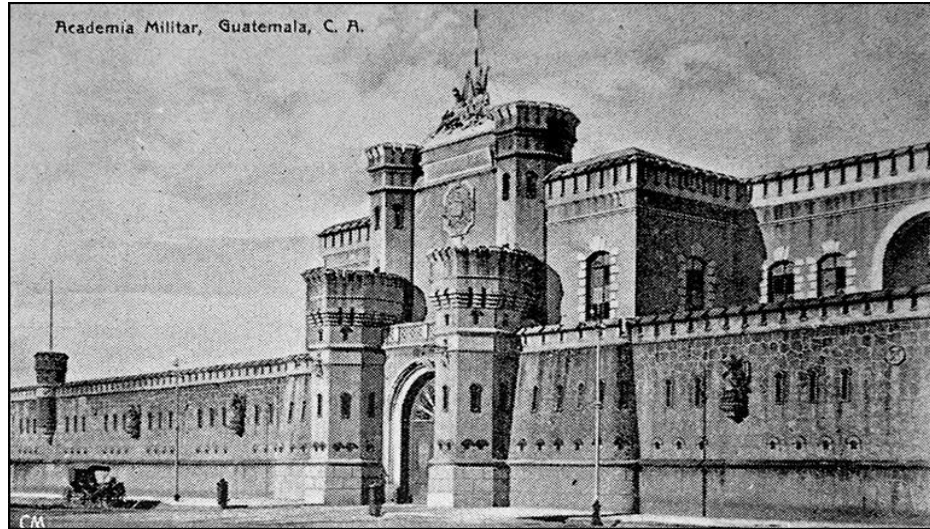
Figure 22.4. The Iglesia de la Recolectión as photographed by Morley on December 27, before additional earthquakes caused further damage. See Figure 22.5, below.



IGLESIA DE LA RECOLECCION. GUATEMALA.  
Terremotos 25 y 29 Dic. 1917, 3 y 24 Enero 1918.

Figure 22.5. Postcard showing the Iglesia de la Recolección after the later earthquakes. Note the additional damage as compared to Morley's photo (Figure 22.5) taken after the first quake.

On the way back I asked a captain in front of the Escuela Militar if I could photograph it, and he said yes. So, I shot him, his *soldados*, and the ruined Escuela in the background [Figure 22.6]. We let the Ford go at the station and looked up Mr. Clark, who was kind enough to send some telegrams for us. I sent one to John through Mr. Shaw, telling him not to attempt to come up, but to proceed to Belize with all our baggage at the first opportunity, whither I would follow him as soon as I could get away. We looked up some friends of Mac and Smith in the vicinity, and after spending a half hour with them, made our way up to the Hotel Hamilton. This walking around in all the adobe dust is a thirsty business, and we went first to the American Club to see if it was open. Finding it closed, we went to George Oates' place (The Hamilton) where Smith spied three huge brown turkeys, cooked to the minute, of most appetizing odor, and apparently waiting only the carving knife. We ordered one forthwith, but George said they were for special clients, two Germans and a native. We strafed him soundly for giving comfort and aid to alien enemies when his own allies were in want—George is a Jamaican Negro—and told him he was on our blacklist henceforth. He finally relented and served us one. Never have tasted better turkey in my life.



Academia Militar.

Figure 22.6. The Military Academy (Escuela Militar). Top, 1915 postcard. Middle, Morley's photo after the 1917 Christmas earthquake. Bottom, ruins after subsequent earthquakes.

After leaving George's we walked through the Pasaje Aycinena<sup>267</sup> to the Plaza, where we bought some apples and grapes and sat down inside. The place is rapidly filling up, and unless some sanitary precautions are taken—if only of the most elementary kind—an epidemic of some sort will surely get underway [Figure 22.7]. Already a foul odor is noticeable. I left Smith and Mac in the Plaza [Figure 22.8] and returned to the private car, where I was in time to come in on a second supper. Later in the evening, Smith showed up and, not tired with the exertions of the afternoon, wanted me to take a walk with him. The moon is now beautiful and we took a short stroll.



Figure 22.7. Morley's photograph of earthquake survivors gathered around a broken water main in front of the National Palace, in search of drinking water.

He and Mac are sleeping in a second-class coach near our car, on a hard wood bench. Smith was out looking for new lodgings, but found none. We came back about ten, each going to his own car. One thing is noticeable today more than yesterday. People are beginning to venture in the houses and drag out their furniture; in consequence the streets are far more crowded today with the impedimenta of living than yesterday. Also, more people are leaving the city.

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<sup>267</sup> Now a small shopping center south of the Plaza Central, the Pasaje lies on a *manzana* (1.75 acres) of land given to Marquis Juan Fermín de Aycinena Irigoyen for his assistance in moving the capital from what is now Antigua to its present location.



Figure 22.8. Morley's photo of the temporary commercial zone set up on the Plaza in the weeks after the earthquake.

### December 28, Friday

The exodus has begun in real earnest. I got up early because of the general hubbub outside our car. The yard was filled with people frantic to get on board the train for the south, i.e., Escuintla, San Felipe, and Retalhuleu.<sup>268</sup> The ordinary trains of three or four coaches were speedily filled and three or four more coaches were added and as quickly filled. It became apparent another section of equal size would have to be run.

Rafael Aparicio and his family and servants were among the fleeing refugees. María was nearly frantic. They had arrived at the station too late to get into the first train, and before it was announced there would be a second one. I looked up Mr. Leech, the General Superintendent, whose car is next to ours, found out from him there was to be another section and where it was to be made up. I rushed back, got Rafael's family and piloted them thither. In addition to Rafael, his four children and Elvida, there was María, Alfredo Aguirre and Conchita, and that busy old *criada* [maid] Marcella, and I think two others. At the last moment, María thought they would need a basket which she had had put in the baggage—a little tremor just then—car, and so I went with her to get it. Of course, it was behind a pile of luggage mountain high, but the baggage man was obliging and I pitched in with him and we soon excavated our way through a pile of baskets, mattresses, and huge bundles to her basket, which I hauled out and lugged back to the car for her.

They ate shortly after this, bread, fruit, and a delicious Spanish sausage. We washed it down with some very good French cognac. Elvida had on her lap a large Christ on the Cross,

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<sup>268</sup> These are all cities in the foothills of the mountains; Escuintla and San Felipe are south of Guatemala City, while Retalhuleu lies in the southwest.

from which she refused to part. I urged her to put it under the seat as it would become burdensome before the long journey was over, but she was afraid it would come to some harm. Finally, I persuaded her, however, and I wrapped it up in a *rebolsa* [shawl] and put it under her seat. Conchita's Virgin was also reposing in the food basket, and to her dismay had suffered some injury as to its leg.

Paul Mitchell was going down to establish his coffee-buying headquarters at Retalhuleu, and also Erb and Mrs. Mann were on the train. They were going to San José and thence to San Francisco.

Poor people were running hither and thither. Fat old men and women, terror writ all over their faces, struggled along with big baskets containing the treasures of a lifetime, perspiration gathering in beads on their foreheads. Everybody was shoving and pushing and the hubbub and confusion was indescribable. Finally, the trains got off—an hour late—and the yard resumed its normal appearance.

On my way up to the Legation, I stopped in at Simmons' Grocery Store, which was open, and bought some goods. Told Simmons to put them aside for me and that I would call for them later in the day. He was doing a rushing business, people crowding in to buy all the food he would sell them in spite of the prevailing high prices.

At ten, George was at the Legation with his Ford. Walter and I first went over to the cable offices and after Walter had filed his messages, we went out for the Foreign Minister, Luis Toledo Herrarte, who had fled to his villa at Guardia Vieja after the first night. We had difficulty in locating him, indeed first had to find the Brunis'. He was living in the Villa Louisiana, which we finally found. The house itself was badly destroyed and the family was living in a garage behind. The Minister's wife speaks English. I believe she is French. Her sister, a widow, married a Philadelphian by the name of Wister, who died here last year.

After concluding his business, Walter and I took our leave. In bidding him goodbye, I offered my condolences in the name of the Carnegie Institution as well as for myself, and placed myself at the disposal of the president. On our way back to the Legation, we met Mrs. Clark and took her back to the station. George then brought Walter and me back to the Legation.

After lunch, George returned, reporting he had carried the groceries at Simmons' down to the car. Walter and I started out to the wireless station to see Watts. The road to the Guardia Viejo is jammed with people in little temporary huts and hovels made of matting, boards, lamina, and canvas. We had great difficulty in weaving our way through this and indeed only a Ford could have accomplished it. In places, the little vehicle mounted right up over fallen adobe walls, cleared them, and continued on serenely beyond.

We found we had got into the back door of the wireless station, so we walked through a large imposing building built by Reina Barrios, now used to house the motors and sending apparatus of the station, and finally located Watts inside a barbed-wire stockade surrounding the base of the tallest tower, 350 feet high. Watts introduced us to a don Julio Llerena, the director general de *los telegrafos*, a young man. I knew Walter wanted to talk confidentially with Watts, so I engaged don Julio in conversation and tried to hold him. Walter had several messages he wanted to go by wireless, and Watts said the president was preventing him from answering messages coming from anywhere. Walter promised to take the matter up with the president and we left, returning by way of the Reforma.

I left the car at the Legation and walked down to the Plaza where I fell in with young Richardson, a son of Melgar the druggist and the two Peresini girls. I walked up toward the Parque Estrada Cabrera with them, but left them at the San Sebastian Church. I was looking for the Callejón de Soledad where lived the young girl who assisted Dr. Hamilton, Teodora García. I found her in a deplorable condition, suffering from an acute nerve shock. She was in the patio of the house next to her aunt's with whom she lived, and which had collapsed. At first she did not recognize me. Her pulse was slow and weak, hands clammy, eyes distended, pupils large, tongue thick, and at times unable to talk at all. She recovered somewhat while I was there and finally before I left took me through her aunt's house. I promised to call again in a day or two.

I returned to Mr. Clark's car for supper, and afterward Mrs. Roach, Mrs. Clark, and I played a little three-handed auction. We were all in bed by nine, however.

### **December 29, Saturday**

Hundreds continue to flee from the city to points on the west coast. This morning they closed the big gates to the station yard to let the people through slowly, but there was no holding them back. They simply stormed the gates, broke them down, and poured in. I went to the Legation early to work on cables. Captain Owen had come in late yesterday afternoon from Puerto Barrios, having ridden overland from Sanarate. He reported the big shocks of Christmas night were felt very perceptibly at Jocolo on Lake Izabal, where he and Mrs. Owen were spending Christmas with Mrs. Potts.

I worked hard on my cables all morning. Just before lunch, I went out to the wireless station to see Watts for Walter, particularly to find out whether the messages we had carried out yesterday got off. I found Watts in a great stew. The messages had been held up, and indeed had not gone yet. He was furious at the president, said he was double crossing us, and urged me to urge Walter to put it "up strong" in his interview with the president this afternoon.

I returned to the Legation for lunch. Just afterward, at two in fact, while I was writing in the clerk's office, came a terrible shock. I rushed out, grabbed Miss Marroquin, Consul Fess' secretary, and ran into the smaller patio. The big *zaguan* at the end of the corridor leading into this was open, and before anyone could stop her, Mary Owen had darted through this and down the street to her old home where her father was. It was a perilous thing to have done, and Jim Roach ran after her. Fortunately, she came to no harm and even more fortunately her father had stopped to do an errand at Simmons' store, and therefore had not quite reached the house, for the second story of the latter completely collapsed.

This renewal of the severe shocks, after we thought their severity had abated and they were passing, has upset everybody. This afternoon's shock was certainly as severe as the first and third shocks of Christmas night. We learned later indeed that it killed more people than any of the other three heavy shocks. A young Red Cross physician, Valla, was killed near the British Legation riding through the streets on his horse. He tried to escape a two-story house, which, however, did not fall, crowded over to the other side of the street and was killed by the front of a one-story house which fell out and crushed him and his horse.

Everybody had begun to feel secure again, and were venturing into their houses to salvage their belongings. This shock caught them thus inside and off guard, and many walls previously weakened by the shocks of Christmas night collapsed, which accounted for the heavier death



toll. Whilst we were discussing this new shock, someone ran into the Legation with the news that a German had been killed around the corner. Walter, Miss Marroquin, and I hastened around and found that instead of a German, "*un Aleman,*" an ox, "*un animal*" had been killed. An ox car had been drawn up to the sidewalk in front of a house opposite the German Legation, and when this shock came, the façade had fallen forward, smashing the cart and crushing one of the oxen so that it had to be killed.

We had scarcely returned to the Legation when a man rushed in with the news that the soldiers were taking an American off to the Castillo [prison building] to be shot for looting. Although leaving for an interview with the president at the minute, Walter hurried out to investigate the matter. He returned later with the news that the story had lost nothing in the telling. It seems a man by the name of Qualman has a lot where many people have taken refuge. When the two o'clock shock came this afternoon, a great many people tried to break through a fence or wall into the lot. Qualman tried to persuade them to go around to another side to enter, but they refused to do so, so he asked a young American by the name of Sebelle to get his (Qualman's) revolver out of a bag and give it to him. Sebelle did this, and the police saw him with a revolver in his hands and promptly arrested him and carried him off to the *cuartel*. A man in the crowd saw him being thus led away and ran to the Legation with the story I have given. When Walter got down to the *cuartel*, Sebelle was just being released. Mr. Shaw had also seen the matter and hastened up to the *comandancia* and explained the affair, with the result that he was released.

Walter was late getting out to La Palma<sup>269</sup> and of course George did not show up, so he had to go out on horseback. I think the lack of dignity perturbed him somewhat, but surely this is no time for the niceties of diplomatic intercourse. I was still at work on my cables when he returned. His interview had been most satisfactory, he said. The president promised that all messages signed by him whether in key or not would receive immediate transmission through the wireless. A very satisfactory promise if it is kept.

I had dinner at the Legation and worked there in the evening typewriting my two cables. Later, went down to the car. Six were sleeping in the parlor car part: the two Cooks, the two Kohlers, and the two Roaches. With Alfred and me on the back platform and Mr. and Mrs. Clark at the other end, we were 10 in all.

## **December 30, Sunday**

Worked all morning on my diary. After lunch, about two, we had another severe shock, not as bad as yesterday, but bad enough in all conscience. Again, we ran out into the patio but the quiver passed and we came back inside. One could almost become blasé if one could be sure the roofs would not fall in. At 4:30, I knocked off work and walked up to the Callejón de Soledad to take Doctor Hamilton's little assistant some apples.

I found the house deserted and falling. A boy in front told me that the big shake of yesterday had brought it down and that the family had fled to the *llanos* [flat land] of San Antonio out 7th Avenue. A *mozo* was carrying a mattress thither and undertook to show me the way. We picked our way over fallen walls which all but choked the *callejón*. I finally got out to

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<sup>269</sup> La Palma was the name of the presidential compound (see January 3, 1918).

the llanos, which are just this side of the American Mission Hospital, and saw Teodora's aunt. Teodora herself was getting corn at a food distribution [center] nearby. She and her aunt are living with two other families in a lamina and *petate* [straw mat] shelter. Presently, Teodora herself came in and was fairly blossoming, her nervous attack apparently entirely forgotten. I gave her the apples, for which she was very thankful.

I did not stay long but walked back along Seventh Avenue.<sup>270</sup> The shock of yesterday brought down a great many more houses in this part of the city. Indeed, I should say 50 percent more had fallen since I was up here last, day before yesterday.

Returning to the Plaza de Armas, I bought some apples for Watts' little girl and went up there. They were all eating supper when I arrived. He is safely and comfortably fixed in the patio of a garage, sleeping in a tent at night and eating under a machine shop open shed in the daytime. I stayed until about seven-thirty, and then came back to the Legation for supper. There is no early moon now and I had to walk to the station in the dark. Very few people are on the streets and no one stopped me; the martial law seems to be laxly enforced. The Clarks' car was crowded enough without the Roaches, who are sleeping in a day coach to be sure of a seat in the Retalheleu train tomorrow morning. We were six in the parlor car end tonight: the two Cooks, the two Kohlers, and Alfred and me. The Kohlers are the kind who fear fresh air at night, and they wanted to have all the windows closed. When it came to counting votes, however, there were only two votes for the closed window policy and four for the open door. Mrs. Kohler was magnificent in a boudoir cap, and her husband picturesque in a Turkish towel swathed around his head. It fell to his lot to put out the light, as he was the last in bed.

### **December 31, Monday**

I got up early and after coffee went out to look up Toxie and Jim to say goodbye. I found them herded in with lots of natives, and hungry. Went back to the car and got a couple of cups of coffee, some bread and butter. Toxie said I had saved her life. I will miss them. They, particularly Toxie, are jolly and have been awfully kind to me. Jim is going down to Retalhuleu to start Hard and Rand's office there.<sup>271</sup>

I came up to the Legation after breakfast and found Walter just dressing. I had noticed Captain Owen with the last [American] *Review of Reviews* yesterday, and I got hold of it and read what Simonds has to say about the war.<sup>272</sup> Militarily speaking, he thinks our cause is safe, but he fears allied morale may break to pieces in the face of the Russian disintegration and the Italian collapse. I read his article to Walter at breakfast. After finishing the *R. of R.*, I walked down to the Plaza where I got a very satisfactory hair cut at "The Peluqueria Washington." The proprietor had salvaged the long mirrors, chairs, and razors, and was doing a good business.

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<sup>270</sup> This was probably in what is now Zone 4 which, together with Seventh Avenue, is today part of the main commercial sector of the city.

<sup>271</sup> Hard and Rand Co. was New York-based import-export firm with offices throughout Latin America. Their focus was coffee and cacao.

<sup>272</sup> Frank H. Simonds, a noted journalist, wrote extensively on the war for *The American Review of Reviews*, articles that were collectively published by the magazine as a five-volume *History of the World War* (1917).

Rafael Yaquian, the son of the chief-of-police, came in while I was there. I had met him before, and we exchanged what little news there was.

I was very curious to go up to Fernando Cruz's brick yard, but could get no vehicle to take me thither, neither automobile nor carriage. Even had Rafael Yaquian looking for me. I walked around to the Grand Hotel but there were none there. Met an alien enemy on the same quest, and one dilapidated *coche* showing up, we were obliged to share it. I bought some apples to take up to Fernando's wards before I left the Plaza. We went first to the German's place at the tennis courts where I dropped him, and went by a long route out to the brickyard of Doctor Guillermo Cruz, where Fernando is stopping. On the way out we passed the Cerrito del Carmen. The slopes of the hill are covered with little temporary constructions, but the church above does not appear to have been damaged in the least.

At some distance beyond the Cerrito, we came to the brickyard of Doctor Cruz, but I was unfortunate enough to find Fernando out. I left the apples for his little nieces and also my *recuerdos*, and returned to the city and the Legation for lunch. I wrote in my diary all afternoon, and also dined at the Legation.

In the evening, about 8:30, Walter and I walked out to the wireless station. It was quite dark and we took an electric flash. Everywhere, the streets were deserted. We passed few policemen or soldiers and no one stopped us anywhere, either going or coming. There were a number of soldiers in front of the penitentiary but no one halted us and we passed unchallenged. The road from the Reforma to the wireless towers was very dark, but we managed to feel our way along it. We were a bit apprehensive that some fool soldier might shoot us from the wireless station, but when we got there it was as silent and dark as the grave.

We could not help speculate how easy it would be for some enterprising Hun to dynamite the place and put the service out of commission for a long time. In the daytime, it is heavily guarded, but at night nobody appeared to be around. After several hails, we succeeded in raising a couple of men from the receiving hut, a shanty hastily constructed by Watts. These told us Watts had been there earlier in the evening but that as there was no gasoline the engine could not be run and consequently no messages could either be sent or received. So we had the exercise for our pains of our walk.

We returned to the Legation by way of the R.R. Station, walking down the track from the wireless station, across the Paseo de la Reforma and into the yard. We stopped in the car only for a short time. Walter tried to make me stay down at the car but I did not like the idea of his going back so late at night by himself, and therefore went with him. I knew, too, that Mary Owen had very kindly had a mattress and blankets ready for me the last two nights. We got back to the Legation without incident, and sure enough I found a comfortable mattress with blankets and real sheets already prepared for me. I could not help but contrast this New Year's Eve with the last. That was spent with Ma Parks, Marjorie, Paul, Warner, Marcia Taylor, and Ethel Vandeventer, Billie Weston, and myself at the Copley Plaza in Boston. Supper had commenced at 9:30 and we didn't leave until 5:30. I slept in town at the Adams House with Andrew Wallace. It was quite a contrast and much water had gone over the dam since then, for me as well as the rest of the world.

## CHAPTER 23

### THE EARTHQUAKE AFTERMATH

**January 1, 1918, Tuesday**<sup>273</sup>

#### **Guatemala City**

I rose early on New Year's morning and started the year aright by writing to True—my first letter in 1918. I began before breakfast and wrote afterward on it.

About 9:30, Federico, the door-boy, came in and said a man wished to see me. I went out and was dumbfounded at seeing Gann's man, Esquivel.<sup>274</sup> I inquired what on earth he was doing in Guatemala, and he said, "Dr. Gann is here and wants to meet you at the plaza at ten." I could scarcely believe such agreeable news. It seems he had been sent over by the Government of British Honduras with the first relief ship to find out just what was needed and wanted, and had come up by train as far as Sanarate and thence by mule, and had arrived yesterday afternoon. This much I got from Esquivel, whom he had brought with him. As it lacked only ten minutes to ten, I got my hat and we set off for the Plaza without delay. On the way over Esquivel said Gann was returning tomorrow and expected to take me with him.

After some little searching, I found him on the Cathedral side of the Plaza with Pérez Aura, who had also come over on the relief-ship. It was a very pleasant reunion indeed. I had last bid him [Gann] goodbye on the night of the Salvador earthquake, June 7th, at Puerto Barrios on board the *Suriname*, seven months ago. Earthquakes had separated us then and had brought us together now. We were bursting with news for each other, and as soon as he could get rid of his colonials—Esquivel, Pérez Aura, a boy Sargent, and some Belize refugees—we took a long walk out 7th Avenue, more for talking purposes than walking purposes, however.

He sprung a big find at Indian Church<sup>275</sup> on me: painted stelae which were set up within the past century, incredible—almost. He also told me how disgustingly Craig had acted about an *incensario* found at the Cayo. It seems a man was sending it down to Gann by his younger brother, a weak-kneed colonial, and Craig met the fellow and persuaded him to give it to him (Craig), saying Gann could have all the rest! This putty-jointed individual promptly gave it to Craig and on reaching Belize said nothing to Gann about the matter. Sometime later when the

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<sup>273</sup> We have included this first week of 1918 in Part One: 1917 because it is a continuation of the story of the Guatemala earthquakes. Part Two: 1918 picks up on February 2 at the start of Morley's expedition up the Quintana Roo coast.

<sup>274</sup> Amado Esquivel, AKA Muddy, was one of Gann's permanently employed assistants, a right-hand man or "factotum," as Gann (1924: 19) calls him.

<sup>275</sup> Indian Church is another name for the Maya site of Lamanai, which has a Historic-period Spanish mission church.

older brother returned from the Cayo, he asked Gann how he had liked his *incensario* and then the whole thing came out. Gann went to Craig and asked him for the piece, and Craig just laughed, saying he had “put one over.” Gann used every peaceful means of making Craig restore the pilfered article, but without success. Finally, he told Craig that if he did not return the article immediately he, Gann, would report the matter to the government, and since this thing had been found on government land, the government would seize it. Craig only laughed, whereupon Gann reported the affair to the governor who ordered the chief of police to seize the piece, which he did. Craig was furious, wrote a letter to the governor saying Gann was selling the antiquities he found for private gain, etc., etc. But to no avail. The governor still has the *incensario* at government house and though Gann lost it, Craig did not profit by his underhand work.

I think, in the last analysis, no one likes him [Craig]. I shall never forget his having given my report on Doctor Lafleur’s death to Estrada.<sup>276</sup> On this, and much other gossip, we passed our time walking northward until we had reached the Baños de San Antonio, where I looked up little Theodora Rosales to see how she was getting along. She is quite recovered from her nervous breakdown and was as smiling and happy as ever. She tells me they lack for nothing.

We crossed from here to the British Legation, where Gann went to tell the Minister he was lunching with us. I had gathered from a hint Armstrong dropped that he was not overly keen on the Black List, so purposely drew him out on that subject. He rose to the bait. Said he thought little was to be gained by pressing it, that it worked so much hardship among the natives that what we gained by squeezing the Hun was more than counterbalanced by the corresponding loss of sympathy among the natives; further that while the Germans did everything in their power to conciliate the natives, we went out of our way to irritate them. While hardly a Lord Lansdowne,<sup>277</sup> he seems to be of the same *laissez faire* type, the easiest way kind. I told him—perhaps rather warmly—that if we were on the horns of the dilemma he sketched, i.e., only being able to crush German commercial supremacy in these countries by losing native love and affection, why to bend to the former the harder, and to hell with the native. We have everything to gain by the former course and very little to lose by the latter.

The British Legation is a complete ruin. The Youngs and Armstrongs and the Chilean Minister are living in the garden behind, in a very sketchy manner. Water is scarce and baths are a luxury. Herbert Apfel was here, and after finishing his errand, Gann, Apfel, myself, and another man started back toward town. Working our way through the temporary huts in front of the British Legation, what should I see but the rear of the long lost Ford, and going around in front: George, its chauffeur.

“Where have you been, hombre? Mr. Morley, look what the earthquake’s done her, a wall fell on her and ruined her.” The old machine in truth looked pretty badly messed up. The crank-

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<sup>276</sup> This refers to Morley’s report on the tragic end of the 1916 Uaxactun expedition; apparently Morley was not pleased that Craig had given Guatemalan President Estrada his report, which laid the blame for Dr. Lafleur’s death squarely on Guatemalan soldiers.

<sup>277</sup> Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, the 5th Marquess of Lansdowne, served as governor of Canada, viceroy of India, and other high offices, holding senior positions in both Conservative and Liberal party governments.

shaft was broken, the limousine partially staved in, and other minor injuries had been sustained. George had the engine out and was substituting one of his own, which he thought would work. He promised to come around in the morning, and in the meantime recommended the machine of a Belize creole named Egan, a monstrous old white steamer which had been built specially for Roosevelt to use in his first campaign for president. Arranging with George to show up as soon as he could, we resumed our walk to the Plaza, where we left Apfel and his friend.

We had lunch at the Legation. Gann thought we all lived in high luxury for such times, and I daresay we do. Mary Owen is a wonderful hostess, and I believe the Legation is one of the very few houses in town—less than can be counted on two hands—where we are still eating in the dining room. Right after lunch, we walked down to the Plaza where I engaged the services of a dilapidated carriage, the direct progenitor of the one-horse shay, and we set out on a photographic tour of the city.

First, we went out to the Reforma, and en route stopped at the Villa Margarita. Saw the two Carloses, father and son, Margarita, and Julia Roblos, who is now there. I took Margarita some apples from the Plaza. We stayed for about half an hour, during which time a Hun dropped in and Margarita's fiancé. What a pity a beauty like she is to be thrown away on such a fat, short-legged, little pig as he is. Some say he is very bright, and others that he doesn't know Mocha from Java and he is Schwartz's coffee taster. We continued our way out to the end of the Reforma, where we stopped for a drink at the cantina there. We had a little shake sitting at the table. Returning, it became bitterly cold. I have never felt such coldness in my life in Guatemala, keen and penetrating.

We just had time to go out to the relief map at the Hippodrome before sunset.<sup>278</sup> Fortunately, it has not suffered at all. Gann and I marked out the principal Maya sites—more or less of a rite with me—but the wind was whistling too strong, so we hurried back to the carriage.

I dropped Gann at the British Legation and came on back to our own, where I let the carriage go. I had been absent from the [Clarks' rail] car so much lately that I felt I must go down tonight. We had a big supper. Turkey and accompaniments, and champagne. It was very jolly, all except the poor Kohlers, who do not speak English and had to be explained every joke. Many English jests cannot be rendered in Spanish and the lady who is naturally heavy in mind as well as in body was continually foundering around for the elusive point. After dinner, Mrs. Cook and I played auction against Mrs. Clark and Mr. Cook. We turned in about nine, the Kohlers, Cooks, and Alfred and I sharing the large end of the car between us.

### **January 2nd—Wednesday**

Came up to the Legation early and started a letter to Mother describing the quakes. At ten, Gann showed up in a carriage and wanted me to make a tour of his hospitals with him. We first went to the General Hospital, which had very few wounded people, I thought. The sisters and

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<sup>278</sup> This large, cement relief map of the entire country was originally built in 1904–1905. An underground water tank supplied water to rivers and lakes. The Relief Map still exists, and was extensively restored in 1980 and 2014.

padre in charge were French.

I had heard of an American being brought here, out of his head and dying, and I tried to get some information on the subject. The sister said the man had been brought in by the police about four o'clock Saturday, two hours after the big shock of that day. He was not only out of his head, but very violent. They had great difficulty in undressing him and putting him to bed. His fever had increased and he died the next morning at seven without ever regaining consciousness. There were no papers or letters or even money in his pockets, and they had no means of discovering his identity. I asked if they were sure he was an American. And they said they thought so. Large, fine appearing, blue eyes and light hair. Poor devil, he doesn't even fill a nameless grave, for they are now cremating all the bodies. It was the end of some tropical tragedy. But I should like to have been able to find out his name.

The president told Gann day before yesterday that more than ten thousand bodies had been burned to date.<sup>279</sup> They bury here in little vaults or niches in great walls, and these the earthquakes threw down, scattering the burials about like clothespins. The stench, Julia Robles told me, was horrible—Rodolfo was in charge of the burning—and great quantities of gasoline were consumed at these impromptu burning-ghats.<sup>280</sup>

When Gann had finished at the hospital, we drove next to the American Hospital. On the way we passed through the old Recolectión Monastery, now a heap of ruins, like the church of the same name just adjoining. The Recollect Fathers were great builders in Guatemala, and they must have been one of the most powerful of all the orders here. Their establishment at Antigua is immense, and the large Roman arches in their church there were the largest in that city. Their church, therefore, suffered a maximum of damage there.

The *terremotos* of Christmas night laid low the two mighty towers of the Recolectión church here, and the one of the 29th did further damage [see Figures 22.4, 22.5]. All told, I photographed this church several times. The Military School was housed in this Monastery several years ago, but when the students made that abortive attempt on the president's life some eight years ago, the school was abolished and the buildings were demolished.<sup>281</sup>

The fine, old, puddled-adobe wall which surrounded the entire compound is still standing in many places. It seems to be surviving the *terremotos* much better than the more modern walls of adobe brick. Both of us took pictures of parts of this establishment. We proceeded then to the American Hospital, which is operated by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Their building had suffered heavily, but happily they had few patients at the time. Returning to the Legation, we saw a corn distribution in progress at the Parque Estrada. A large wagon was

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<sup>279</sup> This is one of the only estimates of the death toll from the first two big quakes we have found.

<sup>280</sup> One of the more gruesome tales of the earthquakes is that more than 8,000 dead were shaken from their graves. Seeing a health crisis in the making, authorities ordered a giant bonfire that consumed the entire cemetery. A ghat is a place of cremation in India.

<sup>281</sup> The cadets of the Military Academy tried to kill Estrada Cabrera twice in 1908, the second time actually shooting him point blank, but only injuring his pinky finger. In revenge, the dictator ordered the execution of several entire cadet units, the destruction of their compound, and salt spread on the field where the building had stood (Rendon 1988).

entirely surrounded by a mass of seething humanity. In the wagon were three or four men distributing ears of corn, and there was a forest of hands reaching for the grain. All poor people, but apparently all eager for the ration. I asked an old woman what they were giving to each person, and she said "*un mano*." We later found out that a hand is composed of five *mazorkas*, or ears, and constitutes the individual daily ration. Unfortunately, this wild scramble for food was going on in the shade and we could not photograph it although it would have made a splendid picture: the forest of hands stretching toward the wagon waving baskets aloft, the golden colored adobe dust, the scuffling, shuffling, and crowding.

Gann returned to the Legation with me and left me there. I bid him goodbye and told him I would come down on Monday or Tuesday of next week and over to Belize on Thursday or Friday. He left right after lunch on mule back for Sanarate and expects to catch a train down from there to the port tomorrow.

Had lunch and dinner at the Legation and slept there.

### **January 3rd, Thursday**

After breakfast, Alfred brought up a telegram which had come to Walter over the Railroad wires to the effect that Commander Brumby of the *Cincinnati* was at San José and would be up as soon as possible. He was bringing with him three officers and some medical supplies. Alfred said his father had already notified the president and had made up a special train for them, which should get in about two-thirty. Walter was to have an interview with the president at 3:30, so he decided to take Brumby right along with him. While he and Brumby were out at La Palma, I was to take the officers around the town in a car and show them the destruction that had been wrought.

George came around about eleven and after a number of errands downtown he took me up to the *llano* in front of the Legation to see his Belize creole friend, Egan, the owner of the ancient white steamer. Walter was going to use George in going out to La Palma with Brumby, so I had to get another machine. Had to wait for this individual quite a while, as he was off buying gasoline. I saved the time by going over to an optician's on First Avenue East, who was living in a temporary shack. I broke my glasses several days ago and without them I am lost indeed. This individual thought he had frames that would fit my lenses and told me to come around to his shop at 1:30 on Tenth Street.

