

“It is better to be a dead hero than a living coward.” - Soberanis”

ANTONIO SOBERANIS GOMEZ (1897- 1975)

• If the Honorable George Price is regarded as the father of independence, then perhaps, it can be argued that Antonio Soberanis was the grandfather.

Did You know?....

• “Tony” as he became fondly known became one of the early twentieth century leaders to lead a mass organized movement of workers against colonialism and in support of better wages and improved social and economic conditions.

• Antonio Soberanis was born on 17th January, 1897 to parents Canuto Soberanis of Tzitas in Yucatan, Mexico and mother Dominga Gomez of Corozal and was the eldest of 7 children, 3 boys and 4 girls.

• Antonio did not complete primary school, but instead left Holy Redeemer Boys school while in Standard Five. At this time he travelled to La Ceiba, Honduras and later became familiar with the Central American Republics.

• In 1922 he married Violet Garbutt with whom he remained married for 45 years. He later married Juanita Fuller and altogether was the father of 13 children.

• Antonio was a member of the British Honduras Volunteer Guard during World War I.

• By the late 1920’s and into the 1930’s British Honduras merchants who had enjoyed much economic success in the forestry and entrepot trade experienced rapid economic decline as a result of the Great Depression and the September 10th, 1931 Hurricane which killed over 1,000 persons.

• Under these conditions nearly 25% of the working population lost their jobs out of a labor force of approximately 5,000 workers. The workers expected the Colonial Government to intervene with projects and funding to alleviate the difficult conditions. Instead, between 1932 and 1934 a report on British Honduras done by Sir Alan Pim of the Colonial Office recommended further retrenchment of workers from the civil service. It also did not bring to fruition public works programmes for rebuilding after the hurricane.

• However, on February 21st, 1934 the Governor intervened by offering “rice lab” to those who had registered along with introducing a program where workers could make five cents per tin can of stone broken for road construction.

• In his personal reflections Soberanis recalled that “...after seeing the sufferings and hardship of my fellow men, I made up my mind to try and help them, it’s then that I started the cry for independence and to free my country from colonialism...”

Interview with Antonio Soberanis:

Question: Mr. Soberanis, could you tell us a little bit about the circumstances that led up to the founding of the Labour and Unemployed Association?

Answer: In 1934 in the month of February they had a depression here and they used to feed the people at the prison. And they used to cook the food in the same copper kettle in which they used to boil the officers' clothing. And I organized a group of my countrymen and we formed a party named L. & U. A. (Labour and Unemployed Association).

The Government used to pay women 5 cent to break kerstone can of stone. The workers were getting 50 cents to work on the road. And I fought against that until, by 1942, they were getting a dollar a day and transportation. I went to Panama in 1942 because of the war.

Question: How did you accomplish your goal?

Answer: We made demonstrations. We made no appeals to Government. We marched around the town with banners: "We want more work! We want more work!" "We want more pay! We want more pay!"

Question: How many would come to the demonstrations?

Answer: Oh, thousands. It's a pity I don't have a picture I took when I led 4,000 people one day in Yarrowborough after a big march on the 18th of September. (The picture was lost in the hurricane Hattie.)

Question: Where did you get the food to feed so many people?

Answer: I begged collection from the merchants and I went to all of them and asked them to give me rice, beans, salt meat. And I had men hunting; they got peccary, glibout, and deer. Mr. Aron Arnold gave us bull. I had fishermen going fishing. I had a house as big as this filled up with all kinds of things: plantain, bananas, coconuts, everything!

Question: Did you regularly provide food for the members of your party?

Answer: Yes, you see, I opened credit for them at the different shops. The Belize Estate Company had a store where the Post Office is now and they used to give the people spoiled rice and rotten onions and potatoes, so that, when the people got no country, they couldn't use the food. So I went to the different shops and got credit for them. And the people paid me and I paid the shops for them. But still I had to take some of my own cash pay for some of them, because they were very ungrateful to me.

We also had a nursing group, the Red-and-Green Cross Nurses. (The colors of the L. & U.A. were red and green.) Christobel Usher was a certified nurse and she was the head of the nurses. If one of our members was sick, they went and gave free attention. If one of them needed medicine, we got medicine for them.

The same evening when I got through with governor -because they rang up the governor and said there was trouble in town-so he asked us to excuse him and said we could come back another day that his presence was needed in town. So I came to the shop and found several of my boys. So I went to the station to get bail for them. I found that they were going to give them bail. So they said yes, but I must come back later. By this time they were planning to arrest me. So I went back again about an hour later; they said the bail was not ready yet. I should come back at five o'clock, and they arrested me and I paid the shops for something that happened the Saturday before. And they wouldn't give me bail.

That night if it wasn't on account of the rain, something would have happened because the people were going to break down the station. And we had some Hondurians that were here and they were going to start a revolution here. But I got out and I begged them not to do anything; I was not for violence. I wanted a peaceful demonstration. I didn't want violence. Well, with that they kept quiet.

They had no sedition laws in those days, so they locked me up 35 days until they passed a sedition law.

Question: Why were you charged for sedition?

Answer: You see Mr. Turtton gave me a bulletin that was given to him when he was a member of Council and it said there that the king and reigned 2 years of robbery of the poor. And I took it and I read it at one of my meetings and they charged me for sedition for reading it; and I read it in public and they tried me for sedition because I was defaming His Majesty the king. I was tried for treason and at the first trial they couldn't come to a verdict; at the second trial they couldn't find sufficient jurors because I made objection to them. And the third time they tried me I was acquitted unanimously.

Question: What effect did the strike have?

Answer: The workers at the small: I don't remember what pay they got-but they got a raise in pay anyhow, and they got better benefits than they had before. And they were satisfied to a certain extent at the little bit in those days: A tin of milk was 5 cent, plantain used to be 3 or 4 for 1 cent. So things were very cheap in those days, although the pay was very small.

Question: Was this a political party?

Answer: Yes, it was a political party. It was then that I started to fight for the independence of Belize.

Question: Who helped you to found the L. & U. A.?

Answer: James Barnett, John Lahoodie, Chano Lovell, John Neal, Benjamin Reneau, and Archibald Lodge. Archibald Lodge is the only one of these still living.

Question: About How many members did your party have altogether?

Answer: We had over 5,000

Question: And what sort of platform did you stand for?

