

**Interviewer:** The last section is like more specific on culture. Are there any traditional festivals or ceremonies that the villages have? I know like on your independence day you have a festival.

**Narrator:** Um-hum. Um-hum. In the village here, just for the village, we have this Patron Saint, San Narciso. We celebrate that, with that religious ceremony first, then comes a traditional ceremony for the Maya Mestizos, we have this hog, the dance of the hog which is traditional.

**Interviewer:** What kind of...? Do they have a certain dress that they wear?

**Narrator:** Yeah. Full white with a little white hat and little red handkerchief. Yes, that's the traditional dance for Mayan Mestizos.

**Interviewer:** That's neat. Now and that's, when is that festival?

**Narrator:** The Patron Saint is the 29<sup>th</sup> of October.

**Interviewer:** Is there any kind of, like, traditional music?

**Narrator:** Yes, we have this band that plays the type of music to dance this special dance. It's a band that, nothing electric there. Pure instruments.

**Interviewer:** What kind of instruments do they use?

**Narrator:** Like a trumpet, a trombone, and what else they use? Sax, they use a sax, saxophone and the.... What ya call it?

**Interviewer:** A drum?

**Narrator:** A drum, yeah. That's all they use, I think, only 4 or 5 them. That's the type of band we use to have long time ago. I think there's only one left of that band. Only one.

**Interviewer:** Are they passing it down? Are they.... The members of the band, are they older or are they passing it on to younger people?

**Narrator:** I don't know if.... You see younger people don't want to play those type. They want electric now. Everything they get tired. They want the organ, whatever.

**Interviewer:** So when this band stops....

**Narrator:** Yes, because they use to be about 8 of them and I think 4 of them died already or 3, 3 or 4 died. And now they're small, 4 playing this thing. It's hard. And if nobody joins them, they, that will disappear sooner or later. It will.

**Interviewer:** Is the deer dance festival celebrated here?

**Narrator:** The what?

**Interviewer:** The deer dance festival?

**Narrator:** Deer dance festival? No. Un-un. [3:20]

**Interviewer:** And traditional art, is there...? Can you tell me about any art in your cultural history like...?

**Interviewer 2:** Maya figures or anything like that? Or anything that you might consider art that has survived over the years?

**Narrator:** Over the years? Yes, like the serpent? The serpent, and some make this in Maya ruins. Most of them is the Maya ruins. Little pyramids. The Mayas. That's all, I think.

**Interviewer:** Going back to like say your grandfather. Was there any specific dress that they always wore? I mean was there.... I know in certain areas like the ladies wear shawls. Did your grandmother wear a certain type dress? For daily?

**Narrator:** Dress? Normally, for daily? Yes. What they use to. They use everyday was these skirt, only half skirt and then the blouse. They scarcely use the whole dress, that's what I notice with the old ladies. Just long.... (interrupted)

**Interviewer:** It was always 2 pieces?

**Narrator:** Yeah, 2 pieces. Yeah. Long, long dress.

**Narrator 2:** The Mayan Mestizo is mostly commonly known because this huipil. The ladies, they wear the huipil with these....

**Narrator:** Flowers. Shawl and the flowers.

**Narrator 2:** The rose in the hair. The men usually dress white. Long legs, white pants with the sandals with arches and the sombrero.

**Narrator:** Hat.

**Interviewer:** What'd the ladies wear on their feet? What kind of shoes?

**Narrator:** Shoes? Well they....

**Interviewer:** Like your grandmother? Do you know what kind of shoes?

**Narrator:** My grandmother? Slippers. Pure slippers.

**Interviewer:** Are there any stories that your grandfather used to tell you or maybe your grandmother used to tell you so he was...?

**Narrator:** Stories? The only story they used to tell us was about the..., let's say, about the X'tabai. The X'tabai is one. Tell you in the nights in certain places, at that time, everything was bushy here. Maybe just to scare us because I never see it, never saw it, but a lot of people say that they see it. I think he saw something like that the other day. There is a woman that comes out in the night, after midnight, and if you pass there every night, they might want to grab you and.... But what I..., one of the things they use to tell me and.... I almost, I saw almost something like that in the bush. Sometimes you hear that somebody's whistling you in the bush. And if you turned to see it, you get frightened, scared. They say that it's a little man that comes out and in the middle of the milpa and that is the man that takes care of the bush and the people working in the bush. He's the one who grow garden. And that is the story that all the old people tell you because they believe in that. Even when they are going to plant their corn, they take out their bebida [Spanish for "drink"] and take all their meal and they offer it to that man. Yes, they put some sticks there and they hang the food and if they would put coffee, or whatever, porridge. That's when they're going to start to plant. When they reap again, they do that again. I always hear, my grandfather use to do it.