Went back to the *llano* in front of the British Legation, found my man Egan, and arranged with him to be at the station with the white at 2:30 sharp. George then took me back to the Legation, promising to return at two. Mary Owen was quietly and efficiently planning for a late luncheon for the officers of the *Cincinnati*, so we ate of sardines in the back portal.

At two, George The Faithful showed up and took Walter and me down to the station, where to our dismay, we found the special would not get in until between 3:30 and 4:00. This disarranged our plans as it made it impossible for Walter to wait and meet Brumby. It was hastily decided that I should meet them formally in his stead, and take all of them around the city while Walter was at La Palma, bringing them to the Legation later in the afternoon. With this understanding, we parted.

After an errand in the neighborhood of the station, I returned to Mr. Clark's car to find several officers on guard outside, and inside a magnificently caparisoned higher officer, whom



Mr. Clark at once introduced to me as General Ovalle, Minister of War. He had been dispatched thither by the president to meet Commander Brumby—a signal honor.

He was oldish, apparently rather mediocre, and in spite of the fact that he was general of a division, the highest rank in the Guatemalan Army, he was far from a military figure lounging there in the car. He spoke no English, so Mr. Clark and I laboriously entertained him—and probably amused him in his own language. We sat there in the car talking until Cruse came in and said the special was coming. The three of us walked out, and the two officers on duty outside the car closed in behind. The special had two cars, a baggage coach and a first-class coach. A number of men got off the car, among others I recognized Dr. Struse of the Rockefeller Foundation and a Mr. Qualmley, a Swiss (?) I have heard, and three enlisted men. In addition to Commander Brumby, there was a Lieutenant Taylor, the doctor, a Lieutenant Fox, and an Ensign Purdy. There was also another general, this time only a Brigadier General: Alvarado, who had been sent to meet the party at Morozan. We made ourselves known to these people, and they to us.

When I suggested the automobile ride about the city, Commander Brumby said he must see the president at once. As I was representing Walter, I had to go out with him, leaving all the others to Mr. Clark, Struse, and Qualmley. It was understood that we should send the big automobile back for them.

Four of us then climbed into the Rooseveltian White: Brumby, myself, Generals Ovalle, and Alvarado. I explained to the latter that the commander had to see the president at once, and I thought if we hurried, we might overtake our charge d'affaires at La Palma, a thing to be desired. However good the old White may have been back in 1904, it had gone off since those days. Going down the barranca which separates the city from La Palma, we fairly breezed, but when it came to climbing the other side, it petered out. Three times we had to stop to get up enough steam to reach the summit, and each time I thought we would have to abandon the machine as time, after all, was an element. The commander and I were always in favor of walking, but the two generals, especially Ovalle, are fat and they said the ascent was very steep. We finally worked our way up to the gateway.

Sponsored by the Minister of War and a Brigadier General, there was no halting our party, on the contrary—everybody, even civilians—stood up to attention as we passed in, and all officers and soldiers saluted. My plans were uncertain. Was I to go in with Brumby or let him go in by himself, or in fact had I any say in the matter at all? I could not tell, and all the time we were penetrating farther and farther into the complex of houses and courts and gardens and shrubberies, which is La Palma.

When we passed up the long entrance, everybody stood up and saluted. The Minister of War and General Alvarado were responsible for that, I suppose, though Brumby was a fairly military looking individual with his U.S.N. uniform and clanking sword. We kept going in and in and in. We were passed through the hands of several chaps in khaki, and finally arrived in front of a small khaki tent wherein, I inferred, was the president.

Sánchez de la Tour, the interpreter, was outside and asked us to wait as some visiting delegation was inside. They came out presently and we were ushered in. The tent was a small army tent, perhaps 14 by 10. There were two benches, one on each side, and between the two at the back was a table at which the president sat facing to the left, and on the right bench Sánchez

de la Tour sat beside him. The rest of us sat on the opposite bench, Brumby opposite the president, next myself, next Ovalle, and next Alvarado. The last two never peeped during the entire interview, which lasted about half an hour.

The president opened the matter by thanking Brumby for his visit and expressing his deep appreciation of the generous assistance already proffered by our government, etc., etc. Brumby thanked him through the interpreter, and said he was there to offer his sympathy for the catastrophe, but more immediately to find out just what medical supplies were needed. He urged the president to give him this information at once, and also asked permission to use the government wireless to transmit the information to his boat at San José, where it would be sent to Washington immediately. The president told him Rodolfo Robles was the man to see in this connection, and also said he would give the necessary orders, which would permit Brumby to use the government wireless.

Manuel Estrada Cabrera is a short man who looks about sixty. His face wears an expression of fatigue—more mental than physical, I should say, as though he were tired to death of holding the lid down. The eyes are a piercing black, and his most notable feature. The face is heavily lined—cruelty, lust, power, satiation, and disillusionment are all registered there. After addressing the interpreter, to whom he would speak directly, he would lean back in his chair and close his eyes, a not infrequent trick I heard later. In fact, he rarely looks you straight in the eye, rather avoiding it. There was no magnetic thrill, however, when he did, rather an impression of power and cruelty. We stayed about half an hour, and then took our leave. There were renewed protestations of good will and appreciation of our government's help in the present crisis, and farewells and we left.

The two generals accompanied us back to the decrepit White. The chauffeur asked if we could return to the city another way so as to escape the big hill we had descended. So we came back by way of the Reforma. Even the low hill which this route involved proved too much for the White, and we had to stop half way to get up more steam, and this not once but several times.

During one of these stationary interludes, I heard the exhaust of a high-powered gasoline machine coming up the hill. It was Denby in a huge gray car. I hailed him and asked if he would give us a lift, and he was kind enough to do so. I introduced him to Brumby, of course he knew the two generals, and we made the shift to his car. I directed Egan, the White's driver, to return to the station if and when he could, pick up the other officers, and take them about the city. We then continued on out to the Reforma and back. Just before reaching the railroad bridge, a tire blew out and we were held up about 20 minutes. Brumby explained his haste in seeing the president. It seems he had been at San Diego and was ordered to Panama. He had taken on just enough coal for the trip. When within 200 miles of the Isthmus, he had received a wireless bidding him to turn back and put in at San José de Guatemala, a detour of 700 miles. This had consumed so much coal, of course, and he felt he could only afford one day at San José with steam up, and then he would make Panama with only a few tons of coal in his bunkers.

In the meantime, the tire had been changed and we climbed back into the car. We dropped Denby at his house and continued on to the Legation to pick Walter up. Walter's dignity was ruffled a bit that Brumby sat in the automobile and did not come in, said that diplomatic usage demanded that he should have called at the Legation, etc. I shouldered the blame, and

smoothed his ruffled feathers, said time was speeding and he wanted to get his message off to Washington tonight.

Walter got his hat, came out to the machine, and I introduced him to Brumby. We all went down to the Plaza next to look for Rodolfo, and here the Minister of War left us with ponderous adieux, a rather soiled, grizzled old gentleman who is said to be scrupulously honest. He sent some orderlies flying to look for Rodolfo, including a motorcyclist, who went out to the Villa Margarita, where [he] is now living. General Alvarado accompanied us back to the Legation, where we left Brumby and Walter.

I took Alvarado back to the Plaza and then went down to the station to see the Clarks. It was dark when I came back to the Legation and found quite a junta assembled: Walter, Brumby, his three officers, Struse the Rockefeller man, and several others. Rodolfo and another Cruz Roja man came in as we sat there. A course of action was finally mapped out and it was then decided that Brumby, Walter, and Rodolfo should go to see the president tomorrow. As soon as the meeting broke up, we went straight out to La Palma with Rodolfo, and arranged for this interview for tomorrow. During the hour he was away, Brumby composed his wireless message asking for supplies, typhoid and para-typhoid serums, small pox vaccine, etc., etc. When Walter came back, the three of us only went out to the wireless station to give the message to Watts personally.

Sánchez de la Tour must have seen our lights coming because he was at the railroad crossing when we got there. We filed through the narrow entrance in the barbed wire entanglements, and into the enclosure, across, and into the little sending shack. Watts was there and I introduced Brumby.

We had to wait a few minutes for his engine to start, but soon the mechanism was spluttering and spitting after the most approved wireless fashion. Curiously enough, Walter intercepted two important "rush" messages in code to the *Cincinnati*. As Brumby did not have his books, there was no use taking these down and Walter turned to the business in hand, trying to get the *Cincinnati*. By and by the cruiser answered and he held them. It seemed miraculous to me, reaching up into the air and out into the darkness, and plucking from the ether those particular waves of the many thousands flowing hither and thither which were emanating from a single instrument, somewhere off to the south.

Brumby bid Walter goodbye and asked him to see that his messages got through at once, so as to reach Washington first thing in the morning, and we returned to the Legation. It was just now after nine, and everyone was famished. We were a large and merry party at supper: Captain Owen and Mary, our adequate and clever hostess—she certainly had been a "pillar of strength," and if I can modify the Bible, "and of efficiency in this present crisis"—Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, Brumby, Lieutenants Tailor and Purdy, and Walter and myself. We rose from the table about 10:30 and scattered in the corridor and rooms looking up pajamas, etc. Everybody was ready to turn in and Mary had a number of mattresses already made up in the patio.

I remember Captain Owen and I were squabbling over the coat to a suit of pajamas, the nether complement of which had disappeared, in Walter's room, and he had just succeeded in establishing a better title thereto than I was able to do. I walked out into the corridor and said a word or two to Brumby. Suddenly, without warning or advance notice of any kind, a *retumba*. The earth swelled under our feet and shook violently. The candles toppled off the table and

went out. The shaking increased. Everybody broke for the patio. I remember some dust showering over me as I plunged through the nearest doorway. Everybody was falling pell-mell into the patio. We could hear walls crashing down in the neighborhood and the air was filled with a fine choking dust. Purdy, whom I discovered once kept a trading post at Ojo Alamo, New Mexico, a God-forsaken spot near Pueblo Bonito (and who knew many people in that region that I met in 1908, coming overland from Mancos to Santa Fe) was caught in the corridor when the shock came and dived through a doorway head first, ran afoul a tub with bamboo growing in it, and barked himself up in consequence. Mary Owen was in the dining-room and had to run around by the corridor and was the last out.

The shock still continued with decreasing violence, however. Mr. Clark told me the next morning his secretary, John Osborne, had had the presence of mind to hold a stop-watch on it, and that it lasted for eleven minutes. We all stood huddled there in the middle of the patio, cold and anxious. It was bitterly cold indeed. The Indian servants had in the meantime joined us. As we waited thus for the next, there was a knock on the *zaguán* and young Weyerstall came in, in his pajamas. He had been sleeping in the Fruit Co. building, and the house next as well as the German Club opposite had both fallen in, and he had fled. To undress was out of the question. Slight shocks still continued, but we could not tell at what moment the Legation might come tumbling down about our ears.

We waited for perhaps an hour for the expected second big shock, but none came, so one by one we turned in. Someone had to double up, as there were not enough mattresses to go around, so Captain Owen and I shared one on the north side of the central pole. No one slept well; we were awakened more than once by fairly strong shakes, and it was bitterly cold.

### **January 4th, Friday**

Nobody felt rested. We all rose early and a party walked down to the Plaza: Brumby, myself, Owens, and the three officers. The German Club is down on the Fifth Avenue side. The wall is fallen out and the interior is disclosed, Christmas tree, dinner tables, etc. The Hun may see what sort of thing he's doing in France and Belgium. We continued our walk as far as the Plaza de Armas. As I passed Rodolfo Robles' house, I noticed the whole end wall had fallen out, exposing what I took to be Julia's boudoir.

Both towers of the cathedral crashed down last night, falling backward and going through the roof [Figure 23.1]. The lofty central ornament with the papal tiara on top also fell down. The wreckage in front was thrown out nearly across the street. People on the Plaza said the noise was terrific when the towers fell. General Ovalle was already on the ground looking the damage over. We passed a few minutes with him, then returned to the Legation for breakfast.

Afterward, about nine, Rodolfo Robles showed up, and with Brumby and Walter all went out to La Palma to see the president again. I was to go to the station and arrange with Mr. Clark for the special, which was to take them back. I found Mr. Clark had gone out the line to examine a [land]slide or some weakened place eight miles out, together with Shaw and Leach, and until he returned, nothing could be ascertained as to the extent of the damage or indeed whether a train could be got off for San José at all today.



Figure 23.1. The Cathedral of Guatemala City after the earthquake.

When I got back to the Legation, Walter and Brumby had already returned from La Palma and had heard of the possible delay owing to the slides. The line to the north is also cut again. Brumby said he wouldn't change his plans unless he had to, and that if Mr. Clark could start him on nothing better than a flatcar, he and his staff would go. We had lunch on this understanding, and were at the railroad station at one, as originally planned. Mr. Clark was not in yet, but the train was just outside of town and in a few minutes came in.

Clark was hot and dusty and tired, and said he felt as though he had walked as far as Esquintla at least. The slide was not a large one and he said he would have Brumby's special out in an hour. This was already made up and the *Cincinnati* party got in. Struse was going down to San José with them, whither he had left Mrs. Struse. I saw Rafael Aparicio and Alfredo Aguirre. They were returning to San Felipe where the ladies and children were nicely fixed. I bid them adios a second time.

Walter and I did not wait for Brumby's special to leave, but returned directly to the Legation. I found Mary and Mrs. Shaw very much broken up under the strain of last night's terrible shock, and the continued loss of sleep and general uncertainty.

Many people were killed last night, and a general feeling of anxiety, even terror, prevails. Everybody is wondering when will it end. I think this last shock did more damage than any one of the others, I suppose because the buildings are all loosened. This last one brought the Cathedral down, destroyed the little old church on the Cerrito del Carmen [Figure 23.2], now

lacking only two years of its third century (1620–1918); the Plaza de Toros is now “*al suelo*,” as they say here. The station is now destroyed, and houses too numerous to mention.



Figure 23.2. Postcard of the destroyed church on the Cerro del Carmen.

I found Mary Owen in tears. Her father insists on their leaving tomorrow by mule, and Mary does not want to go, least of all in this hard way. Truth is, she is tired out with the strain of housekeeping, and her nerves are on edge. And as for Mrs. Shaw, she is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and refuses to sleep here at the Legation another night. It has been arranged that the Owens, Shaws, and four Indian girls are to sleep down at the Clark car tonight. Our last supper together was a dismal affair. The Owens leave at daybreak for Aguas Calientes or Sanarate, where the train now runs to. The Shaws will spend their days here at the Legation and their nights at the car. After supper, we put Mary and her father and the Owens in one coach and sent them off to the station. It was hard to say goodbye. Mary had been so splendid, had risen to the emergency so magnificently, and Captain Owen is always dependable. Mrs. Shaw said they would send back the coach for the four Indian girls, and in about an hour's time it returned and carried them off to the station also. This left Walter and I with the Legation to ourselves.

We had the Indian girls make our beds up in the center of the patio, and we thought further to fortify ourselves against falling walls and roofs by dragging out two heavy leather chairs and putting them on each side of our mattress. By sleeping close to these we hoped falling beams might be averted at least from striking our heads. We also took all the candles out of the sconces in the dining room and brought them out into the patio for use in case of emergency. We left one burning in the cigar box which we rigged up. I undressed in his office, as easier to get out in a hurry, and turned in about nine, confidently anticipating a heavy shock.

## **January 5th, Saturday**

But none came. The night passed without event, other than a curious singing note like a whistle. The pitch never varied though the volume rose and fell. Sometimes it was louder and again would practically cease. It set many dogs barking and we could not account for it. Mrs. Shaw told me she heard it down at the railroad station also. It sounded as though it came from up toward the Recolectión Church. I got up, went out to the street and looked up and down but no one was in sight. The late half moon filled the streets with a cold whiteness and the air was crisp, so I did not linger long over these meteorological observations, but hastily scrambled in under the covers again.

About seven, the four Indian girls showed up and Mrs. Shaw came in a little later. Right after breakfast, two encouraging messages were put into Walter's hands: one from our own State Department saying the U.S.A. was sending 6,000 tents and a warship to take off sufferers, and another from our Minister Price in Panama to the effect that a relief ship was coming from Panama with supplies, food, clothing, roofing, medicines, doctor, and assistants. This was good news and Walter lost no time in requesting an interview with the president in order to communicate the same, which he did in the late afternoon. The president expressed himself as deeply appreciative and urged the whole 6,000 tents be sent without delay, as he estimates 40,000 people to be without any kind of shelter whatsoever.

I spent most of the day in writing. In the afternoon, I looked up Raimón to see if he could fix my glasses. I ran him to ground in the Plaza de Armas, but he said he wouldn't venture in the Hamilton Hotel—where his office is—for \$5,000.00. So I will have to wait until I get to Belize.

## **January 6th, Sunday**

I wrote all morning. About 11:30, Mr. Shaw and I walked down to the Plaza de Armas, where I bought some apples. The place is now all built up on both sides of the outer walk with little shops which do a tremendous business. I noticed a new barbershop this morning: "Peluqueria Washington." We returned to the Legation by way of the Parque Gálvez and the Post Office. The government has opened 6th Avenue between 13th and 12th streets—now one can pass in front of the Post Office and the San Francisco Club.

## PART II. THE 1918 DIARY

### CHAPTER 24

#### INTRODUCTION: MORLEY'S 1918 DIARY

Upon returning to Belize after the Guatemala City earthquakes, Morley and Held were joined by Thomas Gann, the chief medical officer in British Honduras turned archaeologist, for the next leg of their journey. The month of February saw the trio travel from Corozal, Belize, up the coast of Quintana Roo, across the northern shore of Yucatan to Progreso, and overland to Merida (Figure 24.1). Unlike the expedition along the Honduran and Nicaraguan coasts, the Quintana Roo trip offered numerous opportunities for Morley to conduct archaeological reconnaissance, and the team discovered several new Postclassic sites. Additionally, they made a visit to Tulum.

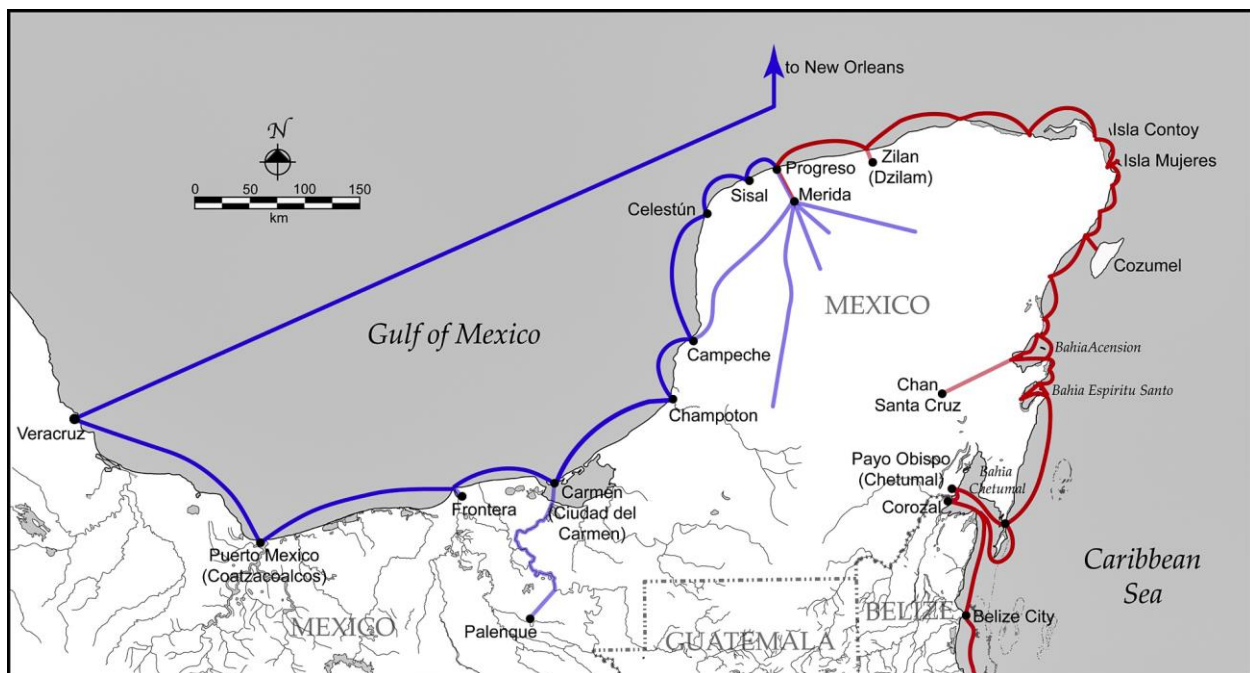


Figure 24.1. Map of Morley and Held's travels around the Yucatan Peninsula in 1918. Red, travel February to June; blue, travel March through April/May.



This section of the trip is highly documented: in addition to Morley's daily diaries, we have Thomas Gann's book, *In an Unknown Land* (1924), which mirrors Morley's diary in its day-to-day chronicling of the expedition (see below). To further flesh out the story, we have Morley's detailed ONI reports. Taken together, the first part of Morley's 1918 travel (in red in Figure 24.1) is perhaps the most thoroughly documented of his career. Sadly, however, much of Morley's 1918 diary has been lost, the last lines in both the Peabody Museum original copy and the American Philosophical Society typed copy end mid-sentence on February 28. The diary clearly continued, but it no longer can be located. In addition to searching the Peabody and the APS holdings, we sought assistance from the Museums of New Mexico Archives of the Governors' Palace to see if any diaries remained in their collection, but none were found. By coincidence, Morley's granddaughter stopped by the museum to read some letters in the collection, but when asked about any additional diaries possessed by the family, she indicated that she was unaware of any (K. Dull, personal communication, August 5, 2021).

### **Thomas Gann: Archaeologist or Antiquarian?**

Among scholars active in Maya studies in the early twentieth century, Dr. Thomas Gann [Figure 24.2], a physician by training, stands alongside contemporaries who laid the foundations for modern Maya archaeology. Americans include Morley, Spinden, Lothrop, and Merwin; in British New World archaeology circles of the time, Gann ranked with Thomas Athol Joyce of the British Museum and the noted John Eric Sidney Thompson. Compared to these luminaries, however, Gann's modern legacy ranks low, largely because of his methods.

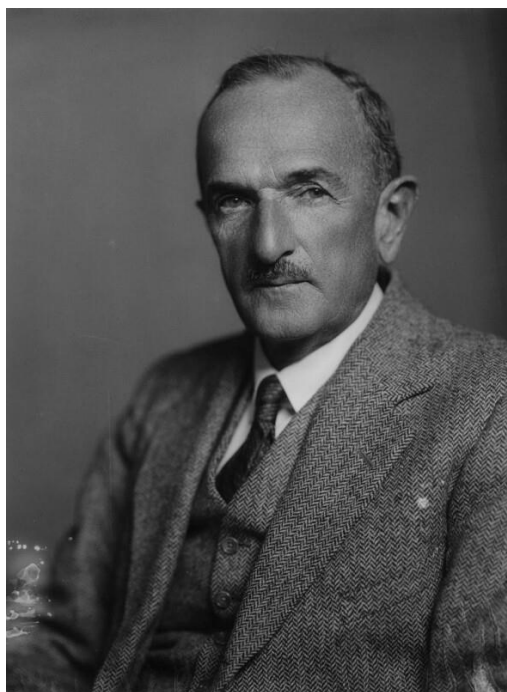


Figure 24.2. Dr. Thomas Gann.

Born in 1867 at Murrisk Abbey on the western coast of Ireland, Gann grew up in Whistable in Kent and earned his medical degree at nearby Kings College in Canterbury.<sup>282</sup> At medical school, Gann specialized in tropical medicine and took up his first appointment in 1892 as district commissioner and district surgeon of Cayo (District) in British Honduras (now Belize). He sought out the appointment because he had already developed a keen interest in Maya archaeology—so much so that one of the conditions of his joining the colonial office was that he would serve only in parts of Belize that had Maya ruins (Thompson 1975: 742).

Gann's medical activities were minimal from the beginning, owing to the sparse population of Cayo. Although many modern scholars dismiss Gann as a doctor first and archaeologist second, from the very first year of his service as a physician, he was fully involved in Maya studies. He published his first archaeological contribution, "Exploration of two mounds in British Honduras" (Gann 1895),<sup>283</sup> shortly after his arrival in the colony, suggesting that immediately upon stepping foot in Belize, he had shovel in hand.

After a transfer to Corozal District in 1894, Gann's archaeological activity increased. In 1897, he published an article describing his excavation of more than 60 mounds in the area, the title giving insight into his approach: "On the *contents* of some ancient mounds in Central America" (Gann 1897; emphasis added). His was a quest for artifacts more than for understanding. With a few exceptions, Gann did not carefully map ruins, study the structures, or do much that today's field archaeologists consider basic. Nor did he always closely supervise his excavations, often showing up at the site in the late afternoon to collect artifacts found by his hired diggers. Thompson (1975: 742) writes, "From later knowledge of Gann, I picture him speeding up the flow of patients through his surgery and cutting short long-winded recitals of ills so that he could be off to see how the dig had progressed."

At Corozal, Gann made one of the first significant discoveries of his career—the murals at the site of Santa Rita. Unfortunately, he was unprepared to fully record these, lacking proper paper, and when the first wall was exposed to the elements, it faded rapidly. Gann made a full press effort to record the multicolored murals, but one day he arrived at the site to find that the locals had removed the stucco upon which they were painted to grind into a medicinal powder. In the ensuing months, other murals at Santa Rita were uncovered and properly recorded, published later by the Bureau of American Ethnology (Gann 1902). Because the paintings eventually faded from sun exposure, Gann's drawings are the only record that exists today of these Postclassic artworks (Figure 24.3).

In early 1908, Gann was appointed to the University of Liverpool's new Institute of Archaeology as special lecturer in Central American antiquities and director of excavations in British Honduras. Most of the faculty at the Institute were Old World archaeologists, with Gann not only the lone Americanist but the first individual appointed to any New World archaeology position in Great Britain. He was never in permanent residence in Liverpool and never taught any formal courses, although he delivered multiple special lectures in that city. His excavations, conducted and funded by the university, allowed him to deliver numerous antiquities to the

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<sup>282</sup> Somerset Maugham grew up in the same village and attended the same college, but they strongly disliked each other (Thompson 1975: 742).

<sup>283</sup> This paper is one of the earliest reporting on the unusual shapes of chipped "eccentric" flints.

public museum, almost all of which were destroyed in a German bombing raid in 1941. By 1917, his connection to the University of Liverpool was loosened (although he was still listed as staff through 1935), and he became more closely associated with the Museum of the American Indian and, ultimately, the Carnegie Institution, both in Washington, DC (Wallace 2012: 27).

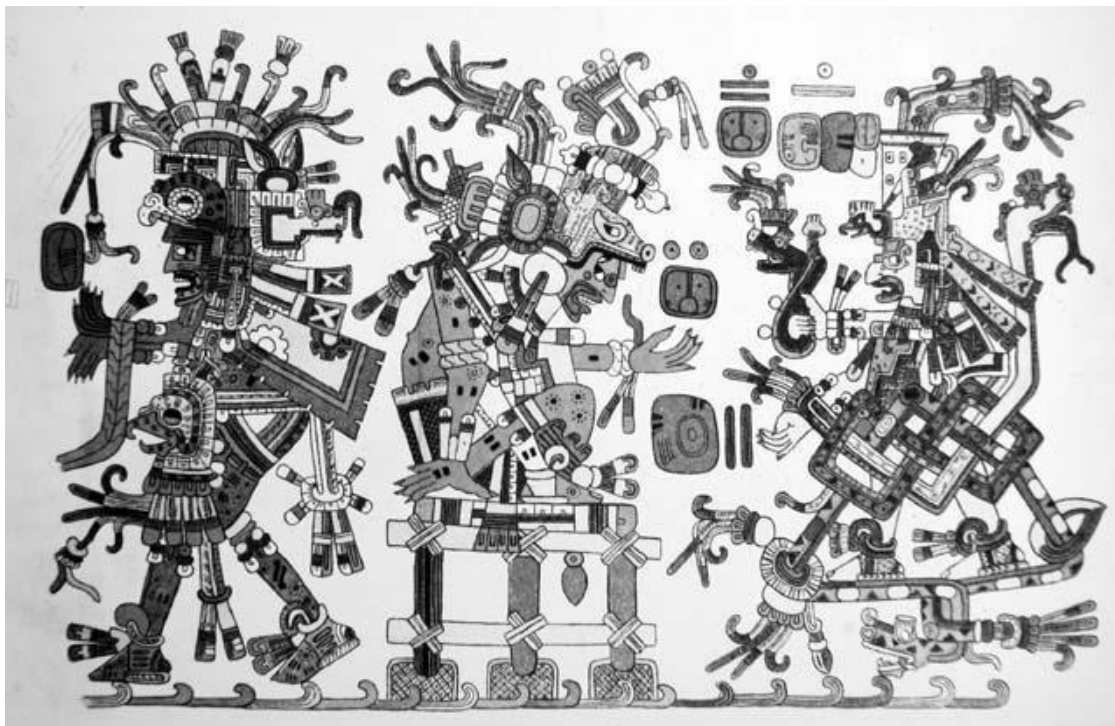


Figure 24.3. Gann's drawing of one of the Santa Rita murals.

After learning in 1903 of a large Maya city in the south, Gann organized an expedition that led to the discovery of Lubaantun, excavated under the auspices of the British Museum in the 1920s. In 1924, he took the adventurer F. A. Mitchell-Hedges to the site, launching a series of sensationalistic reports in which Mitchell-Hedges claimed to have found the famous Lubaantun Crystal Skull, supposedly endowed with magical energy. The Crystal Skull fraud was exposed when it was determined that the cranium had been carved with modern machinery, probably in the 1890s. Gann had nothing to do with the controversy, and knew nothing of it. It was later revealed that Mitchell-Hedges bought the skull at a Sotheby's auction in 1943, some five years after Gann's death.

Gann played a key role in the 1926–1931 British Museum Central American Expeditions, which focused almost exclusively on Belize. Although these efforts were under the overall direction of T.A. Joyce, Gann headed the 1928 season of excavations at Pusilha, which resulted in the removal of five stelae (Pusilha Stelae M, O, P, Q, and R) to the British Museum. Gann co-authored the final report on the fieldwork.

The British Museum identifies 867 artifacts acquired by Gann, including potsherds, statues, and entire stone hieroglyphic panels. Gann may have been the first person to collect Maya jades, and the "Gann Jades" at the British Museum are one of the most important collections of jadeite ever acquired by a single individual (Figure 24.4). Joyce (1938: 145) comments that "The

sites from which they were obtained are, unfortunately, not defined with accuracy, but they obviously come from the Central Maya area, and in the main from British Honduras.” Thus, Gann’s lack of record-keeping compromises the scholarly benefit of his most valuable artifact compilation by offering nothing in the way of even general provenience. Also, Gann’s collecting did not always conform to the laws of the countries whose artifacts he was removing. In Morley’s diary (January 1, 1918), he recounts a tale of Gann arguing with another collector about an *incensario* (pottery incense burner) that he wished to obtain. When the other person got it instead, Gann reported the matter to the Belizean government, which seized the artifact. Gann was satisfied that, if he couldn’t have the censer, neither could his rival.



Figure 24.4. Jade plaque Gann gave to the British Museum. The Museum website mis-identified it as being from Teotihuacan.

Most of Gann’s work was in Belize, but in 1918, he joined Morley (who became a life-long friend) on a multi-month expedition up the Quintana Roo coast and through the interior Puuc hills to the west.<sup>284</sup> Gann wrote about this travel in *In an Unknown Land* (1924), the first of his many publications aimed at a non-specialist audience. Maya scholars generally ignore Gann’s

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<sup>284</sup> The expedition continued west without Gann to Campeche and Palenque (Chapter 26–29).

popular writings as simply exaggerated adventure tales<sup>285</sup>; only one book is listed in Robert Sharer and Loa Traxler's (2006) bibliography in *The Ancient Maya* (but cf. Houk 2015). Our present study gives a unique perspective on this evaluation, however. In *an Unknown Land*, Gann's vivid account of the 1918 trip with Morley, can be compared with Morley's journal entries. The two accounts differ only rarely and only in the level of detail. Set next to Morley's diary, Gann's account is reliable and truthful, without exaggeration or events imagined for sheer entertainment.

Gann's subsequent books, the first publications since John Lloyd Stephens' volumes of the 1840s to bring the ancient Maya to a general audience, came out nearly yearly throughout the 1920s: *Mystery Cities of the Maya: Exploration and Adventure in Lubaantun* (1925); *Ancient Cities and Modern Tribes* (1926); *Maya Cities: A Record of Exploration and Adventure in Middle America* (1927); and *Discoveries and Adventures in Central America* (1929). These very successful volumes reached a wide readership and, in introducing the Maya to the public, a cause dear to Morley's heart, doubtless contributed to their friendship.