Answer: We used to say: We want our country back, we want our government. I was not against the Englishman. I have nothing against him; I have more thank for him than anything. But what I don't like is imperialism, colonialism. We want to be a free country. Not that I hate them, I personally. Because they have done a lot of good for my country, and they did a lot of bad too. In my opinion, they have done more good than bad for our country. But I am against colonialism. I want a free country.

Question: Did you have a newspaper in which you expressed your ideas?

Answer: No, The Belize Independent used to support our movement and The Clarion was supporting the Government.

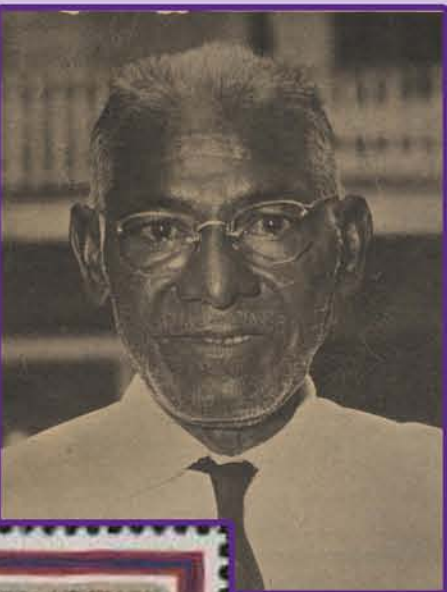
Question: How often did you hold public meetings?

Answer: Sometimes we had two meetings for the week, sometimes only one for the month, because I went to all the villages.

In those days those poor Indians, when the policemen went there, the policemen would say: "Any fool see turkey you got?" "I say: "Yes." The policemen say: "Get them, I will go and sell them for you in Corozal." They would take those poor Indians' pigs and things and sell them in Corozal and give them no money. So I went there and told them that must not be afraid of the policemen. They must respect them but not be afraid of them. I said: "If they came and got any pigs or things from you, get their number and their name, and if they don't want to give you, don't give them anything. Don't be afraid of them. They can't do you anything for that. And if they don't bring back your money, you come to me and report to me." So I opened their eyes up.

Question: Could you tell us something about the first labour strike that occurred in Belize?

Answer: That was the 1st of October of 1934, when they arrested me. This was a strike against the Belize Estate. I was at Government House along with some others speaking to the Governor when that happened. I told the people to wait until I got through as I was going to speak to the governor. But the B.E.C. authorities feared that the people would start a strike there. And the people chased all the B.E.C. officials out of the place there.



• On March 16th, 1934 Tony, who was making his living as a barber and was relatively uneducated, held his first public meeting at the Battlefield. Here he was noted as saying, “...although he knew he was unfit by origin , education and class to act as a spokesman of the unemployed...he was prepared to die for them... it was better to be a dead hero than a living coward.”

• Soon after he formed the Labour and Unemployed Association (LUA) along with men such as Igal Lahoodie, Gabriel Adderly and Benjamin Reneau. The LUA was formed despite not being able to register as a union.

• During his involvement Soberanis openly and regularly ridiculed the elites, merchants and colonial officials in an effort to expose the injustices faced by the workers. These became known as the Battlefield attacks.

• As a result of his attacks the Colonial Governors referred to him as a “half crazy creature” and as a “professional agitator”.

• In 1934 on the occasion of the September 10th, 1934 Tony and the LUA achieved the feat of feeding 3,000 people at the Yarrowborough area after the parade. This contrasted sharply with the failure of the colonial authorities to bring aid to the people.

• On October 1, 1934 LUA agitation led by Soberanis came to a head resulting in a series of riots and skirmishes as well as the arrest of 17 LUA members including Soberanis. Despite attempts to acquire bail and even one attempt to forcibly free him with the help of snakes, Soberanis was held until November 6th.

• Upon his release he was greeted by his supporters with a rally at the Liberty Hall.

• Soberanis continued his agitation and led a number of demonstrations across the country. He was arrested and charged on a couple occasions with use of threatening and insulting words and sedition. These were attempts to weaken his public agitation. In some ways the colonial authorities achieved its objective as there were divisions among his colleagues which weakened the LUA position.

• His hallmark as a Belizean hero perhaps lies with the fact that he was able to mobilize an organized mass movement in a countrywide forum despite his educational and financial limitations.

• After the 1930’s disturbances which coincided with similar and more violent disturbances in the Caribbean, Soberanis remained active in public life and continued in his profession as a barber.

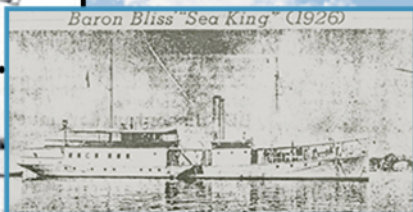
• He died in 1975 and was buried in Santana Village.

• On December 13, 1991 at the inauguration of the Battlefield Park, a bust of Antonio Soberanis was unveiled to memorialize his contribution to Belize.



- The Baron spent almost a month enjoying Belizean waters, breezes and fishing.
- Governor, Sir John Burdon, visited and made the Baron feel welcomed. Mornings would find the Baron being lowered in his chair to a small boat where local fishermen took him fishing by the reef and cayes. That small boat was also named the Sea King.
- By February 10th, the Baron's health had deteriorated considerably and he was advised to make preparations for his demise. Baron Bliss called on Governor Burdon and expressed his wish to leave the bulk of his estate for British Honduras. On February 17th, one day after his 57th birthday, the will was executed and signed aboard the "SEA KING 2".
- The will named Governor Burdon, Colonial Secretary, Charles Jones and Attorney General, Willoughby Bullock and their respective successors as executors of his will that would comprise a "BARON BLISS TRUST". The will was witnessed by Captain R. K. I. Masson and Towrye Price.
- The Baron Bliss Trust has been used for many projects in Belize including: The Bliss Institute, The San Ignacio Town Hall, The Benque Viejo Town Hall, The Corozal Town Hall and The Bliss School of Nursing. Money from the fund was also crucial in acquiring land for the construction of Belmopan.
- Baron Bliss died on the 9th of March, 1926.
- As was his wish he is now buried in a tomb beneath the Bliss Lighthouse.

