
31 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT KAXIL UINIC AND QUALM HILL, TWO COLONIAL PERIOD SITES IN NORTHWESTERN BELIZE*

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In 2015, the Belize Estates Archaeological Survey Team (BEAST) conducted preliminary investigations at two sites in northwestern Belize: Qualm Hill, which was the seasonal headquarters of the British Honduras Company in the mid-1800s; and Kaxil Uinic, a San Pedro Maya village settled by Caste War refugees sometime after 1868. Although these sites may be considered two entirely separate entities with distinct histories, inhabitants, and archaeological assemblages, an exploration of the larger historical context surrounding both sites highlights their intricate relationship within a broader historical framework. Conflicts between the San Pedro Maya and British logging firms arose as a result of the two groups' differing uses of the Belizean landscape, yet both the Maya and the largely Creole labor force employed by timber companies were prohibited from owning land by colonial legislation. British logging companies were thus able to maintain vast estates and keep the general population of Belize dependent upon them for access to resources and jobs. As evidenced by the synthesis of archival and archaeological data from Qualm Hill camp and Kaxil Uinic village presented here, the loggers and the Maya, though marginalized by the colonial system, actively negotiated their identities to navigate the cultural landscape of British Honduras, sometimes in manners inconsistent with the defacto protocol dictated by the larger social groups of "colonizers" versus "colonized."

Introduction

In 2015, the Belize Estates Archaeological Survey Team (BEAST), the regional component of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project, conducted preliminary investigations at Qualm Hill camp and Kaxil Uinic village, two late colonial sites in northwestern Belize (Figure 1). The former site was a logging camp owned and operated by the British Honduras Company (BHC, later known as the Belize Estate and Produce Company [BEC]) from the 1850s into the early 1900s, and the latter was a San Pedro Maya village settled sometime after 1868 and occupied until 1931. The senior author directed investigations at the two sites as part of her thesis research. Bonorden and Smith (2015) and Bonorden and Kilgore (2015) describe the investigations of Qualm Hill camp and Kaxil Uinic village, respectively, in greater detail. This article provides a historical context for the occupation of the two sites and summarizes the results of the 2015 work at each site.

Historical Context

An initial observation of Kaxil Uinic village and Qualm Hill camp implies that the sites are two entirely separate entities with distinct histories, inhabitants, and archaeological assemblages. An exploration of the larger historical context surrounding both sites,

however, highlights their intricate relationship within a broader historical framework.

The economy of Belize was based on resource extraction, exports, and imports before the country even formally existed (Ng 2007:90), with timber forming the economic backbone of the colony from its nascence (Clegern 1967:5). Mahogany, in high demand by British and colonial American furniture makers and used for the construction of ships and railway carriages, replaced logwood as the primary export from the colony around 1770, leading loggers previously concentrated along the coast farther inland (Cal 1991:116; Finamore 1994:36; Ng 2007:6). Conflicts arose between the British logging firms and both the Maya inhabiting these areas and the colonial government in the Yucatán as British logging interests pushed into northwestern Belize (Bolland 2003:104; Cal 1991:98). As part of this move deeper into the interior, BHC established Qualm Hill camp, which operated as a seasonal headquarters sometime before 1852, as evidenced by mentions of the camp in Luke Smythe O'Connor's (1852:516) travelogue produced that same year (Bonorden and Smith 2015:68).

With their sole concern being the extraction of timber, the British eventually saw the *milpa* farming techniques practiced by the Maya as a threat to valuable mahogany sources (Bolland 1977:74), while the Maya perceived



Figure 1. Map of colonial period sites in western and northwestern Belize (map courtesy of Jason Yaeger).

the British intrusion into northern Belize as a threat to their territory and independence (Bolland 2003:104). Territorial disputes between British loggers and the colonial government in the Yucatán conversely stemmed from liberal interpretations of the northern boundary of British Honduras (Ng 2007:6). In addition to its role in the overall power struggle between England and Spain for global dominance, this territorial dispute ultimately went on to create further conflicts between loggers and the Maya during the Caste War (Ng 2007:5).

