

# Never in Fear

By  
Merle Greene Robertson

Foreword by Peter R. Mathews

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For  
Joann Andrews





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Stucco figure from the crypt of Pacal the Great

## PHOTO CREDITS

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For a long time my friends have been trying to get me to write a book about my life working in the dense jungles of Mexico and Central America, but also to include my life as a child and painting my way around the world. I thank Cristin Cash for making me get started. She spent an hour every evening for two different months while working for me in San Francisco, taping the stories I told her. Then she would put them into the computer for me to work on. Martha Macri, Maureen Carpenter, and Dana McClutchen spent months putting all of my rubbings photographs and slides into a database so I could find them. For this I am most grateful. Much has been gleaned from my husband Bob's diaries that he so meticulously kept of every little detail. I thank all of my grant donors, who made working in the jungle possible: The American Philosophical Society, the Edith Stern Fund, the Zemurray Foundation, the Lende Foundation, N.E.H., the National Geographic Society, FAMSI, and The Explorers Club.

My many Stevenson School students who play such an important part in the telling of all this—I love you all. I thank Peter Harrison and Pat Culbert for making a Mayanist out of this neophyte gringo, and my pal for some 45 years Peter Mathews, I thank for doing such a generous foreword.

And finally I acknowledge Lee Langan and Joel Skidmore for actually seeing this all come to completion and its publication. Without these two, this would never have gotten off the ground. I thank you.



With Cristin Cash

# MERLE GREENE ROBERTSON

## A MASTERPIECE IN PROGRESS

By Peter Mathews



Merle Greene was born in Montana and grew up in Great Falls, in a beautiful region of the United States characterized by rolling grasslands flanked by the majestic Rocky Mountains—a very different landscape from the jungles of Central America and Mexico where she has spent most of her working life.

Two aspects of her youth in Montana were to have a large influence over the direction of her life. One was an interest in Native American culture. Merle's family spent their vacations beside a mountain lake at the edge of Glacier National Park. Merle frequently went with her father to visit his friends, Blackfoot Indian chiefs, and it was here that she learned Indian sign language. The other influence was the great artist Charles M. Russell, who lived in Great Falls. The young Merle spent many an afternoon on his front porch observing and learning about painting. Her parents were very supportive of her interest in art; when her mother announced that Merle could select some wallpaper to redecorate her bedroom, she chose to keep the walls as they were—a dark green—so that she could draw pictures on them with colored chalk!

When she was a teenager, Merle's family moved to Seattle, and it was there that she completed high school and began university, finishing in California and graduating with a degree in art. During and after college, Merle worked as a commercial artist and gold leaf window painter in Seattle. For vacations during her years in Seattle, Merle liked nothing more than canoeing and camping in the lush wilds of the Olympic peninsula, where she directed a private camp.

Later she went to the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Here for three summers she studied watercolors, oils, photography, and mural painting from Mexico's top mural instructor, earning her MFA from the University of Guanajuato.

After San Miguel, Merle went to Tikal to work on the great University of Pennsylvania project underway there. She spent three summers making architectural drawings of the Central Acropolis, and also started recording monuments by means of rubbings. This technique had been used before in the Maya area, principally by John H. Denison Jr. at Chichen Itza and sites in the central part of the Yucatan peninsula. However, Merle Greene brought the technique to an art form, and also showed how useful the rubbings could be as a means of documentation of Maya relief sculpture.

Most of Merle's working life was spent teaching at the Robert Louis Stevenson School in Pebble Beach on California's Monterey peninsula, whose dean was her husband Lawrence "Bob" Robertson. In the 1960s Merle and Bob began to take some of their students to Guatemala and Mexico for summer vacation. That is to say, most of the students on beginning the summer trip might have thought it was "summer vacation," but anyone who has worked with Merle knows differently. Hours of slogging down muddy trails only to set up camp during a torrential downpour, to be followed by days of machete work, clearing the bush for the mapping of archaeological sites and for Merle's photography and rubbings. All of the students, of course, wouldn't have missed it for the world, and the ones I talked to have all said that those trips were one of the major formative experiences of their lifetimes. Some, like Arlen Chase, went on to make their careers in Maya archaeology.

The main purpose of these jungle trips was to record in photographs and rubbings the magnificent stone monuments on which the ancient Maya carved. By the 1960s the looting of Maya sites was becoming a major "growth industry." Despite the efforts of local and national authorities such as Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) and Guatemala's Instituto de Antropología e Historia (IDEAH), many monuments were being sawn up and carried to all corners of the world. Sometimes they would be abandoned in the middle of the attempt—Merle found the lower half of Yaxchilan's Stela 18 in a hut on the bank of the Usumacinta River; she reported it to the authorities, and it is now joined with its better half in Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology. In the worst cases of looting, fires were lit under the limestone monuments and then cold water thrown on them, shattering the stone and completely destroying the monument. In Merle's expeditions there was certainly an element of racing against the clock, trying to locate and record the monuments before they were lost forever. The fact that Merle has now done over 5,000 rubbings indicates the scale of the task that faced her in those early years, and the perseverance that she has shown in completing the documentation. Her work was supported by Mexico's INAH, by Guatemala's IDEAH, and by numerous funding agencies both public and private in the U.S., and also by Tulane University, where the rubbings are housed in the Merle Greene Robertson Collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Department of Tulane's Latin American Library.

Merle herself will be writing about the way in which she produces the rubbings, so I shall not go into that fascinating process here. Suffice it to say that watching Merle at work is as pleasurable as it is exhausting: the cleaning of the stones, the pounding in of the wet rice paper, getting just the right degree of moistness of the paper, and finally watching the carved image emerge bit by bit through the application of an inked wad of silk by Merle's masterful

hand.