An analysis of Gann's influence on the development of New World archaeology at British universities summarizes several later scholars' assessments (Wallace (2012: 24–25):<sup>286</sup> his methods "remained more destructive than protective of evidence from beginning to end" (Pendergast 1993: 4); he was "notoriously ... more concerned with recovering aesthetically pleasing artifacts than with careful excavation and reporting, as attested by his dynamite holes in some mounds" (McKillop and Awe 1983: 2).<sup>287</sup> Early twentieth-century Belize archaeology was "the Colonial playground of Thomas Gann," who not only used dynamite but neglected to backfill his digs (Houk 2015: 6–7). Norman Hammond (1983: 19–21), on the other hand, avoided judging Gann by modern standards, attributing his methods and practices to those of his times. Despite the importance of some of Gann's accomplishments—such as his 1925 map of Lubaantun, the most accurate diagram of the site until recently (Wallace 2012: 25); and the only existing drawings of the Santa Rita murals—there is no argument that Gann's legacy is compromised. His discoveries of several major Maya sites burnish his career as an explorer more than as an archaeologist. Notably, his obituary in *The Times* in London calls him an "explorer" rather than an archaeologist (February 25, 1938, cited by Wallace 2012: 25).

Any defense of Gann's methods would probably follow two lines. First, in the 1890s few New World archaeologists practiced better techniques. Second, Gann's approach mirrored what other "archaeologists" were doing throughout the British Empire—collecting antiquities (and even whole buildings—e.g., the Parthenon Frieze) to bring back to England for museums and private collections. Thompson (1975: 742), an admiring friend and co-author (Gann and Thompson 1931), who worked with Gann for over a decade, offers another justification: "...if Gann had not opened those mounds, looters would have done so, or the mounds would have been bulldozed to supply road metal [material?] or to level land for plantations, fates which have befallen so many archaeological sites in Belize and elsewhere."

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<sup>285</sup> Hammond (1983: 20) notes Gann's "predilection for telling tall tales" in his popular books.

<sup>286</sup> Citations are to the originals in Wallace (2012). Houk (2015: 6) cites the same sources and quotes.

<sup>287</sup> Wallace (2012: 24) casts doubt on Gann's supposed use of dynamite.

Gann's greatest academic shortfall was probably one of timing: he was born too late. He was decidedly in a nineteenth-century mold—explorer, collector, and humanist. Regrettably, he and other British archaeologists, wedded to the imperial tradition of procuring antiquities from their colonies, considered artifact-collecting on an equal footing with knowledge-building. Had his entire career taken place in the nineteenth century, few today would question his stature as an influential Mayanist. But in the early twentieth century, formally trained archaeologists were beginning to implement stratigraphic excavations and detailed recording of structures and artifact provenience, most notably in the American Southwest and the Valley of Mexico. Gann failed to change with the times: he was and remained an antiquarian, highly regarded in Britain long after his death in 1938, his status bolstered by Thompson: "In a way [Gann's] interest epitomizes the Victorian or Edwardian collector attracted by intrinsic beauty and exquisite workmanship. It is not the approach of the present-day archaeologist, often more interested in finds that reconstruct economic history, but it would be a poorer world were there not room for both 'schools'" (Thompson 1975: 743).

If Gann's legacy in the field of Maya archaeology is limited, his value to students of the history of Maya archaeology is significant. Gann played a major role in his day, interacting with everybody who was anybody in early twentieth-century Maya studies, and was considered by those figures to be one of their own. His popular books, at least one of which can be said to be more reliable than previously thought, offer insight into 1920s archaeological activity in Central America, and are, like the Morley diaries, a first-hand source for the story of early Belize archaeology.

## Quintana Roo

Fortunately, Morley's entire Quintana Roo trip is covered by the diary that does exist, but the next part of his travels, which took him throughout the central Yucatan, to Campeche, and on to Palenque, are not. Most of his travels during this part of the trip were archaeological and included visiting numerous sites: Ichmul, Dzibanche, Mayapan, Chichen Itza, the Cave of Loltun, Kabah, Uxmal, and Palenque. Gann traveled with Morley as far as Uxmal before returning to Belize aboard the *Lilian Y*, the same vessel that had brought the explorers up the Quintana Roo coast in February. We are able to piece together some information about his itinerary after February 28 from Gann and his espionage reports. We present this as a brief epilogue (see Chapter 29).

Morley and Held spent most of the first two months of 1918 reconnoitering the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. They traveled by sailing vessel, the *Lilian Y*, from Corozal, British Honduras (Belize), north along the coast, then around the peninsula into the Gulf of Mexico, as far as Champoton, Campeche. Their travels in Quintana Roo are particularly interesting, as they were able to visit a few archaeological sites, and even discovered a new one.

The state of Quintana Roo—a "territory," not yet a state, in Morley's time—is one of three comprising the northern Yucatan Peninsula, the northern Maya lowlands, in southeastern Mexico. Quintana Roo occupies roughly the eastern third, Yucatan state the northern third, and Campeche state the western third. The peninsula as a whole is much larger, incorporating most

of Belize (south of Quintana Roo) and the Guatemalan Department of Petén, south of Campeche, which together constitute most of the southern Maya lowlands.

### Environment

Geologically, the peninsula is a marine carbonate shelf of Eocene through Miocene-Pliocene age. The visible land of this shelf, the Yucatan Platform, was formed by uplift of the ocean bed beginning millions of years ago. The northern part of the peninsula is generally a flat coastal plain, higher in Campeche (and rising to mountains farther south and west, as well as in southern Belize). Bedrock is mostly karstic limestone of varying composition, with some dolomite and bedded chert (silica), and evaporites (e.g., anhydrite) in the east (Quintana Roo). The term karst refers to a topography created by the erosion and dissolution of limestone, leaving abundant sinkholes (dolines or cenotes, after the Maya word *dz'onot*), caves, and underground streams. This karstic landscape and subsurface drainage explain why the northern peninsula has few surface rivers. Soils of the peninsula, derived from this limestone base, are shallow and generally of medium to low fertility.

Annual rainfall over the Yucatan Peninsula varies from around 3000 mm in the southeast (southern Belize, southeastern Guatemala) to 500 mm in the arid northwest (around Merida) (Sharer and Traxler 2006: Figure 1.6). Caribbean hurricanes (tropical cyclones) often sweep over the peninsula, bringing high winds, flooding, and destruction. In fact, in his journey up the Quintana Roo coast, Morley repeatedly commented on the damage left by a hurricane that had struck in 1916. That storm blasted the province with winds of 110 mph (175 km/h) before crossing the peninsula, turning into the Gulf of Mexico, and making landfall at Pensacola, Florida, on October 18.

Forest vegetation varies along the rainfall gradient, with high trees and luxuriant understory vegetation in the south, grading to scrubby, semi-xerophytic growth along the coasts and in the northwest. Most of the coastal region in southern Quintana Roo, including in adjacent Belize, was reserved into a state-protected area and manatee preserve in 1987. The *Biosfera Sian-Ka'an*, meaning “heaven-born,” is a World Heritage site centered on the Bahía de la Ascención (Ascension Bay; see Morley’s description, February 9). In the parched northwestern peninsula, the magnificent, soaring ceiba and mahogany trees of the wetter forests of central and southern Petén are stunted, almost pitiful. The fauna—terrestrial, aquatic, avian—of the northern Yucatan Peninsula does not differ greatly from that of the south, although the creatures are generally less abundant in the dry forest.

Quintana Roo in the east generally fits these characteristics, but its inland lies between the extremes of wet and dry. Only eleven percent of the state’s soils can be described as rich and well suited to farming.<sup>288</sup> Rainfall varies around 1000–2000 mm per year, with vegetation generally following the clinal pattern described above. The exception to this generalization is in the extreme northern area, the Yalahau region, an atypical freshwater wetland with thin but

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<sup>288</sup> A study of Quintana Roo soils (Fragoso-Servón et al. 2017: figure 4) identified only 11.4% as phaeozems: highly arable, humus-rich, and covered with forest. Another 15.5% were characterized as gleysols (water-saturated, and often lacking essential nutrients) and nearly half (48.5%) as leptosols: shallow, gravelly, and easily eroded.

fertile soils, where settlement flourished from the Preclassic through the Early Classic periods (Fedick and Mathews 2005; Fedick and Morrison 2004).

Given Morley's task of evaluating the suitability of the Mexican and Central American coasts to support German submarine bases, the coast of Quintana Roo is of interest. The northern Caribbean shoreline is generally steep with bluffs and only narrow, rocky beaches. A coral reef lies some distance offshore, posing a hazard for navigation in Morley's time as well as for ancient Maya seafarers. At the site of Tulum, "landing was always difficult. Boats had to negotiate a narrow opening in the reef, something that became impossible whenever there was a strong breeze. And even on calm days the surf pounded the rocky shore with incredible force" (Harris and Sadler 2003: 221). The only place that Morley deemed suitable for a German base was Ascencion Bay, wide and deep, lying about midway up the Quintana Roo shoreline, and now a popular fishing destination.

### **Archaeology**

In early colonial times, the northern Yucatan Peninsula continued to be divided by the multiple ethnopolitical provinces that were members of the Late Postclassic League of Mayapan. Three of these provinces were located in the eastern/coastal area of what is now Quintana Roo: from north to south, Ekab, Chable, and Uaymil, plus Cozumel Island.

The proliferation of Postclassic sites on the shoreline and islands is testimony to the new importance of maritime commerce around the peninsula. During the Classic period, trade routes between lowlands and highlands, and between northern and southern lowlands, passed primarily overland. Goods were carried by tumpline on the backs of traders and porters because the Maya lacked domesticated beasts of burden, although transport was aided in the south by its extensive river systems (e.g., the Usumacinta-Pasión). These overland routes were disrupted by Late Classic conflict among Maya polities in the south, and one of the consequences was an accelerating emphasis on coastal trade via huge, seagoing, dugout canoes. Beginning in the Terminal Classic period (~AD 830–1050), this trade was dominated by the Chontal Maya of Acalan (the Chontalpa): the Gulf coastal lowlands of Tabasco and the Laguna de Términos, in the southwestern peninsula (see Andrews 2020; Glover et al. 2011). These seafaring merchants, once dubbed Putun, were called the "Phoenicians of the New World" by Thompson, and their routes extended through the Gulf and Caribbean Sea from Mexico to northern Honduras. Postclassic archaeological sites along the Quintana Roo coast facilitated this maritime trade by serving as ports, storage and transshipment stations, and way-finding points or possibly lighthouses. Tulum on the coastal bluffs, for example, was visible to mariners from miles away.

The archaeological sites of Quintana Roo were long neglected, in part because of more than a century of unrest in the area (see Caste War, below), but today at least 400 Maya sites are known (Elizalde-Rodarte et al. 2016). Four sites, Xelha, Tancab, Tulum, and Muxil, lie closely spaced on the coast, southwest of Cozumel, in what was the southern part of the prehispanic Ekab province. Arthur Miller (1982: 2) describes this area as a "regional backwater for much of its history," but with the growth of maritime trade, the new settlements gained prominence, and shrines, such as the one to Ix Chel, made them pilgrimage destinations. These and other sites exhibit the characteristic "east coast" style of architecture, consisting of generally roughly



cut stone (as opposed to carefully dressed, squared, and fitted stone blocks of the Classic period), coated in thick plaster; walls flaring outward and upward; one or two upper moldings; round columns; tiered substructural platforms with vertical faces; and vaulted or flat-beamed ceilings and roofs. The sites around Tulum share an emphasis on mural painting and a proliferation of small structures (called shrines) scattered around them. Morley describes one of these, in the far south, that he visited on February 8.

### **Tulum**

Tulum is by far the best known of these eastern coastal sites. Sitting on the rocky headlands south of Cozumel Island, Tulum was probably established at the beginning of the Late Postclassic period, about AD 1200, and remained occupied for several decades after the arrival of the Spaniards in 1518 (Sharer and Traxler 2006: 608–611).

The Tulum ruins are enclosed by an impressive masonry wall with “watchtowers” (see Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 19). The site features a temple assemblage, a distinctive Late Postclassic architectural complex known throughout the lowlands, from Mayapan south to the central Petén lakes (Pugh 2003). Structure 16, known as the Temple of the Frescoes, features very late polychrome paintings in the widespread “international style” and stucco reliefs, including depictions of the common Postclassic descending figure or “diving god.” Tanchah lies just north of Tulum and has similar murals. Miller (1982: 2–3) identified themes of liminality in these artworks: a sense of being on the edge between land and sea, a transitional zone in terms of the sun’s cycle, emerging from the underworld/ocean every morning to shine over the earth.

The first modern-era visitors to Tulum were John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood in 1840. Their publication, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843) included a detailed description of the site as well as stunning drawings, and, from that point forward, Tulum attained a somewhat mythical status.<sup>289</sup> Stephens and Catherwood explored the site just a few years before the Caste War made the east coast of Yucatan too dangerous to explore.

Subsequent visitors were able to reconnoiter Tulum for only a few hours or days, if at all, before being unnerved by the hostile local Maya. The Field-Columbian Expedition of 1895, under the direction of William Holmes, was unable to land ashore, although he made drawings of the ruins from the vantage point of his yacht.<sup>290</sup> George Howe of the Peabody Museum spent two days at Tulum in 1911 before fleeing, but he did discover and make the first transcriptions of Stela 1. Raymond Merwin twice planned to visit the site in 1916 but was unable to make it (K. Merwin, personal communication, 2021). Morley and Jesse Nusbaum paid a five-hour visit to Tulum in 1913, but because their boat capsized when attempting to get to shore, most of the photographic equipment was ruined. The party quickly left the site, again because of fear of Maya hostility.

The first major study of Tulum came in 1916 when Morley, Arthur Carpenter, Thomas Gann, and Samuel Lothrop spent several days there, the report of which was published in the

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<sup>289</sup> Inspired by Stephen’s visit, Erastus Ellsworth wrote a classic romantic era poem, *Tuloom*, which, regularly recited by schoolchildren, became one of the most popular poems of the era.

<sup>290</sup> A summary of these early visits can be found in Rice and Ward 2021: 252–254.

*American Museum Journal*.<sup>291</sup> By the time of Morley's 1916 visit, the Caste War had diminished in intensity, allowing scholars to visit the Quintana Roo coast; his next stopover occurred in 1918 (Chapter 27). The most important early work at Tulum began in 1922, when the Carnegie Institution of Washington undertook a major expedition under Samuel Lothrop. Lothrop's findings, along with summaries of the preceding CIW expeditions to Tulum (1913, 1916, 1918) were published in his *Tulum: An Archaeological Study of the East Coast of Yucatan* (1924).

### **Other Sites**

Explorations by William T. Sanders (1960) and E. Wyllys Andrews IV along the coast in the 1950s established an influential ceramic sequence and data on subsistence patterns (Con Uribe 2005: 19, 21). It was only beginning in the 1970s, as the area opened up for tourism (construction of the "Riviera Maya") that thorough archeological investigations were successfully carried out (see Shaw and Mathews 2005). Research, especially by Mexican institutions, has revealed Maya occupation dating from the Middle Preclassic period through Spanish contact in the early sixteenth century. Besides Tulum, Postclassic settlements are found all along the northern coast, including Cancún and Cozumel Island (see Con Uribe 2005: figure 1.1, also figures 1.2 and 1.3).

Cozumel Island, about 48 km long (northeast–southwest) and 16 km wide, is located 19 km from the mainland. Multiple sites dot the shoreline and interior, including ports (e.g., San Miguel, the modern population center), shrines (including a famous shrine to the goddess Ix Chel)<sup>292</sup>, and its ancient Maya capital, San Gervasio (see Sharer and Traxler 2006: figure 10.6). With architecture featuring port and storage facilities, rather than civic-ceremonial temples and palaces, a "port of trade" model was tested at Cozumel (Sabloff and Rathje 1975; Freidel and Sabloff 1984). A port of trade is a specific kind of trading center, typically maritime, that is politically neutral (often physically separated from political territories), deals primarily in luxury goods, and its traders act as state agents. Although it was not clear from archaeological evidence that Cozumel fit this model, the island obviously played a major role in Postclassic Maya coastal commerce. Much of that commerce was in obsidian, chiefly from the Ixtepeque source in eastern Guatemala.

Xelha lies north of Tancah (itself north of Tulum), near where Francisco de Montejo landed in 1527 and claimed possession of the land (the peninsula) for Spain. One structure has 27 layers of mural painting on the wall (Miller 1982: figure 78).

Xcaret (Pole or Ppoole), north of Xelha, was the common point of departure from the mainland to Cozumel Island and its Ix Chel shrine. It was occupied continuously from the Late Preclassic period through colonial times. In the late book of "prophetic history" known as the Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Roys 1962), the powerful Itza Maya arrived in the lowlands at Xcaret/Polé, and took the women there to be their wives. The Itzas came to dominate the history of the entire Yucatan Peninsula, even throughout Petén, in the Postclassic period.

On the far north coast, settlement at the site of El Meco began in the Early Classic, and the

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<sup>291</sup> Reproduced in Rice and Ward (2021: 250–263).

<sup>292</sup> Ix Chel ("Lady Rainbow") was the Maya goddess of fertility and childbirth, but probably not the moon goddess (Miller and Taube 1993: 101). In elderly form, she was known as Chak Chel. For pilgrimage to Cozumel shrines, see Magli 2016.

site rose to prominence in the Postclassic period. Its principal temple, El Castillo, resembles that at Chichen Itza, with two serpent heads at its base in front. Its port may have been the point of departure for visitors to the shrines on Isla Mujeres. Before excavations in the 1970s, El Meco was visited in 1891 by Maler, and by Lothrop and Gann in 1918.

To the south, Muyil lies inland, about 15 miles (25 km) south of Tulum (Witschey 1988, 1993). Also called Chunyaxche, Muyil was first explored by J. Alden Mason and Herbert (Joe) Spinden in 1926 (Mason 1927). It is a large site, first settled in the Late Preclassic period, and its Classic civic-ceremonial architecture, which includes internal causeways, suggests relations with cities in Petén. One causeway leads to a port on a small freshwater lake. Like most sites along the Quintana Roo coast, Muyil experienced heavy Late Postclassic occupation.

Still farther south, on Ascencion Bay, Morley, Gann, and their party discovered a new site that they named Chac Mool, from the large, reclining, sculptured figure (*chacmool*) they found at the site (Chapter 26). The site is small, and appears to have been occupied only in the Postclassic period (Elizade-Rodarte et al. 2016). Other than a brief return by Gann in 1919, Chac Mool had few visitors for many years until in the 1940s, when the area was exploited in coconut cultivation (to produce oil). Recent decades have seen significant archaeological investigations, including excavations and consolidation (Shaw and Mathews 2005: 28).

### The Caste War and a Legacy of Violence

After the Spanish conquest of the Yucatan Peninsula in the mid-sixteenth century, the region became a backwater.<sup>293</sup> Lacking minerals and agricultural assets, Yucatan had little to offer aside from local Maya labor, and Spain's attention focused on other areas of its empire offering greater opportunities for exploitation and enrichment. What later came to be called Quintana Roo, on the distant east coast, was even more unappealing and saw little Spanish activity east and south of the new town of Valladolid throughout much of the colonial era.<sup>294</sup>

The Spaniards built new towns on old Maya cities—with their churches atop ancient temple mounds—in central Yucatan as elsewhere in Mesoamerica. From an economic standpoint, however, these peninsular settlements were little more than self-sufficient villages anchored by Catholic religious orders taxed with demands of tribute and forced labor drafts (Farris 1984: 39–49). Only in the northwestern third of the peninsula, a triangular area anchored by Merida, Valladolid, and Campeche, did the Spanish engage in significant economic activity: cattle ranching. Ranching success, however, paved the way for future troubles. Ever-expanding ranches required the expropriation of lands traditionally held by the indigenous Maya, which drove more and more of them eastward away from Spanish control. There, they effectively escaped an oppressive colonial system in favor of the safety of the near-impenetrable

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<sup>293</sup> Although part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, Yucatan, because of its remoteness, was the very definition of a peripheral province. In 1617, the region was named as a Spanish captaincy general, which gave more authority to local rule from the provincial capital at Merida.

<sup>294</sup> The name Quintana Roo did not exist until 1902, when the eastern part of Yucatan was separated to form a new Mexican territory (named after Andrés Quintana Roo, a Merida lawyer).

vegetation. As early as 1761, the Maya, under the leadership of Jacinto Canek, staged an armed uprising against Spanish rule, a revolt that was quickly suppressed (see Jones 1989; also Bricker 1981).

Although the Yucatan Peninsula, far from the central authority of Mexico City, was peripheral to the Mexican War of Independence, the revolutionary spirit was strong in both Campeche and Merida, and in 1821 Yucatan declared its independence from Spain. Decades of political chaos ensued: a brief connection with the new Mexican Empire; the establishment of an independent Republic of Yucatan; political fighting between Campeche and Merida that split the peninsula into two opposing camps by the 1850s; and rising tensions between the Maya and non-Maya populations.

The first decades after independence saw a major transformation of the local economy as henequen (*Agave fourcroydes*) plantations expanded in the north to exploit the native plant's fibers. These were used to make ropes for the sails of the growing number of ships freighting the expanding global economy (Reed 2001: 9). In addition, sugarcane was introduced and became a significant crop, especially in the ignored eastern parts of the peninsula, and rum production became a keystone of the region's economy.<sup>295</sup> The commonality between these two agricultural enterprises, however, was not just the expropriation of indigenous lands. Even more devastating was the vast labor these crops demanded. The Maya were now increasingly likely to be (indebted) laborers on large plantations or haciendas than independent farmers (Gust and Mathews 2020; Rugeley 1996).

This was the context for the explosion of one of the most violent episodes in the peninsula's post-conquest history. Conflict began in 1847 when, fearing a general insurrection, Yucatan's Governor Santiago Méndez moved against a gathering of Maya near Valladolid, captured and executed the leader of Chichimila, and carried out wholesale massacres (Reed 2001: 62–65). Cecilio Chi, the Maya leader of the destroyed town of Tepich (in what is now Quintana Roo), raised forces and ordered that all non-Maya be killed in revenge. Within a year, the entire peninsula, except for Campeche and Merida, was in Maya hands and nearly all of the non-Maya population outside those cities had been killed. The situation was so grave that Merida and Campeche set aside differences and agreed to rejoin Mexico. With renewed backing from federal forces, the Maya were pushed out of the central peninsula and driven east into today's Quintana Roo.

As the war entered a decades-long stalemate, the Maya effectively achieved a degree of independence. Several polities emerged, the most significant of which, in both political and religious terms, was the Chan Santa Cruz ("small holy cross") state in the area surrounding today's Felipe Carrillo Puerto.<sup>296</sup> It was here that the legendary Speaking Cross (also called the

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<sup>295</sup> Limited sugarcane cultivation existed in colonial times, but it was officially banned by the Crown in an attempt to both prevent the production of alcohol for native consumption and protect Spanish wine trade interests. After independence, the restrictions were eased (Reed 2001: 9–10).

<sup>296</sup> It is perhaps not coincidental that the newly independent areas of the eastern peninsula harkened back to ancient Maya political organization in that, rather than a single state covering larger territory, multiple independent regions emerged with localized political hegemony.

Talking Cross) provided a spiritual underpinning for the Maya resistance that merged Catholicism with traditional beliefs. The cross was said to speak the word of God; one of the first such revelations was an instruction to continue the war. The legacy of the Talking Cross still lingers today and plays an important role in local Catholicism. In 2002, the Mexican authorities recognized the Church of the Talking Cross as a legitimate religion.<sup>297</sup>

Wide-ranging skirmishes continued throughout the late nineteenth century, even spilling into adjacent British Honduras. By the turn of the century, Mexico was determined to reassert control over the region, and in 1901 undertook a major offensive under the leadership of General Ignacio Bravo. Chan Santa Cruz was captured and the followers of the Talking Cross (called Cruzob; *-ob* is the Maya plural) dispersed into the jungle. For the next decades, under the leadership of (General) Francisco May (Francisco Mai Pech), the last commander of Maya resistance forces, they occupied small villages and maintained a low level of on-again/off-again violence that occasionally erupted into open conflict. Morley was to meet Mai in 1918, as the latter was attempting to negotiate an end to the struggle, but Mai did not show up because of illness.

Quintana Roo remained a dangerous place for non-Maya travelers well into the twentieth century. The region was not fully pacified until 1933, when the Mexican army defeated the village of Dzula, the last holdout of the Cruzob (Reed 2001: 321). Once Mexican authority was finally established, the town of Santa Cruz was renamed Felipe Carrillo Puerto after the Yucatan governor who led the effort to peacefully resolve the lingering conflict. Towns in Michoacan and Oaxaca also bear his name. Today, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, QR, boasts a population of some 25,000 inhabitants, mostly of Maya descent.

Over nearly a century of violence, it is generally assumed that between 40,000 to 50,000 people were killed in the Caste War, most of them during its first years (Gabbert 2019).

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<sup>297</sup> The elders of the small town of Tixcacal Guardia (about 40 km north of Felipe Carrillo Puerto) today closely guard what they claim is the original Talking Cross, hidden from outsiders' view.

## CHAPTER 25

### BELIZE, CHETUMAL BAY, AND THE LAND OF THE SPEAKING CROSS

*Note that there is a gap in the diary from January 6 through February 2, a lacuna indicated by a black line. During this time Morley and Held travelled to Belize. The journal picks up in Belize City as preparations began for a trip north along the Quintana Roo coast that ended in Merida, Yucatan. Morley wrote an extensive report to the ONI dated February 1, 1918 (Harris and Sadler 2003: 158–160). Included in this report was a map drawn by Held (Figure 1.1), showing the locations and names of the sub-agents Morley had recruited into his spy network. Unlike his 1917 diary, Morley did not fill in an itinerary of his 1918 travels.*

#### **February 2nd, Saturday** **Belize City**

It seemed, in the early morning when we rose, that we could not possibly get off today. There were bills to pay, supplies to lay in, many last things to attend to, until I thought we could not finish. However, as the day wore on, thing after thing began to be finished. I paid Juan Carillo, the Belize Stores, Meyer, Morlan, Schmelzer's, the bank, etc., etc. Then there was the packing. John and I with common accord had been postponing this unpleasant task. There was so much of it to be done, and things to go in so many different receptacles. We did it somehow, though not all at one time; indeed John, who had many pressing social duties, didn't finish until just before we left.

About eleven, we went down to the courthouse to get our passports, and here a difficulty arose. Hubert, our new domestic, a Belize creole quite black of color, had no photograph [for a passport] save only a tiny little sliver off a postcard, part of a group of Belize volunteers. The colonial secretary, Mr. Kinstry, suggested that John draw his picture on the back. No sooner suggested than put over. John whipped out his pencil and in a few telling lines had Hubert's prognathous profile pat [Figure 25.1]. I heard Hubert afterward complaining that he did not like it, as it gave him too much lip, his one feature which could not be overdrawn.

And so the day wore on. We managed to squeeze in an hour at the club, where I had bills to pay. The annual meeting was in progress, and had reached the election of officers when we arrived. Everybody was refusing office, and it looked like the club would have no officers. I had great difficulty in getting away finally, with all the goodbyes I had to say. We walked back with Pérez Aura, who had a good deal to say about a delicate mission Estrada Cabrera wished him to undertake to Honduras to investigate the Cuyamel situation (see Chapter 21). Pérez Aura was

not keen for it at all, scenting an adobe wall and firing squad if he ventured into Honduras. His idea was to hire some intelligent colonial—if such exists, the which I doubt—pay him liberally to go over and do the sleuthing for him and if it is to be, to get shot. Pérez Aura is wily, willing to enjoy his sugar-shipping graft from Estrada Cabrera, but wants to take no excessive risks therefore.

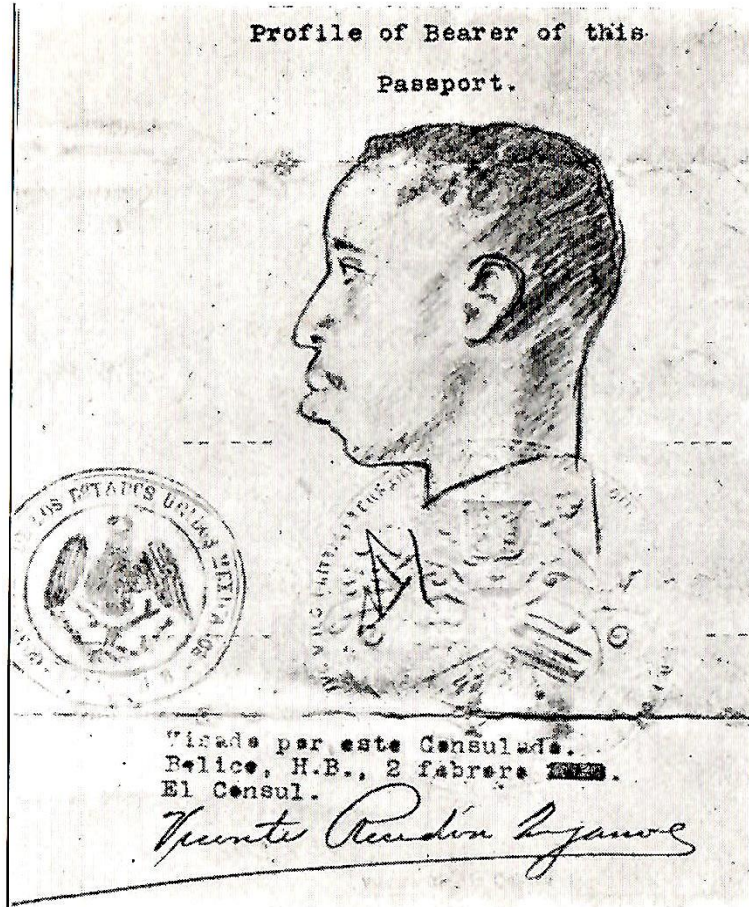


Figure 25.1. Held's drawing of Hubert for his passport.

The youth from whom I hired the bicycle earlier in the day showed up for his pay. This same bicycle had disappeared from the hospital earlier in the afternoon. I found out later the youth who rented it to me did not really own it, but had it on loan from another individual who came to the hospital and carried it off without letting anyone know anything about it.

On my way back to the hospital, I stopped at Eddie Johnson's, where I found John. Gladys had made a delicious cake and some fudge, and this we took with us. Schmelzer brought the last of the photographs while we were finishing supper. Afterward, we returned to the hospital and finished packing. Tipped old Morgan, who at the last minute did his best to make an error in the baggage. Ever since he brought back six bottles of claret for six copies of the *Clarion*, I have believed him capable of any sort of damn foolery.

Gann got word from Stann Creek that Saville was not aboard the mail [steamer], but mistrusting the accuracy of his information, he thought it best to go out and see himself. Saville

was not on board. but it was just as well that we went out, since Pollan had sent up an important letter for John.<sup>298</sup>

Dr. Cutting and his wife came up. The former enquired how his proposed remedy for the 7-year itch had worked out and I was only too thankful to report a complete cure. Col. Cran, Miss Lynch, Mr. Grand, and Fox Wilson had all come out to the steamer, and all except the last piled into the quarantine boat, and we came back to the *Patricia*. Adolfo Pérez, Schofield's Spanish son-in-law, was already aboard and, bidding goodbye to our friends on the quarantine boat, we clambered aboard and into our bunks at once. Gann slept on deck on his cot.

### February 3rd, Sunday

Unfortunately, we hung up several places, Bullhead for one, and instead of getting into Corozal at nine or ten, it was two when we finally drew alongside of the wharf. And hungry—all they could scare up on board the *Patricia* for breakfast was tea and ship's biscuit. Directly on landing, John and I went to the Hotel Central, a much-revamped affair from the old one I knew three years ago. In fact, it has just undergone renovation and is now much larger and more comfortable. We ordered dinner for three as soon as we got to the hotel, and presently Gann returned from Schofield's, whither he had gone directly on landing. Muddy<sup>299</sup> met us at the dock and reported everything OK on board the *Lilian Y. Carranza's* bosom companion, a Mr. Melgar, whom they had brought up, said he had been royally treated and would put in a good word for us with General Solís, the governor of Quintana Roo at Payo Obispo. When dinner was finally prepared, it was delicious. A good soup—a dish that is always well prepared in these countries—beef, chicken, rice, potatoes, beans, tortillas, tomato and onion salad, and *chayotes* [squash], the whole washed down with some St. Julien [Bordeaux].

Gann returned to the Schofields' after dinner and John and I went to the room to write letters. This will be our last opportunity for getting letters off, surely, and we had many to write. I wrote to True and mother and to Gladys Shehan describing the earthquake. I had written a long letter to Jennie coming up on the *Patricia*, and now wrote to Sam Guernsey<sup>300</sup> asking him to restore the bowl Popenoe had given me from the Alta Vera Paz region. Long before this letter writing was over, Gann came in with an invitation to tea from the Schofields and we went over at once [Figure 25.2]. I took the earthquake pictures, as I thought they might be interested.

They are an interesting family themselves, [Ernest] Schofield, a man of about 60, literally owns Corozal.<sup>301</sup> The site where the town grew up was his father's and he has never sold an inch. He owns all the improvements and lets places out on annual leases. He is in fact that *rara*

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<sup>298</sup> A. A. Pollan was one of Morley's ONI operatives who worked for the United Fruit Company in Puerto Barrios.

<sup>299</sup> Amado Esquivel, Gann's right-hand man. See Chapter 23, page 325, note 274.

<sup>300</sup> Guernsey was a curator of archaeology at the Peabody Museum.

<sup>301</sup> Corozal was originally known as the Goshen and Pembroke Hall Estates, a private venture that was sold to Thomas Schofield in the 1880s. The family continued to own much of what is today Corozal until 1956, when the estate was sold to the government of Belize. Today, the Schofield residence is a stop on the Corozal Historic Walk.