**Interviewer:** So he always thought that they would, he would, he'll take care of their.... He will protect them.

**Narrator:** He will protect them. Yeah. Protect. For protection, yeah, they do it for protection. They say if you don't do that, you will see him at anytime. It will appear. I heard the whistling about two times

and I didn't turn back to see (laughs) because I was told every time, we were working with my father and my grandfather and he tells us. So when I heard this, I won't turn my head and see. So I didn't get to see. No, no time. But that time it was high bush, high bush all around here. That was before the cane started. They had that belief. That was the only two, favorite stories, they tell about that and they tell you about the lady coming out in the night, X'tabai, X'tabai is a Maya word, X'tabai. [9:08]

**Interviewer:** Are there any certain plants or animals that would have a special significance to say your grandfather's culture. They raised mostly corn, so corn was very important to them.

**Narrator:** Corn. Yes.

**Interviewer 2:** You mentioned a serpent earlier in the art. Was that considered a sacred animal or special...?

**Narrator:** Un-huh. Un-huh. Art. Yeah, I think the serpent was something special in the art because what they use to do is, they used to plant, let's say like melons, water melons. And most of those little, those old people, they take a piece of string and they tie it round and they throw it in the middle of the patch, of the area, milpa. And if you want to thief that watermelon as you try to grab the watermelon, it turns a snake. It turns a snake and that is true. That is true. I don't know if I saw the really snake or if it was the.... But I was small but I remember that it's not my grandfather who did it. It's his friend, his friend. Because a lot of us didn't believe it. I say that you didn't believe it. You know boys. And the old man say he wants to see it. Say go away and when you come back say you try to grab one of those watermelons. And we came back and say grab it. And as you bend over and start to grab it, the snake come out. Yes, and that's true. A lot of those old people. But I think they didn't teach nobody because now you can't hear about it, not hear it anymore. Or nobody can do it now. You couldn't thief watermelon to those people or going and take some corn, green corn. Couldn't do that. San Victor had about two people who use to that, they say. I think it was the Canton family.

**Interviewer:** What was the name of the family?

**Narrator:** Canton. Canton. I heard that that is old man that was good for that. If you want to cure your patch, to go and get, he comes. Nobody can thief nothing from you. Yes, the snake will chase you.

**Interviewer:** What about like conservation of your environment? Have there been any formal conservations, like you were talking about, was it some kind of tree that isn't, doesn't grow here any more. Are there certain plants that are, they've been harvested and harvested to where they're thinking like they're endangered, where you can't harvest them anymore? Or is there any conservation going on where they are wanting to preserve certain types of plants?

**Narrator:** Plantas que quedarán? [Plants that they will preserve?] Like the mahogany? Mahogany. That was coming here because they use to cut logwoods here. The chicle. It was closed here where the chiclaros used to bleed chicle. I know because scarcely see one, one of those trees here. Some people have one in their yard and they protect it. They won't destroy it. Those are the two, two and....

**Interviewer:** Does the government protect any of those?

**Narrator:** Yes, mahogany, sapodilla.

**Narrator 2:** You need to have a special permit now to cut down a mahogany [tree].

**Narrator:** Before the cane started that was their job. After they finished their corn work, they reap corn and everything, that was their next job, chicle. They went breed Chicle and sell the chicle, I think. Some Mexican guy, I think, use to come and buy the chicle by markets and they sell it in contraband. They

didn't have permit to bleed the chicle but they sell it. That was their..., there they used to get their extra money, bleeding chicle. [13:35]

**Interviewer:** Are there any birds or animals that are the same way to where there used to be lots of them and now there aren't, well like the deer. You said there used to be a lot of deer but now there's no deer.

**Narrator:** The deer? Yes. They use to go there and shoot one there but now, you won't see none. Deer. The turkey, wild turkey. They used to shot that just behind the village but now you won't find that. Even the parrots, the big parrots, they are gone. Some big parrots like that, you can't see them here or near anymore.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything...? What lives in the sugar cane? Just snakes and rats? I mean, is there anything, any other big animal that lives in the sugar cane?

**Narrator:** Big animals? Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Especially now, how everybody burns before harvesting. Drives things out.

**Interviewer:** It drives them all out.

**Narrator:** Nothing stays there. Nothing.

**Interviewer:** How about the hurricanes, when the hurricanes come? How..., do they impact your village? I mean, does it come in far enough to where it makes a difference here or is it mostly like in Corozal or how does it impact this region?