BENEFACTOR HENRY EDWARD VICTOR BLISS (1869-1926)



HENRY EDWARD ERNEST VICTOR BLISS a.k.a. BARON BLISS (1869-1926)

- Baron Bliss was born in England and lived at Quarry Court, Marlow, Buckingham. He married Ethel Alice, Baroness Bliss.
- Baron Bliss inherited the title 4th Baron of the Kingdom of Portugal from an ancestor when Britain and Portugal were allies during the Peninsular War of 1809-1814 and the British sent troops to fight French incursions by Napoleon.
- He was an engineer by profession, but the source of the Baron's wealth is unknown. Upon his death, he was worth one million pounds and may have acquired it by engineering, business, inheritance or all three.
- In 1911 at the age of 42, Baron Bliss was struck with paralysis from the waist down forcing him to use a wheelchair.
- After World War 1 that he procured the famous "SEA KING" 2, a shallow draught design great for cruising the Caribbean. He cruised the Bahamas for five years, visited Trinidad and finally ended up in British Honduras, visiting his friend, the then Attorney General of the colony who suggested that the fishing was great. Baron Bliss left Trinidad in poor health and stopped in Jamaica.
- The Baron arrived in British Honduras on January 14th, 1926, living aboard the SEA KING 2.
- 2. With the SEA KING 2 anchored off Fort George Point in Belize City harbour.

Photos courtesy of: National Heritage Library
Information taken from: Baron Bliss and His Bounty to Belize.
Leo H. Bradley, JP 1986

NICH
national institute of culture and history

ISCR
institute for research
in cultural research

BELIZE BILLBOARD NEWSPAPERS FROM 1951-1952



• In 1951, an article from The Belize Billboard had suggested that “there are two roads to Independence: evolution and revolution.” For that article, both Leigh Richardson and Phillip Goldson were convicted of “seditious Intention” and sentenced to one year with hard labor.

• It was commonly thought that Goldson and Richardson were jailed by colonial authorities so that The Belize Billboard, an anti-colonial mouth piece could no longer be published. However, with the help of a prison warden Goldson and Richardson wrote the articles for the newspaper on toilet paper. This was smuggled out on a daily basis and delivered to the Governor’s own cook, who then secretly delivered the articles to the Belize Billboard Press.

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Photos Courtesy of: Florence Goldson
Information taken from: Philip S.W. Goldson:
A National Icon. *Belizean Studies*, 24(1), 48-52.
The Goldson Story-A Belizean Heritage Book. 1991

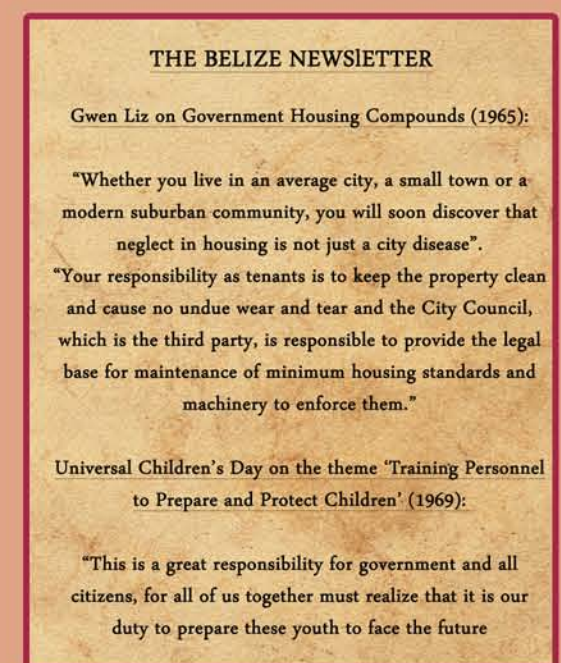


NATIONAL HERO PHILLIP STANLEY WILBERFORCE GOLDSON (1923-2001)

- Phillip Goldson was born on 25th July, 1923 in Belize City to Peter Edward Goldson and his wife, Florence Matilda Babb Goldson.
- He attended St. Mary's Primary School and attended night classes in order to sit the Cambridge overseas Junior Certificate exams which he successfully passed. In 1941 he took the Senior School Exam and again obtained his certificate.
- Mr. Goldson was one of the founding members of the People's Committee formed on December 31, 1949 in response to the devaluation of the Belize dollar. Later he would also become one of the founding members of the People's United Party.
- In 1951, an article from The Belize Billboard had suggested that "there are two roads to Independence: evolution and revolution." For that article, both Leigh Richardson and Phillip Goldson were convicted of "seditious Intention" and sentenced to one year with hard labor.
- It was commonly thought that Goldson and Richardson were jailed by colonial authorities so that The Belize Billboard, an anti-colonial mouth piece could no longer be published. However, with the help of a prison warden Goldson and Richardson wrote the articles for the newspaper on toilet paper. This was smuggled out on a daily basis and delivered to the Governor's own cook, who then secretly delivered the articles to the Belize Billboard Press.

- Mr. Goldson was highly regarded among Belizeans for his stance on what he called the "Unfounded Guatemalan Claim". For this reason, he never lost an election and was elected each time because it was felt that he would not waiver in protecting Belize from any threat of making concessions to Guatemala
- Mr. Goldson rejected the notion of negotiations, because Belize's existence was non-negotiable. He asserted that "Belize belongs to all Belizeans and as such, we have a duty, right and responsibility to protect and preserve Belize."
- As a result of deeply rooted disagreements with
The People's United Party, he resigned and formed the Honduras Independence Party. By 1958, HIP joined with the National Party to form the National Independence Party of which he remained leader up to 1979.
- In 1973 NIP joined two other political parties, the People's Development Movement (PDM) and the Liberal Party to form the United Democratic Party.
- While in his 50's Goldson went to London to read law. After his return he was elected to the House of Representatives and served between 1979 and 1980 as the one-man OPPOSITION.
- By 1984, Goldson won his seat and his party won the national elections. He became blind due to glaucoma and was an advocate for persons with this disability up to the time of his death. He also strongly advocated for the freedom of speech and for the empowerment of women in Belize.
- Was offered US citizenship, but refused because he felt that if he was to serve the people of Belize, he should do so with all its difficulties, he did not want an escape route.
- By January of 1992, Goldson was instrumental in the formation of The National Alliance for Belizean Rights (NABR) because he had opposed the passing of the controversial Maritime Areas Bill.
- On October 3, 2001, Phillip Goldson was laid to rest, honoured with the Order of Belize and a State funeral.