*avis* [rare bird], a benevolent despot. Mrs. Schofield is at least three-quarters Maya and one-quarter Spanish. Spanish and English are spoken interchangeably by everybody, though Mrs. Schofield rarely speaks the latter except to servants and dependents. She also speaks Maya fluently. Some are Protestant, some Catholic, and all are charming. There are six daughters and four sons: three married girls, one in England and two distinctly pretty ones at home. Of the boys, three are at the front—one in India, one in Mesopotamia, and one in Flanders. The oldest boy is at home.

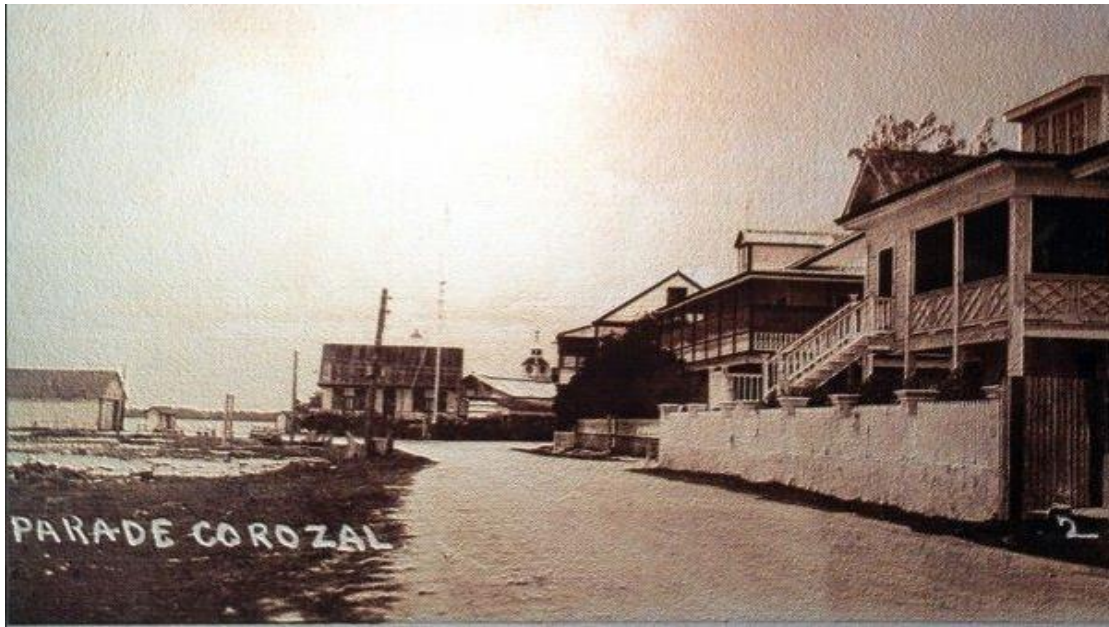


Figure 25.2. Main street in Corozal showing the Schofield house on the right, behind the whitewashed wall.

They enjoyed the earthquake pictures, and afterward we had tea. As Gann went with the prettiest girl on an auto ride after tea, John and I returned to the hotel to finish our correspondence. About seven, we had the third meal almost within as many hours, but we hardly could do justice to it. John and I spent the evening finishing our letters. Gann stopped over with the Schofields.

### February 4th, Monday

A long and festive day. I got up early, went through my photographs of the quake, and put some in each envelope. Hubert showed up for our things about seven-thirty and, after breakfast, John and I walked over to the Schofields' with our letters, which Nellie Schofield had promised yesterday to mail for us. Gann was out getting some Mexican silver, but turned up presently, and, bidding the Schofields goodbye, we went down to the wharf, alongside of which lay the *Lilian Y*. I discover now that old Juan Carillo spells his *Lilian* with but one "l."<sup>302</sup> Adolfo

<sup>302</sup> The *Lilian Y*, much larger than the *Lilly Elena* of the 1917 Mosquito Coast expedition, was a 22-ton sloop with a Wolverine 36-horsepower engine, 41-foot keel, 17-foot beam, 5-foot draft,

Pérez was going over with us to give us a proper introduction, and we got off shortly before nine.

I had the typewriter brought on deck and managed to write a four-page letter to Alice Jackson on the way over, as well as eat our first meal aboard the *Lilian Y*. She appears fearfully and wonderfully laden. Tanks of oil stuck around in every conceivable place, a crate of onions here, potatoes there, bags, deckchairs, blankets, ropes, the very obvious after-house, and the crew everywhere. I never saw such an ubiquitous crew [Figure 25.3] in my life before, all over the boat, and particularly aft where we have to live.



Figure 25.3. Held's sketch of the *Lilian Y*'s Belizean crew. Note the tiny sketch in the upper right corner—possibly a drawing of the *Lilian Y*.

The captain did not know the direct channel, but took us a long way about, and then when we reached the roadstead off Payo Obispo<sup>303</sup> we had to wait perhaps an hour for the doctor to come off. The government steamboats, the *Guatemoc* and *Coatzacoalcos*, lay at anchor in the offing, neither over 30 tons, and a number of motorboats. The doctor came aboard presently, a Mr. Heredia from Merida, the son-in-law of that Ferraez who sold Gann the fine stucco heads two years ago, and that same wretched Ferraez who had so annoyed Alice and me at Uxmal nine years ago this very month. With him came a fat, jolly little fellow, Enrique Barragán, the governor's secretary, whom we later learned was the real power behind the throne. The latter took us up to the general's [governor's] headquarters at once where we were introduced all around [Figure 25.4], and where I presented our Carnegie Institution credentials. Also broached

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and a full crew (Gann 1924: 19; Harris and Sadler 2003: 171).

<sup>303</sup> Capital of Quintana Roo, the name was changed to Chetumal (from Maya *chak-temal*) in 1936.

the subject of John's making a watercolor of General Solís<sup>304</sup>, much to the former's disgust.

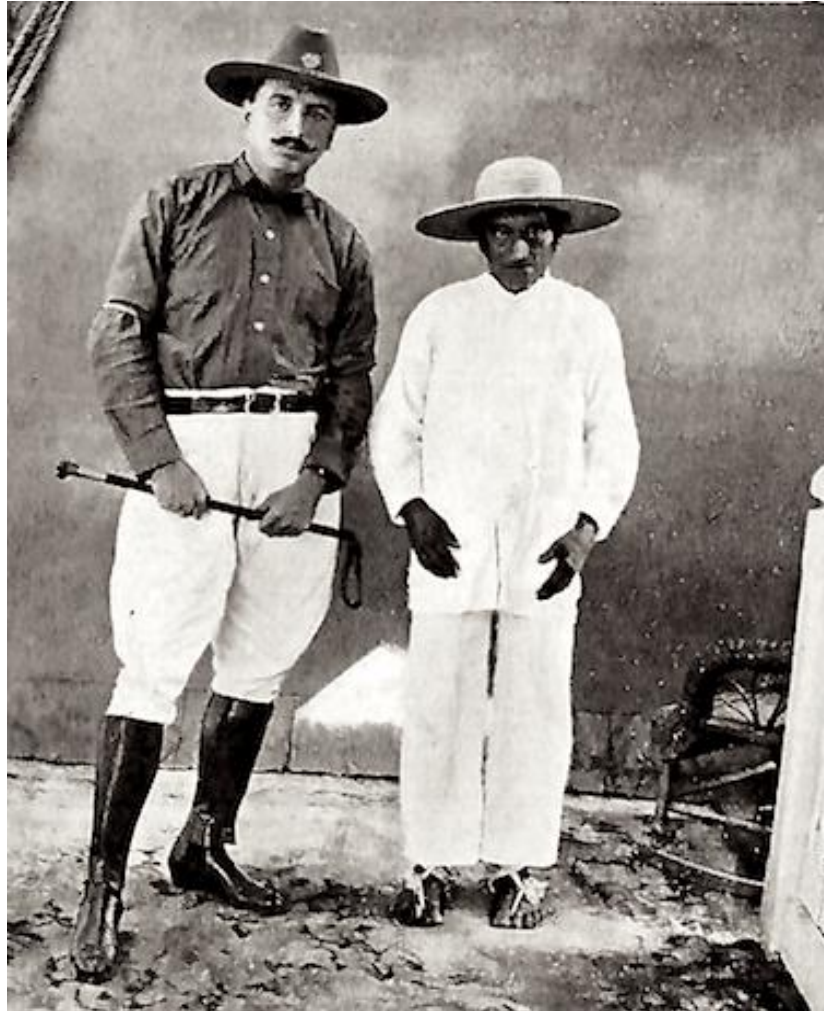


Figure 25.4. General Octavio Solís Aguirre, Governor of Quintana Roo, with an unnamed Maya.

Barragán asked me what I wanted of the governor in particular and I said a general letter of recommendation. He promised this for three-thirty, the hour set for the portrait painting, which was to be in full military regalia. It was then arranged that Gann should go around in the *Lilian Y* to Xcalak<sup>305</sup> and John and I go across direct tomorrow morning.

Gann left us presently to see Adolfo Pérez and John and I went to lunch with Barragán and Heredia, and, as we were eating, a chap called Armando Zapata-Vera came in.<sup>306</sup> He looked almost American, *muy rubio* [very light, blond] as they would call it down here. Indeed, I learned later his mother, though born in Mexico, was of Scotch parentage, MacDonald on both

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<sup>304</sup> General Octavio Solís Aguirre, governor of Quintana Roo from 1917 to 1921.

<sup>305</sup> Xcalak is a coastal town in southern Quintana Roo, Mexico, north of Belize.

<sup>306</sup> Zapata-Vera was the assistant secretary to Governor Solís, working directly under Barragán.

sides. He had just come in from Xcalak that moment, and from there had come from Puerto Barrios with 500 sacks of sugar, a not inconsiderable achievement in view of the circumstances. He sat down to dinner with us. By the time we had risen from this *banquet con vino*, it was time to hurry out to the *Lilian Y* and get the painting materials. Gann was very disgusted that the papers had not yet come aboard and had sad visions of a night at Payo Obispo.

The portrait of the general was a great success. John got him to the T with his fierce mustachios, beetling eyebrows, piercing eyes, and eagle nose.

At the same time, they gave us two letters—the strongest I have ever had in these countries, one an official one and the other an unofficial one. Both were very strong and left no doubt in the reader’s mind, whether he be a military or civil official, that he was to aid us in every way within his power. After the portrait, we walked around town and then went to Adolfo Pérez’s house to rest a bit before dinner. Adolfo himself had returned to Corozal earlier in the afternoon but had very kindly put his house at our disposal. We asked the governor, Zapata-Vera, Barragán, and Heredia to have dinner with us at 7:30, and all had accepted. Lunch had been very convivial and I felt none too comfortable for a heavy diner *con más vino*, but such was to be.

After a preliminary round of cognac at a cantina, we adjourned to the restaurant where we ate and drank for two hours. Then the governor asked us over to his house, where some champagne was opened. It was a full day in more ways than one, but all for a good cause. I knew, however, that I would be thoroughly upset on the morrow. We retired about eleven, well done up with the strain of being *simpático*.

## February 5th, Tuesday

A longer and more festive day. I rose feeling every bit as *triste* as I had anticipated. We dragged ourselves over to breakfast about 8:30, but met none of last night’s crowd. Barragán told me yesterday that today was the 51st anniversary of the publication of the Reforma Laws by Benito Juárez (February 5, 1857)<sup>307</sup> and the first since the publication of the reforms of Carranza. There was to be a fiesta, exercises in the school, and a *baile* at night. Zapata-Vera came up after breakfast and asked us if we were willing to stay over. I wasn’t keen, but it seemed as though we would appear ungracious if we refused, so I consented to stay.

After breakfast, I got the Kodak and walked up to the governor’s house [Figure 25.5]. About 60 soldiers were drawn up in double rank in front, and all the *jefes* of the different departments were inside. We went in and were presented to all those whom we missed yesterday, a *Teniente Mayor de la Flotilla del Sur* was particularly *simpático*, a don Edmundo Elizondo. But now it was time for the procession to start. I photographed the governor and his staff in front of the gubernatorial mansion and then, with the band leading off, the Governor

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<sup>307</sup> On this date the Mexican congress adopted a liberal federal constitution that limited the power of the church, abolished hereditary titles, placed the army under civilian rule, and granted citizens the first bill of rights, among other things. Juárez’s liberal regime was interrupted by a conservative backlash under foreign-backed Emperor Maximilian. Juárez returned to power in 1867 and ruled until he died in 1872. The conservatives ended the liberal regime with a military coup that established the decades-long regime of Porfirio Díaz in 1876, a dictatorship that lasted off and on until 1911 (a “golden age” known as the Porfiriato).

and staff next, and last the detachment of 60-odd soldiers in charge of Lieutenant Colonel de la Rosa, the procession started for the schoolhouse, whither we followed with Zapata-Vera, who had evidently been detailed to look after us especially.



Figure 25.5. The governor's mansion in Payo Obispo in 1918.

The schoolhouse was full when we got there, but chairs were found for us near the governor. I found myself between two naval officers. The exercises were on the point of beginning, the territorial band was playing, and the children being marshaled into their seats. The program consisted of patriotic discourses appropriate to the occasion by adults, and eulogistic poems to national heroes—Juárez, Carranza, Hidalgo, etc.—by the school children, these speaking numbers being interspersed with music. Two small Turkish children impressed me particularly because of their tremendous voices—a fierce bellow of sound issuing from such tiny orifices. The exercises closed with the national anthem sung standing, and a rousing “*Viva Mexico.*”

Afterward, on invitation of the governor, his staff and ourselves adjourned to the *Flotilla del Sur* [offices] for cocktails. They have a neat and commodious place and *Teniente-Mayor* Elizondo proved to be a royal host. About fifteen of us were crowded into his *sala* on the second floor and for four hours partook of naval cocktails and listened to his gramophone. These naval cocktails came on with great frequency and were of effective potency. We had a good many of them and John registered a tremendous hit with his caricatures. Even General Solís finally wanted to be done, and what with the navy cocktails, the caricatures, the music, and the general *simpaticismo*, time passed swiftly.

About two, we adjourned to a restaurant where we had another big feed and more wine. At the close of this banquet, we were all quite mellow and occasion was taken—I believe possibly made by order—to impress upon us, in a formal oration by Dr. Heredia, the friendship of Mexico for the U.S., for Wilson, and for us. “That if we invaded them they would rise as one

man against us; but as their friend, they were ours to the death, etc., etc., etc." I replied that the greater part of my countrymen felt kindly toward Mexico and held no thoughts of or desires for intervention, but that there was a powerful moneyed party in the U.S. which wished to force intervention to seize the oil fields. But that Wilson understood the machinations of this *partida* clearly and was not to be humbugged thereby. And finally, with the help of God, we would continue to be Mexico's friend for many centuries.

With many *vivas* for everything and everybody, we adjourned *sine die* for a visit to the wireless plant. The single tower we found to be slightly leaning as a result of the great cyclone of October 15, 1916, which all but destroyed this whole district. The equipment is wholly German. The station communicates regularly with Merida, Campeche, and the nearby Xcalak, and even Acapulco on the west coast of Mexico. They hear all the Fruit Co. stations in Honduras, Swan Islands, and even Mexico City. After the inspection of the plant, we returned to the village, where a game of baseball was organized. John and the governor played on the same side.

The commander of the Southern Flotilla and his chief engineer wished me to see a speed boat which they had built, which they said would go fifteen miles an hour. While this was being got ready, we inspected all the marine equipment: their hospital, their new quarters, their machine shop. The chief engineer is also in charge of the local electric light and ice plants. Their machine shop in particular excited my admiration. It is fully equipped and capable of making fairly elaborate parts. By the time this tour was over, the launch was ready, and we went aboard. As is the case with all gas engines, this seized this show occasion of acting cranky. It refused to go, coughed and balked, and was generally discouraging. We finally got it started and started for the mouth of the Hondo River. When the thing went, we fairly sped over the water. We finally reached the mouth, many another boat coming down, and came back to the town without further mishap.

The baseball game was over, John's side having won with a tremendous score. John did not cover himself with much glory. In the box, he was removed for wildness, letting 4 runs in, and at the bat struck out twice. They wanted to show us more "kindnesses," but it was now 5:30 and we wanted an hour's rest before the dinner at the governor's and the dance to follow.

At 7:30, we were at the governor's house and presently the other guests came in, the chief officers of the army, navy, and administration of the territory. The meal itself was delicious: oyster soup, chicken in saffron, rice, frijoles, tortillas, beef, salad, and wine and beer. Barragán and Zapata-Vera, the two dark horses, arrived late.

The governor's wife and an elderly doyen-type of *señora* were the only ladies present. We sat at the table until 9:30 and then adjourned to the ballroom. The fiesta was in progress with a band at one end of the schoolhouse and *señoritas* ranged along the sides. The *caballería* stood at the ends, or near the bar in an adjoining room. From time to time, trays of beer were served to the ladies. The governor's lady did not come over with us, but burst upon the scene in a magnificent silk toilet some half hour after we got there. After the custom of the country, she danced with no one but her husband. They did several complicated numbers which required much hopping about, but were not ungracefully executed.

I danced with several ladies. Zapata-Vera was a sort of master of ceremonies. He would swoop down on any lady and regardless of her previous engagements reserve the next number

for his gringo friend, a sort of modified *jus premae noctis*,<sup>308</sup> as it were. And this extreme cordiality marked all of our relations with the officials at Payo Obispo. It seemed as though they went out of their way to treat us nicely. Everything was at our disposal throughout our visit, every courtesy, every attention was shown us, and far from experiencing any anti-American spirit, they were on the contrary, very pro gringo. It was, in short, one of the friendliest and most enjoyable receptions in the ten years I have been coming to Latin America, and left a very pleasant memory behind it.

At Zapata-Vera's earnest solicitation, we stayed until it was over, close on to three o'clock. He was much interested in a *señorita* and naturally wanted to see it out, so we stayed on. At three, however, the general and his lady withdrew which was the signal for breaking up the party. Zapata-Vera went to his room to pack a bag and we returned to Adolfo Pérez's house to arouse Hubert, who had stayed with us. On the way thither, a sentry stopped us, but on my replying that we were engaged on the business of the *Estado Mayor* he let us pass. Zapata-Vera came forth in about half an hour and we walked down to the wharf. There were seven of us going over to Xcalak in a little motorboat called the *Amaya*: John, myself, Hubert, Zapata-Vera, Vidal (the inspector of lighthouses for the territory, and a brother of the preceding governor), and two Utila boys from the schooner Zapata-Vera had brought his sugar on from Puerto Barrios.

When we got down to the wharf, the engineer of the boat could not be found and we had to wait for nearly an hour until someone could go to the marine barracks—it was a government yacht we were going over on—and arouse him. Lieutenant-Colonel de la Rosa and a drunken chap by the name of Zaldiver came down to see us off. Zaldiver was at the friendly stage and did not want us to go, but presently the missing engineer turned up and we went out to the boat. A woman with many bundles was already on board. She moved herself forward and John settled himself on the only mattress. Vidal, Zapata-Vera, and I arranged ourselves around the rest of the space aft, and I fell asleep at 4:30 after a long, hard, and festive day.

### February 6th, Wednesday

I woke about eight in Chetumal Bay. The water was very low on account of the norther outside, and instead of landing from the *Amaya* we had to go in by dory for the last two and a half miles, a long and slow pull. Indeed, for the last half mile it began to look as though we would have to wade ashore. The water became very shallow and the boys ceased rowing and poled in. Finally, after much shouting and going ashore, we were at last pushed into an old barge that was moored alongside a stone jetty or wharf, and clambered ashore. What a desolate scene. A gray lowering sky, a flat swampy foreground with unhealthy reed grass growing rankly everywhere, and in the distance the wreckage of a house, water tanks, machinery, etc., which the cyclone of two years ago tossed about like so many toys. It came on to rain at this juncture and we all took shelter under loose sheets of corrugated iron roofing, which were laying about like dead leaves. There was a telephone box attached to a pole, and Zapata-Vera called up Xcalak to send over a mule train for us.

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<sup>308</sup> A supposed legal right, probably urban-mythical, of medieval lords to have sexual relations with subordinate women on their wedding night.

This desolate place where we had landed was called La Aguada and is connected with Xcalak by a Decauville tram 7 kilometers long.<sup>309</sup> The man in charge at Xcalak telephoned back that the tram would be over in half an hour. While we were waiting, it again came on to rain, and we had to dodge under our *lámina*.

Presently the car came in, drawn by one lanky mule, and we all piled aboard. The country between is flat, desolate, and occasionally marshy. The bush is low and sparse. On the way over, John and I pictured Gann as in a terrible temper over the delay of a day we had caused him. It was with no little satisfaction, therefore, that just as we rounded the lagoon before turning south to Xcalak, John espied the *Lilian Y* coming through the reef, twenty-four hours late herself. And so, we were well met all around, and I was trebly glad we had stayed to the *Cinco de Febrero* fiesta.

Xcalak was practically wiped out by the cyclone two years ago. The wireless tower was overthrown, practically all the houses were blown over, and a channel opened up from the sea to the lagoon behind the town. Five vessels were blown ashore and many people were drowned, including my old friend Pete Vásquez, known locally hereabouts as Mr. Peter. By the time I had taken several pictures and gotten down to the wharf, Gann came ashore in the jolly boat.<sup>310</sup> He had a long tale of woe, beginning with going aground the night before last off Blackador's Key, to hanging up at San Pedro.<sup>311</sup>

Alamilla<sup>312</sup> was also in, and wanted us to tow him through the reef. The government tug was broken down and he has no engine in his boat, the *Ambergris*. We had eaten nothing since last night at eight o'clock—it was now two in the afternoon—and sent Hubert out to the boat ahead to get dinner ready at once.<sup>313</sup> We asked Zapata-Vera and Vidal to lunch with us, which they were glad enough to do, as Zapata-Vera said the food at Xcalak was terrible. We went aboard about three but lunch was not yet ready. After a half hour's wait and much profanity, Hubert began to serve things and after that the courses dribbled in piece-meal.

A heavy sea was running outside and crashing over the reef with a great booming. Zapata-Vera said it would be impossible for us to get out that day, but we thought differently. When we put them off, we sent word ashore that we were ready to tow Alamilla out and that if he wanted to be towed, he would have to come at once. He sent back word that it was too rough outside and he would not risk it.

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<sup>309</sup> Decauville was a French rail manufacturer that built easy-to-install, narrow-gauge track lines for cars pulled by mules. They were extensively used on henequen haciendas throughout Yucatan, so much so that as many as 4,500 kilometers of track were in use in the early twentieth century, creating a de facto mass transit system (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decauville>).

<sup>310</sup> A jolly boat is slightly larger than a dinghy and is used to travel to shore from a larger vessel.

<sup>311</sup> Gann (1924: 20–21) elaborates Morley's mention of the *Lilian Y* running aground: at three in the morning, he was awakened by a shudder as the vessel scraped across a jagged coral reef, and then another and another. Gann feared that the bottom of the hull would be ripped open, ending the expedition before it had barely started.

<sup>312</sup> Eusebio Alamilla, a British Honduras chicle contractor.

<sup>313</sup> Gann (1924: 19) noted that Hubert was a horrible cook, his hiring being something "we never ceased to regret during the whole trip."



The captain weighed anchor and we steamed out through the reef. The sea was running very high, and all but pounded us back through the opening. We saw then that even with our 36 h.p. Wolverine, we could never have negotiated the transit of the reef towing the *Ambergris*. We finally won through about 5:30, and turned northward. John turned in at once and I shortly afterward. We were much wearied with the fiesta of last night, and it was so rough I took no pleasure in the thought of food, so our bunks below seemed the best place for both of us. And here we slept more or less fitfully until morning. We reached Punta Herrera about three, and had to lay off until daylight as the captain was afraid to run inside the reef in the dark.

### February 7th, Thursday

I thought with our detailed chart of Espiritu Santo Bay that we might navigate therein, so we did not put ashore at the lighthouse on Herrera Point, but continued along the shore of Owen's Island, feeling for the channel as we went. Suddenly the water shallowed down to 6 feet and only by veering seaward were we able to avoid going aground. The captain did not know the channels inside the reef, he said, and so it seemed best to put back to the lighthouse at the point and get a pilot. We anchored off the point and Gann and Muddy went ashore. Presently we could see them returning with someone on board. This proved to be a Mexican, the assistant lighthouse keeper, who knew the bay and could be with us for the day. We weighed anchor without further loss of time and proceeded along Owen's Island again, but this time standing farther out. Gann reported that while ashore and taking his constitutional, a mongrel cur seized the occasion to creep up on him from behind and bite him. Happily, his khaki trousers or hide, *quien sabe* which, withstood this assault and his person suffered no injury in consequence.

Espiritu Santo Bay is a desolate looking place, in all conscience. We penetrated this great shallow estuary for several miles until we were in danger of going aground, and then we took to the jolly boat. This we had equipped with an Evinrude [motor], and with Muddy acting as wet-nurse, we set off. The jolly boat also has an awning, and in the shade of this we were fairly comfortable. The Evinrude behaved beautifully and we made good time. Five of us went ashore in her: Gann, John, myself, Muddy, and the pilot. The water finally got so shallow before we reached the shore that even our jolly boat, drawing not more than 2½ feet with the Evinrude, went aground and we had to take off our trousers and wade ashore.

I was in the lead, and as there were many sharp stones on the bottom, I made haste to reach terra firma. I plunged, therefore, straight into a strip of soft oozy evil-smelling mud, which had every appearance of being as solid as any shore should be. Into this I sank knee deep, and as I ploughed in deeper to escape I splattered mud all over, particularly on the tails of my shirt. And what an evil stench. There seemed to me to be H<sub>2</sub>S [hydrogen sulfide] in it, for the malodor of the filthy black ooze filled the air. The others had stopped, seeing my predicament, but as this stretch of about 30 feet extended all along the true shore they must needs follow in my footsteps, and so struggling through this mud we finally reached the shore.<sup>314</sup> The shore was

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<sup>314</sup> Gann (1924: 23) recounts the mud adventure in more vivid detail: "Morley—always to the fore in adventures, great and small, [followed Muddy into the ooze] ... and on planting his own tender sole full on a sharp point of rock, with which the bottom of the mud was liberally supplied, he endeavored to shift the weight to the other foot, which, however, encountered an

even more desolate than it had appeared from the deck of the *Lilian Y*. The predominating flora were the salt water palmetto,<sup>315</sup> purple convolvulus, a small variety of cactus, sour grass, and, on the keys, mangroves.

The shore on which we had landed was a low island, scarcely more than a strip of mud and sand with its low bush, and separated from the mainland by a very shallow lagoon having scarcely a foot of water. The pilot said practically all the shores of the bay were like this, muddy just offshore, and low, poor ground. There are absolutely no settlements on the entire periphery of the bay, which is something over a hundred miles, except the lighthouse maintained by the Mexican government at Herrera Point.

I made my way through the brush along the shore of the island for a little way and on the *playa* came across two rusty iron bands with heavy hand-wrought spikes in them, half buried in the sand: the flotsam and jetsam of some tragedy of the sea. But what? From what boat had they come? How long had they lain a-rusting on this desolate shore? These were questions we could not answer, though they provoked a host of interesting speculations. By the looks of the nails, they were of fairly old make. Perhaps they served to hold together the massive timbers of some long-forgotten Spanish galleon or treasure-ship, possibly the boat of which they were a part flew the Jolly Roger and plied the Spanish Main, or again they may have been from some humble fishing craft lost along this dangerous coast for these many years. There was nothing to tell their origin about them, and we left them rusting away in the sand and salt water.

John made a watercolor and Gann and I took several photographs and then we waded back out to the jolly boat. When we had pushed the latter out into waist deep water, we went in and had a bath. We got back to the *Lilian Y* at two o'clock and *mirabile dictu*, Hubert had dinner ready. We returned to the lighthouse, where Gann and I went ashore to sleep. It was dark by this time and a fairly high sea was sloshing around. We came alongside the stone wharf and landed. Mindful of Gann's experience of the morning with the hungry canine, I picked up a club as soon as I stepped ashore and when the creature appeared, let fly at him. I probably missed him in the dark, but he went off yelping. The lighthouse keeper met us at the shore and took us into his dwelling house, a long building with the lighthouse tower at one end. Muddy came ashore and put up our cots, and as I was pretty well tired out, I went to bed at once. Gann slept on the veranda overlooking the sea, and I in a room opening on to it.

## February 8, Friday

We got up greatly refreshed by the night's rest and the cool, delightful, sea breeze, which blew all night. A table was brought in and together with the light keeper and his two assistants, we had tea and *pan dulce*. After breakfast, I waved a towel frantically to signal the *Lilian Y*, but no one paid any attention. The lighthouse keeper showed us the plumes of some *aigrettes* (osprey) he had killed. They were beautiful and his prices were very reasonable, \$15.00 the ounce, but I

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even sharper tooth. It is not an easy matter to change one's footing rapidly when sunk in two feet of mud, and the performance ended in a series of spasmodic jerks, a shower of mud, collapse, and a shirt much in need of washing. Held and I from front seats in the pram enjoyed the show immensely."

<sup>315</sup> Morley calls this "salt water pimento." We have corrected it to palmetto in each instance.

had no use for them and Gann wanted the tail feathers, so we came to no deal.

Before going out to the *Lilian Y*, we climbed the tower, which is 72 feet high and has a flashing white light.<sup>316</sup> It burns 2½ gallons of kerosene a night and is visible for 14 miles. The equipment—tower, light, lenses, revolving mechanism, even the tiles on the house—is all French, which was a real relief from the ubiquitous “Made in Germany,” and gave us a distinctly friendly feel for the place.

Muddy was ashore by this time, and had our cots aboard the jolly boat. The light keeper knew of a ruin some two miles around the point on the inside of the bay and consented to guide us thither. We put out in the *Lilian Y* and then dropped down off Owen’s Island, between which and a key, one entered for the ruin. Muddy had fitted the Evinrude on the jolly boat again and two sailors went ashore to cut wood. As the Evinrude did not work at once, I told the sailors to start rowing, and in the end it turned out they had to row the whole way, a distance of nearly three miles. Muddy cranked the wretched Evinrude until he was lame, but all he could get out of it was one or two dispirited coughs, no connected business-like action. Once, it exploded as much as five or six times consecutively, but petered out in the end as before.

It must have been about ten before we finally reached the shore where the ruin was said to be. We tried to follow the lighthouse keeper through the thick bush, but it was so thorny and so all but impenetrable that we soon gave it up, and waited for our guide to find the ruins first, before ploughing through this unfriendly bush. He presently returned and said he had found the ruins and that it was nearby.

We set off through the thicket and in a hundred yards came to a little platform in the bush and on its summit was a very small temple of the Tulum type of very crude masonry and with its roof fallen in.<sup>317</sup> It was about 8 feet square outside and had a single very low room inside, 4 feet 9 inches long by 3 feet wide. The doorway was only 2½ feet high and 1½ feet wide. The outside walls showed no less than nine coats of painted plaster, where the surface finish had been renewed from time to time, and on the outer coat I made out no less than five of the familiar “red hands,” the prints of which so plentifully decorate the walls of these late Maya ruins (see Rice and Ward 2021: 259). We measured and photographed this little shrine and then returned to the shore, where Muddy was still wrestling with the Evinrude, which continued balky and for the most part silent.

The sailors had by this time gathered quite a respectable pile of wood, and lading this aboard the jolly boat we set off for the *Lilian Y*. When we passed through the bogues, we landed on the southern side of the channel and saw the well and a few fishermen’s huts. It looked like a very attractive place to spend the night and there was a lovely bathing beach; but I felt we must reach Ascencion Bay<sup>318</sup> tonight, so we did not tarry here. After gathering a few coconuts, we

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<sup>316</sup> The original lighthouse, painted white, was constructed in 1901 and stood 15 meters high. Morley saw a second, taller structure. Today, a modern lighthouse exists at this same location.

<sup>317</sup> Gann (1924: 24) notes that this ruin was known to locals as Canche Balaam, not to be confused with the modern small settlement near Tulum.

<sup>318</sup> Ascencion Bay (Bahía de la Ascención), an inlet on the Quintana Roo coast, is known today for fishing. It is the only place Morley considered as a possible site for a German submarine base.

returned to the ship. It was now getting on toward two o'clock and it seemed doubtful whether we could make Ascencion Bay and get through the reef there before nightfall, but we decided to make a try for it.

We dropped the pilot at Punta Herrera and put out through the reef. The sea—so far as I was concerned—was raising the devil outside. The sunlight on the blue waters of the Gulf Stream was lovely, but great high rollers kept coming in, and my stomach was presently quite upset; and so it continued for close on to five hours until we got down inside the reef at Ascencion Bay. I lay on the bunk below and read one of Daddy Wolfsohn's novels, *Gilded London*, and only with the greatest difficulty kept my lunch down. When we finally got inside the reef at Ascencion Bay, it was after sunset, and we saw that it would be impossible to make Ascencion or Allen Point before nightfall, so we anchored off Culebra Keys in the mouth of the bay.

The Mexican government formerly had a settlement of convicts on the largest of these keys, but these fellows built a raft in 1911 and escaped to the mainland, and it has been unoccupied ever since. The southernmost, off which we now found ourselves, had a few fishermen huts, and after getting our cots and bedding together into the jolly boat, we put off for the shore. We saw a light in one [hut], and after going aground once or twice, finally landed. The fishermen were natives of the colony [Belize] from San Pedro on Ambergris Key, five old men, every one over 55. They made us welcome in their simple fashion and offered us the use of their house, but we preferred to sleep outside. Muddy put the cots up behind their house and then returned to the *Lilian Y*. John never sleeps ashore as he has become quite accustomed to the (to me) intolerable motion of the sea.