The Caste War in the Yucatán (1847–1901) was primarily responsible for an immense

population dislocation that sent thousands of refugees into northern Belize, including both Maya and Ladino groups (Clegern 1967:10). As a result of internal conflicts among various Maya factions, Asunción Ek led a group of approximately 1,000 Maya from Icaiche, Mexico into territory claimed by Guatemala and British Honduras between 1857 and 1862 (Bolland 2003:107). This group became known as the San Pedro Maya, named after their main village at San Pedro Sirís (Ng 2007:9).

At the height of their settlement history, the San Pedro Maya were dispersed throughout about 20 settlements in northwestern Belize and Guatemala over an area approximately 1,100

square kilometers in size (Jones 1977:139). The San Pedro Maya settlements were organized into three main settlement clusters: San Pedro, San José, and Holmul (Jones 1977:139; Ng 2007:9). Each of these settlement clusters comprised units of increasingly larger territory; including hamlets, small villages, and a major village center (Jones 1977:139). Kaxil Uinic was a small village within the San José settlement cluster.

Far from the principal population centers of the Yucatán, the Petén, and Belize, the only other inhabitants of this territory were the logging gangs who seasonally inhabited the mahogany camps in northwestern Belize (Jones 1977:139–141). Conflicts between the San Pedro Maya and British logging firms eventually arose as a result of the two groups' differing uses of the landscape, and rental disagreements further strained relations between the loggers and the San Pedro Maya, who believed they had ownership of land west of the Rio Bravo (Dornan 2004:89).

While Maya leaders in Icaiche conducted raids on mahogany works in northwestern Belize to coerce payment from the timber companies, Asunción Ek, *comandante* of the San Pedro Maya took a different approach, declaring his friendship with the government and maintaining peaceful relations. In exchange for “respecting” the mahogany trees in the region, the British supplied Ek's forces with ammunition, which was requested by the San Pedro Maya in anticipation of an attack by some Icaiche faction (Jones 1977:148–149).

In 1864, Marcos Canul became the *comandante general* of the Icaiche Maya faction, posing a challenge to Ek's diplomacy with both logging firms and the British colonial government (Jones 1977:145). In April of 1866, Canul led a raid on the BHC's logging camp at Qualm Hill, burning the saw mill, taking hostages, and demanding a hefty ransom from the company to settle delinquent rent payments. Knowing that the British had sold arms and ammunition to the San Pedro Maya, colonists became fearful of their former allies in September of 1866 (Bolland 2003:138; Jones 1977:149; Ng 2007:11), as rumors that the San Pedro Maya had turned on the British began to

circulate among colonial military leaders (Jones 1977:149).

In response to these rumors, the British marched on San Pedro Sirís in October of 1866 but were repelled by the Maya (Jones 1977:149). With the arrival of reinforcement troops from Jamaica in January of 1867, Lieutenant Colonel Robert William Harley led a punitive expedition into San Pedro territory, attacking San Pedro Sirís, San José Yalbac, Chunbalache, and other small villages in what became known as the Battle of San Pedro (Ng 2007:11).

Though the San Pedro Maya were dislocated and their settlements destroyed in the Battle of San Pedro, most of the villages were eventually repopulated (Jones 1977:151; Ng 2007:11). In the aftermath of the battle, Maya relations with the British colonial administration in Belize began to change (Ng 2007:12), ending the long period of hostility between the two groups over Icaiche claims to territory in the northwest (Cal 1991:361). Bolland (2003:111) designates this shift (from 1872 to 1900) as the consolidation of British jurisdiction over the Maya, with the Maya ultimately becoming incorporated into the colonial social structure. As the Anglo-Mexican border was formalized in 1893, British troops were able to occupy the San Pedro Maya settlement area without fear of reprisals from Mexico (Ng 2007:12). This event, combined with a series of epidemics that severely reduced the populations of San Pedro Maya villages, considerably diminished San Pedro autonomy (Jones 1977:151; Ng 2007:12).

According to Jones (1977:161–162), “[Kaxil Uinic] does not appear in the historical record until January 1885,” although Jones speculates migrants from Holuitz, an older San Pedro Maya village to the southwest, may have founded it sometime after their village disappeared from the historical records in 1868. BEC forcibly relocated the inhabitants of Kaxil Uinic to San José Yalbac in 1931 over rumors that they were illegally harvesting *chicle* in the village (Thompson 1963:228, 233–234).