SOCIAL ACTIVIST GWENDOLYN MARGARET LIZARRAGA (1901- 1975)



•Gwendolyn Lizarraga was born on 11th July, 1901 to parents Sidney Smith and Guadalupe nee Baeza.

Did you know that?

• She was born in Maskall Village and was educated at Mr. Datsun Primary School, St. Mary's Primary School and St. Catherine's Academy.

• In 1926, she became married to police photographer Victor Manuel Lizarraga and had five children- Manuel, Adolfo, Miguel, Minerva and Lucero.

• She was not only a mother, but a business woman and was a successful chicle and mahogany contractor in northern Belize.

• Unlike the typical woman of her time, she wore pants, carried a gun, publicly smoked cigarettes and even drove a land rover as she went to her chicle and mahogany camps.

• Madam Liz was known to be a very outspoken business woman and legislator and dealt with big companies such as Wrigley's, Castillo and Thurton.

• Before her career in politics she was very active on the social scene and formed the United Women's Group. Wherever she went she tried to assist the people around her, especially women in unfortunate conditions. She would help the sick and the poor and expressed compassion for those less fortunate.

• As a probation officer in the Social Development Department she organized women's group and centers geared towards the advancement of women.

•Madam Liz was the co-founder of United Women's Credit Union. Even if a woman could only afford to save 25 cents per week she was encouraged to save. During that time a domestic earned roughly \$1.50 per week to wash/iron and about \$8.00 a week full time.

• During the 1950's and before Universal Adult Suffrage (1954) only property owners were allowed to vote therefore she assisted women to acquire their own house and lot.

• Madam Liz first ran for office at 60 years of age and won for three terms in 1961, 1965 and 1969.

• April 1961- Gwendolyn Lizarraga was first elected into politics and became the Minister of Education, Housing and Social Services, representing the Pickstock division in the National Assembly. Gwendolyn Lizarraga was the first woman to be elected to National Assembly as well as the first woman minister (Minister of Education).

• 1965- In her second term she served again as Minister of Education, Housing and Social Services. She believed everyone was entitled to a house and lot and assisted people in acquiring their housing lots. It is reported that she once even assisted a woman in locating her lot covered by bushes and mud.

• 1969- As Minister of Education and Housing the building of low cost homes began in King's Park, Lake Independence and Queen's Square areas.

• Her main area of interest was in improving the housing conditions and providing educational opportunities to youths. Under her ministry the first junior secondary school was established in 1968 and was later renamed "Gwendolyn Lizarraga High School".

• She endorsed the bill for the introduction of Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to Belize.

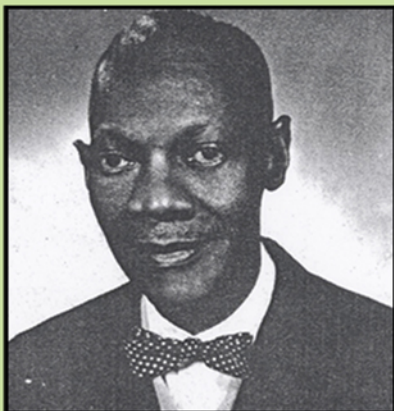
• She was awarded the Member of the British Empire (M.B.E.).

• Gwen Liz was an excellent chess player and helped organized the first chess club in Belize.

• She conducted pioneer work as folklorist and choreographer in the revival of the Mestizada dances.

• Gwendolyn Lizarraga passed away on June 9, 1975. Pallbearers for her funeral at Lord's Ridge Cemetery included the Premier Hon. George Price and Deputy Premier Carl Lindbergh Rogers.

SOCIAL ACTIVIST SAMUEL A. HAYNES (1898-1971)

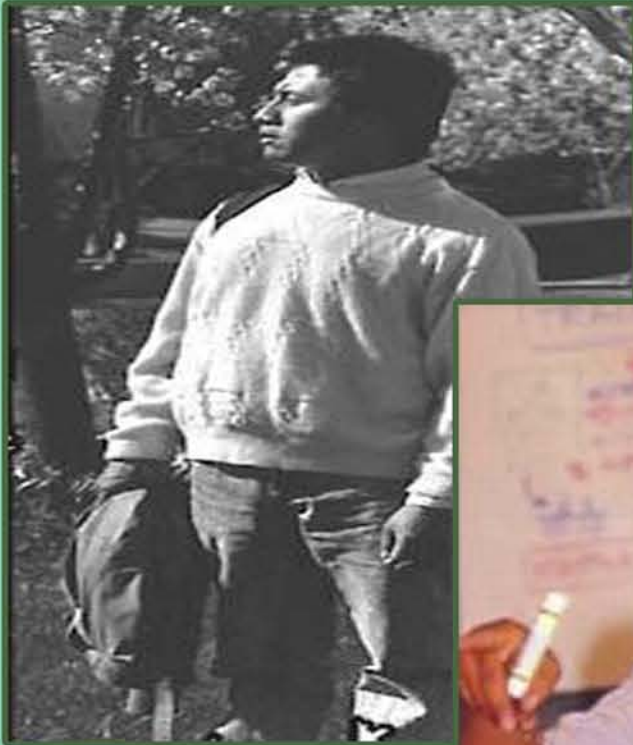


- Samuel Haynes was born on February 28, 1898 to parents Samuel Edward Haynes and Ellen Trapp.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Haynes was a student at Wesley High School, now Wesley College on a competitive scholarship.
- In 1916 at the age of 18 Haynes joined other Belizeans to serve in World War I as a member of the 2nd Contingent (stationed in Mesopotamia modern day Iraq).
- During his time he was very observant of seemingly discriminatory practices of the British soldiers against coloureds. As such, he became a key witness to the commission in the inquiry into the Ex-Servicemen's Riot of 1919.
- In 1921 Haynes was recruited by Marcus Garvey, the President of the United Negro Improvement Association (to return with him to the U.S.). Garvey met Haynes in Belize and became impressed with his eloquence as well as his commitment to promoting black advancement in society.
- Haynes emerged as one of the four-member Committee of Presidents of the United Negro Improvement Association when Garvey was arrested in the United States.
- In June 1966 Haynes formed the Freedom Committee at a public meeting in Harlem after learning of events that had transpired in London in respect to the Webster Proposals and also as reported by Phillip Goldson
- He wrote extensively and contributed to many United States based papers, including the Negro World, Philadelphia Tribune.
- He is best known in Belize for having written the words of the poem "Oh Land of the Gods", the words of which is now Belize's National Anthem.