We talked to the five old men, fishers and turtlers, for nearly an hour before turning in, and then bidding them goodnight we betook ourselves to our cots, dodged in under our mosquito nettings, and went to bed. Sometime during the night, Gann, annoyed by the snoring of the San Pedranos within the hut, moved his cot to a more silent locality, but the noise did not break my rest.

### **February 9th, Saturday**

Muddy came ashore for us early and, taking leave of these five pleasant old men, who really appeared to be enjoying themselves on this lonesome though delightful little key, we returned to the *Lilian Y*. The captain got the boat under way and while we were crossing the six miles from this key to Ascencion, we had breakfast. As we were approaching this point, a small sailing vessel flying the Mexican flag sailed across our bows and told us to halt. She had the Custom House official on her, and he came aboard. When he saw General Solis' letters he put himself at our disposition and we towed him into his port.

Ascencion was, "*en su gentilidad*," a place of some 2,500 souls, founded by General de la Vega in 1902 as a military camp from which the "pacification" of Quintana Roo was attempted.<sup>319</sup> After Santa Cruz de Brava was established, the town lost its importance and fell into decay, and the cyclone of two years ago felled most of the houses and just about wiped it off the map. It has now dwindled from 2,500 to 8 people, the lighthouse keeper, his family, and

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<sup>319</sup> See discussion of the Caste War in Chapter 24.

two minor Customs officials. There is even no *comandante*, and heaven knows, the town in these countries which cannot boast a *comandante* is indeed in a bad way. There was little to see ashore: the lighthouse (which is no tower, only a steel frame, up and down which slides the light), the *aduana*, and a dilapidated Cinco de Mayo iron arch. I took a few photographs and then we returned to the wharf and put out. On the beach I noticed many of those beautiful Portuguese Men-of-War.<sup>320</sup> They were an exquisite amethystine color, lovely iridescent balloons. A local pastime appeared to be stepping on them to hear them burst.

There was a Belize creole here by the name of Peter Moguel, who had lived in the vicinity for some fifteen years and was of more than average intelligence. He knew the bay and its channels, as well as the road to Santa Cruz de Bravo, so I engaged him by the day until we should leave hereabouts.

We set off across the bay for Vigía Chica (“little look-out”), the tidewater terminus of the railroad to Santa Cruz de Bravo. Just before reaching the wharf we saw an abandoned Mexican gunboat, the *Intendencia*. It was beached in some 6 feet of water and looked to be on the verge of disintegration. I photographed it twice in passing. Vigía Chica, next to Xcalak, seems to have suffered most heavily from the cyclone of 1916. Freight cars were tipped off the wharf into the shallow water of the bay; a barge driven a quarter of a mile inshore; and houses galore blown completely over or caved in. It presented a scene of great desolation.<sup>321</sup>

Muddy rigged up the Evinrude in the jolly-boat—I should note that yesterday’s trouble was due to a broken sparkplug, which was discovered after we returned to the boat—and we went ashore. All the male population, some 50-odd men, were waiting on the wharf—Peter told me that we were suspected of being Germans—to meet us. Peter proved very useful here introducing us to the *teniente*, a Cristóbal Valdéz, and the principal chicle contractor of the region, don Julio Martín, a Cuban. Walking ahead with these *gente principales* we moved along the wharf, a lengthy procession. We wanted to visit Santa Cruz de Bravo and to do so it was necessary to arrange the matter with don Julio, who was the only one having mules. He had good news for us indeed: General Francisco Mai,<sup>322</sup> head chief of all the east coast Maya, is due tomorrow at Central, a station up the line, to arrange about milpa lands for the coming season with don Julio’s assistant there. On hearing this, we decided to leave at once for Central, where the meeting was to take place, 34 kilometers up the line. And while don Julio was arranging for mules, etc., Gann and I returned to the ship where John had remained, and followed an orgy of packing. Everybody wanted to be in the hold at the same time, a physical impossibility—Muddy, Hubert, et al. were always underfoot and the confusion was indescribable. After two hours hard work we emerged from the boat with a great mass of impedimenta, with probably everything forgotten that we will really need. We had tea and crackers before leaving and then returned via the jolly boat to the land.

The small trucks were ready, a mule for each, and the baggage was quickly loaded on them

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<sup>320</sup> *Physalia physalis*: a floating siphonophore rather than a true jellyfish, with very long, venomous, tentacles.

<sup>321</sup> Vigía Chica was again destroyed in October, 1955 by Hurricane Hilda.

<sup>322</sup> Mai (May), the last commander of Maya military forces during the Caste War, was negotiating with the Mexican government to end the conflict. He lived until 1969.

and we set off. This railroad is a narrow Decauville affair, 2-foot gauge with about 20 lb. rails. It was built from Vigía Chica to Santa Cruz de Bravo, 56 kilometers inland, for the double purpose of serving as a military base from which to conquer the independent Maya of the east coast and as a penal colony for the whole of the republic. Indeed, the railroad, such as it is, was built by convict labor. It was started by General de la Vega in 1902 and later given over to General Ignacio Bravo, an old companion of Porfirio Díaz, said to be the only man who never went back on him. Bravo had visions of making Vigía the port of Yucatan, taking the chicle business from Progreso, and the town, which under the name of Chan Santo Cruz dates from the Spanish period, was rechristened Santo Cruz de Bravo in his honor. It was distinctly a military occupation of the country, and the railroad only for military purposes. The bush for thirty meters on either side of the right of way had to be kept cleared as a *campo del tiro* [shooting range] to prevent the Santa Cruz Indians from attacking the trains as they passed. After the Madero Revolution in 1910 and after Bravo left in 1911, General Alvarado, then governor of Yucatan, ordered its abandonment. So much for the railroad on which we were to travel.

The line was cut for slightly under a mile between kilometers 9 and 11, and it was necessary to transfer our baggage from the trucks to the back of the mules and walk across this break. In this shuffle, I got changed to the forward car and rode the rest of the way to Central at Kilometer 34, our destination, by myself. The country is poor beyond words. The native limestone crops out everywhere, grudgingly contesting with the sparse low bush of the region its very right to exist. So universal is this rocky outcrop that one wonders where the roots find soil, and yet low as the bush is, it is impenetrably thick and thorny. After the break at kilometers 9–11 we proceeded on our way without further incident to Central. Central is a miserable place filled with miserable Mexican *chicleros*.

The *encargador*, don Rosendo Vila, a Spaniard, was, however, a good fellow, and turned himself inside out to make us comfortable. We had dinner in a *lámina* house amid a riot of flea-scratching dogs and cats. Don Rosendo is expecting General Mai tomorrow about noon; and so we decided to go on to Santo Cruz de Bravo early in the morning, returning to Central in the early afternoon to meet the General. Gann elected to sleep outside, saying the dogs and snoring would prevent him from sleeping. John and I slept inside. It was awful. *Chicleros* expectorating all night long, dogs investigating fleas, snoring, uncanny noises, etc., etc.

It rained heavily toward morning and drove Gann inside, dripping water and ill-temper. His face as he wrote at the table in the light of a flickering hurricane lantern was a study in utter and abandoned disgust.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Gann (1924: 28–29) minces no words in describing the *chicleros* of Central: “These *chicleros*, recruited from the scum of the Mexican peonage, are probably the dirtiest people on earth, and as the *cuartel* [barracks] was crowded with them and a large pack of their mangy dogs, I erected my folding cot and mosquito curtain on one of the flat cars, which I had pushed about half a mile up the line in order to escape what might be termed the odoriferous zone which surrounded the house.... *Chicleros* in their wide-brimmed conical hats, machetes, revolvers, bandoliers, cotton shirt and trousers, red blankets, and sandals are certainly picturesque, and all keep up a constant staccato cough and expectoration upon the floor, while wandering about at intervals during the night smoking innumerable cigarettes.”

## February 10th—Sunday

An uneasy night. Every time I woke up, some scoundrelly looking chichero was stirring around with lantern in hand. The dogs and John were scratching fleabites and there was a continuous hawking and spitting. It was morning at last and we got up, nothing loath to leave our beds. We took practically no baggage, only cameras, notebooks, and John's sketching material, and set off at a good pace, all packed in one truck. In addition to the driver, we were six: Gann, John and I, Muddy, Peter, and don Rosendo. The railroad lay through the same poor country as yesterday, and it was easy to see why the Maya had never occupied it intensively. At Station D, Kilometer 42, we saw a few mounds in the *campo del tiro* on the south side of the track. These were so low and so casual that from the track we could not decide whether they were artificial or natural. About here we got a good drenching, which added to our discomfort. Long before making Kilometer 49, where the track has been torn up for two kilometers,<sup>324</sup> the mule, called *El Grandote* because of its large size, began to show signs of fatigue or laziness, we could hardly say which.

Arriving at Kilometer 49, we left our truck and walked on to Kilometer 51, where the track begins again and where don Rosendo said we would find another truck. The driver brought the *Grandote* along so that we could ride in the last 7 kilometers to Santa Cruz. But things fell out differently. When we got to the track on the other side, we found no truck. Don Rosendo said the Indians still living at Santa Cruz must have carried it thither, so we were obliged to walk these last 7 kilometers. Peter set out at a brisk gait, followed by John, don Rosendo, and myself. It came on to rain just then and Gann and Muddy stayed behind. It rained hard for a half an hour and we were drenched.

It was something after eleven when the track turned to the right and ran into the town. What ruin and desolation. Although abandoned but yesterday, already the bush was running over its plazas, streets, and buildings.<sup>325</sup> We passed in the outskirts falling wooden houses, an expensive gas engine rusting and worthless, sagging water tanks. Here was the machine shop, its roof falling, bushes growing in the doorway and hiding the entrance; within, rust and ruin. Farther on we passed "The Club," another ruin. After several streets filled with a 10-foot growth of bush and young saplings, we caught sight of the immense barrel vault of the church [Figure 25.6], a relic of the Spanish period, and turning again to the right, we entered the plaza. The fountain was choked with weeds, and the water supply dried up—formerly this was supplied by an expensive pumping plant. The plaza, also dating from Spanish times, is filled with an orchard of sour orange trees, the only thriving thing about the city I saw. The cement walks are now hidden in long grass and the central *kiosko*, or bandstand, is in ruins. At one corner of the plaza stands the church that has had a remarkable history, going back to Spanish times for its foundation, I believe possibly even to the XVII century. It was never finished; it lacks its towers and the façade never has had any decoration.

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<sup>324</sup> Both interruptions in the rail line were deliberate, it being severed to prevent Santa Cruz Indians from using the line to mount a surprise attack on the Mexican towns on either end.

<sup>325</sup> This area of Quintana Roo remained unsettled, with sporadic fighting into the 1930s.

In 1848, when all this part of Yucatan was abandoned because of the War of the Castes, the Santa Cruz Indians who occupied the place made this church a kind of Maya Delphic oracle. The cross here is said to have had a hole in it through which a concealed person could give responses. Prisoners of war were thus brought before the “Santa Cruz” to learn their fate, etc., etc., and the fane [shrine] attained a great local celebrity. When the Mexicans reoccupied the town under General Bravo about 1905, the Indians carried off the Santa Cruz to their settlement in the bush. The Mexicans used the church as a prison, herding as many as 200 prisoners into it one at a time, men, women and children. Terrible scenes were there enacted. The convicts, the very street sweepings of Mexico, would quarrel, fight, and even kill in the very shadow of the high altar. It was, in short, a bloody, pestilential, charnel house under the Mexican regime. Few religious edifices can boast a history equal to this: church, pagan oracle, and prison house in three successive centuries, and now again an abandoned ruin with staring open doorways and dark gloomy interior.



Figure 25.6. The church of Santa Cruz in Felipe Carrillo Puerto.

Happily, for those prisoners incarcerated there, the church is large—105 feet long inside, and 36 feet wide, with ceiling fully 75 feet high and walls 8 feet thick. To offset this, there are no windows save one large one in the front, and save for three large doorways, one in each side and one in the front, there are no other openings in the walls, and the interior is correspondingly dark and gloomy. Portals dating from the Spanish period adjoin the church on either side, used in the Mexican occupation of the town for *cuarteles* [barracks]. These bore every mark of hasty abandonment. A cart left here, a table there, and now the bush growing everywhere.

Across the Calle de Libertad from the *cuartel* was the house of General Bravo, a hideous wooden affair of two stories fast falling to pieces. Across from the church was another



colonnaded building of the Spanish period, used by the Mexicans for a hospital. And beyond, for a considerable distance, were ruined buildings on all sides: a veritable city of the dead. At its height in the Mexican occupation, 1905–1915, about 1909, the town boasted close on to 3,000 souls, and in the Spanish period, judging from the large church and ample colonnades, it can hardly have been less large. Now two families of Santa Cruz Indians, less than a dozen people, are the only human beings who waken the echoes of its deserted streets.

And of the two occupations, Spanish and Mexican, the latter in a few years will have left far less trace than the former. Its wooden houses and iron machinery is already rotting away and in another decade it will have disappeared, while the old Spanish church and adjoining portals will be all that is left to show that man was here. This permanence of Spanish architecture compared with the impermanence of the subsequent remains offers a sad commentary on the two civilizations. Whatever their faults may have been, the Spaniards conceived largely and executed grandly, whilst their successors with less breadth of vision and ability executed only grandiosely and meretriciously [flashily]. The architectural comparison may be extended beyond the merely concrete and material, to the abstract and indeed to the very essence of the two civilizations, to institutions, customs, and governmental machinery. The one efficient and for three centuries permanent, the other inadequate and transitory in the nature of things bound to pass.

We photographed and sketched amid these ruins until word came that lunch was ready at the house of one of the Indians. We had a delicious tomato omelette, *chaka sacan*—ground corn and hot water and salt—some peppers, and many delicious hot tortillas, which the wife of the Indian made while we waited. And after taking a photograph of this Maya family, we climbed aboard the truck and started back to Central. The mule had not grown any stronger during our stay at Santa Cruz, and it took us an interminable time to get back to the break at Kilometer 51–49, but this was as nothing compared to those 15 kilometers beyond. We tried every means of making the wretched beast go forward, cajolery, persuasion, coercion, profanity, flagellation, and what not, but nothing availed. Indeed, under direct corporal punishment of the most violent sort, it would stop dead in its tracks and refuse to go forward. We calculated afterward that we averaged from 2½ to 2¾ miles an hour. I know the kilometer posts passed like league stones instead. In consequence of the slowness of this mule, we reached Central only just before sunset. We found that General Mai had not arrived nor, in fact, had been heard from.

Rosendo told us of a Spanish cemetery with tombs standing in the bush just south of Station D, and we determined to wait until noon tomorrow for General Mai, and to improve the morning by visiting this *campo santo*. We did not stay up late. The slowness of the *teniente's* mule had worn our spirits down and we were all thoroughly tired out. Gann decided to sleep inside and Muddy put his cot next to mine. With John diagonally across the room in his hammock, and Rosendo the other side of Gann, and Muddy on the floor next to John, we were fairly well crowded, but it was better than the next room where slept and snored a dozen hawking, spitting, filthy *chicleros*. A whisky and soda improved our tempers somewhat, and we turned in with something approximating equanimity.

## February 11—Monday

Don Rosendo had told us yesterday of a Catholic cemetery in the bush just behind Station D,

with tombs standing and a cross on top of one of them. We were at a loss to account for a Spanish *campo santo* so far from anywhere, about eight miles from the nearest Spanish town known, Santa Cruz, and with the hope of possibly getting a date on one of the tombstones, Gann and I decided to visit the place during the morning waiting for General Mai to show up. We decided that if he did not get in by noon, he would not get in at all and we would return in the afternoon to Vigía Chica. John decided to stay at Central and paint. Four of us went—Gann, myself, don Rosendo, and Peter.

The mule we had was full of life and, but for one defect—that of darting from the road at every cross path—an ideal animal. However, after several attempts of this kind, one of which was successful, we got beyond the region of cross paths and then we breezed along at a good rate. What it had taken us an hour and forty-five minutes to do yesterday afternoon, we now did in forty-five minutes. We left the mule and car at Station D and set off across the milpa south of the tracks. On the edge of the *campo del tiro*, we examined a mound of crude stone construction, which we came to the conclusion was Maya not Spanish. While we were looking this over, don Rosendo had been hunting around in the bush and called to us that he had found the *tumba*.

We followed a *picado* [small trail cut through the bush] he had made and soon came to one of the most perfect little Maya temples I have ever seen.<sup>326</sup> It was two stories high and stood on a low platform, and all three combined are slightly under nine feet high. The second story stood on the first like a smaller block stands on a larger one. It was almost perfect; in fact, lacked only the cross, which don Rosendo said had formerly stood on the summit. Unfortunately, no trace of this remained, it having been destroyed by the soldiers of General Rivera who founded Camp D. We regretted this latter circumstance, since a Maya temple surmounted by a Christian cross would be a treasure trove indeed. I rather doubted this being a cross. Not that don Rosendo was deceiving us at all, but he might have mistaken a purely Maya ornament like the frets at Chichen, for example, for a cross. However, this ornament, whatever it was, was destroyed and speculation was useless. If a cross, the padres may have hoped to re-consecrate this pagan temple by this simple Christian symbol. We photographed the temple, measured it and set out to see a few others.<sup>327</sup> These had been thrown down by the Mexican soldiers, so that not one was entire.

Returning to the *campo del tiro*, we passed an aguada, or water hole, which had been artificially formed, or at least modified. It was, perhaps, a hundred feet across and doubtless served as the water supply for the ancient city. We started back for Central at a good pace and were there in forty minutes. John had spent a busy morning in painting, having three pictures in his book. Muddy had the packing all done when we got back and after lunch, General Mai

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<sup>326</sup> This may be the small site of Platanal, which lies immediately off the rail line (Muller 1959). Alternatively, it could be another small site, Kiic, which lies ten kilometers from Central just south of a line connecting Central with Felipe Carrillo Puerto.

<sup>327</sup> Gann (1924: 37) reports the measurements: the stone platform was 20 by 15 feet and constructed of roughly squared stones. The first story was 6' 9" long and 6' 4" broad. All four sides had small doorways with recesses over each. The upper story measured 3' 4" high, 4' 3" long, and 3' broad. Oddly, the interior was ovoid, with a central column.

not having come, we set about returning to Vigía Chica. They tried to persuade us that *El Grandote*, the *teniente's* mule would do. This lazy beast was indeed harnessed to the car, but we could scarcely get it to start, and it stopped at the switch so suddenly that the car overtook it and bumped into its posterior. I begged don Rosendo for another animal, any other in fact, and he gave us a smaller one called Conchita. The animal was slow but with sufficient urging and flogging she could be induced to move faster than a walk. And so we started. I had taken the precaution to telephone don Julio at Vigía to send out a fresh mule to Kilometer 10–11, where the line is cut, to give us a lift in.

We had gone as far as Kilometer 28, four kilometers before the point where the trail from General Mai's capital comes in, when we saw two Indians walking up the track. When we got close enough to recognize them, Peter and the driver said the man—one was a boy—was Desiderio Cochua, General Mai's first captain. We stopped, and [with] Muddy acting as interpreter, had a long *junta*. The reason the General had not come was because he was ill with chills and fever. Here was Gann's opportunity, and he got out his bag and gave the first captain some quinine and cough mixture. Muddy explained we were bearing gifts for the General and looking for ruins. At our direction, he asked the man if he knew of any behind Tuluum. To our great delight, he said there was a good-sized place two leagues behind Tuluum, which was even larger. We brought down the gramophone at this, told him it was for the General, and played it to him from the end of a railroad tie. Gann showed them the photograph taken in Belize of their *compadres* and they were greatly pleased. Through Muddy, we made an agreement to meet him next Saturday, the 16th, at Tuluum. He was to get General Mai to come if possible, but if not he was to come anyhow.

Giving him some cigars and cigarettes as an earnest of our good faith and future intentions, and to the nice-looking little Maya boy—General Mai's nephew—who accompanied him, some chocolate candy, we bid them goodbye and mounting the car, set off. How the beast lagged, how slowly the kilometer posts slipped by. Many were missing, which made the distance seem all the longer. Muddy discovered that 12 or 13 made a mile, and I counted them faithfully, sometimes 39 consecutively without seeing a kilometer post. But the afternoon wore on and finally, just before dusk, we met the two men sent up from Vigía Chica by don Julio to meet us; but these had foolishly left the mule on the far side of the break. All our baggage that we could get on to Conchita was loaded on her back, and shouldering the rest ourselves we made the carry in one trip.

But on the other side another difficulty arose. The mule that had been sent was named "Lunatico" and was, as our driver expressed it, *muy bravo*. The idea was to send Conchita in and we follow with Lunatico drawing the car. This ugly brute pranced and cavorted about so, and made so many false starts, that the boys could not get her harnessed to the car, and when this last was finally achieved, he darted off at a terrific rate of speed, threatening to overturn the car in the darkness. By and by, he slowed down. After some time in the darkness, we made out a boy ahead driving Conchita. The sight seemed to infuriate Lunatico, who again plunged ahead madly. Conchita and her driver took to the bush to avoid being run down, and our cowardly driver cast loose the tugs and we had the disgruntlement of hearing Lunatico clatter off in the darkness. We soundly berated the cowardly fellow, who set off without more ado to catch Lunatico. We made sure that we were in for a six-mile walk to Vigía and started ahead.

Presently we heard voices, and soon caught up with the driver, who had caught Lunatico. With great caution we fastened the tugs again and instantly the brute darted off again. And so we continued at a great rate of speed until we came near the port. We passed the boy driving Conchita, who yelled to us to stop to give him a lift, but as well halt the whirlwind. We dashed by and he took after us. Finally, by a great burst of speed, he clambered on behind.

We reached Vigía at 7:30, where don Julio met us. After a much-needed wash, we had supper in his house, or rather kitchen, and then went upstairs to bed. Gann slept on the porch and John and I in a room opening thereon.

## CHAPTER 26

### COZUMEL AND CHAC MOOL

#### February 12, Tuesday

After breakfast we made immediate preparations for leaving. The boys came ashore for our baggage and, bidding goodbye to our several friends, don Julio (who in the end would not accept a single cent for all his kindness) the *Teniente* and his señora, we took our leave. Don Julio had told us that Alamilla had come in from Xcalak and was out at Culebra Key, and thither we went first. Alamilla was at the Hut of the Five Old Fishermen. We sent ashore for him and later, for his captain—the one who had told Gann such glowing stories of a ruin just south of Tulum.<sup>328</sup> This shameless fellow, when we finally cornered him, fell down on his former story entirely and confessed he had only passed through the place hurriedly once and knew little or nothing about it. Peter knew of some ruins on the southern point of the bay, Xnohku, “great mound” in Mayan, but we decided to pass them up and proceed directly to Ascencion, and thence for Boca Paila and Cozumel.

Alamilla had the *aduana* and inspector aboard the boat, and this one we now took back to Ascencion Bay as he had our papers. I did not go ashore, but John and Gann took advantage of the opportunity to take a bath. In the trip ashore, a pair of the latter’s socks was lost and he was greatly put about thereby. About one, Peter and the captain came aboard with our papers and we raised anchor for Boca Paila, where we hoped to meet a fisherman from Cozumel who was well acquainted with the region and who might know of some ruins.

In three hours, we made the *quebrada* in the reef opposite Boca Paila, and anchored inside. Gann, myself, Peter, Muddy, Kuylen, and George went ashore in the jolly boat propelled by the Evinrude, which was having a working interval. The outer bar had a depth of only three feet, and we bumped once in going over it. Just at the mouth of opening where the current runs very strong—about three knots an hour, we calculated—there is another bar four feet deep. We passed on in through the narrow opening, passing a fisherman’s net drying-rack on the left bank. Peter said the Cozumeleño should be here if he was about, but we saw no sign of him. We continued on to Boca Paila, however, which is a long shallow arm of Ascencion Bay with a varying depth of from three to six feet, and a five-foot channel if you know where to find it. Eight miles north of the mouth, it was formerly separated by a three-mile strip of land from Chunyaxche lagoon, a body of fresh water, but some five years ago a canal was cut through this to facilitate chicle operators in this vicinity. Independent Santa Cruz Indians live about this lagoon and at the southern end there is a Maya ruin, which we did not see.

After chugging around for an hour, we returned to the mouth, where I paid Peter off. He had been a good boy and I gave him a dollar extra. He was to return to Ascencion Bay on foot,

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<sup>328</sup> These ruins are almost certainly those of Muyil (Chunyaxche), 15 miles south of Tulum.

eighteen miles off. Gann and I walked on the beach for a bit. The former has a mania for picking up shells, seaweed, etc., and straying down the beach, we discovered a pretty little gray dory with pointed prow and stern, named the *Ti-Tani*. We tried to conjure the *Titantic* out of it, but could hardly do so.

The sea here was beyond description, deep, deep sapphire at the horizon, shading through lighter blues to exquisite light green, [colors] the waters of the Caribbean take on over pure white sand of decomposed coral and shell. It was so lovely we would fain have stayed, but it seemed that we should go on for Cozumel that night, and, sending Kuylen around for the little gray dory, we set out in the jolly boat. Kuylen had great difficulty in launching the *Ti-Tani*, but with Peter's aid finally got her off. As soon as he got within hailing distance of us, he informed us she was the crankiest dory he had ever been in. We took him aboard the jolly boat and towed the *Ti-Tani* out to the *Lilian Y*, where we put her on the deck. She is about fifteen feet long, and an unfamiliar build to our Belize bullies [old term for shipmates, associates, etc.].

The captain weighed anchor as quickly as we got aboard and set out through the reef before dusk. It was quite rough outside and, my same old trouble coming on, I took to my berth and ate no supper. About an hour and a half after leaving, we raised the light at Cape Celerious [Punta Celerain], the southern point of Cozumel Island, and at 12:30 dropped anchor off San Miguel. We could hear music, beating of the tom-tom, and drunken singing, shouts, and laughter ashore, the tail end of the pre-Lenten festivities, *El Carnival*, but it was too late to go ashore. We tried to go to sleep with but indifferent success.

### February 13, Wednesday

Fairly early, the port authorities came aboard and, taking our papers, said we might land. I went first to the Inspector of *Aduanas*, a cousin of Carranza's, we understood, from Chihuahua. We passed enough time of day with him to introduce ourselves and our business, and I promised him later in the day to show him some of our *obras*, books, articles, paintings, etc. From here, I went around to Coldwell & Banastre.<sup>329</sup> Coldwell himself was not in, but I met his partner, Banastre. The latter was absent from San Miguel when I was there in April 1913. I told him our business and said we were on the lookout for a pilot who was thoroughly familiar with the coast. He sent for a man, whom he said had the completest confidence of their firm, and when the latter came, I questioned him closely. His name is Miguel Polanco and I quickly saw he knew what we wanted him to know: every reef and *quebrada*, anchorages, etc., between here and Progreso. I engaged him on the spot at two dollars a day until the trip should be over, and told him to be ready to leave in the morning.<sup>330</sup>

As Coldwell had not returned, I went to look for him. I found him under a repairing shed superintending work on my old friend, *El Fenix*, on which rotting old luger Jesse Nusbaum and

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<sup>329</sup> The import/export firm of Coldwell & Banastre was the main supplier of outside goods on the island, imported on their own ship, the *Alberto*.

<sup>330</sup> Gann (1924: 72) describes Polanco as "a silent, reserved, not undignified individual, with greying hair and a face crisscrossed in all directions by a million little wrinkles, and tanned to the color of saddle-leather by constant exposure to the sun."

I made the trip to Tulum five years ago and found nothing.<sup>331</sup> It awakened many a painful memory. He appeared glad to see me, and before he would allow me to leave his shop had pressed a lot of fruit upon us—a sack of oranges and a dozen odd *guanábanas*,<sup>332</sup> which the colonials call sour-sop. From here, we went over to breakfast in the same *fonda*, at the southeast corner of the plaza, where Jesse and I ate five years ago. We had a delicious breakfast, an omelette with fresh tomatoes and nice hot tortillas, which will linger long in my mind as it did not in my stomach, for unlike [with] Hubert's appalling greasy cooking, the digestive process was speedily and comfortably accomplished.

After lunch, we returned to the *Lilian Y* and read until two, when we had tea and then set off to see the old church, said to be the same as that built by the first *conquistadores*. We stopped at Coldwell's for a guide, and then set out along the playa [Figure 26.1], turning into the bush about a quarter of a mile below the plaza.

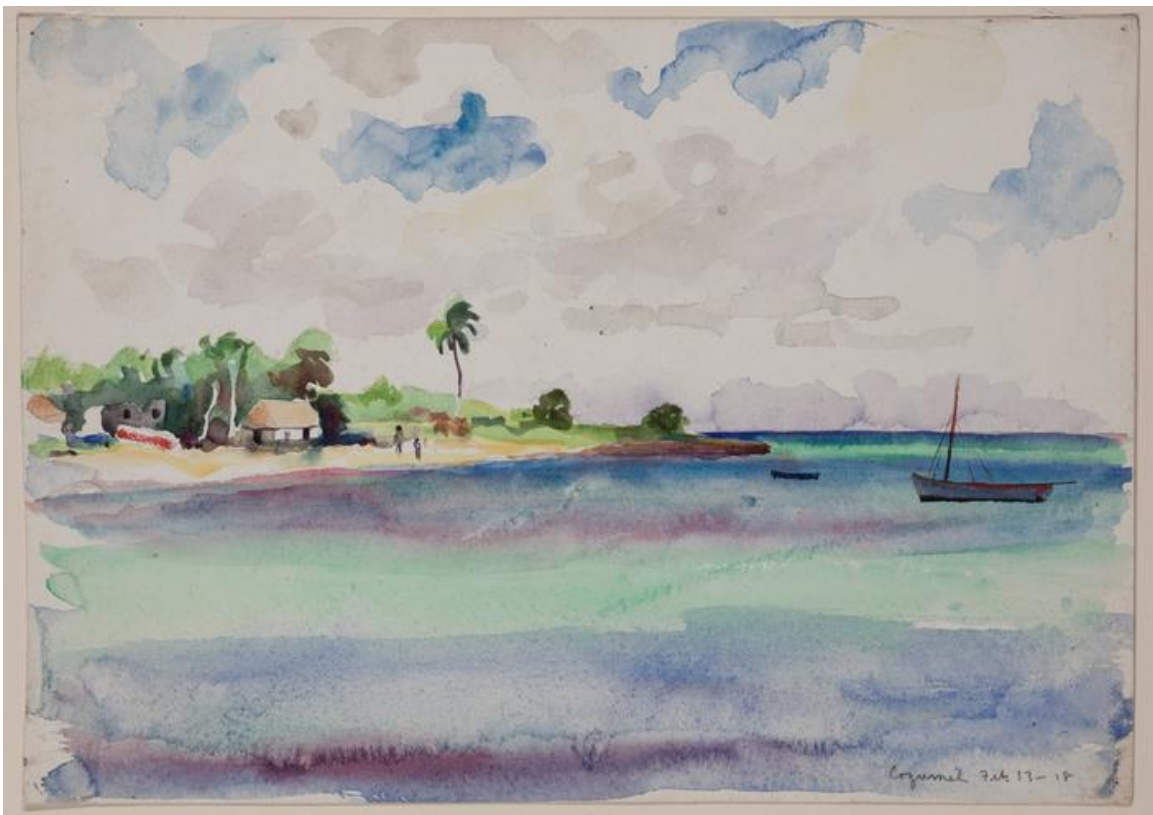


Figure 26.1. John Held's watercolor of the beach at Cozumel.

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<sup>331</sup> Morley's brief (five-hour) 1913 visit to Tulum yielded few results. Upon arriving at the ruin, the boat with the photographic equipment capsized, ruining the film. Additionally, the team worried constantly about attacks from local Indians, 1913 being near the tail end of the violent Caste War that had made visits to Quintana Roo problematic. Morley's hometown newspaper, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, even ran a story on April 17, 1913, claiming that the Morley expedition had encountered cannibals, much to the dismay of Morley's wife.

<sup>332</sup> *Annona muricata* or custard apple, a tropical fruit with a flavor that hints of apples, strawberries, and sour citrus, with the texture of a banana.

We let the guides go first to bring down the bunches of *garrapatas* which everywhere infest the island. The church is much as I remember it five years ago, a long rectangular enclosure, with roof entirely fallen and walls largely so. It is 98 feet long inside, and 36 feet wide. Within, there are several [burial] vaults built against the walls, probably of subsequent origin as they looked fairly new.<sup>333</sup> One had a hole, and looking in we could see the bones and cranium in fragments. Gann pronounced the latter that of a young woman, a European. His science could not tell whether she had been fair or not, but we invested her with the charms of a houri;<sup>334</sup> and now she was no better than her homeliest contemporary. A small wooden cross bore the following inscription:

BACILIO AGUILAR JULIO 9

DE

80

Doubtless 1880, for it would not have lasted from 1780. In my enthusiasm, I brushed off two large clusters of *garrapatas* on my trousers and had to leave off measuring to flog myself well. But, we had finished the church and returned to the beach for a bath.