The huge collection of Merle's rubbings represents a major archive of Maya stone monuments. Rubbings are a vital adjunct to the more usual documentation by photographs and drawings: often details can be seen in Merle's rubbings that are in shadow or not clear in photographs. Since 1993, Merle's rubbings have been available in a superb set of CD-ROMs for the world to enjoy and marvel at, and to use as a major archival resource.

One could be forgiven for thinking that part-time exploring and "rubbing" would be quite enough to fill a life, but we're only beginning to recount Merle's accomplishments. Her first love of the jungle was at Tikal, and in Mexico it has always been Palenque. During the 1970s she worked tirelessly, documenting the sculpture of Palenque. In this she was ably assisted by her husband Bob, and also by a host of helpers—Merle's slaves we proudly call ourselves. When Merle is at work she is focused utterly, completely, on the task at hand—to the point where she refuses to take even a short break to eat or drink. In order to take square-on photographs of the piers of the Palace and the Temple of the Inscriptions, huge scaffolding made of mahogany beams and planks needed to be made. These scaffolds were ably constructed by another long-time friend and companion of Merle's: Ausencio "Chencho" Cruz Guzman, a Ch'ol Maya resident of Palenque. Chencho's scaffolds were absolutely solid, but with relatively narrow planking leading back from the piers and out over the yawning space below. One of my lasting memories is of Merle, eye pressed to the viewfinder of her camera, stepping backwards along this plank in order to get the entire pier into the photo, while various "slaves" hovered nearby, making sure that she didn't step completely off the scaffold to the plaza twenty meters below!

The result of Merle's Palenque work is brilliantly documented in the sumptuous series *The Sculpture of Palenque*, published by Princeton University Press. In this study, other things Merle has shown in great detail are exactly how the beautiful stucco sculptures were built up, layer by layer, by the Palenque artists. She has investigated the paints that were used to color the sculptures, searching out pigment sources in the Palenque region and painstakingly experimenting to reproduce the exact colors used by the Palenque artists. In the process she was able to document the entire method of making beautiful stucco sculptures for which Palenque is so famous.

While Merle and Bob were working at Palenque in the early 1970s, their home became a haven for Maya scholars and interested tourists traveling in the area. In August 1973, Merle and Bob were entertaining several friends on the back porch of their Palenque home—Gillett Griffin, David Joralemon, and Linda Schele (at that time an interested amateur just beginning her own great odyssey among the Maya)—with Bob's gin-and-tonics and

chilled peanuts and birds chirping in the lush foliage above. It was agreed by all that a meeting to be called the Mesa Redonda de Palenque be held as soon as possible.

For most people that might mean in a year or two, but one has to remember that this was a Merle Greene Robertson production. By September the invitations were out, and in mid-December thirty-five participants and up to sixty or seventy interested local residents gathered together for the conference. I was lucky enough to be there, and it was by far the most important event of my academic career. (I was an undergraduate at the time, and Merle had invited my teacher David Kelley, who replied that he was not able to attend as he'd be in Europe but wondered if Merle would consider inviting one of his students who was working with Palenque inscriptions?)

The Mesa Redonda ended a week later, just before Christmas. Many excellent papers were presented, and Merle got to work preparing them for publication. For most people that might mean a three or four year process, but again one has to remember that this was a Merle Greene Robertson production. Within a year two-volume proceedings were published (by the Robert Louis Stevenson School, with Merle as editor) and titled the *Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque*. Of course the "Primera" part of the title implied that more were to follow. Now for most people that might mean in another two or three years, but yet again one has to remember that this was a Merle Greene Robertson production. The *Secunda Mesa Redonda de Palenque* was held on the one-year anniversary of the first, in 1974. In the succeeding years, eight Round Tables were organized by Merle, and all of them have been published, comprising one of the most important conference proceedings in Mesoamerican studies. The Mesas Redondas de Palenque continue to be run today, under the auspices of INAH, with Merle Greene Robertson as their official Honorary President.

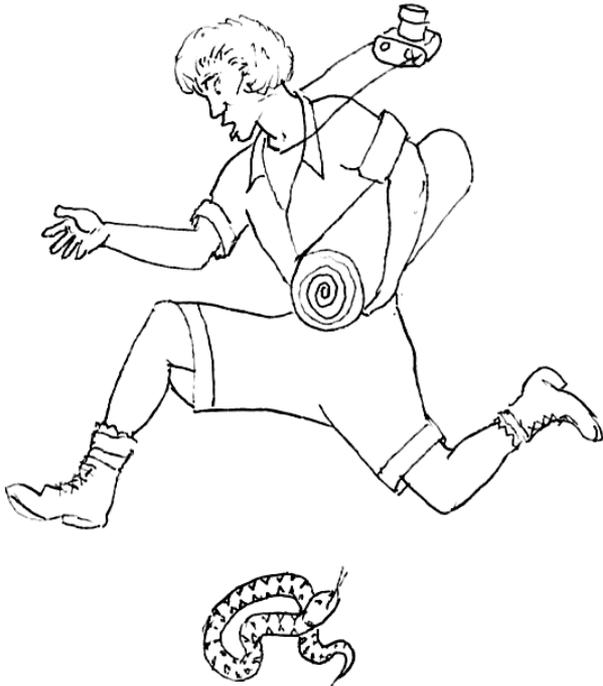
Merle Greene Robertson is also the Chairman of the Board of the Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute (PARI), which for twenty-five years has promoted and supported research in Mesoamerican studies, and has published most of the Mesa Redonda proceedings as well as a monograph series and the quarterly *PARI Journal*. PARI also has its own website put out by Joel Skidmore, [www.mesoweb.com/pari](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari), offering the entire corpus of Merle's rubbings online, as well as extensive resources for the study of Palenque.