The logging camp at Qualm Hill and the San Pedro Maya village at Kaxil Uinic are thus bound not only by the conflicts that characterized relations between loggers and the Maya in northwestern Belize, but also by their associations with BHC/BEC, which ultimately

became the largest logging firm in British Honduras (Ng 2007:67). Given their proximity, it is likely the inhabitants of the village and camp interacted on occasion.

Correspondence to Sir J. Eric S. Thompson from the colonial government (Telegram to Thompson from Office of the Conservator of Forests in British Honduras, September 15, 1930, Field Museum Archives, Chicago) indicates that Kaxil Uinic village was included in BEC's land holdings by 1930, and the inhabitants paid rent to the company to use the land for their *milpas* (Bonorden and Kilgore 2015:108). Under the Honduras Land Titles Act (1859) timber companies were allowed to purchase most of the land in northwestern Belize, while the Maya were prohibited from owning it (Bolland 1977:187). Former slaves, who had comprised the majority of logging labor prior to emancipation in 1838, were also forbidden from purchasing land by colonial legislation, and, unable to acquire farmland, many of these individuals returned to the logging industry, where the advanced system notoriously forced many of them into a perpetual state of debt servitude (Cal 1991:207–208). Both Qualm Hill camp and Kaxil Uinic village were therefore located on land owned and/or operated by the same company, which managed such a vast estate that they kept the general population of Belize dependent upon them for access to resources and jobs (Bolland 1977:8).

Although Bolland's (2003) description of British-Maya relations accurately reflects the historical narrative of colonialism in Belize as constructed by archival data, the simplification of this 200+ year period of culture contact into generalized phases of indigenous resistance, avoidance, and incorporation in the colonial superstructure obscures the subaltern history of the Maya and the loggers with whom they interacted, as well as the internally variable social, political, and economic agendas of factions within the larger groups of the "colonizers" and the "colonized" (Yaeger 2008:92). A more complex analysis of how these groups negotiated the cultural landscape of Belize is therefore necessary to construct a more accurate narrative of Maya-British relations during the nineteenth-century, and supplementary data provided by archaeology has

the potential to increase our understanding of the colonial experiences of these disenfranchised groups in lieu of historical documentation of events and circumstances from Maya/Creole perspectives.

Qualm Hill Camp

Qualm Hill camp is on the right bank of the Rio Bravo about 100 m east of Cedar Crossing, where the road between Gallon Jug and Blue Creek crosses the river (see Figure 1). The BEAST crew learned, to its surprise, that a group of loggers had chosen the western portion of the site as their seasonal camp in 2015, suggesting that even today the location holds certain logistical advantages for a logging base. The site appears to have been periodically reoccupied by various groups in the past, including the British Army who either camped there or used the location for jungle warfare training—our metal detector survey and excavations recovered blank rifle cartridges dating to the 1980s across the site. The presence of the loggers prompted the crew to modify the field methodology; crew members systematically walked transects radiating outward from the modern logging campsite and along the terrace of the riverbank that bounds the site to the west. Crew members used flagging tape to mark cultural material present on the ground surface, which BEAST staff later assigned Surface Find numbers and recorded using a GPS unit. The senior author selected Surface Finds representing dense artifact concentrations for the placement of test units. Based on observations by Olivia Ng (2007:111) during excavations at the San Pedro Maya village-turned-logging-camp at Holotunich, surface artifact density often correlated with denser sub-surface artifact concentrations.

BEAST crews identified 60 artifact scatters visible on the ground surface (both within and outside the boundaries of the modern logger camp) at Qualm Hill camp and excavated 19 suboperations, commonly measuring 2 x 2 m in size (Figure 2). In general, the density of artifacts was lower than we expected, given the duration of the site's use, but two factors probably account for this: First, BHC/BEC only occupied Qualm Hill camp seasonally; and, second, bottle collecting by modern visitors may