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS ADVOCATE JULIAN ARMANDO CHO (1962- 1998)



- Julian's efforts received international attention. Hence, international concern initiated the evaluation and mapping of areas inhabited by the Mayas, a project that resulted in the production of the Maya Atlas.
- On November 25th 1998, the government of Belize signed a Memorandum of Understanding to negotiate a solution to the Maya land rights struggle.
- Cho's untimely death in December, 1998 was a huge loss to the Maya people and to the environment of southern Belize.
- In 1999, The Belize Audubon Society posthumously awarded Cho the James A. Waight Conservation Award for his tireless efforts in the protection and enhancement of Belize's Environment; and his efforts to advocate on behalf of the Maya people.
- The Julian Cho Society was created in 2004 in honor of him and pledge to continue his work- advocacy and leadership for social justice and human right. As part of their educational program there is a scholarship program and a Maya Youth Coalition.
- The Julian Cho Technical High school was also named in his honor. Each year on his birthday April 6, the Julian Cho Memorial is held celebrating his contributions and legacy.

Julian Armando Cho was born on April 6th, 1962 in the village of San Jose in the Toledo District of Belize as the sixth child of Mr. and Mrs. Juan Cho.

Did you know that?

- He attended high school at St. Peter Claver College in Punta Gorda Town and continued his education at St. John's College Sixth Form in Belize City after which received a Bachelor Degree in Philosophy from St. Louis University, Missouri, USA.
- Julian's educational mission crossed paths with the Society of Jesus. It was through this influence that he became drawn to their work in education, human rights, and social justice; hence he contemplated becoming a Jesuit Priest. Julian pursued a different path by returning to Belize where he served as an English teacher at St. John's College(1990-1991), Sacred Heart College (1991-1994), and the Toledo Community College (1994- 1998). His Jesuit background and experiences travelling exposed him to various people.
- His passion for education and knowledge could be best observed in the classroom where he would provide interactive ways for students to become engaged in topics of relevance. He was a great story teller and his creative style of teaching incorporating local elements to ensure that every student was reached. Julian never gave a 100% score to his students.
- He later married Magdalena Coc in December of 1992. Julian and Maggie had two children, son Ian Cho (1994), and daughter Ingrid Cho (1998). Julian is remembered always riding his bicycle from school to home and spent majority of his time expanding his knowledge by reading the papers and spending time with his family.
- Julian's belief in social justice led him to join the Toledo Maya Cultural Council (TMCC), a group working for the indigenous people of the Toledo District. December 1995, he was unanimously elected as chairman of the council by the indigenous communities and the TMCC members.
- He brought international attention to TMCC as a force for indigenous rights. He established partnerships with other organizations throughout the world and strengthened the financial and human resources of TMCC. Julian also mobilized his people into functional groups, inspiring the formation of the Toledo Alcalde Association (TAA), and the Toledo Maya Women's Council.
- On December 3rd 1995, Julian led a peaceful demonstration march to voice the indigenous people concerns over the granting of logging concessions on indigenous lands. He was concerned about deforestation, and the resultant threat to the livelihood of nearby communities.
- He was able to mobilize and influence communities and develop strong affiliation with the Indian Law Resource Center (ILRC) which enabled him to effectively present the indigenous agenda to Belize.

UNIONIST NICHOLAS DE LA ROCA POLLARD SR. (1924 - 2003)

- Was born on March 22, 1924 at Bacalar in Quintana Roo Mexico to parents Alberta Gill and Juan Castro Pollard.
- His Father was from Trujillo, Honduras and his mother was from Monkey River Village in southern Belize.
- Nick was the youngest of three sons. His two older brothers were Justo and Liberato.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Nick's father was a mahogany and chicle worker, hunter and small contractor. For this reason, Juan Castro Pollard moved his family from Monkey River to Hill Bank in Orange Walk, then to Corozal, then to Chetumal and finally Bacalar, where Nick was born in 1924.

- At age 7 Nick also survived the 1931 hurricane after he escaped a tidal wave. He was pulled to safety on the roof of one of the collapsed buildings in the St. Ignatius School Yard.

- He attended Holy Redeemer Primary School and then St. John's College and graduated at the top of his class.

- Despite his intelligence Nick was haunted by the fact that he was not recognized as a British citizen in British Honduras until 1957. This fact resulted in Nick being overlooked for several scholarship opportunities to pursue further education during his early years.

- Two events helped to shape his outlook on life. The first was the “vision of my mother worn to the bone over the back-breaking job of washing clothes for boarders at St. John's College...” The other was the fact that he, his brothers and mother were abandoned by their father when Nick was only four years old. This he said helped him to “assume a sense of compassion and common identity with the underdog.”

- On February 9, 1948 Nick married Elizabeth Hoffman and together they have twelve children, 6 girls and 6 boys.

- Between 1947 and 1950, Nick along with John Smith, George Price, Philip Goldson, Leigh Richardson, Narciso Valdez and others became members of the Christian Social Action Movement (C.S.A.). During this time they studied Pope Leo XIII's “Rerum Novarum” which dealt with the plight of the working class. These social and religious views presented in the “Rerum Novarum” served as the framework for the trade union agenda that Nick would pursue for much of his life.

- In 1939 as a 15-year old student at St. John's College, Nick recalled that he first became conscious of the social issues within Belize as a result of a strike called by the General Workers Union against Belize Estate Sawmill.



- Nick stated that he “dwelt on the need for economic justice, and stressed the organization of a strong, truly national trade union movement...”

- Between 1945 and 1950 he was the Director of Education in the movement which started the Holy Redeemer Credit Union.

- Between 1950 and 1957 Nick was one of the co-founders and executives of the People's Committee that would later become the People's United Party.

- In 1948 Nick, as an employee of James Brodie's, organized secret meetings with the workers and legally established the Mercantile Clerks Union of which he was president.