Today Merle continues to work most actively in the Maya area, spending several months each year continuing her rubbings documentation, principally now at Chichen Itza and at Palenque, where the ongoing research sponsored by PARI continues under her directorship and with the able guidance of Alfonso Morales as Principal Investigator.

Merle also spends a lot of time creating beautiful watercolor paintings

of landscapes and buildings in such diverse parts of the world as Mexico, Norway, Australia, Turkey, India, Chile, France—to name just a few, often accompanied by her granddaughter Blair. Her paintings have been exhibited in the U.S., Europe, and Australia. Her rubbings have been exhibited in over twenty-five museums in the U.S. including the Museum of Primitive Art, New York, the Field Museum, Chicago, and the Palace of Legion of Honor, San Francisco, as well as in Holland, France, Greece, and Australia.

Merle has received an honorary doctorate from Tulane University, and for her contributions to the world's understanding of Maya culture she was awarded the Aguila Azteca by the Mexican government in 1993. Merle is one of the world's living treasures, to paraphrase a title of high esteem from Japanese culture; to all those who have the honor of knowing her, she is very much a masterpiece in progress.



Merle jumping over a fer-de-lance (sketch by Gillett Griffin)



## NEVER IN FEAR



His bones were found two years later. His Hasselblad camera was there also. This German photographer did not know the jungle rules. Never, never sit anyplace without being sure it is safe. That is—no snakes. Never go off a trail by yourself. This man had undoubtedly never been to Tikal before, nor had he told anyone where he was going. He was off doing his own thing, by himself, and he needed to change film in his camera. He walked off the trail, his first no-no. He then hunted for a place to sit. He sat on this stump to change film, and was undoubtedly bitten by a coral snake.

Yes, I did go off into the jungle by myself at Tikal, but I never went off a trail or what looked like a trail. As I proceeded further along these faint traces that often looked like abandoned army ant trails, I would turn around and draw a sketch of the trees and anything of note that I could see. Each time I came to another questionable trail, I did the same thing, so that I would be able to find my way back. And of course I told someone in what general direction I would be going on these excursions into the jungle.



Merle, 1 month



Merle, 3 years old



Ada when I was born



Mother Ada and Grandma Foote

## THEY DARED BEFORE ME



Well, many years passed before all of this, and during those years a lot happened that prepared me for a lifelong love of the jungle and the great outdoors.

I was born in the cattle and cowboy town of Miles City, Montana, on August 30, 1913, to Ada Emma Foote and Darrell Irving McCann. They had come from Duluth, Minnesota, where my mother was teaching school. She once told me that when she met my father, she thought this handsome man was a big shipping baron. Actually, he worked for Swift & Company, a meat packing plant based in Chicago, later to become the western representative for the same company.

My grandfather, Montello Allen Foote, believed that if his sons Wilbert and Vain could go to the university, then so could his daughter. My mother graduated from the Minnesota Normal School in Minneapolis, one of only five girls in the class.

My grandparents spent a good deal of time away from their home in Wilmington, North Carolina. My grandfather was an architect, then referred to



My mother Ada, age 25



My dad Darrell McCann, age 21



My dad with his Swift & Co. Ford

as a draftsman, who designed sawmills and other large buildings. In those days the draftsman went to the location where the buildings were to be erected and stayed there until they were completed. My mother was born on one such occasion. My grandfather was to build a sawmill in Moorehead, Minnesota, which is on the Le Croix River that marked the boundary of Indian territory. Logs were floated down the Le Croix, and this is where my grandfather was called to build the sawmill he had designed. As my grandmother, Barbara Elizabeth Anez, was with him, this is where my mother was born on December 31, 1883.

In 1995, I was invited by the Maya Society in Minneapolis-St. Paul to give a slide lecture on the Maya. My hostess, Nancy Dell Lund, offered to take me to Moorehead while I was there. It was a delightful small town on the river, with many of the town's homes still well preserved. The archivist at the courthouse was most helpful, telling us which homes were there at the time my grandfather was there, and supplying me with a map so that I could find them. I even found the lovely old hotel, now an upscale restaurant, which must have been where my mother was born, as there were no hospitals there at that time. In an old bookstore, I found two large prints of Moorehead, done during the late 1800s that showed the sawmill built by my grandfather.

I remember my mother telling me about the large plantation house where they lived in North Carolina that had two living rooms, one for family and the other used only for visits from the parson or other important people. The large dining room was not attached to the kitchen. A flower-covered trellis connected it to the outdoor kitchen. This was to keep the heat from the wood-burning stoves from heating the house, and also for fire protection. They had a great

variety of foods—biscuits every meal, cakes and all sorts of good things made by a much-loved black cook.

One of the stories my mother told me when I was a child was about the time when she was six years old, and was awakened in the night by loud singing. She got up in her nightdress, went out on the upstairs porch and saw a large crowd of white-clothed and hooded people marching down the street carrying torches. She was very frightened. This was the Ku Klux Klan coming to burn down houses. Luckily they did not stop at my mother's house.

During the Civil War, my great, great grandfather was Commodore Foote, in charge of the Union fleet on the Atlantic shore.