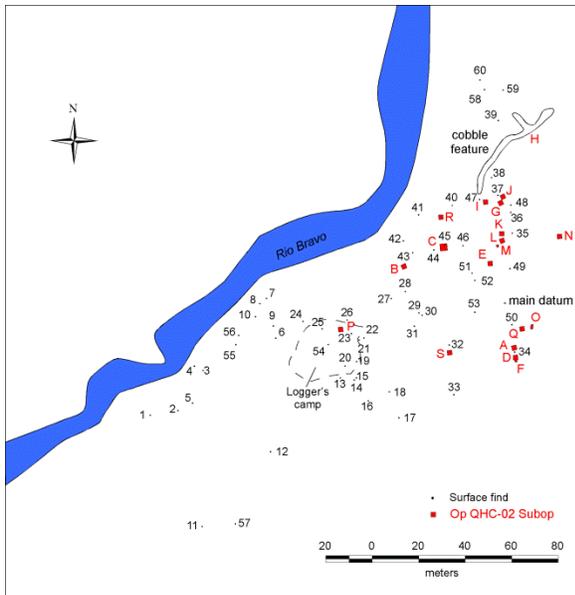


Figure 2. Map of Qualm Hill camp.

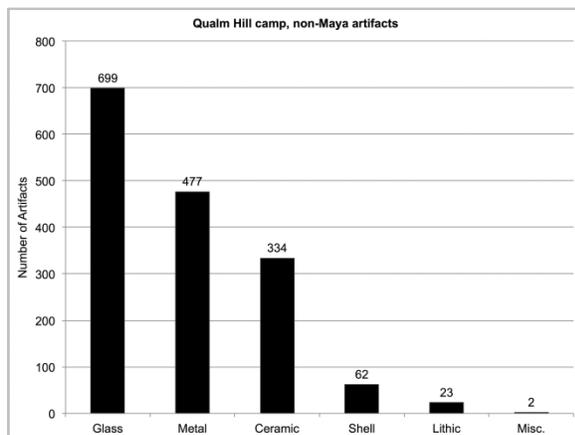


Figure 3. Summary of non-Maya artifacts recovered at Qualm Hill camp.

have affected the amount of cultural material preserved on the surface of the site.

Interestingly, the only apparent Maya artifacts encountered at the site by our investigations were a proximal side-notched arrow point fragment, two sherds of Maya pottery, and a mano fragment. It is likely the geomorphology of the site is too young to contain prehistoric Maya materials, or any prehistoric occupation is buried deeper than our test excavations penetrated.

Non-Maya materials present at the site include glass, historic ceramics, and metal in that order of frequency with lesser quantities of other artifact types (Figure 3). Unidentifiable

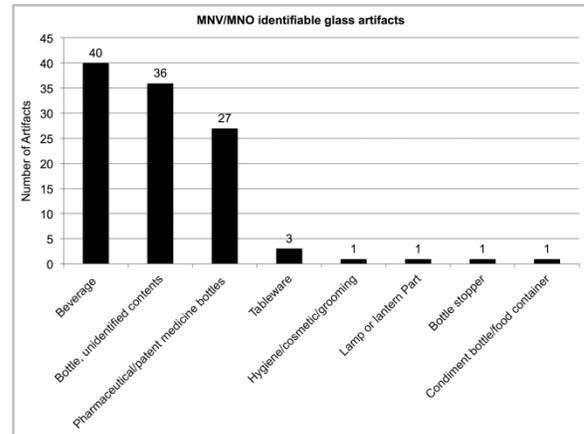


Figure 4. Identifiable glass artifacts recovered at Qualm Hill camp.

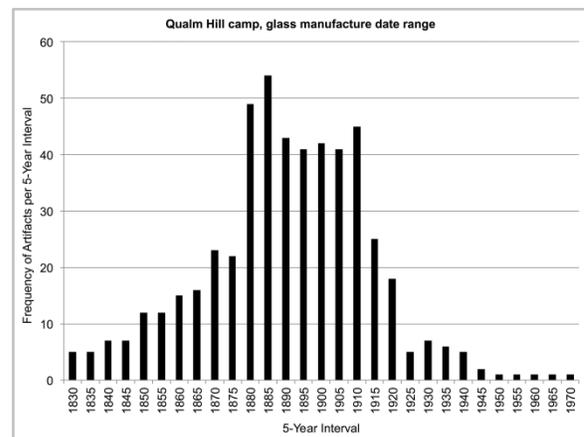


Figure 5. Manufacture date range of glass artifacts from Qualm Hill camp.