**Narrator:** Well, the only hurricane that has cause a big damage here was, I think, Janet. That was the biggest, I think it was '55. '55. Janet struck hard here, everything in Corozal, whole district. That year, scarcely, we scarcely reap, harvest cane. I think we only had about 50% of our crop.

**Interviewer 2:** So it even damaged the sugar cane?

**Narrator:** Sugar cane, corn, everything but mostly the corn because that spoils and, but the sugar cane, we still harvested about 50% of the crop. But oranges and everything else went. That was the strongest hurricane. Other hurricanes, they was not too hard, didn't struck hard. Not much damage.

**Interviewer 2:** Did it destroy a lot of the houses?

**Narrator:** Oh, yes. At that time, well, all the houses were not strong enough to take a hurricane and I think here in San Narciso after Janet, only one house stood up. One house and I think it was Rafael's , Rafael Campos' house. Only that house.

**Interviewer:** In all of San Narciso?

**Narrator:** All San Narciso.

**Interviewer:** Just one house.

**Narrator:** One house. Everything went down.

**Interviewer:** So what happened.... What happened to everybody after that?

**Narrator:** After the hurricane? Everybody tried to put up a little piece just to make you stay there that night. Some went to the church and.... But most of the people, everybody tried to put a little hut just to stay in. Helping each other. [16:55]

**Interviewer:** Where were you living during...?

**Narrator:** I was living with my father. I think I had 8 to 10 years at that time. Because I remember, in the morning, for about two days, we were eating only oranges because we had a lot of oranges at that time and because that's all we had to eat. Oranges, oranges. 'Til about a week after, we start to get help from, probably, from Belize, from city and Mexico and.... They help a lot. We got food and beans, rice and everything but, for two days probably, most of the people here were just eating oranges.

**Interviewer:** What about during the hurricane, if they lost their houses.... Were they in their house? They were in their houses, I assume?

**Narrator:** Um-hum. In their house. I tell you that, at that time, nobody believed. Nobody knew what was a hurricane. Nobody run and to hide or get protection somewhere else. So everybody stayed in their house.

**Interviewer:** Were there lots of people hurt?

**Narrator:** No. Nobody got hurt. Nobody died. Nobody. Nothing.

**Interviewer 2:** You were fortunate.

**Interviewer:** Wow! That was very fortunate.

**Narrator:** Yes. It's because probably most of the houses were thatch houses. But if it would be something like now, I bet you all those things and that will fly and cut somebody somewhere. Yes? But at that time, no, because of the houses were old and only little sticks. They would just drop. As the wind started, those little houses went down. So when the breeze got hard and hard, they had nothing to throw down. Everybody, everything was on the floor. That's why nobody got hurt. Because I remember that my father house dropped in this, this way....

**Interviewer:** So you were in the peak?

**Narrator:** So we were inside there. Yes.

**Interviewer:** You were in, safe in the peak and there wasn't anything else to fall down.

**Narrator:** And the \_\_\_ was up, blowing and blowing and blowing. We were underneath. Yes, and my father, what he did when he heard that, he took 2 big tables that we had like that and he put it in center of house. Everybody come under this table. So when the house dropped like this still had the table to protect the roof. So we stood up there until it finished. Yes.

**Interviewer:** About how long was it?

**Narrator:** Well, that was, stayed about, it started about, let's say, about 10, 10 in night. It finished about 4 in the morning and t'was really hard. Because it was really getting clear when we come out and it was everything down.

**Interviewer:** Do you think.... Like thinking back to the weather when you were young, how's the weather pattern changed?

**Narrator:** The weather? It have changed a lot. I tell you before, I told you before, we had this rainy season. We know that from June to September, we have a lot of rain and we used to go out when we were small, playing at that little field in front of the church. We do water up to here. You could swim. You see the ducks and whatever, animals in the water swimming. That's in the rainy season. But it is

about, let's say, about 30 years now, that changed a lot. That is, it doesn't rain in those months and when it rains, it sometimes only one half an hour. And he have been for three years and you haven't seen rain here. That's how we've been passing it for good while. It doesn't rain again. That road, that road that goes to San Victor sometimes nothing can pass, not even mule, because the road gets in two. \_\_\_ the current wash the road and used to have a lot of rain and that was from when my father was small, he says. They know that's from May, June up to September a lot of rain but that changed a lot. I have never seen that again. Only when I was small.

**Interviewer:** Well, that's all I have on my list.

**Interviewer 2:** Well, thank you very, very much.

**Interviewer:** Yes. Thank you very much.

**Interviewer 2:** You're a great contribution to the project here [21:34].