On my father's side of the family, my grandfather, Harry Irving McCann, and his wife, my grandmother Delila Maxson (Lila), lived in West Liberty, Iowa. My great, great grandparents, John and Mary McCann came from Londonderry, Ireland, in 1819 or 1820. The McCann (earlier known as MacAnna) crest is a criss-crossed shield with a red boar. My great, great grandmother Sarah Hemingway, mother of my grandmother Lila, came from England and married Helan Kirts Maxson. My great, great, great grandfather Jonathan Maxson came to the Colonies before the Revolution and fought with George



My great grandparents Maxon



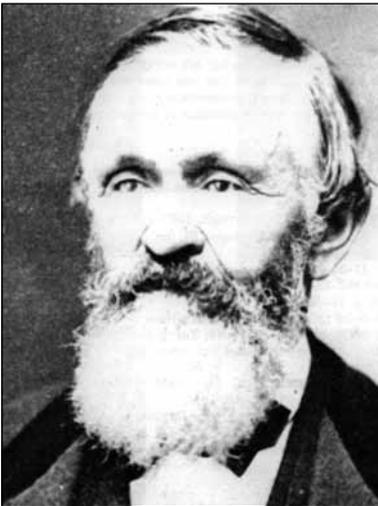
Great Grandpa Helan Kirts



Ada's college graduation



Ada, age 2, on front step, Will and Vane



GGG Grandpa Maxon, son of Jonathan of the Revolutionary War

Washington all through the war, and was with him all of that freezing winter in Delaware.

My great, great, great grandfather John Stanclift, who was born in Connecticut, also served under Washington during the Revolutionary War. After the war, he moved to Canada (a real wilderness) until the War of 1812. He and his brother were about to be conscripted into the British army, but—never in fear—they crossed frozen Lake Erie in the depth of winter with British officers after them with guns and swords, determined to bring them back “dead or alive.” They made it to the American side just in time. It was a daring undertaking and a narrow escape.

I must have inherited my love of the great outdoors and love of the wilderness from these ancestors who dared go into then unknown territories.

## THE GREAT BLUE SKY



My parents did not stay long in Miles City, but moved to Butte, Montana, a copper and coal mining town, and then to Helena. The house in Helena is so vivid in my memory that I can even draw a floor plan of it. My parents had just bought this two-story corner house, and were in the process of improving it. My mother did not like any of the wallpaper in the rooms, so my parents were going to town to buy all new paper. They told their six-year-old little daughter (me) that I could come along and pick out any kind I wanted for my room. My room, incidentally, was papered in a dark green wallpaper, the color of blackboards. I asked my mother if I could truly have any kind of paper I wanted. She replied, “Yes, of course.” I told her that I would like to keep the paper that was already on the wall because then I could draw pictures on the walls with chalk. This was okay with her. I must say that I am greatly indebted to my parents for not curbing my creativity, and letting me do whatever I wanted with my room at all times when I was growing up. I spent many happy days drawing pictures on those walls, and I would stand on my bed to draw even higher.

Great Falls holds my fondest memories of childhood—my pals, Kay Hull and Suthers (Suds) Smith, the Missouri River, Giant Springs, the sand hills, high mountains, mountain goats, and those great blue Montana skies, those wide-open spaces. We moved there when I was eight and lived there through my second year of high school.

My first art endeavor was making paper dolls. The Jello Company had a cardboard doll on the outside of each box of Jello, and inside the package, one dress for this doll. Kay and I had been making piles of clothes for this doll on the Jello box. We thought our clothes were much better, so we made a quantity of dolls and clothes with colored crayons (we hadn’t advanced to paint yet) and



With our dolls

mailed them to the Jello Company. A very nice letter came to us from the president thanking us for the lovely doll clothes, but he was so sorry that their advertising budget was completely used up for the next year. He sent us a whole case of Jello, which to us, was very good pay.

In the spring came spring cleaning. Everything came out of the house. The whole house was scrubbed and painted—floors, cupboards, walls, everything. Rugs were draped over the clotheslines in the back yard, and beaten with brooms, and then left in the sun for several days. We moved all of our doll furnishings out under the tents made by the rugs, and set up housekeeping in the back yard. This was the time of year we could take off that awful scratchy woolen underwear that we had to wear all winter. How we hated it! When Easter came, I got an entire new outfit—dress, shoes, coat, and hat.

Central Avenue where we lived was not far from the edge of town, near what was known as the “Sand Hills,” which covered quite a large area. At night, we could sometimes hear wolves howling. We were not allowed to go over the sand hills, nor were we allowed to play with the Wolf kids—there actually were some people over there by the name of Wolf who had a number of children. We wanted to know what they looked like. We thought the Wolf children were little wolves. Our curiosity finally got the better of us, and we crept on our stomachs to the top of the sand hills. We saw a wooden shack in the distance. Soon some little children came out. They had real kid’s faces and wore real kid’s clothes. We now knew that these wolf children sometimes dressed like us, but if we got near them, they would suddenly turn into their wolf selves and probably eat us.

Much later we asked our mother about these wolf kids who lived over the dunes. She laughed and laughed, though we didn’t think it was funny, but she finally convinced us that they were real children and not wolves. In a way this

spoiled our "belief." We thought we were something special knowing about wolves who sometimes would turn into real children. We had talked a lot about them among ourselves, and had about decided that maybe they were not bad wolves, but could be friends of ours, and maybe they could even teach us how to speak "wolf talk." After all, we were learning Blackfoot Indian sign language from my Blue Bird leader's husband who was a ranger on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation. Finding out that our wolf friends were not really wolves was quite a letdown to two little kids.

When spring came, and I was a little older, I dug up the back yard making caves. Now these were not little caves; they were huge, sometimes having two or three rooms. This, of course meant huge piles of dirt all over the back yard. My father was away most of the week and returned on Friday. Each time it was: "Merle, I want that cave filled in by the time I get home next week." My friends and I filled it in. By the next week, we were at it again, this time a bigger and better cave. Again: "Merle, I want that cave filled in by next week." We filled it in, but started a new one that went from our yard into the yard next door (this boy Sherman was in on my cave-digging spree also).