body shards constituted 39.5 percent of the glass assemblage, or 276 of the 699 glass pieces recovered from the site (Bonorden and Smith 2015:87). Identifiable glass items included beer, soda, wine, mineral water, condiment, medicinal, and perfume or cologne bottles, bottle stoppers, drinking glasses, a lamp chimney, a vial, and bottles with unknown contents (Figure 4). The glass assemblage included 27 patent medicine and/or pharmaceutical bottles. Brands identified on these bottles included: Elliman's Embrocation, Eno's Fruit Salt, C. H. Wintersmith, Barry's Pain Relief, Parker-Blake Co. Ltd., Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure, and Hamlin's Wizard Oil. The high frequency of wine (n=7), beer (n=11), and patent medicine bottles (n=27) in the assemblage is consistent with the practice of selling alcohol at logging camps and medicines

to alleviate the aches of physical labor associated with logging (Ng 2007:204). Some of the patent medicines were advertised as acceptable for use on “man or beast,” and may have been applied to the animals that pulled the logging carts. The glass artifacts that could be dated have a manufacture date range spanning 1830 to 1970, with peaks in production between 1875 and 1880 and in 1910 (Figure 5). The majority of glass identified at the site was produced between 1870 and 1920, which post-dates the Icaiche raid on Qualm Hill.

A total of 334 non-Maya ceramic sherds was collected from Qualm Hill, mostly in the form of unidentifiable body sherds from unknown vessel types. The majority of the ceramic assemblage comprises imported items from Europe. Of the identifiable ceramic objects, clay tobacco pipes and plates were most common (Table 1; Figure 6). As noted by Ng (2007:216), the use life of a pipe was only several days to two weeks, which may explain the large number of broken pipes present at Qualm Hill (n=21). Ng (2007:216) also notes that smoking was considered a working-class activity in the late nineteenth century, which is consistent with the status of logging occupations in the economy of British Honduras.

Many ceramic sherds collected from Qualm Hill were such tiny fragments that no design was visible on them. For those ceramic sherds that exhibited some form of decoration, transfer whiteware seems to have been the most common form, followed by ironstone. The relatively low density of porcelain vessels recovered from the site may attest to class distinctions present in the camp, particularly between the presumably Creole loggers and British foreman. The ceramic artifacts recovered from Qualm Hill camp generally date from 1830 to 1900, with a peak in production from approximately 1840 to 1860. The earlier manufacture date range for ceramics versus glass at the site may be attributed to the fact that glass containers were discarded after consumption of the contents, while ceramic vessels were curated longer for reuse.

Of note, the ceramic assemblage included two ceramic doll fragments—one an arm and the other likely a limb, as well—recovered from the same excavation unit (see Figure 6). The toy

Table 1. Non-Maya Ceramic Object Types from Qualm Hill Camp.

Object	Specimens
Clay tobacco pipes	21
Plates	10
Saucers	4
Cups and Mugs	6
Storage Vessel	1
Buttons	1
Doll Parts	2

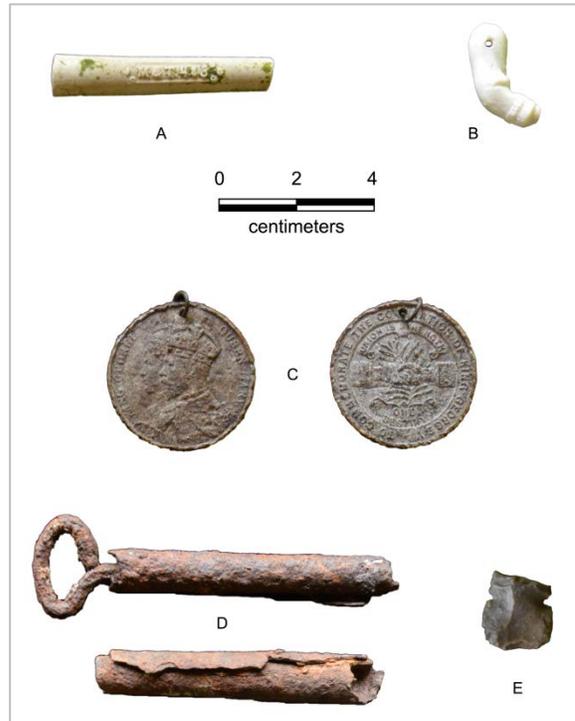


Figure 6. Artifacts from Qualm Hill camp. A: clay pipe stem, B: ceramic doll arm, C: King George V coronation medallion, D: food can winding keys, E: proximal arrow point fragment.

pieces indicate the likely presence of children (or at least a child) at the camp.