As I was finishing this, Muddy came hurrying down the beach to tell me the papers would cost \$32.34 gold and I would have to pay for them at once, otherwise the office would close and we could not get them until morning. I hurried back with him and found this outrageous price for papers would only clear us as far as Punta Morelos. If it had been to Progreso, I would not have objected, but only twenty-seven miles across to the mainland, it was too much. I told the inspector this and he said it would only cost a dollar more to Progreso, so I told him to change them for there. This necessitates further changes and it seems we lacked several vital papers from young Vidal, a *patente de sanidad* [health certificate], a *permiso* to leave, etc., etc., In short, it was a conspiracy to hold us over until sometime tomorrow.

In spite of eight *bailes* celebrated during the four days before Ash Wednesday, the young men of the village were organizing another for that night! As Gann shrewdly observed, we had roundly paid for it with our papers. They had determined not to give us the papers that night, and in spite of strenuous subsequent efforts on my part we did not get them either. It was now after five and the Inspector of *Aduanas* said he would give us our papers in the evening as soon as Vidal had finished his.

John had drawn everybody's caricature to increase good feeling, but this promise was the best I could exact, and I wished I had had my \$32.34 back. It was young Vidal and his precious *baile* which was humbugging us. He is captain of the port, and had to sign several of our papers, but had determined that we were not to leave them that night. We adjourned to the boat to cool off, and about six-thirty to supper. After supper, we saw Vidal again and I suggested I look up his clerk and pay him extra for making out our papers after hours. Vidal shrugged his shoulders and said, "As you please." I chased around the village for the clerk and finally ran

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<sup>333</sup> Both Morley and Gann speculated about the significance of this ruined church, the altar of which reportedly dated to 1519 when Cortés first landed on the island (Gann 1924: 67).

<sup>334</sup> A beautiful young woman, the virgin companion of a faithful Muslim in Paradise.



him to ground not at his house, but teaching a night school. I gave him to understand if he would do this favor for us he would lose nothing thereby, and he said to return at 8:30 when they would be ready.

We next called on the Inspector of *Aduanas* with John's sketchbook, some articles, and papers Gann and I had written, and explained the precise nature of our work to him. Finally, on leaving, I asked him for our papers and he said they were locked in the Customs House safe but that we could get them at 7:00 in the morning! And here we had to leave them. I returned to the boat thoroughly disgusted and tired out, and Gann went down the beach to the cots, which Muddy had set up on the *playa* in a dudgeon at such infamous treatment.

About 9:30, John and I showed up at the *baile*, which was already in progress. We were at once ushered through the *sala*, where all the ladies were assembled, to a back room where all the gentlemen were drinking a cheap and awful native rum, of which we had to partake. Presently a one-step was struck up—in our honor—and we were led in to two *señoritas* and bore them off on our arms. Each dance was preceded by a marathon about the *sala*, round and round, which taxed our powers of endurance strongly. The music was an accordion and a drum, the latter very casually touched up now and then by an Indian boy. One-steps, waltzes, and mazurkas were danced, and a *zapatera*.<sup>335</sup> We were obliged to partake frequently, but so long as I permitted my glass to be filled no one noticed whether I drained it or not, and I set it down each time all but untasted. The native rum was unspeakable.

Being Ash Wednesday, about eleven they came around with a pan of ashes and put a cross on everybody's forehead. Some village wit conceived the heavy notion of burning a cork and painting mustachios on a friend, and soon we were all barbarously thus decorated. John painted a hideous face on Vidal and after that had to do everybody with his diabolical ingenuity. He made my nose turn up even more than nature did—if that were possible—and I hastily scrubbed it off. After more dancing and native rum, the party broke up just after twelve. John, rather the worse for the latter, repaired to the ship with uncertain step, and I went down to the beach to the tree under which Muddy had set up our cots. Gann was already snoring his head off, and I quickly joined him.

## February 14—Thursday

We were up by six and on the trail of our papers. We finished breakfast and went over to the Inspector of *Aduanas*. Our papers were undergoing a last change and we had to sit down and wait. Time dragged on, and to save it, John went around to Vidal's. He didn't find him at his office and went to the *fonda*, had the pleasure of watching him finish breakfast, and then returned with him to his office where he finally got the papers. He came back to the Inspector of *Aduana's* office after about an hour absence. The latter's papers were just ready at this time and with a pile of clearances a mile high, we went around to Coldwell's to say goodbye, and then for the *muelle* [dock, pier], where the captain was already hauling up anchor.

All the *principales* of the village were down to see us off, and after many farewells we finally cast off at 8:30. I should mention here an important change of plan that had been made. I found

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<sup>335</sup> A *zapatero* is a shoemaker. Morley might have meant *zapateado*, a tap dance or Spanish clog dance.

out yesterday that our new pilot knew where the large "Spanish ruins" were between Ascencion and Espiritu Santo Bays, the group that poor old Peter Vásquez had told me of several years ago. His account of these was so glowing that even at the cost of putting back on our course sixty-four miles we decided to go back and visit them. We thought by getting cleared last night we could get off at seven this A.M. and make the point, Santa Rosa, where Miguel said they were located, before nightfall. The delay of an hour and a half beyond this schedule in the end prevented us from carrying out this plan, however. All day long we pushed the *Lilian Y*, but current and wind were both against us, and as dusk came on Miguel said we could not make Santa Rosa before dark, so I told him to go as far as he could, but to be sure and get us inside before night fell, as I was too seasick to sleep aboard.

The sun set and light grew fainter and fainter, but still the old man held out to open sea. I began rowing him to go in, but he held his course, and finally, just as dusk crept on we slipped through the reef to everybody's great relief and came to anchor perhaps a quarter of a mile off shore. As soon as the anchor dropped we made immediate preparations for going ashore. A new moon hung in the sky and presaged better nights to come, but for the present it was darker than Egypt. Finally, we got off in the jolly boat, and landed in the usual scurrying manner, getting half wet as always.

After the cots and nets were fixed, Gann discovered a fresh jaguar spoor passing up the beach right by our beds! These were fairly large, 3½ inches wide and very fresh. It seemed wisest to have arms by us in the event this feline returned, and we sent the boys off for some artillery. They fetched back Gann's shotgun and my .45 automatic revolver. I slept with one eye open, but nothing untoward happened to break our rest and the jaguar must have returned by some other route.

### **February 15—Friday**

We just got aboard in the morning in time to catch a heavy shower. This had been brewing since daylight and broke after breakfast as we were getting underway. The heaviest part of it passed off to the southwest and before we reached Santa Rosa it had passed by. We were scarcely an hour between Xnohku Point—Bird Point on the charts—and Santa Rosa, so an hour more of daylight would have brought us to our destination last night instead of this morning. We went ashore and had a cold breakfast under a small coconut tree before setting out for the ruins. Five of us went: Gann, John, myself, Muddy, and Miguel. Gann was more cheerful than usual, felt we had lost two days, gone 120 miles out of our way and burned God knows how many gallons of oil—all for nothing. This philosophy had one indisputable advantage: anything that turns out at all favorably, however small and insignificant, is all velvet.

We set off down the beach for nearly a mile before we turned into the bush. The unfrequented character of this shore was revealed in the amount of valuable wreckage strewn the beach. Here a mahogany log of value, there a dory, oars, life preservers, lumber, etc., valuable salvage material. Muddy kicked over in the sand a big circular life preserver with S.S. *Iagua*, S.F. on it. What tragedy or near tragedy of the sea did it all tell? Shortly after this point we climbed a bank of sand dunes and turned into the bush. Everywhere the salt water palmetto predominated. After wrestling with the bush for some time we came out on a mud flat near the long arm of Ascencion Bay, which extends to the south. It bore the marks of deer everywhere.

After ten minutes of this more open going, we turned into the bush again—Miguel said in the vicinity of the *iglesia*, he thought. After stumbling around for fifteen minutes in the palmetto bush he decided he was on the wrong trail and put back to the mud flats. Here, we let him and Muddy do the scouting while we rested behind. We were already tired and perspiring from fighting the bush. Muddy said they would fire off a gun if they found the church. We had been resting about half an hour when we heard a shot not far off to the south, and soon they both returned with the news that a ruined city had been found, but not the big church Miguel had seen eight years ago when he was hunting deer through here.

We set off through the bush and presently crossed a low dance platform and soon were in front of a small temple of the Tulum type. We went quickly from this to three or four others, one mounted on a pyramid perhaps fifteen feet high. We then had a council of war at the base of the last. It was obviously a Maya city of no little importance. We had already seen enough to keep us busy for a day in mapping and photographing it, and besides there was some clearing necessary for the latter. We decided to send Muddy back to the boat to bring out as many of the crew as extra pay would attract, with axes and machetes and lunch for us.

Miguel went back with him to the *playa* to open up a trail directly from the beach to the ruins. This was much shorter than wandering around through the mud flats, as we could hear the breakers booming not far off. While they were gone, the three of us started on the map of the site and were so energetic that, by the time Miguel returned with the lunch and the men, we had it half done, including the ground plans and elevations of four temples. Before eating I put the boys, five of whom responded to the call to arms, to work cutting down the bush and trees in front of the principal temple. This had one important and unique feature, which I think I have never seen before: namely, an arch or formal gateway approaching it. To be sure, the arcade idea is old. Witness the House of the Pigeons [Doves] and the south range of the Monjas at Uxmal, or the Portal at Labna; even the independent arch is not entirely unique, as there is one at Kabah, but an arch leading direct to a temple was new to me.

Moreover, this proved to have an entirely new feature to me in a chacmool figure<sup>336</sup> [Figure 26.2] reclining on the floor of this arch, directly in the line of approach to the main temple above. Alfredo uncovered the knees of this first, and then the hands along with the thighs before I discovered that it was a chacmool. Going deeper, the boys exposed the breast, arms, and shoulders. The head, unhappily, was broken off, although we found a fragment showing part of the left eye, left ear-plug, the forehead, and head-dress. By this time it was nearly five and we decided to knock off work for the day, returning tomorrow with picks and shovel to complete the disinterment of the chacmool. We returned to the *playa* well satisfied with the result of the day's work. The boys went back to the *Lilian Y* and brought her down to where our path emerged from the bush. We went aboard and had supper and then came ashore for the night.

It looked so much like rain that we pitched our cots in the palmetto grove on the sand

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<sup>336</sup> A chacmool is a male figure, usually carved of stone, in a distinctive reclining position: lying on its back with head elevated and facing out, knees and elbows bent, and hands on the abdomen, where there is usually a round object or bowl, presumably for offerings. The figures, widely found in Mesoamerica, date to the Postclassic period (see Miller 1985).

dunes and had the tarpaulin stretched above them; and finally, mindful of the tiger's tracks of last night, we had a lantern put on the head of each bed and, as an extra precaution, our firearms under them. It rained briskly in the night, but not a drop came through the tarp on me, though misery-loving Gann claimed to have sustained wet feet.



Figure 26.2. A chacmool figure from Chichen Itza.

### February 16, Saturday

We went aboard for breakfast since, for once, the *Lilian Y* was anchored nearby, and got off early for the ruins with three or four of the crew, picks, and shovels. Before leaving I had Miguel and George climb the mast to see whether there were any eminences rising from the plain, which might be Miguel's still missing church, for which he searched yesterday in vain. George reported a higher hill than any we had yet seen as not far south of the main group, and as quickly as we reached the ruins, Miguel set out to try to locate it.

John put Alfredo and George to work digging out the chacmool and Gann and I finished the general map [Figure 26.3, top] Presently Miguel returned with the report of another large ruined building, and Gann and I went over to look at it. It proved to be one of those tremendous colonnaded halls like the two at Tulum, 102 feet long. With two rows of 10 columns each inside and 8 columns on each side of the facades thus:<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> The site plan Morley and Gann made shows only 7 interior columns and five on each side

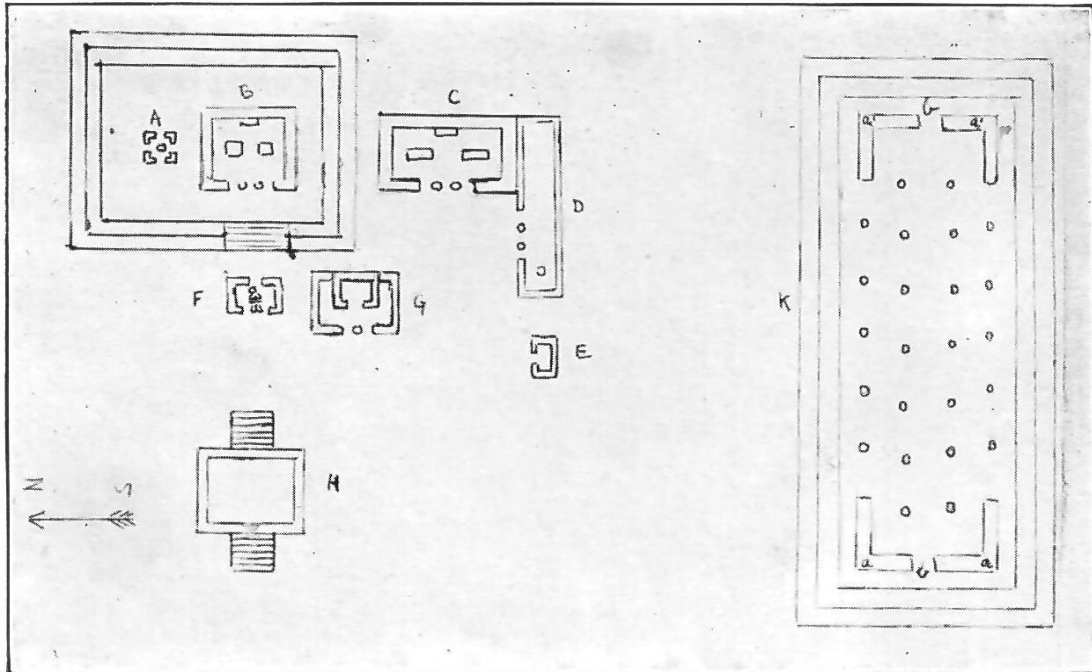


Figure 26.3. The site Morley and Gann named Chac Mool. Top: their site map. Bottom: the site today, with the Temple of the Columns at the extreme right in the distance.

(Gann 1924: facing page 76). A modern plan of the site confirms Gann's count as correct: (<http://casablancafishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Ruins-of-Punta-Pajaros.pdf>)

In its entirety it must have presented a fine appearance. Now with the roof fallen and over half its columns prostrate it was the apogee of ruin and desolation. Later in the morning, in fact just before leaving, John and I measured it.

To return to the chacmool. By this time John had it completely uncovered and ready for photographing [Figure 26.4]. Several interesting objects had been found during the course of this work: a fine little *incensario* with a head on it, a triangular shell gorget, several beads, and a fine little jade ear plug.



Figure 26.4. The remains of the stucco chacmool at Chac Mool.

The chacmool himself was an object of wonder and interest. He was of extraordinary height or would have been if erect: 7 feet; 66 inches around the chest and 19 inches around the biceps, almost heroic in size. The head was turned 90 degrees to the left as in all figures of this type, and the hands rested against the thighs. There was no receptacle in the abdomen or chest for incense, as in the famous one from Chichen Itza. The figure was made of stucco and had been painted. Lying thus in the deserted forest, headless and alone, he seemed forever doomed to

contemplate the desolation of his shrine and the destruction of his worshippers. This figure was easily the most important object in the city, both as to its location and characteristics and we gave the place its name: Chac Mool. Future explorers should note it is about one-fifth of a mile in from the *playa*, just north of the point known as Santa Rosa locally, but not marked on the charts.

We finished photographing the principal temples and measured the large colonnaded hall and returned to the *playa*.<sup>338</sup> On the way out we passed a small square temple near the shore on the way to the beach. Gann had already preceded us on board, and as soon as we reached the *Lilian Y* we set off about one. When we passed Xnohku Point, where we had slept night before last, we put in through the reef again, and I went ashore with Miguel, Alfredo, George, and Kuylen to see the ruins of the Spanish church said to be there. I found insteadh on the very tip of the point, just within the salt water palmetto trees, a nice little Maya temple with two columns and its eastern end entirely destroyed. Formerly there had been another temple just in front of it (i.e., it faced north), but this had been completely destroyed by fishermen to make sinkers for their dories, indeed the other was speedily sharing the same fate.

As soon as I returned to the boat, we weighed anchor and put out through the reef again. We hoped to be able to make that delightful beach at Boca Paila where we put Peter Moguel ashore, but the sun set just as we got beyond Allen Point and we had to put in through the reef only three miles above Ascencion light. Gann and I slept on the beach as usual; John remained on board.

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<sup>338</sup> Other than a brief return to the site by Gann in 1919, Chac Mool had few visitors for many years until in the 1940s, when the area was exploited in copra cultivation (to produce oil from the kernel, or nut, of the coconut). Recent decades have seen significant archaeological excavation and consolidation; some 128 burials were found, many of which included sacrificed dogs (Shaw and Mathews 2005: 28).

## CHAPTER 27

### TULUM

#### February 17—Sunday

A double disappointment today. But all that in its proper place. We got a good start, but it was nearly eleven before we were finally abreast of Tulum [Figure 27.1].



Figure 27.1. Tulum from above, view to the northeast, showing the entire site. The Castillo is center right; the perimeter wall is left.

As we passed through the break in the reef, where we so nearly had a disastrous ending two years ago,<sup>339</sup> an accident occurred which, but for the exceptionally fine weather we have

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<sup>339</sup> In 1913, Morley and Jesse Nussbaum briefly visited Tulum. While attempting to navigate the surf in a small rowboat, they nearly sank some distance from shore. In an April 13 letter to Edgar Lee Hewett, Morley writes, “In that sea and in heavy boots as Jesse and I were [wearing], I think we would have drowned had the boat capsized. Fortunately . . . this did not occur. Just as we were congratulating ourselves, however, on having almost reached the shore in safety, a



been enjoying, might easily have proved fatal to all aboard. Just as we were passing between the jaws of the reef, the engine suddenly stopped dead. Alfredo, who was on deck, dived into the companionway and tried to resuscitate it, but without success, and in this delicate position, to say the least, we drifted for a moment, the teeth of the reef not 25 yards from us on either side. Happily, the captain, who was at the wheel, had his wits about him and ordered the sail up hastily; and with scarcely enough wind to fill them we drifted through this dangerous *quebrada* and came to anchor in the scarcely less smooth waters within! Of all the places on the east coast of Yucatan, Tulum has the worst name among mariners. Here, even on the calmest days, a heavy surf pounds the rock-bound coast, due, our pilot said, to the strong current always running. Certainly, this has been my experience. In 1913, in 1916, and now in 1918, a heavy surf has always been rolling, rolling in.

We scanned the Castillo anxiously for signs of Desiderio Cochua—this was the rendezvous agreed upon—but there was no sign of life about the tower or its platform. As it was not yet high noon, we decided to eat lunch before going ashore. Five of us put off in the first boat: Gann, John, myself, George, and Kuylen. The water was breaking too fiercely in the bight to permit our entering there, so we made for the beach just under the high cliffs south of the Castillo. We felt our way in very carefully and anchored the jolly-boat in three feet of water outside the breakers, and from there Kuylen and George carried us in on their backs.<sup>340</sup>

John felt miserable and faint—the sun had been beating down on us all morning—and lay down in the shade of the cliff to pull himself together. After resting up a bit ourselves, Gann and I climbed the cliff, entered the salt water palmetto bush on top and beat our way around through the plaza in front of the Castillo (Figure 27.2) and down the other side to the bight where we had left the stela two years ago. Miguel joined us here. I came out on the beach first and to my consternation could not see the stela. I called out this disconcerting news to Gann, who could not believe me, he said. We both were so sure Peter Vásquez had not taken it. It was a great blow to both of us, and after giving the beach a careful “once over” we sat down to mourn over this missing treasure. We visualized it at the bottom of the Caribbean in the hold of poor Peter Vásquez’ sunken craft.

Miguel, however, was sure this could not be. He knew Peter well, he said, was his “*compadre*,” and that on that last voyage of his Peter never got beyond Ascencion Bay. Miguel said his partner had gone to Cozumel and had returned with a Mexican official on board with an order for Peter’s arrest. Miguel and this partner had smuggled Peter off to Puerto Herrero, and from there he had departed for Xcalak, when he was overtaken by the great cyclone of October 1916 and drowned. He capped his argument with the statement that Peter had offered him \$50.00 gold to put into Tulum to get the stela.

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huge 6-foot wave slipped up behind us and broke over the boat, capsizing us. I found myself floundering around in 4-foot water without a dry stitch on. We all made the shore . . . but the camera and plates were drenched.” (New Mexico History Museum, Edgar L. Hewett Collection, AD 105, Box 9)

<sup>340</sup> Although the Peabody Museum has many photos of Tulum from the 1916 and 1922 CIW expeditions, nothing exists from the 1918 work, so we use those from the 1922 CIW expedition.



Figure 27.2. The Castillo at Tulum (Structure 1).

We developed, there on the beach, five possible fates that could have overtaken the monument:

1. That Peter had carried it off in some way and that it was therefore lost forever;
2. That some one of the thousand other people Gann has sent for it from time to time had called for it and carried it off;
3. That the Indians, seeing our activities of two years ago, had themselves carried it off into the bush for reasons best known to themselves;
4. That the sea in the great cyclone of two years ago had either washed it out to sea or destroyed it; or finally,
5. That it lay buried in the sand which the cyclone appeared to have washed in.

We determined to dig all around where we had left it the next morning, and with this faint hope we returned to the beach and went aboard to bring our living impedimenta ashore. This was no slight task, as we planned to transfer our cooking establishment ashore, and also because of the difficulty of landing through the high surf. John and I went ashore with the first boatload, carrying our beds and bedding, and had the boys carry this up the cliff to the Castillo where we had decided to sleep, before we let them go back to the boat for the second boatload.

Gann came ashore with the second and last load, which comprised the cooking outfit and food. He climbed the Castillo cursing like a trooper and drenched to the skin. It seems he had the boys put in too far, and a wave broke over the stern of the jolly boat and wet him through. I

put George to burning off the brush on the terrace in front of the Castillo,<sup>341</sup> and he started to cut down one of those thorny bushes in which ants inhabit the thorns.<sup>342</sup> After he had scattered an army of these about, and as he expressed it, after they had “put heat into the flesh” by biting everybody, I had him desist. Thorns were preferable to these devilish ants.

Meanwhile Hubert and Muddy were getting supper. After this meal, the boys put up our beds and then returned to the boat for the night. None of them wanted to sleep on shore because of the Indians.

Gann had elected to sleep outside on the terrace, but John and I chose the outer corridor of the temple proper, John in his hammock, and myself on my cot. The moon was magnificent and we sat on the terrace discussing subjects appropriate to the time and place: the age of the ruins, scenes that must have been enacted where we were so quietly conversing at that very moment, of Stephens, whose trail we were again crossing here. Before going to bed about nine, we went around behind the temple, overlooking the sea, and watched the moon lighting up the water with its silvery radiance. At our feet, the surf broke white against the base of the cliff, and so extended a ribbon of white on the sea of silver up and down as far as the eye could reach. The *Lilian Y* lay at anchor with her top-light twinkling back and forth in the heavy swell, which made me very thankful I was not aboard her. It rained in the night and Gann was obliged to come inside. I helped him in with his bed, which we put up in the inner chamber, or sanctuary.

### February 19—Monday

Alfredo and his boy came ashore to work for us, and after breakfast we all went down to the beach and set them digging up the sand where we had left the stela. It was a slender hope, but all we could do under the circumstances. Leaving them under John, who said he would boss the job while he made watercolors of the bight, I went off with Miguel to make a complete circuit of the walls and Gann disappeared to look up some wall paintings.

Miguel and I went first to the sea-end of the north wall and then started westward. When we came to the first passage, I stopped at the building there over a cenote of brackish water [Figure 27.3] and took the measurements for its ground plan. I think Sam Lothrop failed to secure these two years ago.

After this, we continued on around the north wall, noting the other passage therein, and on to the tower at the northwest corner. Thence, across the back to the passage through it, and beyond to the southwest corner and the other tower. When we reached here, it was nearly one and we could hear the others hallooing for us faintly through the woods, presumably to come to dinner. So, we set out in a northeasterly direction for the Castillo, arriving there fifteen minutes later, hot and tired through fighting the thorny bush all morning. Here, good and bad news awaited us. No Desiderio Cochua had shown up and we forthwith abandoned all hopes of seeing him, and better tidings: John had found four of the seven missing fragments [of the

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<sup>341</sup> Burning heavy vegetation at fragile ruins is not an optimal way to clear archaeological sites, but is sometimes necessary. In his May 26, 1924 (unpublished) diary, Morley says that the CIW team burned bush choking the Temple of the Thousand Columns and lower Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza, doubtless damaging sculptures (which still retained pigment).

<sup>342</sup> This is bullhorn acacia (*Vachellia cornigera*).

stela]. These were recovered within twenty-five feet of each other, scattered along the edge of the bush, presumably where the sea had thrown them in the cyclone of two years ago.



Figure 27.3. The Temple of the Cenote at Tulum (Structure 35). Note the cenote entrance underneath.

This considerably heartened us all, and gave hope that further search would reveal the big top piece which carried the I.S. [Initial Series date]. The other two fragments were very small and I feared they would not be recovered. After lunch, Gann took Muddy down to look for the still missing fragments, while Miguel and I set off for the east, or sea end of the south wall (Figure 27.4).

We measured the two passages through this and followed it to the southwest corner where we had knocked off before lunch. The wall is clearly of a defensive character. It abuts on the steep cliff running down to the sea at each end, and encloses an area of twenty-two acres. The north and south walls are 650 feet long, the west, or land wall, 1,500 feet long. It varies in height owing to the rolling nature of the ground from 6 to 18 feet and from 15 to 25, and in one place—at the southwest corner—37 feet in thickness. It has a parapet all the way around the outside ranging in height from 3 to 6 feet, and behind this is a platform, or esplanade, very regularly 9 to 10 feet broad. This platform averages about 6 feet above the level of the ground inside the enclosure. Both the outer and inner sides of this massive construction rise to a steep batter.



Figure 27.4. The defensive perimeter wall at Tulum. Note the relatively well-preserved flat surface extending into the distance.

In general, the ground level outside is lower than on the inside. This is particularly true of the west side, where the ground slopes away sharply from the base of the wall. The stones used are rough and show little or no signs of dressing, and appear to have been dry laid into the wall.

The five passageways are narrow, not more than 4 feet wide and 6 to 7 feet high. The eastern one in the north wall, that near the guardhouse of the cenote, had an offset in it which must have greatly facilitated its defense (Figure 27.5). It seemed clear to me why the enclosure was so large. In case of attack, the entire tribe could be assembled within the walls. Here was water and here doubtless were ample stores of corn, and behind these strong fortifications the city was practically impregnable against any attack that any other tribe could deliver against it.

Believing as I do that all these cities of the east coast were not founded until after the fall of Mayapan, circa 1441 AD, when all centralized authority in the peninsula broke down and every tribe was warring with its neighbor, such defenses were necessary, and the prince of Tulum, whomever he may have been, made himself as secure as he could against the vicissitudes and uncertainties of his epoch.

When Miguel and I had finished the wall, we beat back northward along the west wall to the northwest corner and there, spreading out fan-wise, started toward the sea to try to locate

the three buildings Sam Lothrop and Arthur Carpenter thought they had noted in this corner of the enclosure two years ago. I had hoped we might not find these, as I was tired of measuring in such a thicket, but luck was against me, and about 50 feet south of the western passageway in the north wall I found them: two dance platforms and a temple. One of the former had a very small house or platform on it, only 7 feet by 9 feet. The other was unusual in having a parapet clear around it. The temple had an interesting small inner shrine, and a little back door, a sort of privy entrance, which I fancy the priests found useful in slipping into the holy of holies from behind without the faithful in front knowing about it.<sup>343</sup>



Figure 27.5. The offset doorway in the perimeter wall at Tulum.

The bush was very thick hereabouts, indeed at some not distant time it had been completely cleared just east of these three constructions, and had grown up very thick as is usual in such cases; and before we had finished clearing them, I heard Gann calling. He came through the bush presently with Muddy, being bent on the same errand as ourselves—trying to discover these same three buildings.

When I had completed their measurement, we returned to the bight to look at the recovered fragments of the stela. Muddy had found the big top piece buried in the sand not far from where we had left it. Now only two small fragments were missing [Figure 27.6]. I scrutinized the side opposite the I.S. carefully for glyphs of any sort which would bring the troublesome I.S. 9.6.10.0.0. 8 Ajaw 13 Pax [January 26, 564 GMT] forward to a more historically probable period, and not without some measure of success.<sup>344</sup> In one place was a coefficient of 7

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<sup>343</sup> These structures are the Casa del Noroeste (Str. 34), the Gran Plataforma, and a small shrine.

<sup>344</sup> Tulum Stela 1 has long baffled archaeologists because it clearly predates the site's occupation. Its I.S. date and style led to speculation that it was brought from nearby Coba, although the dates of the Macanxoc stelae are all later than the Tulum example (Guenter 2014: 408).

attached to a day sign and following the *lajuntun* [a half-*k'atun* period of 10 years] sign. This enabled us to supply the effaced day sign as Ajaw. Again, on the opposite column of glyphs the day 7 Ajaw after a *tun* sign was unmistakably recorded. What did this mean—a record of the day 7 Ajaw ending a *lajuntun* when the I.S. day was so clearly 8 Ajaw?



Figure 27.6. Tulum Stela 1.

It occurred to me that the cycle after 9.6.10.0.0, the *lajuntun* 10.6.10.0.0, might end on the day 7 Ajaw, and Gann and I sat down on the beach, took out our notebooks and fell to work on the necessary calculations to find this out. As usual in such cases, these dates never work out right the first time, owing to some footling [trivial] error in one's arithmetic, as two times two is five, and so we both reached different results and neither the day 7 Ajaw. However, on a second try we both got 7 Ajaw, the day recorded, and we tucked away the result as promising.

While performing these calculations, John had been nosing around the beach and had found a bottle with a paper inside it. This he broke, and found the paper was a leaf torn from some French play, but no other writing upon it. A curious bit of flotsam and jetsam, we thought it. After this, we all took a bath in the sea and then returned to the Castillo, where the boys had supper ready. This was almost a sacrament, as we had killed our pet and only hen, which we had carried with us all the way from Corozal. The poor creature was losing weight, and rather than abandon her in the bush to be killed by some beast of prey, we gave reluctant consent to have her killed and served for dinner last night. Muddy refused outright to do the fell work, and Hubert was none too anxious. We ate the last of her at supper, and I must confess, relished her greatly. And still no Desiderio. We decided to wait no longer for him, but to leave the first thing in the morning.

Again, in the evening we sat on the terrace under a wonderful moon and talked archaeology. Our thoughts turned instinctively to the stela, and we discussed the possibility of the new evidence declaring the contemporaneous date of the monument. It seemed as though it might. Chichen Itza was abandoned in 10.3.0.0.0 [AD 889 GMT] and seventy years later a stela may have been set up here, i.e., in 10.6.10.0.0 7 Ajaw 8 Yaxk'in.<sup>345</sup> We held this hypothesis up to every angle of criticism we could level against it and only laid it aside at bedtime without having developed any flaw therein.

This morning, the boys killed a small snake of a very poisonous variety in the stones of the cornice of the Castillo, and it was with some misgivings, therefore, that I finally climbed into my bed. It seemed to me I remembered an old superstition to the effect that snakes, like everything else, are usually found in pairs. Gann, in spite of his wetting of last night, elected to sleep outside again.

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<sup>345</sup> Morley has his date wrong on multiple levels: the correct day and month names for this I.S. date is 7 Ajaw 18 Yaxk'in and Chichen Itza was not abandoned at that time (AD 958 GMT).



## CHAPTER 28

### THE TRIP NORTH

#### February 19—Tuesday

As soon as the boys came ashore, we started them carrying our beds and bedding down to the beach. We had finished with Tuluum, for this time at any rate, all but for one thing: namely, burying the fragments of the stela in a safe place. All the boys had returned to the beach south of the Castillo when Gann, John, and I joined Muddy at the bight. We dug a hole in the sand and carried the five recovered fragments thither.<sup>346</sup> And covered them again with sand. John cut a crude cross on a rock on the southern side of the bight and from this cross it is two paces north to the first stone and then three paces inland will uncover the other four. This seemed quite like *Treasure Island*, burying these treasures (to us) of stone in the sand and marking a cross nearby, and poor Ben Gunn came into my mind as we shoveled in the last few shovels full of sand on that blistering white beach. Curiously enough, John told me afterward he thought of the same book, only the picture that came to his mind was that of the pirates under Long John Silver finding someone had been at the treasure before them.<sup>347</sup>

We returned by way of the Castillo, where I had left my Kodak, and in passing by Temple 7 I thought to stop within to see whether we could have missed any fragments of the monument. I stepped up on the terrace in front of the temple and stumbled on a stone, which to my amazement had glyphs on it. It was indeed a part of the stela, which we had failed to find two years ago, chiefly because we had only looked inside the temple, but it was probably one of those carried outside by Howe and Parmelee in 1911 but not removed to the beach by them.<sup>348</sup> At first I thought it was the missing fragment of the Initial Series, that showing the day 8 Ajaw, but I soon discovered it was the last two glyphs in the same column, in fact the lower left hand corner of the sculptured part of the front of the monument. Happily, these two glyphs were unusually clear for this monument and unmistakably record a lajuntun ending on the day 7 Ajaw. This confirming in no uncertain fashion the results obtained from the study of the other side of the monument yesterday afternoon.