Our next endeavor was the best. We dug a huge cave that tunneled under our house and came up in our half-basement which was dirt. There was a crawl space of about four feet where our tunnel came up. We had dumped the dirt from the cave and tunnel in Sherman's yard. We had already built a two-story shack near my bedroom window that had an electric wire connected to my bedroom. The entrance to this cave was in this shack. We could go in the shack, go down in the tunnel, and follow it up into the basement of our house. It was a long time before my father could figure out how he could be calling me to come in from the back yard, knowing that I was there someplace, and have me suddenly appear in the house while he was still standing in the door. Well, when he did find out, I had to remove the cave entrance to the house. His reasoning was that burglars could get in the house that way also. We filled it in, but it didn't make any sense to me, because there never were any burglars anyway. No one in town ever locked their doors.

When I was in the fifth grade, if we were not late for school for a week, on Friday we got to go down the circular enclosed fire escape from the third floor. I made it a point to never be late. As soon as the bell rang on Friday, I made a dash for the fire escape, so I would be first, or almost first, in line. Then when I was dumped out at the bottom I would dash back upstairs and get in line again. Nearly every time I was able to go down the fire escape twice.

We had a summer cabin in Sun River Canyon, and another at Lake Five, a small lake near Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park. My brother Irv and I both had horses, and loved riding them bareback. This is where I learned to love the mountains. Sawtooth Ridge was right behind our cabin. Most mornings, very early, I could see one, and sometimes two beautiful white mountain goats on a ledge about one hundred feet above me.

I wanted to get to the top of that steep mountain, but it went almost straight up. One day when riding along the bottom of the ridge, I thought we should be able to scale it. My brother Irv and I tethered our horses to some trees at the base,

and proceeded to work our way up. This was difficult, to say the least. Sometimes we had to slide down a narrow sheet of granite in order to find a footing to go further up. Once we had to crawl under huge overhanging rocks into a cavern where we could see light on the other side. When halfway in, we came upon a den of baby foxes just a few days old. We would have loved to play with them, but realized that the mother fox would be back at any moment.

It finally became apparent that we would never be able to reach anywhere near the top of the mountain, and we began wondering how we would get down. That proved even more difficult than climbing up. We built little fires of dry grasses to make smoke signals like the Indians did, hoping to alert a ranger. No such luck. We finally reached the bottom, mostly by sliding on the seat of our pants down granite outcrops. It was dark by the time we reached our cabin. Our mother was frantic, although relieved that we were alive. The forest ranger had been looking all over for us, never dreaming two kids would try to climb Sawtooth. We were forbidden to ride our horses for several days.

The other place we would go for the summer for many years was Lake Five, a small lake near Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park. When my father came to the lake on weekends, we would row over to Apgar to meet him. One time the artist Charles Russell was on the train also. He and his wife had a retreat nearby called Bull Head Lodge. I was so excited about seeing Charley Russell that I forgot all about my father's arrival. To me, there was no Picasso, no Miro, no Rembrandt, no Van Gogh, only Charley Russell, the cowboy artist. Ever since I can remember, I have wanted to be an artist. Charley Russell was my idol. Later, when we had moved from Central Avenue to Fourth Avenue, we lived just a few blocks from where he had his home. I used to sit on his doorstep and watch him paint.

When Charles Russell died on October 24, 1926, I was thirteen years old. All businesses and schools were closed on the day of the funeral. Two sleek black



5th grade, Merle on front step far right, Kay on far left



Our cabin at Sun River Canyon

horses pulled the hearse. My class was lined along Central Avenue while the funeral procession passed by. I wept many tears.

We had sold our house on Central Avenue, and were building a new one that would not be ready until just before school started in the fall. We were supposed to be able to stay in our house on Central Avenue until school was out, and then we would be going to the lake. My father had to go to Chicago. Just



My brother Irving, age 8

after he left, the people who had bought our house wanted it right away, but there were two weeks left of school. My father told my mother to settle us in the Great Falls Hotel, the best in town, until school was out. I couldn't imagine living in a hotel. What would my friends think? My brother and I talked my mother into moving into the trailer park. We convinced her that we could go to the camping store and buy everything we needed, which would also be good to have anyway, as we all liked to go camping, and it would be a lot cheaper. In those days there were no motels or regular camping places, just trailer parks that had a community kitchen, tables to eat on, and bathing and toilet facilities. Everyone brought his own tent, chairs, tables, lantern, etc.

We moved into the trailer park. My mother drove us to school every day. My father had not been told. It rained every day we were there. It was boring with nothing to do in the rain, so I decided we should put on a show and get all the kids in the park to participate. We practiced every day after school. The big day came. The show had started, and here I was on top of a table making an announcement, when I walked my father. He was furious, not at me, but at my mother for letting us move into the trailer park. What would people think? My brother and I thought it was fantastic. We were having a great time. Our thoughts ran more like, "What would our friends think if we lived in a hotel?"

I had the best teacher I ever had when I was a freshman in high school. Her name was Helen McLaren. She taught us a love of history and literature that has stayed with me all my life. We acted out many plays, poems, and stories. The *Tale of Two Cities* made the French Revolution so real that it could have been happening right then. I did a large drawing of "the storming of the Bastille." *The Last of the Mohicans* was another story brought to life.

The most remarkable thing this teacher did was to have our class do a research report on early Great Falls history, which turned out so good that it was published in the Great Falls Tribune. My assignment was "Charles Russell," so I started out with The Mint, the famous saloon with solid mahogany fixtures, a long brass rail at the counter, a clock that ran backwards (which in order to be read, had to be viewed in the huge plate glass mirror), but most important of all was the large collection of illustrated letters and paintings by Charley Russell.

It was on Saturday mornings when I went to the saloon, before the men showed up for beers and lunch. Women at that time did not go into saloons. The



Fishing at Lake Five



Charles Russell painting

manager greeted me, and even before I had time to start going over all of the Russell memorabilia, had me seated at this immense bar partaking of the largest banana split I had ever seen.