Although 477 metal artifacts were recovered from Qualm Hill, most were in the form of unidentifiable metal flakes; analysts could only identify the form and/or function for 66 objects. The largest and most complete metal objects were generally surface finds. Nails/staples, gun parts, and ammunition were the most abundant metal forms present at Qualm Hill, followed by barrel hoops (Table 2). Barrel hoops were not consistently collected from surface artifact scatters due to their fragile state and are therefore underrepresented in the

Table 2. Identifiable Metal Artifacts from Qualm Hill Camp.

Object	Artifact Count
Cans (food storage)	9
Chamber pots	1
Gun parts and ammunition	16
Hardware parts	5
Cutting	2
Nails/staples	24
Chain links	1
Personal adornment	7
Logging equipment/transportation	4
Barrel hoops	14
Food preparation	9

**Figure 7.** Photograph of logging cart parts at Qualm Hill camp.

analyzed assemblage. Similarly, larger pieces of logging equipment were also observed rather than collected (Figure 7), and are also underrepresented in the assemblage. Can fragments were generally rectangular in shape, or identified by the winding keys used to open them (like sardine cans). According to Ng (2007:270), metal cans became common in logging camps after 1890. The small amount of cans collected from the site is surprising, considering that most food consumed by the loggers should have been pre-packaged items sold through the truck system.

Items considered to be “personal adornment” included both buttons and a medallion. Most buttons had four holes, though one appears to have been machine pressed. Ng (2007:271) asserts that metal buttons similar to those recovered from Qualm Hill were likely sewn on work dungarees or overalls. Excavations also recovered a medallion with

King George V and Queen Mary in profile and the words “King George V Queen Mary” on its obverse face (see Figure 6). The reverse side shows two hands shaking in front of an olive branch with the words “Union is Strength” and “One Destiny” printed in scrolls. King George V was crowned on June 22, 1911. Ng (2007:140) found a similar item associated with the BEC occupation of Holotunich, in the form of a plate commemorating the coronation of King Edward VII (ca. 1902).

Kaxil Uinic Village

In present times, Kaxil Uinic village is a dense patch of upland forest and cohune palm forest surrounding a water lettuce-choked *aguada*. In 2010, Hurricane Richard severely damaged the forest, which is still recovering today. As a result, dense secondary growth and thicker-than-normal understory vegetation hindered our survey efforts and hampered visibility of surface remains at the site. Our research design, which called for gridding the site and excavating narrow strip trenches to identify historic house floors, was discarded in favor of opportunistic pedestrian survey to locate surface finds, which were recorded following the same methods used at Qualm Hill camp, and smaller-scale excavations, typically measuring 2 x 2 m in size.

Our surface inspection of the site identified and recorded 36 surface finds (Figure 8). In addition to the widely scattered artifacts, we documented seven three-stone hearths, three dense bottle scatters or middens, one mound, one cobble platform, and one small sinkhole-like feature scattered around the *aguada*.

Our excavations and surface collections produced a wide range of artifacts, which represent a mixture of traditional Maya material culture, such as lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains, and non-Maya materials imported to the colony, including glass, metal, and ceramic artifacts (Figures 9 and 10). Glass and ceramics are most useful in terms of establishing a chronology for the site. The manufacture date range of glass artifacts reveals two peaks in production from 1885 to 1890 and from 1905 to 1915. The majority of glass was produced between 1880 and 1930, which precisely corresponds with historical documentation of the