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<sup>346</sup> The copy of Morley's diary from which we worked has a space here for a drawing of the arrangement of these fragments in the beach sand.

<sup>347</sup> The stela did not remain buried for long. Gann returned sometime later and dug it up and carried it off to be sold to the British Museum in 1924, where it resides today in a back vault not on display: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Am1924-0510-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Am1924-0510-1)

<sup>348</sup> George Howe and William Parmelee briefly visited Tulum in 1910 (not 1911 as Morley wrote) under the auspices of the Peabody Museum. The visit, like Morley's in 1913, was cut short by the threat of hostile Maya (Shaw and Mathews 2005: 17).

Here, immediately following the I.S., we have declared a lajuntun ending 7 Ajaw, but when was there such a lajuntun? The first occurrence of one before the I.S. date [of 9.6.10.0.0] was in 9.0.10.0.0, six *k'atuns* [six periods of approximately 20 years, or ~120 years] earlier, and the first occurrence after was 9.13.10.0.0, seven *k'atuns* later, neither of which develops any significant relation with the I.S. itself. But if we choose the second lajuntun after the I.S. ending on the day 7 Ajaw, we develop a higher significant relation with the I.S., none other than that of being exactly 1 cycle later: namely 10.6.10.0.0.

This discovery Gann and I regarded as strongly corroborating our hypothesis of yesterday and we were correspondingly elated.<sup>349</sup> It delayed us for about three-quarters of an hour, as I had to draw both glyphs to scale and photograph them. Just as I finished this job, Gann kicked over another smaller stone on the same terraces which proved to be another fragment of the same monument. This, I was able to tell, came from the right-hand side of the front near the bottom, but contained only one complete glyph and that was undecipherable. It was a normal type head. It is probable if we could have lingered longer, we might have found another piece or so, but we could not tarry. We had found enough, however, to encourage us to believe that possibly we may soon clear up the mystery of this most perplexing but highly important monument.

The boys were waiting at the beach to take us off. Gann and John feared a drenching and [un]dressed to the skin, took off everything, in fact, save their hats. I snapped them while they were all in the surf, carrying their clothes high above their heads out to the jolly boat. I had George carry me out on his shoulders and I made the jolly boat without getting wet. We put out at once to the *Lilian Y* and, as soon as we were aboard, had breakfast and started northward for Puerto Morales [Morelos].

It was rolling heavily outside, and in far less time than it takes to write about it I had lost my lunch overboard. This was the first time this catastrophe had actually happened to me this year, or last on the Mosquitia trip, although I had been very near to it several previous occasions. It so relieved me this morning, however, that I was glad I had parted with it, and almost sighed for more.

We had thought of putting in at Akumal, a small village of Santa Cruz Indians north of Tulum, to leave word for Desiderio Cochua that we had waited for him, but when we were abreast there, the sea was so rough and the *quebrada* in the reef so narrow—only 12 meters wide—that the pilot advised against making the attempt. We continued on [northward] to Playa [del] Carmen, a village of *pacificado* Indians eight leagues south of Puerto Morelos. Our larder was getting low. We had killed our only fowl, the eggs were finished, and it was necessary to lay in some more *totoposte* [dried tortillas].

Gann and I went ashore, John being too lazy and blasé to stir from his book.<sup>350</sup> The village contained between forty and fifty people and there were ruined buildings a couple of hundred

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<sup>349</sup> Lothrop discussed Morley and Gann's speculation at length (1924: 40–42) and believed it to be incorrect based on the style of the sculpture. Instead, he dated the monument at 9.13.10.0.0 7 Ajaw 3 Kumk'u (AD 702 GMT).

<sup>350</sup> Gann writes about going ashore: "The whole settlement, consisting of about fifty Indians came down to the beach to meet us, and was rewarded by the spectacle of the pram being

yards to the north and south of the modern thatched huts. The southern group was composed of two small temples within the sanctuary as follows: [Space left in diary for image.] Near the houses was a pyramid of perhaps 15 feet high with a stairway on the side toward the sea and apparently nothing on the summit. North of the houses were two-unit-room buildings side by side on the same platform, both facing the sea and in good condition. The Indians were using the southernmost as a drying and curing house for their tobacco and *bejuco*s.

We did a thriving business here, or rather Muddy did for us [Figure 28.1]. The village lacked soap and sugar, and these we traded for chickens, eggs, and tomatoes, plus seven dollars and a half to boot. From different people, Muddy picked up a dozen live chickens. The feet of these were tied so they could not escape and they lay around on the ground waiting until we were ready to go aboard. He bought 87 eggs, some plantains, and an *almud*<sup>351</sup> of the most delicious tomatoes I have ever tasted in my life. These were small, scarcely larger than a large cherry, and very, very sweet. They could be, and in fact, were agreeably, eaten raw without either sugar, salt, vinegar, or pepper.



Figure 28.1. Muddy (tall, in center) making a deal for provisions.

Just as we were leaving, one of our customers, a man whose wife had been good enough to make us some hot tortillas, asked Gann to visit an *enfermo* [sick person] at his house. This poor unfortunate was a boy of about sixteen or eighteen. He lay in a hammock all doubled up with pain and fever. He was wasted away to little more than skin and bone, and to me had the look

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twisted round and dashed broadside upon the sandy beach, while her passengers emerged like drowned rats.... Morley, with his small person, blue eyes, long yellow hair, enormous round tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, expansive smile and glibly inaccurate Spanish—a type so different from anything they had ever seen before—being regarded as a particularly amusing specimen” (1924: 136).

<sup>351</sup> An old (from Arabic) and highly variable Spanish unit of both liquid and dry volume.

of death in his face. After examining him Gann said he had chronic malaria. His spleen was so enlarged as to almost fill his abdomen. When we returned to the boat, we sent back some quinine to the poor devil. Gann thought he would probably die. Conditions here would appear to have improved little since Stephens' time.

Before we finally got away from Playa Carmen, it was four and quite out of the question to reach Puerto Morelos before nightfall. We stopped for the night, therefore, at Punta Marcoma, a deserted stretch of sandy beach and low bush four leagues south of Puerto Morelos. As usual, John slept aboard, Gann and I having our cots set up on terra firma and off the incessant rocking and groaning and complaining of the *Lilian Y* and her noisy rigging.

### February 20—Wednesday

We got an early start and before nine were in Puerto Morelos. The wharf formerly extended some 100 yards out to sea, but some storm has eaten a great central section out of it, so that now the seaward end is isolated and unused. Some official beckoned us ashore and Gann and I put off with the captain in the jolly boat. We landed on the beach and after presenting our papers asked about the ruins inland at Santa Maria. We had heard of these as a "*grand casa*" but on getting this near to them the story, as usual, petered out. The *encargador* of the company at the port said formerly they had been large, but that they had been completely destroyed by the *chicleros* living in the vicinity. This decided us not to go inland but to hasten on our way, so we only stayed long enough to have our papers examined and to take a few photographs. I noticed with interest that the lighthouse, or rather the house from which the tower rose, was built after the model of a small square Maya temple or tower so frequently seen on this coast. At last, apparently, the moderns are borrowing from the ancients. The Mexican government maintains a telegraph station here, the only one on the entire east coast of Yucatan. I took advantage of it to wire David<sup>352</sup> Goff that we would reach Progreso before the end of the month. Nothing further holding us here, we weighed anchor and headed for Isla Mujeres.<sup>353</sup>

We dropped anchor a hundred yards off the small wharf in about two fathoms of water. Presently the port authorities came aboard and told us we could land at any time. It was then only two o'clock, so we decided to go back to the southern end of the island and see the small temple there, so that we could leave early the next morning.

We sent word ashore to have a good supper prepared and then in the *Lilian Y* went down to the southern end. Miguel guided us in behind a rocky point and then went ashore in the jolly boat. There was a narrow strip of land here, and we left our towels against the prospect of a bath on our return. Miguel set off down the beach and we trailed along behind. The sea has cut the limestone cliffs into a lace-work of stones, fearfully hard on shoe leather and downright lacerating on the hands. On our way, we met the lighthouse keeper and he turned back with us. We left the beach shortly and, climbing the back of the island, came out on the rocky

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<sup>352</sup> Morley's best friends in Merida were Mr. and Mrs. William James; David Goff, their nephew, was the same age as Morley and the two became close (Brunhouse 1971: 171–172).

<sup>353</sup> Isla Mujeres lies just off Cancun. It is named for the many images of goddesses, such as Ix Chel, the goddess of pregnancy and childbirth, the first Spaniards saw.

promontory, which forms its southern end. The lighthouse establishment is located here and beyond, at the very point, the little Maya temple which is half falling into the sea.

There is a small temple just west of the living quarters of the lighthouse keeper, now almost entirely demolished. It was a little square shrine with four doorways, one in each side rising from a square platform with rounded corners and stairways on all four sides. We measured this and took a couple of photos. We next visited the temple at this point, a magnificent location [Figure 28.2]. The eternal blue of the Caribbean rimming it on all but one narrow side. About a third of it had fallen into the sea and the rest is doomed.<sup>354</sup> We took measurements and photographs and then started back for the boat. The wonder of its situation on that high bluff looking over the sea, the warm sunlight of the late afternoon, the pounding of the surf at the base of the cliff and, above all, the romantic associations with which we invested this decaying shrine of a forgotten faith, all stirred us profoundly and has created a never-to-be-forgotten picture.



Figure 28.2. The small Late Postclassic temple on the southern point of Isla Mujeres.

Fighting our way over the rocky cliffs, wrought to a needle-like surface by many seas, wearied us, and we were hot and tired before getting back to our towels. We paused to examine an old shell heap with thousands of shells, in which the conch predominated, and to measure a little stone house, all gone but its foundations, from which they appeared to have been thrown. Although it was nearly six when we got back to the beach, we took a bath before returning to the *Lilian Y*, and before we finally got back to the village and ashore, it was 7:30. A man met us at the wharf and conducted us to the house where supper had been prepared. This banquet was the most delicious we have yet had: chicken and rice, eggs, and tomatoes, *escabeche* of fish, *mole de coana* (a kind of cardamom of pork), beans, tortillas, and tea. We have had these things before, but never so deliciously prepared. In consequence of which, we all overate.

After supper we walked up to the Plaza in a night fairly dripping with moonlight. I never

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<sup>354</sup> This small temple survives today as a tourist stop on the island.

saw such a brilliance. The man who had arranged dinner for us, and who with several *compadres* had watched us eat it, took us up to an old abandoned wooden tower, an “*observatorio*” they called it, and we climbed to the top. It stands on the east or seaward edge of the island. From here the vista was beautiful. The moonlight had extinguished every star. Off to the right flashed and disappeared the red light of the lighthouse we saw this afternoon. A lovely breeze came off the sea, and we all voted Mujeres the ideal place of a rest-cure.

When we came down the tower, near the base we were shown an old Spanish cannon half buried in the sand. If its rusting old mouth could only have spoken, what tales of the Spanish Main we might have heard, but those iron lips are forever sealed, even for the grim message they formerly conveyed. Nearby, under a covered shed, was a commemorative wooden tablet set up by Carranza, I think, on February 18 and certainly 1917 to memorialize the fourth centenary of the discovery of the island by Juan de Grijalva in February 1517. It struck me as admirable and pathetic that old Carranza, worn and worried by the turmoil surrounding him far off to the north—the Villistas, the Felicistas, the Zapatistas, etc.—should have found time to pause long enough in his harried official life to order the erection of this tablet, and even more so, that the order having been given should have been executed at all.

After this, John returned to the *Lilian Y* and Gann and I went down the beach to where Muddy had put up our beds. The island sheltered us from the strong east breeze and there were no mosquitoes. Everything, in fact, digestion, lack of insect plagues, moonlight, no rain, etc., for once conspired to give us a good night

### February 21—Thursday

Another good breakfast at the same *casa* as last night and then down to the wharf. A change of plan has been decided upon, because there is a boy here who knows of some ruins on the island of Cancun opposite. We engaged the services of this youth and then set off. It did not take long to cross the stretch between Mujeres and the mainland and to enter the narrow arm of the sea, which separates the island of Cancun therefrom. This arm is known locally as El Río, but it is salt water throughout, and in fact opens out into the sea at its outer end at Nisuc [Nizuc] Point. After about a mile, El Río opens into a large lagoon. Even in the jolly boat (with the Evinrude) we touched bottom at the bar when the lagoon enters from the river. We crossed the lagoon perhaps two miles [wide], dodging a sandbar in the middle, and finally landed at a coconut walk on the opposite shore. An old man joined our guide, and after leaving word with his youngish wife to prepare some tortillas for us to take aboard on the way back, we started for the ruins. They said it was two kilometers, but as I timed it, it was nearer two miles. We were going to see the figure of a king, which our guide said was entire.

The path lay partly through coconut walks and partly through cleared milpa, the last furiously hot. We passed through a good-sized group and finally reached the place of El Rey.<sup>355</sup> After a slight search we were shown the building where El Rey had formerly stood in a niche between the doorways in the upper zone of the façade [Figure 28.3].

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<sup>355</sup> These ruins, just south of the Cancun hotel district, are a popular tourist destination, which the local police exploit with speed traps and heavy fines (negotiable with cash) on the road to the site. Photos of the site can be found at: <https://www.themayanruinswebsite.com/el-rey.html>



Figure 28.3. The Temple of El Rey, Cancun.

This building had two rooms, front and back originally, but the latter has completely fallen in. The boys located El Rey, but unhappily he had suffered the same fate [decapitation] as Charles I and Louis XVI. The head was in excellent condition, however, and Gann and I had it set up and photographed [Figure 28.4], and John drew it.<sup>356</sup>



Figure 28.4. The head of El Rey, Cancun, photographed by Merwin in 1914.

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<sup>356</sup> Gann had hoped to return to the site at a future date and remove the head for the British Museum. Ultimately, he did not return and El Rey now resides in the Museo Maya de Cancun.

I have said it was furiously hot. In this cleared milpa, the sun seemed to pour down with especial strength, and we were soon burned out. I finished the measurements of this *Casa del Rey* and also measured another building nearby. The sun was now directly overhead and we started back for the boat.<sup>357</sup> On the way I measured another large colonnaded hall like those at Tulum and Chac Mool. Also saw a “*pedra con letras*,” being a stone with a scroll taken from one of the buildings and carried out to form part of a stone walk to the water side.

This group had been of considerable size in its day (Figure 28.5), but now it is largely in ruin. We left it with its name of Cancun.<sup>358</sup>



Figure 28.5. The northern section of the ruins of El Rey, Cancun.

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<sup>357</sup> Interestingly, neither Morley or Gann mention the numerous faded-but-visible frescos that adorn the interior walls of some of the structures at the site, specifically at Structure 3b.

<sup>358</sup> Today the site is known as Zona Arqueológica de El Rey.



The tortillas were ready when we got back to the hut and, after paying our guide, we got into the jolly boat. The Evinrude was in good working order and we were soon cutting the waters of the lagoon. I was surprised at the sea, which could kick up even in an interior waterway such as this. It is very shallow, however, and with an easterly breeze of any strength grows choppy.

We got back to the *Lilian Y* before three and left for [the site of] El Meco at once. This was not a long run, but before we finally got ashore it was nearly sunset. Gann and I started to walk through the scrub bush to the Castillo, but roused such voracious hordes of mosquitoes that we quickly gave up the attempt until the morning. Moreover, it was too late to have done any work that night, so we returned to the boat at once and had supper. John had seen some animal leaping along the beach just as we came to anchor—he thought it a dog or perhaps a tiger [jaguar]. We found the tracks, which seemed to bear out the first diagnosis. We slept on the beach. It was a clear night and gave no threat of rain. We had the tarp brought ashore, however, on the off chance that it might rain, which it did. Between 11:00 and 12:00, it came on to rain and blow hard. We jumped out of our cots and drew the tarpaulin over but under the rain and the fierce gusts which beat against it, Gann's *pabellon* supports gave way, bringing desolation on both of us. It now became necessary to change my position, i.e., put my head where my feet had been. Incidental to this change, I got partially wet.

The rain passed quickly. It had only lasted long enough to disturb our arrangements for a peaceful night, and after accomplishing that, moved on. The moon came out strongly, and except for our sodden blankets one would never know it had rained. The wind was now blowing strong and it was practically impossible to keep the tarp anchored down. It flapped and flew about in every gust, and almost dragged the cots from their moorings. The feeble bamboo stick which was supporting my *pabellon* bent almost double. I looked for some stronger support but could find nothing, so it had to be permitted to flap. To the accompaniment of these noises and more or less damp, we fell asleep until morning.

## February 22—Friday

We sent aboard for breakfast and then back to the land to visit the Castillo [of El Meco], which is a very prominent landmark from the sea as the Mexican government whitewashes the façade from time to time. We each took a different path. Mine led through a close thicket, fighting through which I scratched myself properly. The Castillo is about 35 feet high, or rather its pyramidal structure is. This is ascended by a broad stairway on the east or seaward side, steep and now in ruins [Figure 28.6].

The temple above is now in ruins. It had two columns in front and the interior is composed of two rooms, a front corridor and a smaller inner sanctuary. It seems to have been altered in ancient times, an outer shell having been built around an older inner unit. Gann came up and after a few photographs, he went back to the beach to take a bath while I finished measuring the Castillo. About ten, I took the final measurements and, with Miguel and our guide of yesterday, started back for the beach. On the way I took several photographs of the Castillo. This group is not large, but there is at least one plaza entirely surrounded by buildings, if not two.

When I got back to the beach both John and Gann were asleep. I hailed the jolly boat and we all went aboard. Then started a longish trip up to the entrance of a lagoon called Boca de

Iglesia. We were inside the reef most of the time, and the channel is very tortuous. Many *vuelatas* [turns] of this took up all our time so that when we finally reached Boca de Iglesia, Miguel and our guide said it was too late to reach there and get back before nightfall. After getting everything on board the jolly boat, Muddy tried to start the Evinrude, but it refused to work so we had to give up the attempt of going ashore until morning.



Figure 28.6. The Castillo pyramid at El Meco, restored.

We had passed Contoy [Island] light on the right about noon, but did not put over there. With Punta Celerain and Punta Herrero, it is the most powerful on the entire east coast. On the left we had passed a lagoon or bay called Blancas. It is said to have some eight feet of water. At the end is a coconut walk belonging to don Nicolás Martínez of Merida. I met one of his sons when I came over on a Mexican gunboat to Cozumel five years ago with Jesse Nusbaum.

I spent the afternoon in writing up my diary, which was getting behind. We slept on board in order to get an early start for the *iglesia* in the morning.

### February 23—Saturday

We were quite a flotilla as we set out for the old church. Muddy had done some scouting the day before and reported that we would have to lighten the jolly-boat as much as possible if she were to get through at all. John, Gann, and I, of course, had to go, and Muddy to take care of the Evinrude, also George and Kuylen in case the Evinrude broke down. Finally we had to take Miguel and the Mujeres boy along as pilots and guides. In order to lighten the jolly boat as much as possible, we towed the ship's dory behind. Once over the bar, we divided forces. Gann,

John, and I with Muddy, and the boy from Mujeres stayed in the jolly boat while Kuylen, George, and Miguel got into the dory. Both parties were soon in difficulties. We got within perhaps a half mile of the far shore of the lagoon and then went aground; nor could we go ahead. The bottom was soft white mud into which the poles sank three feet or more. It was impossible to make any headway, so John, Gann, and I transferred to the dory in the hope that it drew less, but we were quickly undeceived. By and by, we had to put back and take an entire new channel across the lagoon farther north. Presently we made out some sticks in the shallow water and by following these gradually drew nearer to the shore.

We could see the church very clearly standing out above the foliage, and following the sticks we finally reached the shore. Almost, I should say, as the boat went aground about ten yards off shore and we went ashore on the backs of the men. The old padres had had a stone causeway laid across the marshy ground at the edge of the lagoon for almost a hundred yards. We followed this until the ground began to rise where it lost itself in the stony soil. The church stands with its back to the lagoon. It is T-shaped with the chancel flanked by two rooms. The nave is roofless and bore every evidence of being unfinished. The roof was missing, and the walls never had been carried higher than 8 or 9 feet, whereas those of the nave must have been 25 feet high. The high altar had been stripped of all its adornments. Miguel said the Indians had carried the *santo* off to some village in the interior long ago. I think the name was Kaltunich.

The church, however, was still subject to vicarious worship. On the altar, we found several crude wooden crosses, a cheap print or two of the Virgin, two flowers made of clam-shells fastened on sticks, a bit of rotting silk and cheap lace, and in front of the altar a glass of holy beans and some bottles with candle drippings. Behind the altar, there was a bit of newspaper showing the date May 14, 1911. It was all very crude. Gann drew the not inapt comparison that the Roman Catholic domination of the region appeared to have been as ephemeral as the ancient Maya. The one religion, like the other, has passed and only the forgotten sanctuaries of them both remain to witness the existence of either. Creeds as well as men pass in this ever-changing world.<sup>359</sup>

We had hoped strongly to find some date on this church in order to place the east coast culture [in perspective] but were disappointed. I took measurements for a map, and a few pictures, and about 10:30 returned to the *playa*, leaving the old walls to the desolation of the bush. It was high time, too, as the tide was just coming to turn and run out. Indeed, before we finally got clear of the lagoon we had to pole over several shallow places and banks appeared behind us as we made toward the boat. We finally got out to where we could use the Evinrude and got back to the *Lilian Y* about noon, weighed anchor, and were off.

The Mujeres boy whose name I never knew said this lagoon extended clear around to Yalahau Lagoon and even as far as the Río Lagarto, but only the very shallowest-draft dories

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<sup>359</sup> Anti-Catholic sentiment was rampant in Mexico during this period. The 1917 Constitution put severe limits on clergy, including but not limited to the loss of the right to vote or hold elected office, forbidding clerics from wearing their garb in public, confiscation of all church property, and disallowing all religious activity in public debate. Additionally, each Mexican state was given permission to limit the number of priests, or ban them entirely, from its territory.

could negotiate it. We put out to sea here, standing pretty well off shore because of the shoals around Cape Catoche. We made the village of Holbox about four and here I paid off the Mujeres boy and let him go.

Muddy, the captain, and myself went ashore. It is a little fishing settlement, no more, with the inevitable statue of Benito Juarez or Padre Hidalgo in the plaza. We stopped ashore only long enough to get our papers OKed and to buy some tortillas. I took a few photographs and we returned to the ship. We decided to sleep in Yalahau Lagoon off the old pirate haunt of Yalahau, now abandoned.<sup>360</sup> Miguel was grouchy, did not want to go on: said *no hay nada allí*, etc. The truth was he wanted to spend the evening ashore at Holbox, confabbing with some old cronies, but we put out again.

We entered the channel of the lagoon at sunset and dropped anchor off Yalahau about dusk. As the town stands in a mangrove swamp, it seemed wiser to sleep on board. Even here, the mosquitoes troubled us some, although we were 200 yards out. It was fairly calm inside the lagoon and we did not fare so badly on board as I feared we might.<sup>361</sup>

### February 24—Sunday

We went ashore the first thing: Gann, myself, Kuylen, and George. There had been an old wharf here but this was long since dismantled and now little remains of it save a few rotten piles. Clouds of seagulls, herons, and the like flew from these as we worked our way inshore. We made out a stone house through the bush and went thither. It was roofless and abandoned. Passing around behind, we saw a large covered gate overgrown with bushes and weeds. I was at a loss to understand the functioning of this until, passing east of the house, I came to a thick wall with an embrasure in it, and then I realized this was the Castillo of Stephens.<sup>362</sup>

George and I walked inland a bit to a calabash tree, which we climbed to see whether a lagoon separated the place from the mainland. There was none, but we could see a low place that must be a swamp in the rainy season. We returned to the fort and walked around the wall, finding a big oven at one corner, and then returned to the *Lilian Y*. Our next stop along the low

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<sup>360</sup> Yalahau (Yalahao) boasts a very large freshwater spring directly off the beach, which provided a watering point for pirates along the coast. Although today called the Yalahao Cenote, the water source is not a true cenote but rather a round, cenote-like lake, today a tourist destination.

<sup>361</sup> Gann (1924: 161) says, "Yalahau is one of the most melancholy and forsaken looking places it is possible to imagine.... It is a waste of mangrove swamp and scrubby bush—the home of land crabs and snakes, and the haunt of myriads of mosquitoes."

<sup>362</sup> The small Spanish fort of El Cuyo had evidently been abandoned since the seventeenth century, but was occupied in 1810 by Miguel Molas, who became, along with Jean Laffite, one of several early nineteenth-century pirates. In the 1840s, Stephens (1868: 350–351) reconnoitered the structure and wrote, "I rambled for a little while in the Castillo, a low fortress, with twelve embrasures, built for the suppression of piracy . . . . It was now garrisoned by a little Meztizo [sic] tailor, who had run away from Sisal with his wife to avoid being taken for a soldier. The meekest possible tenants of a fort, they paid no rent, and seemed perfectly happy."

barren coast was at Cuyo, or Monte de Cuyo, so named from a fairly high mound, perhaps 30 feet high, dating from Maya times and now used to support the lighthouse tower.<sup>363</sup> Gann and I went ashore here. The Customs House official was not in the town, having gone inland, it being Sunday. Some friends of his put a seal on our papers and they said that they would be all right. Gann and I climbed the Cuyo [lighthouse] which commands a fine view of the surrounding country. This is all flat as a table top. Behind stretches the shallow salt-water lagoon, the Río Lagarto. The water is allowed to run into shallower pans and there evaporates, making salt beds<sup>364</sup> one of the chief industries of this place, which boasts some 300 people.

A Decauville railway crosses the lagoon and then branches, one arm going east and the other south. This belongs to the *Compañía Comercial de Fincas Rústicas*, an organization given over to sugar, chicle, and some mahogany.<sup>365</sup> It has five *fincas*: Ingenio, Santo Eusebio, Moctezuma, Otrest, and one other, and these two railways connect them with Cuyo, which is the headquarters. There was nothing to hold us here, and as soon as we got our papers back, we returned to the *Lilian Y* and continued on our way. We decided not to stop at San Felipe but to continue to Zilan [Dzilam de Bravo], anchor outside and go ashore first thing in the morning. We passed Yalbaku light shortly after dark and anchored off Zilan about eleven.

Followed the most unpleasant night of the entire trip. A fairly heavy swell or roll was coming in, and the boat rose and fell all night long as the endless waves passed under her. The motion was sickening, but to this should be added the discomfort of the noise of pulleys, rigging, helm, wheel, etc. Neither Gann nor I slept a wink, and even John, who usually sleeps like a log on the sea, complained bitterly, said no night since we had sailed has been so bad as this.

## February 25—Monday

We all felt very *triste*. The boat still continued to rock, and we got off for the shore as quickly as we could. The pilot, in an excess of caution, had anchored fully a mile and a half out last night, and when we tried to approach nearer, we bumped on the bottom. After trying to feel out the channel with our keep, as John expressed it, we decided to anchor where we were and go ashore in the jolly boat, a long business from that distance out. On our way in, we met the *Cellador* and gave him a tow back with the *Evinrude*, which for a wonder, was working. Here, for the first time since I left in 1913, I saw some henequen, the golden fiber of the country, at once its fortune and its misfortune. Great 400-pound bales of this were on the wharf ready for shipment to Merida,<sup>366</sup> and thence to the States.

We went ashore and presented our papers and also General Solís's letter. Strictly speaking, this was out of his bailiwick, as we had passed from Quintana Roo into Yucatán sometime

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<sup>363</sup> The modern red and white-striped lighthouse was built atop the same pyramid.

<sup>364</sup> The north coast of Yucatan was famous for its prehispanic (and Colonial-period) salt works, producing salt of very high quality by solar evaporation, traded throughout the Maya lowlands (see, e.g., Andrews and Mock 2002).

<sup>365</sup> Gann (1924: 163) mentions that henequen and salt were also important exports; he does not mention mahogany. If any mahogany even grows in the area, it is probably worth little.

<sup>366</sup> Morley probably means Progreso, the port north of Merida.

during the night. The line comes to the *playa* at Chipopte. However, the letter worked like a charm and we were asked to state our wants. They were not excessive, a platform or truck and a mule to make the eight-mile trip into Zilan [Dzilam González] in the interior. At first, we had thought we would have to make this trip on mule-back, but on learning a tramvia [Decauville rail line] went inland, we decided to go on that, as it was much easier. But here an unexpected difficulty arose—there was only one platform [open flatcar] and that one was then in use taking the heavy bales of henequen out to the wharf end. Moreover, it seems that no mule was immediately forthcoming. We tried to get the chief of the henequen operations to let us have his one ewe lamb [mule], and to my surprise he consented to do so. While the mule was being brought from some distant pasture, we walked out to the *campo santo* [cemetery], a pretty spot by the sea, west of town. There seemed to be a great collection of wooden crosses in one corner, and only a few erect, as though they were used for a while and then rooted up. One grave only had a cement sarcophagus or stone. It doubtless shelters the remains of some village magnate.

Returning to the village, we found everything in readiness for the trip into the interior. My understanding with the chief of the henequen operations was that we would use his platform only as far as the hacienda of Kaltunich, two leagues distant, where he said we could get plenty of platforms and mules to take us the remaining league into Zilan and send the outfit back. With the crack of the whip, our mule galloped off at a promising gait and we covered the five or six miles to Kaltunich in half an hour. The hacienda lies about a quarter of a mile west of the main tramvia to Zilan and we had to take a switch.

Arriving at the hacienda, we had the great misfortune to find the *encargador* gone for the day. His wife, an Indian woman, would do nothing in the way of hiring or loaning us a mule in his absence, and the ship of our affairs was like to have come on the rocks, then and there. Everything conspired against us. We had passed the most miserable night of the entire voyage last night. The sun was furiously hot as it can only be in Yucatan, our time was short, and Gann frankly pessimistic of seeing only a mound or two, piles of broken stone. Indeed, I had no idea if we would see any inscriptions. The clue was too slender: Landa's statement that three and a half centuries ago there were inscribed stelae like those at Mayapan here at Zilan, and Juan Martínez's tip several years ago that he would like to dig there.<sup>367</sup>

However, I dislike to be turned back by purely material obstacles, so devised a way out of the dilemma. Through Muddy's always adequate [Yukateko] Mayan, I got the woman to lend us a platform—she would go no further—and then persuaded the *arriero* who had come with us from the port to take us the remaining league into Zilan drawing the platform behind us. My idea was that he could then return to the port, and we could engage another man and mule in the village to bring us back on the borrowed platform.

This arrangement having been satisfactorily concluded, we set out again towing the borrowed platform behind us. The mule was more burned out now, and it took us the same time to do the remaining league, namely, half an hour, that it had the first two. We bid our driver goodbye at the end of the journey and walked a mile and a half westward into the

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<sup>367</sup> Juan Martínez was inspector and curator of archaeological monuments for the state of Yucatan and also one of the contributors to the GMT (he being the M) correlation of the Maya and the Gregorian calendars.

village. The sun was very hot, and with common consent we sat in the shade of a house at one corner of the plaza. While Muddy was looking up the prospects of getting lunch, a native came up and we asked him if he knew where any sculptured stones were. He said there was a fine one built into the back wall of the *cabildo*, so we all went to have a look at it. First, however, we had to be presented to the president of the municipality and his assistants and had to do the *simpaticismo*. Afterward, accompanied by at least a score of officials and hangers-on, we went out back to see the monument [Figure 28.7].



Figure 28.7. Postcard of Dzilam González Stela 1, showing the creative touches added when the bottom of the original stela was embedded into the *cabildo* wall.

Sure enough, it was the lower part of a stela of considerable height. The piece went as far as the knees. It showed the typical position of his feet at an angle of 180 degrees, standing on a glyph band of five glyphs and below two captives with hands bound behind their backs. This had been set into the wall of the *carcel* and some native artist with a waggish turn had supplied the missing [upper] parts in plaster with a trowel, and very much according to his own fancy. He had made a soldier with musket and bayonet, cartridge box, straps, etc., and fierce, bellicose mustachios.<sup>368</sup>

However, I had no eyes then for anything but the glyphs and I was able to decipher the first two as 7 Muluk 2 K'ayab beyond any doubt. The third was the *winal* ["month"] sign, the preface of the fourth the moon sign, and the fifth an unknown head. There was nothing to indicate the position of this particular 7 Muluk 2 K'ayab in the Long Count, and until further data is forthcoming the exact position of this monument in Maya chronology must remain indeterminate.

We were told of others in the walls of the church and, followed by all the male population of the village, we went over to see them. There were several sculptured stones in the church, though none parts of stelae, I believe. Gann found a most interesting inscription in Maya of Spanish letters on a square stone which had been set in the church wall upside down. The only part we could read was 1756. From this, my attention was called to a small stela, which had been built into the wall on the north side of the Church wall. It had a figure with splendid feather headdress and 7 glyphs, four before and three behind the figure. All were unhappily effaced. They showed us next where these sculptured fragments had been excavated, i.e., from the terrace in front of the big mound described by Stephens at its southeast corner. These were excavated in 1900, and the base of the stela in the *carcel* wall was put in its present position the same year. After lunch, I finished drawing the inscription, took a couple of photographs of the village plaza and Muddy, having looked up the man and mule who were to take us to the port, we set out for the tramvia.

On the way, we stopped into a little chapel of thatch where a stone cross found in the woods nearby had been installed. It was of stone, all right, but had been recently given a body coat of green upon which an agonized Christ had been done in several colors by a local artist. It was very warm going back, but we all felt amply repaid for any discomforts we had suffered. After paying all our bills at the port, we went aboard the *Lilian Y* at four o'clock.