Later, when our class had finished the project, it was all published in the newspaper, with the whole front page taken up with my drawings in color of cowboy scenes around all four sides.

It was so cold in Great Falls in the winter that I was always freezing my cheeks and hands. A narrow path would be plowed down the middle of the streets so children could walk to school and men could get to work. I wore fur-lined mittens, fur cap, and fur-lined boots. We put our boots in our lockers and put on our bedroom slippers for class. When it reached fifty degrees below zero, plus the wind factor, my mother said that was enough. She would not stay another winter in Great Falls. We moved to Seattle.



Merle, 17, at Roosevelt High School in Seattle

## UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON & THE DEPRESSION



When we moved to Seattle, I went to Roosevelt High School in my sophomore year. When I was a senior I got the job of designer for the Sheetwood Company of Washington. I designed stationery, cards, note pads, and book—all to be made out of sheetwood. I was making good money, or so my contract said.

During the Depression anything was good. After working for about six months with no pay, I was told that they were going bankrupt, but they would pay me in sheetwood. What could I do? Nothing. I took the sheetwood, a whole closet full, top to bottom.

Fortunately my father still had his job, but many of my friends' parents did not. During the Depression, in Seattle, a woman was not allowed to work because that would be taking a job away from a man who had a family to feed.



My dad

My mother was a great cook. She knew how to make a gourmet meal out of the cheapest cuts of meat. We loved her liver and onions, her stuffed baked heart, her Parker House rolls that were simply the very best; we had them often.

I loved the University of Washington, where I went after high school. I was in the design program, of which graphics was a part, the same as for architects. This was easy for me, as it was visual, not like trigonometry or algebra, which I found very difficult. Graphics helped me later when I was at the San Rafael Military Academy teaching engineering drawing and art.

My first real money-making scheme was when I was a freshman at the university. In those days, every dance had fancy programs, the more elaborate and dif-

ferent, the better. I designed and made programs for just about every fraternity and sorority and prom on campus. I made a lot of them out of white suede leather, embossed with the fraternity crest in gold, and with gold tassels. Some were of wood, cut in the shape of a barn, and painted red. Once I made 1500 wooden programs for the junior prom, spraying them green and finishing them at the very last minute. I was so tired, I just couldn't make it to the prom myself. Luckily, my date understood. For weeks I was spitting up green paint. At that stage of the game, I did not realize that I should have been using a special spray device that sucked in the poisoned air. Also, I should have been wearing a mask. Fortunately nothing serious happened to me.



My mother, age 93

My best money-making scheme while at the university, however, was when I became a gold leaf artist. I saw an ad in the paper for a gold leaf sign painter to do two fifteen foot windows downtown in the Fourth & Pike Building for the George Washington Mutual Life Insurance Company. The job would go to the lowest bidder, and the bids would be opened the following Monday. It was then Thursday. I sketched what I thought would be a good design. I phoned several sign painting companies and asked how much it would cost to do a sign of a certain size that would have a large horse on it. After I got all of these estimates, I sent in my bid for considerably lower.

I had never worked with gold leaf, let alone done sign painting on a window. I went to the Fuller Brush Company and bought several packets of gold leaf, the brush to flick it on with, plus the other things I would need. I came home and practiced on our windows until I knew how to do it. I waited. Monday the phone call came telling me I had the job.

I was still a skinny kid, who looked more like she belonged in high school than in the university. The men at the insurance company apparently thought that I was the sign painter's daughter who was coming in with the equipment. I had been working quite a while, when one of the officers came in and asked when my father was coming. I told him that I was the sign painter, Merle McCann. They had assumed that Merle McCann was a man, it never entering their heads that it might be a woman, let alone a kid. They did not appear to know what to do, and as I seemed to be progressing fine, they left, I suppose to decide



Wally, Merle, and Irv  
University of Washington days

what could be done. When I finished four days later, they were amazed and delighted. Here I had a gallant George Washington on a beautiful big horse with their company name emblazoned across both windows. This was by far the most money I ever made in college. The insurance company officers were so pleased that upon my finishing they took me to a very fancy lunch.

Now I was a legitimate sign painter. With this window as reference, I was now able to do gold leaf lettering with pictures on many of the windows on University Avenue near the campus. One I remember in particular was for a furrier's window where I did a huge gold leaf and brown grizzly bear. I managed to keep in school, although now I wonder how, with all of this sign painting and dance program work that I was doing.

## CAMPS



Summers, while I was at the University of Washington, were spent counseling at Camp Tapawingo, a private camp, on the Straits of Juan de Fuca at a spot where the last Northwest Coast Salish Indian potlatch was held.

A potlatch was an elaborate ceremony of giving quantities of gifts. The Indian chief giving the potlatch gave as lavishly as possible, many times borrowing from all of his relatives to do so. Each Indian receiving gifts at a potlatch was under obligation to his host to have another potlatch in which he had to give even more gifts than were given out at the one he was attending. This was getting out of hand. Tribes were becoming impoverished. The last Salish potlatch held on our beach was outlawed just a few years before Camp Tapawingo was built. It has since been reestablished, but usually for only a few days' duration, and with none of the reciprocal gift-giving requirements.

Camp Tapawingo was owned by the parents of my good friend Mary Gates (now Mary Ashby). There were twenty riding horses. Each child rode every day. This was also a working farm with cattle, chickens, pigs, and a nice big barn with a hay loft that was fun to play in. The camp also had a number of small boats that we used for setting crab baskets, and to go along the coast to where the famous



Mary Gates Ashby and Merle



Camp Tapawingo

Northwest Coast Indian anthropologist Dr. Erna Gunther, my professor at the University, had a summer home. My anthropology classes, although featuring Northwest Coast Indians, proved beneficial when investigating Indian communities in Mesoamerica, such as how food was prepared.