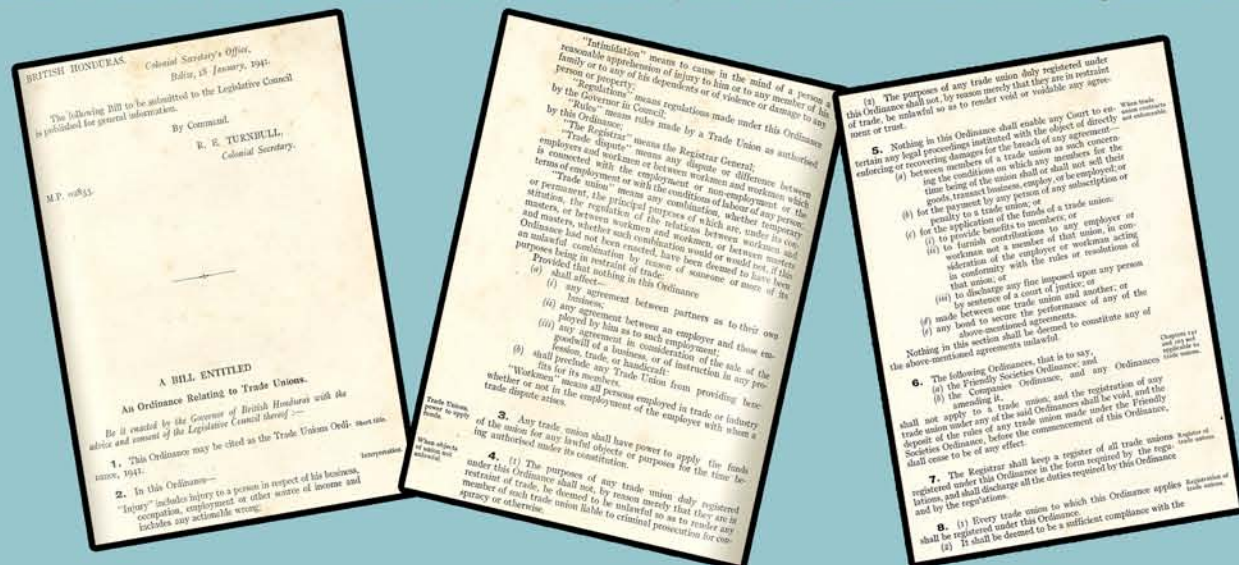
- He was also General Secretary and President of the powerful General Workers Union (G.W.U.)

- In 1951 while attending the founding of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Labour (O.R.I.T.) in Mexico City, he was appointed as its Caribbean and Central American organizer.

- His early union activism was also temporarily scarred by an incident in which he was accused of stealing \$67.09 dollars from hurricane relief funds. This led to his expulsion from the G.W.U. and was one of the factors that led to a split between the G.W.U and the P.U.P. Nick maintains that he never stole the money.

- Other Union activities included being a founding member of Southern Christian Union under its president David Mckoy.
- Founder and General Secretary of the Christian Democratic Union
- Founder of the Christian Democratic Party.
- Founder and organizer of the Christian Workers Union represented in the Confederation of Latin American Christian Unions
- Founder and Organizer of the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions.
- Nick helped to establish Labour Day first designated on May 1, 1961
- His success in unionism was enhanced both by his intelligence and his exceptional public speaking skills.

Nicholas de la Roca Pollard passed away on January 21st, 2003.



NATIONAL HERO GEORGE CADLE PRICE (1919-)



- George Cadle Price was born on January 15th, 1919 in Belize City, the third of eleven children.
- Early schooling included Holy Redeemer and St. John's College in Belize City with more studies at St. Augustine Minor Seminary in Mississippi, USA.
- During the 1931 hurricane, at the age of 12 years old, Price narrowly escaped death when a building at Loyola Park collapsed.
- By age 16, Mr. Price felt a calling to the priesthood. He had hoped to study theology at the University of Rome, but with the outbreak of World War II, he transferred to el Mayor Seminario Conciliar in Guatemala City.
- Within nine months, though, Mr. Price was back in Belize to support his family and dying father. Unable to continue with his spiritual studies, he began working for Mr. Robert Sydney Turton, a wealthy merchant and a mahogany exporter.
- It was with Mr. Turton that Price received his introduction to politics, drafting speeches for his boss and becoming aware of British colonial injustices in the colony.
- By 1944, Price entered municipal politics having entered within three days of voting day. He lost that first election.
- By 1947 he had won his first election. From 1958 to 1962 he was Mayor of Belize City.
- On December 31st, 1949 the Governor devalued the Belize dollar by using his reserve powers. He did so despite objections from the Legislative Council.
- A meeting was held at Price's home at #3 Pickstock Street to plan strategies to protest the devaluation. The result was the formation of the People's Committee, comprised of: John Smith, Leigh Richardson, George Price, and Phillip Goldson.
- By September 29th, 1950 the People's Committee became the People's United Party.

- From 1954 The PUP advocated and gained FULL ADULT SUFFRAGE. By 1956, Mr. Price was leader of the PUP and remained as leader up until 1996.
- The British authorities attempted to derail Mr. Price's popularity with the masses by charges of sedition. He emerged triumphant and even more popular than before.
- In the early 1960s, after witnessing the devastation of Hurricane Hattie George Price clamoured for moving the capital of Belize to Belmopan.
- In 1964, Belize gained its Self-Government and Mr. Price became its first Premier and was elected a member of the House of Representatives in consecutive elections from 1965 to 1984 and again in 1989 to 2003.
- Always hovering over the entire career of Mr. Price was the Guatemalan claim to Belize. It would be the same Guatemala issue that would play a pivotal role in uniting and consolidating the Belizean populace on the road to Independence.
- Mr. Price and his team led a campaign to secure international support for Belize's Independence and managed to secure for Belize, a few months before Independence some military presence from the British for "an appropriate period of time..." to guarantee its defence.
- On September 21st, 1981 we went into Independence and gained membership into the UNITED NATIONS and Mr. Price was the country's first Prime Minister.
- Today Mr. Price is considered: The Father of the Nation.



Photos Courtesy of: Belize Archives and Records Service

Information from: The Daily Clarion

A Man of the People and for the People

FELIPE SANTIAGO RICALDE (1920 - 1975)



• Santiago Ricalde or “San” as he was called remains one of Belize’s most noted and respected politicians and statesmen.

• San was born on May 1st, 1920 as the fourth child of Mr. Antonio Ricalde and Mrs. Eustaquia Ricalde nee Moguel.

• He attended St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic School in Corozal Town and then Johnny Vernon Private School in Belize.

• Upon the death of his father he was forced to abandon school, but this unfortunate event created the conditions for his rapid maturity.

Did you Know?....

• He went to work as a chiclero, farmer and later as a migrant worker on the Panama Canal. This experience of hard work instilled in him strong values of dignity, honesty, responsibility and perseverance.