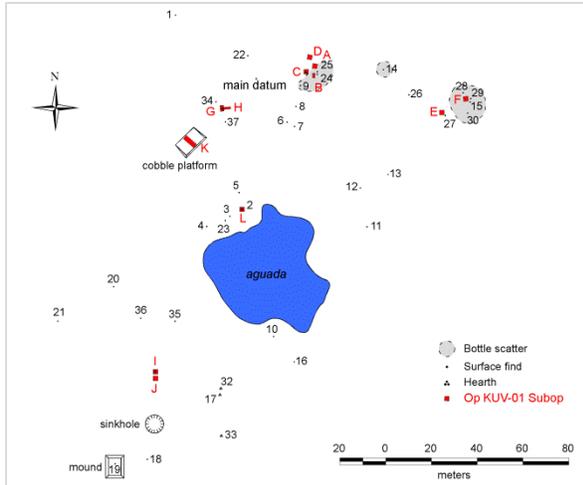


Figure 8. Map of Kaxil Uinic village.

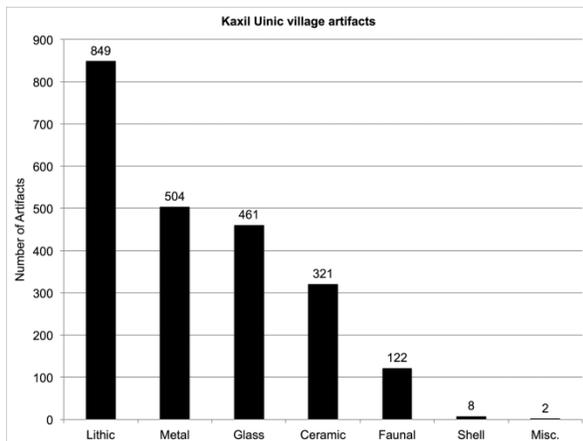


Figure 9. Summary of artifacts recovered at Kaxil Uinic village.



Figure 10. Artifacts from Kaxil Uinic village. A: Royal Flavoring Abstract bottle, B: 1900 1/2 Real coin, C: majolica sherd.

site's occupation. Beer and soda bottles dominated the assemblage of bottles and jars, and patent medicine bottles were also well represented. These types of artifacts and these ratios are similar to assemblages from other San Pedro Maya sites (Church et al. 2011; Dornan 2004; Ng 2007).

The ceramic assemblage includes locally made Maya sherds and imported colonial objects, including clay tobacco pipes and ceramic plates, saucers, cups, and jars. Almost all dateable imported ceramics in the assemblage were produced from 1830 to 1900, with a peak manufacturing range of 1880 to 1900. The earlier manufacture date range for ceramics versus glass may again be attributed to the fact villagers curated ceramics but discarded glass containers after shorter periods of use. The peak production range of this material type also corresponds well with the known occupation date range of the site.

Although 504 metal artifacts were recovered from Kaxil Uinic, most were in the form of unidentifiable metal flakes. The largest and most complete metal objects were generally found in surface collections. Food service items (utensils, bowls, cups, and so forth) comprised the most abundant metal forms, followed by food cans. Metal cups make up the majority of food service items collected from the site. Metal food service items appear to have been present at Kaxil Uinic in larger quantities than ceramic ones, possibly due to the fact that metal items were relatively inexpensive, light weight, and more durable. The most temporally diagnostic metal artifact recovered was a 1/2 Real coin from Guatemala that was minted in 1900. It was found in an excavation unit on a house floor, and excavators recovered two metal cups, faunal bone, debitage, glass, local ceramics, and whiteware from the same context.

In terms of subsistence, the faunal remains from the site include peccary, modern pig, deer, large birds, river turtle, and unidentified mammals. The presence of pig and bird bone in the faunal assemblage aligns with surveyor William Miller's (1887) observation that the inhabitants of the villages near the border in 1887 raised pigs and fowls, but the peccary, deer, and turtle indicate a continued reliance on traditional hunting practices. Yaeger et al.

(2003:8) further theorize that cast iron cauldrons were used to cook traditional soups, stews, and pibils. While corn is not preserved at the site, corn-processing tools were, and they show a similar pattern. In addition to traditional ground stone *manos* and *metates*, the villagers used metal grinders, choosing to adopt some British technologies that allowed them to pursue traditional activities more efficiently (Leventhal et al. 2001:14).