When I was a senior in high school, several of my friends and I often went with our bicycles to Victoria, and then rode up the Island as far as Nanaimo and Qualicum Beach and into the interior lakes, all virgin forest. There were hostels, a day's ride apart along the way, where we would be given a clean sheet, a cot, dinner, and in the morning a good breakfast. I loved these treks into the wilderness where we wouldn't see a soul all day long. The trails we were on would be banked with every kind of beautiful spring flower, and occasionally we would see a fox, mountain rabbit, or other small animal.

One of the greatest rides we would take was into the Olympic National Forest, and an old ranch near Port Angeles called the Forsene property. From there we would go to Sol Duc Hot Springs and Lake Quinault. Before camp started some of us would go there in early spring and camp at the edge of the lake in the snow. Rangers had built little lean-tos along the trail, usually a day's hike apart, where we could camp. The previous camper always left dry firewood for the next person, but also stashed things they would need on the return trip. No one



Sunday ride at Camp Tapawingo

ever thought of taking something that did not belong to him, and we always left firewood for the next camper. We burned as much of our garbage as possible, and dug a deep hole to bury what was not possible to burn. Cans, we tied to a rafter,

and picked them up on the way back to be properly disposed of. Today they have to employ special people to go along the trails every day and pick up the garbage thoughtless campers leave behind. This method of caring for food and equipment became my model when building primitive camps at archaeological sites in the jungle.



Marion Ibach, my friend for over fifty years

I leased Camp Tapawingo for two years, a number of years later, when my children Barbara and David were small. My life-long friend Marion Ibach came as camp nurse, also bringing her two children Chris and Jim. It was Marion who taught me all of the first aid and health precautions that kept my various crews of workers in the Peten jungle always healthy.

## MARRIAGE & DIVORCE



In December, 1936, I married Wallace McNeill Greene (Wally) who I had been dating while at the University. I was very happy the thirteen years of our marriage, as I did not know he was having affairs with different women all that time. It eventually became evident that our marriage could not continue. We had some good times, especially fishing in the wilds of Idaho and trekking through the Olympic Forest.



Wally, Merle, David, and Barbara



Merle, Barbara, and David



Barbara, age 2, with Tucker

## A NEW LIFE & NEW ESCAPADES



The children and I moved to Greenbrae, California, and thus started a new life. David went to the San Rafael Military Academy for two years and Barbara went to the Kentfield School. I then built a house in Kentfield where we spent many happy years.

It was at the San Rafael Military Academy where I was teaching that I met the headmaster Bob Robertson (Lawrence W., called Robby by everyone at school) who I married some years later. I was teaching engineering drawing, and taking cadets to Mexico in the summer. Then in 1954, the children and I and two of their friends went to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, to the Instituto Allende Summer Art School. The children took silver and tin work while I took photography, developing and printing my own pictures. In 1959, I returned to



Barbara at Kentfield School



David at the  
San Rafael Military Academy



Merle, 1952

San Miguel de Allende, having been accepted in the MFA Program of the University of Guanajuato, finally receiving my degree in 1964.

I was taking oil painting and mural painting from Mexico's most prominent mural instructor, James Pinto, watercolor painting from Fred Samuelson, Mexican history, and Spanish. It was a great school. The atmosphere for creative painting was perfect. One of the MFA requirements, if you were taking mural painting, was to do a mural on one of the school walls. This meant preparing the wall, applying the first coat of rough plaster, then the coat of slaked lime, grinding the pigments each day, setting the cartoon on the wall in a "day piece," just as done by the early Greeks, and finishing it off by burnishing.

This has since become so very useful to me in working with Maya murals, as I have been able to determine exactly how certain paintings were done, whether they were wall paintings or true frescos.

I made many friends while in San Miguel, especially Doris Jason and Walde-

mar Sailer. Wally has now been teaching for years in the International School of Bangkok, and is an art historian who has written a number of books on Thai art. He has made rubbings of four hundred of the "Footprints of Buddha" in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar over a period of twenty-three years, the earliest being from Sri Lanka over 2100-2200 years ago.

Sailer was asked to have many of the now world-famous Footprints of Buddha reproduced in a book for Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's sixtieth birthday. Sailer invited me come to Bangkok to meet with the queen's representatives to convince them that the book should not be any smaller than 13 x 18 inches in order to see the inscriptions. He had told the committee that I was the world's authority on rubbings. The book came out as Sailer directed, and for the Queen's Exposition he made one of the largest footprints in twenty-four carat old leaf.



Waldemar Sailer helping me at Yaxchilan

## EL PETEN



While at the Instituto Allende, a friend and I decided to take a little time off and go to Tikal, Guatemala. We packed a weekend's supply of clothes in one suitcase and flew from Mexico City to Guatemala City, and from there to Flores in a tiny plane filled with cartons of Chivas Regal, with only enough room for the two of us squashed in two seats with no windows. The contraband whiskey was unloaded in Flores, then the plane was filled with *chata*, a fern grown in the tropical jungle that was used by funeral parlors in Los Angeles. Upon climbing down from the plane at Tikal, my friend saw a snake, screamed, turned right around and got back on the plane. But no little old snake was going to bother me, so retrieving my clothes from the suitcase, I jammed them into my backpack and proceeded on into the site. Luckily for me, they needed an artist, so I stayed the rest of the summer. Starting in 1961, I was No. 71 on the Tikal Project. I could finish school later.

Tikal, the largest and most intriguing Maya site, is in the 222 square mile National Reserve in the northern Peten district of Guatemala, an immense area where the jaguar, puma, ocelot, wild peccary, deer, monkey, quetzal, guacamaya, eagle, snake, and many more species are protected. Tikal's five temples, connected by *sachbes* (Maya limestone roads), tower above a rainforest canopy of thirty-meter-high second growth mahogany, so dense it devours everything. This site is recognized worldwide for its tall, unique temples, its multitude



Tikal, Temple I



Pat Culbert, Director of the Tikal Project  
when I was there

of fine stelae, and its beautifully painted ceramics.