• It was these values that would earn him the admiration and respect of his family, community and country because like his father who was previously a city councillor in Mexico, San seemed destined to live of life of service to the people of Corozal.

• At age 20 he married Marciana Flores and together they had six children, three boys and three girls.

• Upon his return from Panama, San took up work at the Pembroke

Hall sugar factory at which time he became a member of the General Workers Union and a supporter of the People’s United Party.

• In 1955 he entered active politics and was elected as Corozal’s first mayor.

• He later was elected as area Representative for the Corozal North constituency and thereby served in the Legislative Assembly.

• It is during this time that he came to be recognized as a true statesman and man of the people. He successfully lobbied his government to improve the lives of his constituents.

• He implemented several infrastructural projects such as the opening of feeder roads which connected rural communities and agricultural lands to the urban center.

• He established several community centers, expanded and established several schools in many villages, constructed a potable water system, as well as introduced the 24-hour electrification of Corozal Town.

• One of his greatest achievements was the establishment of the multi-purpose stadium which has come to bear his name.

• In the immediate aftermath of 1961 Hurricane, Santiago arranged for the assistance of a group of Mexican nurses and doctors from Chetumal. Unfortunately, a small plane carrying the team crashed and killed all on board.

• Santiago was deeply affected by the tragedy and later dedicated the fountain in the Corozal Central Park to the memory of those lost in the crash.

• He also demonstrated his drive and commitment to the people in the aftermath of the Hurricane. He promptly organized a system for the arrival of relief to Corozal. This involved daily trips back and forth by truck to Belize City via the old Northern Highway. He got very little sleep during this time.

• Santiago was well loved and respected and pioneered close relations with neighbouring Chetumal. He even arranged for the visit and hosting of Mexican President Licenciado Adolfo Mateos. This followed the inauguration of the Belize-Mexico international bridge.

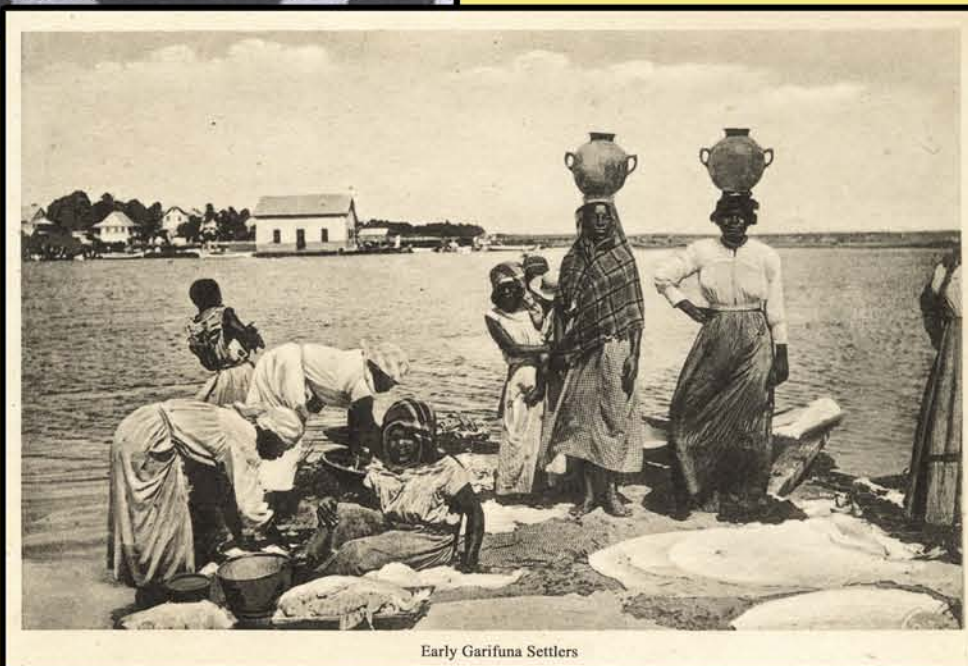
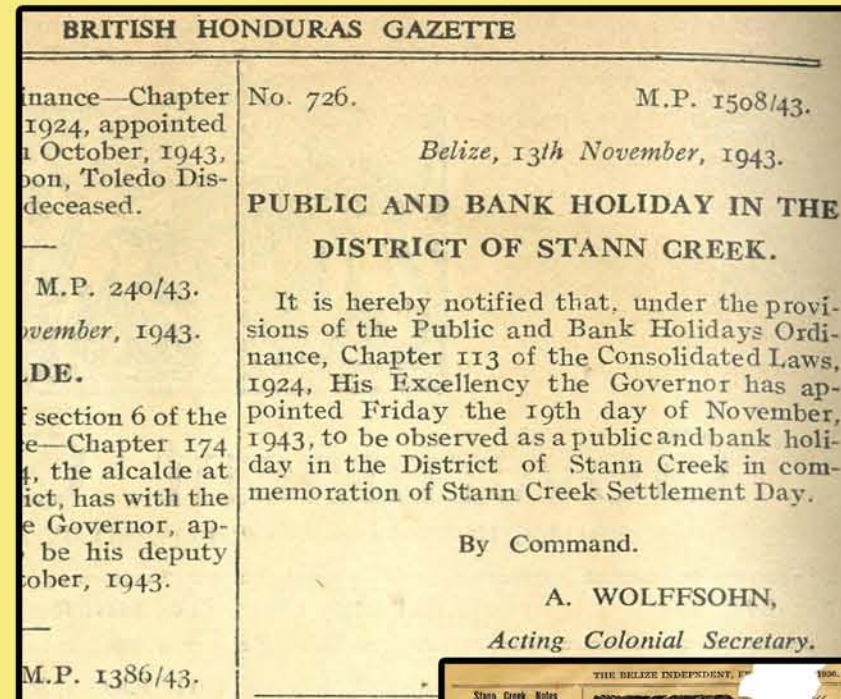
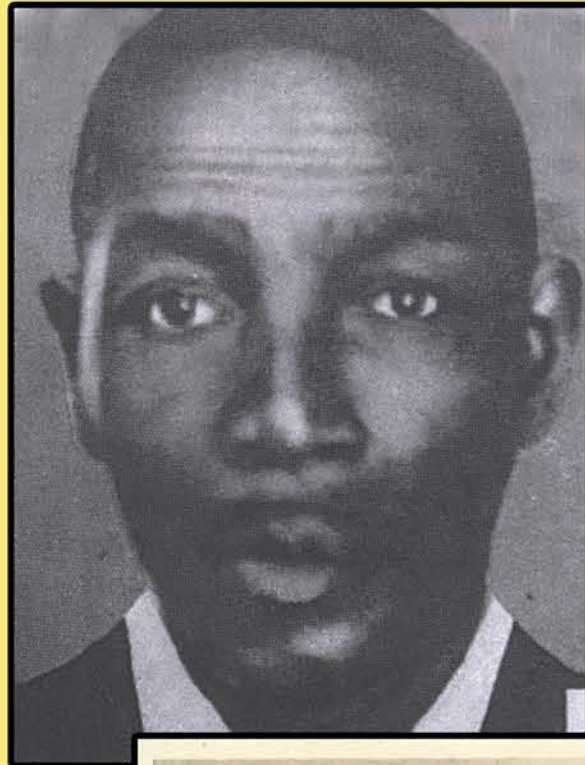
• In 1964 He was also part of a delegation led by Premier George Price to Mexico to lobby support for Belizean Independence.