A heavy, choppy swell had come up since morning and the jolly boat made scarcely two miles an hour against it. We weighed anchor at once for Progreso. If the sea continued rough, Gann and I hoped to sleep somewhere before we reached Progreso. We raised Progreso light about nine and it seemed as though we would be in in another hour and a half. When we were within half an hour of the town, however, the boys made out a boat setting out between us and the shore heading east, a largish schooner, power driven. All said it was the *Albert F* retuning to

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<sup>368</sup> Reused ancient sculpture or stones are called spolia. The Postclassic lowland Maya frequently reused Classic sculpture in the facades of buildings, and Colonial-era churches, typically in the centers of Postclassic Maya towns, did the same with available materials. See Nielsen 2020.



Belize and we tried to overtake her. We cut diagonally across her bows but she had quite a start. We blew our whistle, waved lanterns, etc., but it was fifteen minutes before she hove to. In the end, we would have caught her in any event as our engine gives us more speed than hers.

In the meantime, Gann had been writing the letter to the governor, which he wanted to send back to Belize by her, and by the time the two boats were side by side, it was finished. He and I went aboard her in the jolly boat. The sea was running high and, before we climbed aboard, we were well drenched with the sloshing of the waves against the side of the *Albert F. Alamilla* was aboard. Gann gave his letter to the captain and, after examining the cabin accommodations of his boat, we returned to the *Lilian Y* and again headed toward Progreso. The two boats rapidly fell apart and the last we saw of the *Albert F* was her headlight bobbing about in the darkness. This stop cost us about an hour and it was 11:30 when we finally crept in behind the longest wharf and dropped anchor.

In this sheltered spot, one would have thought the *Lilian Y* would have ceased her pitching, but no. On the contrary, it seemed to me fully as bad as the night before. There was no help for it, however; we could not go ashore until the port authorities came aboard and they would not do this until morning. So we had to make the best of it. The captain kedged her with two anchors, but she rocked all night. I think the *Lilian Y* would rock in a millpond.

## February 26—Tuesday

It was after eight when they beckoned the captain to come ashore, and nearly nine by the time we had changed around to another wharf and finally landed. Gann met a man who had worked for him at Belize. There he earned \$60.00 a month; here, he was earning \$200.00 gold a month. It was our first example of the prevailing high prices. He was a good man to know, as it turned out, and loaned us a platform on which all our baggage was loaded. It was now a little after nine and it looked as though we could not possibly get our baggage through customs before the morning train to Merida at 10:30. Everything had to be opened, but I must say the inspector was white. I had given him Solís's letter to read and he simply waved his hands. As quickly as a piece was examined, Muddy or Hubert closed it again, it was carried out to a waiting platform, and it was soon all quickly sent over to the station where Muddy checked it to Merida. John, in the meantime, had gone up to the consulate to get our mail, while I stayed to finish up at the Customs. The only delay I had here was giving up our four revolvers and cartridges. I had to give their make, caliber, and count the cartridges for each. When this inventory was over, Gann and I walked up to the station and, after buying the tickets, I went over to the consulate to see the consul, meeting John on the way.

The consul, a Mr. Marsh, seemed to have heard of us, indeed affected a very knowing air. Stood pat, however, until he dropped his air of mystery. That sort of thing doesn't get to first base with either John or myself. Whatever other shortcomings we have, neither of us are addicted to such primitive coquetries.

Our mail proved a frost of the same kind as the one at Ceiba, not a single letter, only second-class matter—scientific periodicals, *New Republics*, etc. I was greatly disappointed. It seems the Ward liner, which should have gotten in a week ago, was struck by a torpedo boat in New York harbor and had to put back, so there would be no mail until the 6th. But it was 10:25

and we had to leave. I told him I would come down again. Muddy distinguished himself by nearly missing the train, but finally caught it.

As soon as we reached Merida, we drove right to [the] James's [see February 20, note 352]. They have moved to where the Old Liceo used to be. David [Goff] was glad to see me. It has been five years since I saw him last, and much water had gone over the dam since then. We only stopped to say hello, but as he was eating at the Gran<sup>369</sup>, we all went over there for lunch. There was some doubt about our getting in there, but a boat was leaving for Vera Cruz in the afternoon and the clerk said he thought he could give us two rooms. After lunch we had a bath, dressed in decent clean clothing, and then took an auto out to see Juan Martínez. He lives at Itzimna.<sup>370</sup>

He was surprised to see me. I introduced John and Gann and we talked archaeology straight for two hours. He brought out his unpublished paper on the death of Napot Xiu and allowed me to take it back to the hotel with me. Never did time pass more swiftly. He is a brilliant and charming conversationalist, and on a congenial topic such as politics or the *Books of Chilam Balam* he held our unflagging interest all the time we were there. I could not help but regret the accident which had at the one time projected him into the political arena and taken him from the more lasting one of archaeology.<sup>371</sup>

I asked him to sponsor us in our interview with the governor, and he kindly consented to do so. We returned to the hotel via the penitentiary and hospital. After supper, a friend of David, a young chap by the name of Cully, took us automobiling in his new seven-passenger Overland, and afterward John, David, and I went to the theatre; Gann being tired, turned in early. I met Doctor Cano there and we had a pleasant half an hour exchanging reminiscences. The company was that of Esperanza Iris [Figure 28.8], a well-known Latin American favorite. I had seen it before in Mexico and here. The owner and star is growing fleshy.<sup>372</sup>

## February 27—Wednesday

Juan Martínez arrived about nine and we had a long session with the *Books of Chilam Balam*, all morning in fact. We tried hard to transcribe and translate the passage from the Oxtutzcab ms. relating to the killing of the Ahpula in 1536 or 1537.<sup>373</sup> His son, Eduardo, who is now

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<sup>369</sup> The venerable Gran Hotel on the Parque Hidalgo was one of Merida's finest establishments. Frequented by CIW archaeologists, it is still a stop for archaeologists, even today.

<sup>370</sup> A neighborhood northeast of the city center.

<sup>371</sup> Martínez had been appointed chief of the Yucatan Department of Industry and Commerce because of his deep interest in the henequen industry. Next, he was sent to New York to represent Yucatan on the Henequen Price Control Commission. Both appointments distracted him from archaeology for several years.

<sup>372</sup> María Esperanza Bofill Ferrer, AKA Esperanza Iris, was a leading stage actress and singer. In 1918 she constructed her own theater in Mexico City, the opening of which was attended by President Carranza. She died in 1962.

<sup>373</sup> This passage in the *Books of Chilam Balam* was of great interest to both Morley and Martínez because it dates the death of Napot Xiu, the *ahpula* (heir to the throne) to a specific k'atun. This provided critical evidence in the quest for an accurate Maya/Christian calendar correlation and

conservator of the ruins,<sup>374</sup> came in and out several times and finally announced that our interview with the governor had been arranged for eight o'clock tomorrow morning.



Figure 28.8. Esperanza Iris and a chihuahua.

By the time we had finished with the *Books of Chilam Balam*, it was lunch time and I asked Carlos to take it with us. Afterward, we went around to Eduardo's office in what was formerly the Archbishop's palace and thereafter we separated to meet tomorrow morning at eight. Gann went off to look for some books or other and John and I went over to David's. The latter is arranging a little party of six for tonight. The two toe-dancers from the Esperanza Iris Co., two Italian sisters, a little Cuban-English girl who is in vaudeville, John, myself, and himself. We were to meet at seven at the hotel.

I made a few necessary purchases and met David at the appointed hour. He sent [Held] and I to get the toe-dancers, Maria and Mina C-something, and he went for the Cubana. Supper here and afterwards the theatre. Saw *Sybil*<sup>375</sup> for the third time (twice before in Washington). It had lost considerably in the repetition. I was greatly surprised at meeting don Julio Martínez: he had come overland from Ascención and is returning tomorrow. He says he has liquidated with

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provided fundamental support for Martínez's contribution to the now widely accepted GMT correlation (Houston 2001: 236).

<sup>374</sup> Eduardo took over this job from his father when the latter was selected to head up the Department of Industry and Commerce.

<sup>375</sup> Premiered in 1916, *Sybil* was a Broadway musical in three acts based on a book about Russian palace intrigue by Max Brody and Franz Martos.

Alberto Leal and next year starts in on a much bigger scale for himself. He invited us to make his quarters ours at Central or Vigia Chica.

I met the English mother of the Cubana. She is very typical, and I should say quite prepared to pay whatever price may be necessary to secure her daughter's preferment and advancement in the theatrical profession. In fact, she reminds me of the sort of woman I have always imagined Evelyn Nesbit's<sup>376</sup> mother to be. The daughter, though only sixteen, is undeniably beautiful, exquisitely so in fact. She is her mother's sole hope of affluence, and I fancy nothing will stand in the way of playing the trump card when the occasion arises. I may be wrong and I certainly am not cynical. John is greatly smitten as was to be expected, having seen no girls at all for nearly four weeks.

After the theater, the toe-dancers (or one of them) was ill, so they did not go autoing. Fat Doctor Cano joined us, and the six of us—Cano, John, David, myself, the Cubana, and her mother drove out to David's new *quinta* [villa] This is a lovely place indeed. Newly built on the edge of the city, cool, refreshing and delightful. I am not surprised at his anxiety to move into it. He expects to be in soon, he said. Cano played the pianola. David and John danced with the little Cubana who showed some of her high-kicking stunts and considerable of her person. Not immodestly, I should say rather immodestly, and I talked to the Newcastle-on-Tyne mother. I was dead for sleep, was bored to extinction, and happily the little dancer was sleepy as well, so the party broke up early, about 11:30. On the way back to the hotel stopped at the Colón<sup>377</sup> under the *portales* at the Plaza and had an ice.

## February 28—Thursday

John was unequal to the task of getting up early even after such a mild night, and I let him sleep. Besides, there was no need of his meeting the governor and he had to get off for Progreso on the eleven o'clock train. Juan Martínez and his son showed up about eight and we all walked around to the *Palacio*. We did not have to wait and were soon ushered in to the gubernatorial presence. Carlos Castro Morales was for twenty-three years master mechanic on the *Ferrocarriles Unidos de Yucatán*. He is a large, heavily-built man, deep voiced, and wears gold spectacles. He told me, a bit heavily, he was neither Roman Catholic, *Protestante*, or a Mason, but "*soy pensador libre*" [I am a free thinker].<sup>378</sup>

For all of that he listened to the account of our work, past and present, which Juan Martínez glowingly poured into his ears, and before the interview closed....

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<sup>376</sup> An early film star and artists' model.

<sup>377</sup> Today, the Colón is an ice cream parlor on Calle 61, diagonally across from the cathedral.

<sup>378</sup> Morales was the socialist governor of Yucatan from 1918 to 1920. At the time he met with Morley, he had only been in office a few weeks.

NOTE: The diary ends abruptly mid-sentence here, suggesting that Morley was interrupted and intended to continue the entry. The text is missing in copies at both the Peabody Museum and at the American Philosophical Society.

## CHAPTER 29

### EPILOGUE

As we noted in Chapter 28, Morley's diary ends abruptly on February 28 when he, Held, and Gann were in Merida. Their travels, however, did not end at that point. The next weeks were spent exploring Maya ruins in the central Yucatan Peninsula in search of inscriptions that would help place sites into the framework of Maya history. The details of these explorations are in field reports at the Peabody Museum.<sup>379</sup> Visiting Maya ruins, however, did not impede Morley's ongoing espionage activities—numerous reports to the ONI were filed during March and April that mostly dealt with the political situation in Yucatan and Chiapas, and the complicated relations between Merida and Mexico City. Morley speculated that, given the right circumstances, Yucatan could be separated from Mexico and put under the protection of the United States, especially if rumored cooperation between Mexico and Germany for an attack on British Honduras were to occur:

...the increasing dislike of the Yucatecans for the Mexicans makes it extremely likely that any such madness on the part of the Mexican Government as this would be immediately followed by a secessionist movement down here; and an appeal to us for a protectorate. The Yucatecans thus appealed to the Republic of Texas for a protectorate in the early forties of the last century, and they are ready to do it now with any kind of encouragement from us.

Yucatan's economic future is indissolubly connected with the United States, a fact generally recognized by the Yucatecans themselves. (Harris and Sadler 2003: 240)<sup>380</sup>

On March 1, Morley and Gann (and Muddy, Gann's assistant) left Merida by train to visit the ruins of Holactun en route to Campeche, Held sailing on the *Lilian Y* to the same destination. Holactun—Morley's name, since changed to Xcalumkin—is a Puuc site lacking the region's typical geometric decoration and mosaic mask panels (Andrews 1995; Graham and Von Euw 1992: 150–153). Morley was keen to investigate the site because it had numerous inscriptions and one of only three Initial Series (I.S.) dates then known in the northern Lowlands. They disembarked at the town of Dzibalche and headed to the ruins by car over poor, overgrown roads, an arduous journey through a thorn thicket: Gann (1924: 184) almost had his eyelid torn off.

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<sup>379</sup> Morley's reports cover the sites of Tabi, Santa Rosa Xtampak, Labna, Kabah, Loltun Cave, Uxmal, Ichmul, Zelan, Holactun, Mayapan, Chichen Itza, Yula, Tulum, and Palenque (K. Meyers, pers. comm., August 12, 2021). Because of Covid-19, the Peabody was closed to visitors and suspended document duplication orders, so we were unable to view these reports.

<sup>380</sup> Quoted by Harris and Sadler from Morley's March 31, 1918, letter to his ONI handler, Charles Sheldon (code-named "Taro"), to whom Morley regularly reported.

At the site, Morley was not disappointed. On Panel 2 (first recorded by Maler), an I.S. date of 9.15.12.6.9 7 Muluk 2 Kank'in (GMT Oct. 25, AD 743) was recorded in "head variant" glyphs, a form normally associated with sites in the southern lowlands. The head variants gave Morley difficulty with the date, which they read as 11.2.8.4.9 (Gann 1924: 188). Because of the extensiveness and number of inscriptions at Holactun, Morley remained on site for two days, taking numerous photographs (Figure 29.1).



Figure 29.1. The Initial Series inscription at Holactun. Note the head variant glyphs.

Morley and Gann next went to Campeche, where they were joined by Held in the *Lilian Y.* After marveling at the colonial town, then in a sorry state of disrepair, they returned to spy work with a one-day voyage down the coast to Champoton, where rumors of a German spy

network and enemy radio station had raised eyebrows. Finding no Germans, no radio, and no there there, they returned on the *Lilian Y* to Campeche. They had, however, encountered a young boy from Belize who had walked the entire way across the southern Yucatan Peninsula from Bacalar on the east coast, surviving on leaves, fruit, roots, and insects until nearly dead (Gann 1924: 196–197). Morley decided to take him back to Campeche, and eventually sent him on the *Lilian Y* back to Belize. After returning to Campeche, Morley took the train to Merida and again settled at the Gran Hotel.

## Mayapan

Shortly after returning to Merida, Morley, Held, and Gann set out to visit the ruins of Mayapan, a site easily reached by rail and narrow-gauge lines serviced by mule-drawn flatcars. On the way down, Held directed his attentions toward a young Maya girl. As Gann notes, “an endeavor on Held’s part (who always improved the shining hour on these lines) to carry on a mild flirtation with his pretty neighbor through the medium of about ten Maya words, and that language of eyes and lips which is the same all the world over, was a source of pure joy to all beholders, including Morley and myself” (Gann 1924: 200).

Like Stephens and Catherwood nearly a century before, they spent the night at the Rancho of Xcanchacan (Figure 29.2), one of the largest henequen haciendas in the region. Morley found a stela that had been carried from Mayapan and incorporated into the wall of the central hall of the hacienda. The top half of the 6-foot monument was divided into 36 square glyph panels. He was excited by an inscribed day glyph, 10 Ajaw, because it suggested a connection to the *Books of Chilam Balam*, specifically the death of Napot Xiw. The dating of his death was a key clue to the vexing problem of correlating the Maya and Christian calendars (see Rice and Ward 2021: 26–28).

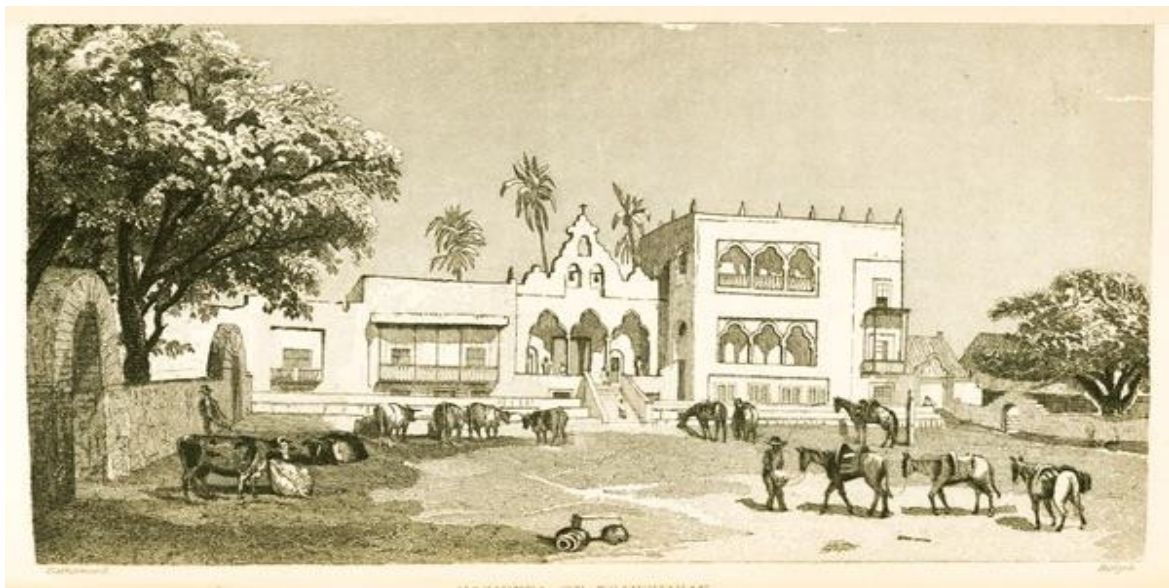


Figure 29.2. Hacienda Xcanchacan as drawn by Frederick Catherwood.



Morley and company set out on horseback for the important Late Postclassic site of Mayapan, passing through the city walls. Mayapan headed the League of Mayapan, a confederacy of at least ten polities that united the northwestern peninsula (and probably other areas) under the city's control (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 41–42; Roys 1962). The League endured until 1461 when it broke up into local polities or “petty states” (Sharer and Traxler 2006: 603). The first major investigations at the site were conducted by the CIW in the 1950s, that institution's final major project (Pollock et al. 1962). Most recent research, in 2001–2009, focused on the city's economic foundations (Masson and Peraza 2014). Mayapan's perimeter wall, 9.1 km long, functioned defensively and also controlled people and goods entering the city (Russell 2013: 275).

Both Morley and Gann were greatly disappointed by the site. They found numerous ruined structures, the largest now known as the Castillo or Temple of Kukulcan, but what impressed them most was the large number of starving cattle grazing between the structures. Gann (1924: 205) wrote, “Of all the ruined sites of Yucatan, Mayapan is perhaps the most disappointing to the archaeologist and explorer visiting it for the first time....” This view of Mayapan has changed little over the years. During the CIW excavations in the 1950s, archaeologists involved in the project resented being “exiled” to do work on what they considered to be a worthless pile of rocks (Shook 1998: 105). Mayapan was essentially a late emulation of the structures and plan of Chichen Itza, but much smaller and poorly constructed. This negative view of Mayapan probably contributed to archaeologists' decades-long disdain of all things Postclassic in the lowlands.

## Chichen Itza

The next ruin visited, after another short stay in Merida, was Chichen Itza. Chichen Itza, a large Yucatan city dating from the Terminal Classic/Epiclassic into the Early Postclassic, about AD 800 to 1000/1100, was the site of Morley's long-postponed career plans for future CIW excavation and reconstruction (Rice and Ward 2021: 7). Without his diaries as a reference, it is impossible to gauge his reaction when he arrived at the ruins: he had not seen Chichen Itza for many years. Presumably Morley, ever nostalgic, would have been greatly moved by his return. It was not until the mid 1920s and early 1930s that Chichen became the focus of intensive CIW work supervised by Morley. Since the CIW project, the site has been studied by generations of archaeologists, all embroiled in energetic debates about dating the city and its relations to the Toltecs and Tula (Mexico), which it resembles architecturally. Morley's *Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico* (1946) has been edited and republished (Weeks and Desantes 2015). For a compilation of more recent perspectives, see Kowalski and Kristan-Graham 2011).

Reaching Chichen Itza in 1918 was an arduous journey that began with a train ride from Merida to Dzitas, the closest station to the ruins. The next and more difficult leg was undertaken on the dreaded *Volan Coche*, which Gann (1924: 207–208) describes:

The Volan, as it is usually called, was, before the coming of the railroad, practically the only means of transport throughout Yucatan, and a more uncomfortable conveyance it would be difficult to conceive. It consists of a high wooden cart entirely devoid of

springs, and drawn by two, three or four mules. The passenger lies, sits or reposes as best he may at the bottom of the cart, which, with the sides, is well padded with mattresses and pillows...To the new-comer it is perfect torture, as he is thrown from side to side and up and down in the volan like a shuttlecock, and it is useless to try to stop the driver once he has started the mules, as he takes no notice whatever of the most piteous cries, till he has reached his destination. We decided to send on our luggage by one of them while we proceeded on horseback.

At Chichen Itza, the party took up lodging in the Hacienda Chichen,<sup>381</sup> but there was no rest for the weary. That night (probably March 8), a swarm of vicious ants invaded the building and, at least in Gann's case, tried to make a meal of him. Morley and the others were roused, and with burning palm fronds they fought off the insects until dawn, killing millions of them (Gann 1924: 210). The next morning, and for the next nine days, they explored the ruins and ventured to a few peripheral sites several kilometers away (including a trip to Ichmul<sup>382</sup> not mentioned in the Gann text).

Other than studying inscriptions, apparently no serious archaeological work was done—just touring, poking around, and avoiding myriad biting insects. One particularly evil insect was a large beetle that dug its long proboscis into the skin, causing great pain. Gann (1924: 229–230) says, “It usually attacks early in the morning, and fortunately gives warning of its approach with a loud booming noise, but as it is extraordinarily quick one is not always able to avoid its attack.” One observation made at the sites was a curious lack of surface artifacts—no broken pottery was observed on the ground, which Gann considered to be highly unusual.

## Tabi

Leaving Chichen Itza on March 17, Morley and his companions stayed overnight in Dzitas before taking the train the next day to Ticul, the beginning of their exploration of the Puuc hill country. The Puuc Hills, also known as the Sierrita de Ticul, is a wedge-shaped range of low, karstic hills in the southern part of the otherwise flat peninsular states of Yucatan and Campeche. The first stop was the Loltun cave, where they found countless artifacts strewn about the floor: “pottery, beads, potsherds, fragments of idols, charcoal, pieces of bone, bone needles and borers, malacates or spindle whorls, broken grindstones...” (Gann 1924: 234). Exploration of the cave lasted until late afternoon, when they left for the hacienda of Tabi, where they stayed overnight. Previously a sugar plantation, by the time of Morley's visit the refining operation was in ruins and the estate was now exclusively devoted to cattle ranching.

In the hacienda courtyard stood a curious stela (Tabi Stela 1; Figure 29.3) in the form of a

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<sup>381</sup> The hacienda was headquarters for the CIW project in the late 1920s and is now an exclusive resort, with bungalows named after the Carnegie archaeologists who originally occupied them.

<sup>382</sup> During Morley's 1918 visit to Ichmul (now Ichmul de Morley), he recorded two ballplayer panels embedded in the walls of nearby haciendas (Smith 2019; also Greg Smith, personal communication).

true arch, with two hunters carrying a deer (Voss and Kremer 1998).<sup>383</sup> Partly because of the arch, Morley and Gann speculated that the monument dated post-conquest. At the time of the visit, the stela was garishly painted—as is shown in the photograph Gann included in his book—which probably further confused its dating. Indeed, the archaeologists were so confounded by this monument that they speculated the inscription was evidence that the Puuc Maya were using hieroglyphs in the decades after the conquest. It is now understood that Tabi Stela 1 dates from the Postclassic.<sup>384</sup>



Figure 29.3. The uniquely shaped Stela 1 of Tabi.

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<sup>383</sup> This and several other inscribed stones were found at the hacienda, the construction of which destroyed the site for building stone (see Meyers 2012).

<sup>384</sup> Tabi Stela 1 now resides in the Museo Regional de Antropología in Merida.

After enjoying a feast put on by the *mayordomo* of the hacienda, the team tried to get a good night's sleep, a futile effort because of a very loud horse battle in the adjacent corral. The equine fight went on all night at high volume. In the morning two dead stallions were found—the remains of which were being devoured by a pack of wild dogs—and a corral that looked like a plowed field.

## Kabah

Heading directly west over a crude road, Morley, Held, and Gann drove in a Ford to the ruins of Kabah, a journey that took one full day, passing many small ruins on the way. They found the site overgrown with thick bush, and small, narrow paths led from one structure group to the next. They first went to the large pyramid (today, on the west side of Federal highway 261), unrestored and not open to the public. Near the pyramid is the famous Kabah Arch, which marks the beginning of the causeway (*sacbe*) that leads to Uxmal, 18 km to the northwest. They found the upper part of the arch collapsed, but it was reconstructed between 1953 and 1955. The more interesting ruins were to the east, and consisted of a series of platforms and palaces, highly decorated in the Puuc style, with numerous large, vaulted rooms, which the archaeologists exploited for a kitchen, storage rooms, sleeping quarters, and even a “sitting room” (Gann 1924: 240). Morley's focus, as always, was on searching for dates, but at Kabah none were to be found. The team stayed at Kabah for several days, leaving on March 22 when they ran out of water.

The most impressive structure at Kabah is the Codz Poop, or Palace of the Masks, a 46 m-long, linear building with five interior rooms, the façade of which is covered by 260 Chaak (the rain god) mosaic stone masks (Figure 29.4).



Figure 29.4. The Codz Poop, or Palace of the Masks, Kabah.

Chaak masks are found throughout the Puuc region, and also in the Puuc architecture at Chichen Itza. Gann (1924: 240) describes the Kabah Codz Poop masks:

On the opposite side of the platform stood a long building approached by a broad, steep flight of stone steps, and possessing a most elaborately decorated façade . . . of reproductions of the face of the long-nosed god in rows, one above the other. The nose resembles an elephant's trunk, the teeth are square and jagged, and the pupils of the eyes are formed of round stones tenoned in, most of which have now fallen from the hollow eye-sockets.

## Uxmal

After a one-night stay back at Hacienda Tabi, Morley and company headed to Uxmal, travelling, for once, on a good road. Uxmal, heavily investigated and now restored, was the most frequently visited Maya site in the early twentieth century, owing to its easy accessibility. Many visitors encamped in the corbel-vaulted rooms of the palatial House of the Governor (Figure 29.5; Kowalski 1987: 17–24), as did Stephens and Catherwood earlier, and now Morley. Supplies in hand, the team set up housekeeping in the House of the Governor, which had several large vaulted rooms that offered commodious quarters:

We spread our cots on the uppermost terrace, and took up our residence here during out three-day sojourn at the ruins. It afforded a cool and airy lodging, free from bush and its attendant ticks and red bug, while the open doors of the palace rooms presented a desirable retreat in case of rain, and a magnificent view over the whole of the ruined city was always before our eyes from this lofty perch. We often sat up long into the night discussing out day's work and discoveries, entranced by the spectacle spread out before us, bathed in a flood of tropical moonlight, the grey ruins standing out ghostlike from the darker background of shadowy, mysterious bush, and the dead silence of the night broken only by the murmur of our own hushed voices, the mournful note of the nightjar, or the distant scream of a jaguar seeking his supper in the surrounding forest. (Gann 1924: 245–246)

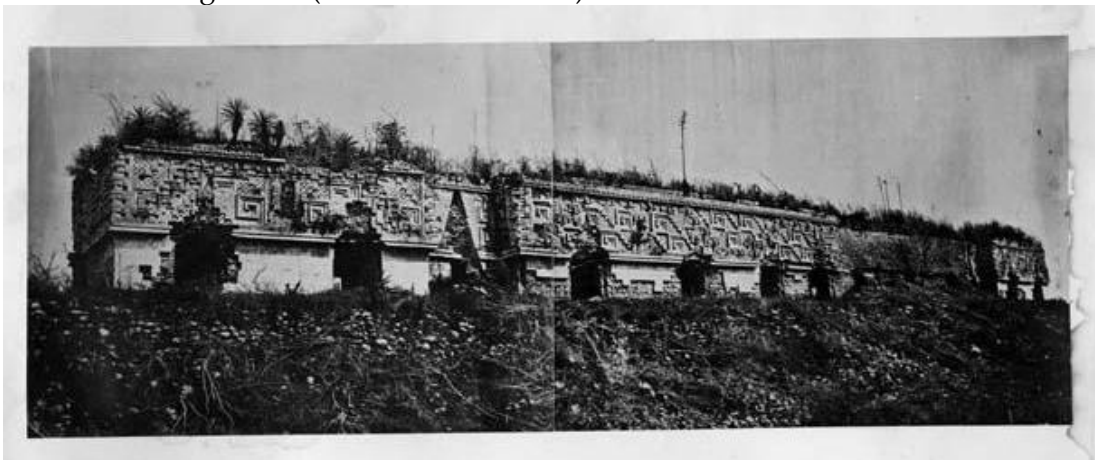


Figure 29.5. The House of the Governor at Uxmal, before restoration.

Before 1918, no dates had been recorded at Uxmal, but on this visit, Morley was able to document at least two dates and record a number of other inscriptions. While exploring the Nunnery Quadrangle, Morley noticed that the capstones of the vaults of several rooms had painted texts. Hastily, and much to Held's disgust and protest, Morley had makeshift scaffolding erected for his artist in residence to lie, Michelangelo-like, on his back to paint the capstones of several rooms (Figure 29.6; Gann 1924: 252; Graham 1993b; Morley 1920: 511).



Figure 29.6. Held's drawing of the text on the capstone of a vault in the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal.

After three days at Uxmal, the group returned to Merida, where Gann and Morley parted company, the former returning to Belize on the *Lilian Y*, while Morley and Held continued their ONI work on the coast at the Bay of Campeche.

\* \* \* \* \*

After Gann departed for Belize, we no longer have day-to-day detail of Morley's next two months of travel. He spent some time in Merida recovering from another bout of malaria (Harris and Sadler 2003: 256–257), and then he and Held sailed from Progreso through the Gulf of Mexico, past Campeche, to the mouth of the Usumacinta River. Anxious to visit Palenque, they traveled upriver and visited the ruins, despite dangerous political unrest in the region.<sup>385</sup> In his CIW annual report, Morley notes that he found two new I.S. dates at Palenque inscribed into stucco, but both were undecipherable as only their Introductory Glyphs were readable. After the short visit to Palenque, Held and Morley made their way up the Mexican coast to Veracruz and thence by steamer back to New Orleans in either April or May.<sup>386</sup> They had not set foot on U.S. soil in more than 13 months.

<sup>385</sup> This was apparently the first of only two visits Morley made to Palenque, the other a three-hour stopover in 1929 while on his way to Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan (Brunhouse 1971: 246).

<sup>386</sup> Harris and Sadler (2003: 364) report his sailing north from Veracruz on April 21, but Morley himself notes that his visit to Palenque took place in May (Morley 1919: 276)

Morley spent the summer resting, after being granted a leave of absence from the ONI. Taking full advantage of reduced train fares conferred by his military service, he made a multi-stop trip across the country by rail to Santa Fe, always dressed in a military uniform which he had purchased upon his return to the states (Harris and Sadler 2003: 266). By August, he was rested and ready to return to the tropics for a second tour with the ONI. This took him via Panama to El Salvador, where he reported on violence surrounding the presidential election. World War I ended on November 11, 1918, after which Morley continued in government service in both El Salvador and Honduras until his [presumably honorable] discharge on March 1, 1919.

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CIW Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC  
FAMSI Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies (www.famsi.org)  
MARI Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA  
PMAE Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
UAP University of Arizona Press, Tucson  
UNMP University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque  
UOP University of Oklahoma Press, Norman  
UPC University Press of Colorado, Louisville (earlier Boulder)  
UTP University of Texas Press, Austin

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Morley's own *Inscriptions at Copan* (1920) and Gann's *In an Unknown Land* (1924) are additional sources of images, the first providing images mainly of stelae, inscriptions, and site plans. We have also exploited numerous postcards from the 1910s to illustrate towns and buildings along the Caribbean coast. Although these are in the public domain, we have indicated the web pages from which these were sourced. Some illustrations and maps from the National Archives were published in Harris and Sadler's *The Archaeologist Was a Spy* (2003). Because of the Covid pandemic, we were unable to visit the National Archives in Washington, D.C. in person, so we have taken the liberty of sourcing these images from Harris and Sadler's publication giving credit to both these authors and the National Archives. Finally the dramatic photographs of the Guatemala City earthquakes (many taken by Morley himself) are sourced from Morley's (1918a) article published in the *American Museum Journal*.

**Frontispiece:** National Archives, sourced from Harris and Sadler 2003: 195.

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