While there are strong similarities between the material culture documented at San Pedro Sirís by Dornan (2004) and Church and colleagues (2011) and Kaxil Uinic, the differences are perhaps most informative. At Kaxil Uinic, our initial work documented seven three-stone hearths, which are common at Tikal's colonial occupation (Meierhoff 2015), and we suspect the dense undergrowth hides more. Interestingly, only one three-stone hearth was observed at San Pedro Sirís (Dornan 2004), and Ng (2007) did not locate any at Holotunich, a contemporary San Pedro Maya village to the east of Kaxil Uinic. Other than a cobble mound of indeterminate age and thin marl floors associated with several of the hearths at Kaxil Uinic, no architectural remains were observed at the site, suggesting the village had fairly modest houses.

In terms of artifacts, the most striking difference is the high frequency of European weaponry at San Pedro compared to that at Kaxil Uinic. Church and colleagues (2011:182) report recovering "many firearm parts at San Pedro Sirís," including flintlock rifles predating 1850 and Enfield rifles postdating 1853. The British undoubtedly supplied the latter to the villagers prior to the 1866 and 1867 battles. In contrast, we only found a few shotgun shells of unknown age at Kaxil Uinic. While the disparity could be related to sampling bias and/or the manner in which weapons did or did not enter the archaeological record at the two sites, it may also reflect the decreasing ability of the Maya to acquire firearms from the British, post-conflict.

Another curious difference is the lack of toys at Kaxil Uinic. Church and colleagues (2011:189–190) found "toys throughout San Pedro, including tea sets and doll parts from both surface and excavated domestic contexts," but we found none at Kaxil Uinic. They



Figure 11. Fragment of a chicle boiling pot and a chiclero spur from Kaxil Uinic village.

concluded that the toys found at San Pedro were associated with the school there. Thus, the lack of similar artifacts at Kaxil Uinic may indicate the village did not have a school.

One large post-conflict change appears to have been the increased involvement of San Pedro Maya men in *chicle* harvesting, to the point that Thompson (1963:118) noted the villagers at San José Yalbac in 1934, which by that time included the former residents of Kaxil Uinic, imported most of their beans and corn because the men were away bleeding *chicle* and not tending *milpas*. As Christine Kray and colleagues note (personal communication, 2015), *chicle* bleeding was one way the San Pedro Maya paid rent to BEC. At Kaxil Uinic, excavations recovered several fragments of *chicle* pots and one *chiclero* spur (Figure 11), both of which may date to the San Pedro Maya occupation of the village or to *chicleros* who reused the site as a camp in the mid-twentieth century.

Discussion

Kaxil Uinic village and Qualm Hill camp represent two distinct archaeological sites in northwestern Belize, yet the occupants of each likely interacted, as they were all entangled within the complex sociopolitical landscape that characterized nineteenth-century British Honduras. Contrary to Bolland's (2003) division of "British"-*"Maya"* relations into generalized

phases of indigenous resistance, avoidance, and incorporation in the colonial superstructure, a critical analysis of archival and archaeological data suggests both the “British” loggers and the “Maya” villagers navigated the cultural landscape in response to external forces as necessary, sometimes in manners inconsistent with the defacto protocol dictated by their larger social groups (colonizers vs. colonized).

On one hand, the San Pedro Maya at Kaxil Uinic were at odds with the Creole loggers and British timber companies like those at Qualm Hill, as their differing uses of the landscape became incompatible and lead to oftentimes violent confrontations. On the other hand, colonial legislation prevented both groups from owning land, allowing logging companies that maintained vast estates to keep the general population of Belize dependent upon them for access to resources and jobs (Bolland 1977:8). The San Pedro Maya were thus unable to maintain their autonomy through *milpa* farming, as they needed to participate in the cash economy of the colony to pay rent for the land they inhabited. Similarly, Creole loggers had negligible purchasing power in the colonial market because their wages were mostly paid in goods rather than cash (Cal 1991:211). The two groups therefore undoubtedly defied “colonizer” vs. “colonized” dichotomy, interacting on more peaceable terms as groups equally disenfranchised under the colonial system. These notions are supported by archaeological evidence from Qualm Hill camp and Kaxil Uinic village, where it appears that the inhabitants actively negotiated their identities beyond the simplified prescriptions of instances of culture contact.

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