• In the last three years of his life he began small scale farming and bee keeping, but on September 23rd, 1975, Santiago died of a sudden heart attack. He was mourned by all of Corozal, his family and his peers.

• Perhaps, Santiago’s greatest strength was the fact that he was people oriented. He was never too busy to talk to people, to joke, to listen to their concerns, or to help them sometimes coming at great sacrifice to him and his family.

• He was truly a man of the people and for the people.

SOCIAL ACTIVIST THOMAS VINCENT RAMOS (1887-1955)



Thomas Vincent Ramos was born on September 17, 1887 in Tulian, Puerto Cortez in the Republic of Honduras.

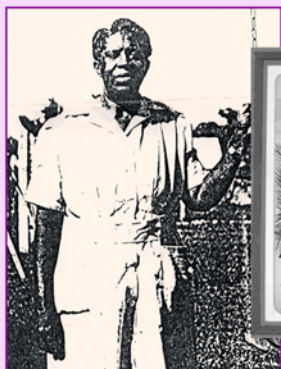
DID YOU KNOW THAT Thomas Vincent Ramos...?

- Today November 19th is recognized as Garifuna Settlement Day throughout the country and is celebrated as a National Holiday.
- In 1954, he became naturalized as a British subject.
- He died on November 13th, 1955 at age 68 just before the 13th anniversary of the Carib Settlement in Belize. In 1965, a monument was erected in his honour at the Princess Royal Children's Playground in Dangriga. Later on November 13th, 1990, a bust was erected in the vicinity of where his body was laid to rest at the Garden of Gethsemane, Dangriga.

- In 1914, at age 26 became married to Eliza Marian Fuentes and together had a twelve children.
- In 1923, at age 36 he migrated to Belize settling in Dangriga where for the next 32 years of his life he dedicated himself to the endeavours of the Garifuna people.
- Thomas Vincent Ramos had many interesting occupations- he was a farmer, a businessman, a candy maker, a boxing manager as well as a song composer and writer.
- In addition, he was a deeply religious man and became a lay preacher in the Methodist church of Dangriga.
- In 1924 he formed the Carib Development Society, which was successful in obtaining 800 acres of land at Sarawee Village which was later designated as a Carib Reserve.
- In 1926, he became an active member of the Carib International Burial Fund Society; he subsequently went on to establish the Colonial Instruction Association and the Independent Manhood and Exodus Uplift Society.
- Up until this time there was not a single nurse working in the entire Stann Creek area, so T.V. Ramos lobbied that Dangriga get its own native nurses to serve the community.
- These organizations were all geared towards the advancement of the Garinagu. They provided sick and death benefits and executed an educational program.
- He was a member of the Stann Creek District Board from 1927-1929.
- He originated the observance of the first Carib Settlement Day in Dangriga in 1941. In 1942 this observance spread to Hopkins, Seine Beight, Punta Gorda and Barranco.

- In 1943 he led a delegation consisting of Pantaleon Hernandez and Domingo Ventura to the Governor requesting that Carib Settlement Day be a public holiday in the Garifuna Communities. The same year this was achieved for the Stann Creek District and for the Toledo District in 1944.
- In 1943, he wrote a booklet entitled "Carib History".
- In the late 1940's he was the Stann Creek Correspondent for "The Belize Independent, a newspaper which was published weekly during the 1940's.

PIONEER CLEOPATRA WHITE (1898-1987)



• Cleopatra White was born June 28th, 1898 to parents Joseph and Maria White.

DID YOU KNOW THAT CLEOPATRA WHITE...?

- Was a member of the Methodist Church and the Black Cross Nurses Association (an auxiliary branch of the UNIA) that she was integral in shaping
- Is now acknowledged as the pioneer of rural nursing well before formal training for nurses became available in the early 1940's
- In addition to providing nurses services in Double Head Cabbage, Gales Point Manatee and Roaring Creek she also did so in Belize City, and Hattieville (most notably after the 1961 Hurricane)
- Was the founder of the Ebenezer Choir and Women's League
- Was instrumental in pushing for the construction of a town clock in the Gales Point Manatee, unfortunately the clock was set facing the sea which remained a source of amusement for the community until its destruction during Hurricane Hattie.
- Wrote scripts and songs and organized entertainment for the small community of Gales Point Manatee. She was also an excellent story teller.
- Many of her plays and songs have been entered in the National Festival of Arts.
- Nurse White served as a kind of counsellor at times, when young girls were making the transition from childhood to adolescence
- Ms. White was known for her love of dancing, and at social events would often pull the unsuspecting male in for a dance
- Some suggest that the decision to implement and formalize village councils was as a result of Ms. White initiative in setting up village leadership councils when she first arrived in these rural communities to which she was often dispatched
- After Hurricane Hattie in 1961 Hattieville was established. Ms. White commuted back and forth to the community to care for those who had been affected by the hurricane
- Was awarded with a Medal of the British Empire for her role in the development of community life.
- Sadly, Cleopatra White died as a pauper at the Old Folks home in Belize City.

Photos Courtesy of: Belize Archives and Records Service

Information from: From Colony to Nation: Women activists and gendering of politics in Belize 1912-1982. Anne McPherson, 2007.

Mothers of Modern Belize: Profiles of four Belizean patriots. Slivana Woods. 1919



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