Patrick Culbert and Peter Harrison were field directors. Those who were there my first year included, besides Pat and Peter, Bill Haviland, Hans-Ruedi Hug, Hattula Moholy-Nagy, Wilbur Pearson, Christopher Jones, Edward Hinderliter, Vivian Broman, and Dennis Pulleston, who was later killed by lightning while standing at the top of the stairs of the Castillo, Chichen Itza, just three days after he had given a paper at our Third Mesa Redonda de

Palenque in 1978. Others who worked at Tikal while I was there were Stanley Loten, Kent Day, Marshall Becker, and Helen Trik. Many of these have remained good friends to this day, especially Peter Harrison and Pat Culbert, who turned this neophyte into a life-long Mayanist.

I have so many fond memories of Tikal—towering temples, lavish palaces, jungle, jungle, jungle. I loved it, especially the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone working there. In those early years of Tikal, every new find was a wonder, about which the speculation would carry on long into the evening discussion in the *sala*. The thrill of accomplishment carried through all of us. Much time would be spent discussing the mystery of Tikal with archaeologists who were dedicating their lives to this. It had to be one of the happiest times of my life. It certainly was the turning point in mine.

Today, forty-six years later, so much more is known about the Maya, that discussions tend more to be comparative, rather than speculative, based on what was known decades ago and what is known now. With Maya archaeology so in the forefront today, disciplines of many categories are necessary on site in order to better understand what has taken place.

My first job was making detailed drawings of the roof sculpture of Maler's Palace in the Central Acropolis. This was bliss, working high on a scaffolding on an ancient building over thirteen hun-



Peter Harrison, Director of the Tikal Project  
when I was there



Tikal crew, 1962: Merle, Pat, Chris Jones, Bill Hinderliter, Peter, Hans-Ruedi Hug

dred years old. Now that Maler's Palace has been reconstructed, it is just not the same. I liked it with the falling stones, the moss-covered exterior, and its dark musty rooms reeking of untold secrets of its noble past and the lords and their families who lived there. I was captivated.

We lived in screened-in cottages down by the *aguada*, where a crocodile also lived. One day, a turkey from camp wandered too close to the edge of the water, and this unfriendly creature caught it by the leg. A workman happened to be right there, grabbed the turkey's other leg, and pulled. A tug of war began. We had roast turkey for dinner that night.

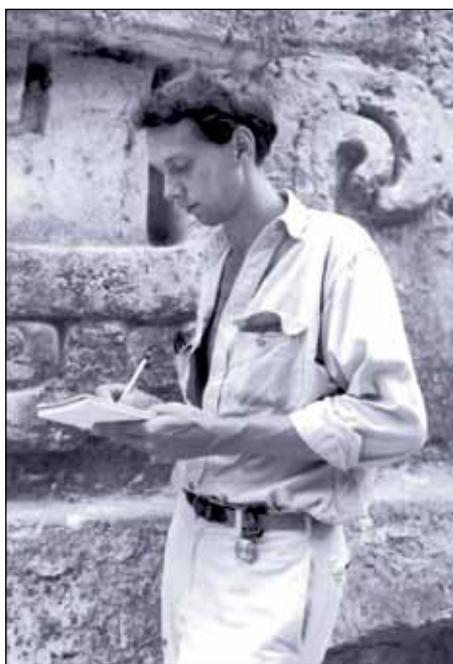
A lot of fun was had at Tikal after hours. We would go up in the Main Plaza during a full moon, put a recorder with music on Temple I, then climb Temple II and dance in the moonlight. The acoustics were perfect.



Maler's Palace, 1962

There were many *chultuns* at Tikal, and we used to hold long debates as to what they were used for—water storage, corn, or something else. One night we raced in the jeep (Peter driving) down the airstrip, and off a ways into the forest to where there was a large *chultun*. We lowered ourselves into an amazing underground cavern of rooms (it reminds me of some of the places I have seen in Cappadocia, Turkey). Once lowered into the first room by stepping over a doorjamb, there was a much larger room, somewhat circular in shape, with narrow benches about fifteen inches high built all around the sides. There were little niches in the wall, where I suppose the Maya put oil lamps. We put candles in them, and we would sit drinking rum, coming up with all of the answers to the Maya enigma. The interior was all whitewashed, so we all came out looking like we had been in a flour barrel.

My first year at Tikal, I mainly worked on recording architecture and absorbing like mad everything I could learn from my eminent professors about becoming a Mayanist. I also did some watercolor paintings, the best being a large painting of the North Acropolis before Temple 33 was taken down.



Peter Harrison



My painting of the North Acropolis before Temple 32 was dismantled

Peter Harrison is now the owner of the original, as well as some of my other paintings of Tikal.

Beginning at Tikal and carrying on through the near one hundred sites in the jungle where I have worked, I developed my technique of recording monuments by means of rubbings, a method used by the ancient Chinese before newspapers were invented. Over all, I have made over 4000 rubbings, using different kinds of paper and different techniques. Over the years they have been reproduced in hundreds of publications, a number of TV movies, on CDs, and on Mesoweb, FAMSI, Tulane, and other websites.

## RUBBING TECHNIQUES

I have developed two techniques of my own, one using a thick sumi ink, and the other using a Windsor Newton oil paint mixture of black and burnt sienna. Whether to use ink or paint was determined by a number of factors. In deep rainforest jungle such as El Peten, it was often necessary to use the oil technique, because the monuments were for the most part very large and covered with moss that had to be carefully removed, leaving a damp paper that would not take water-soluble sumi ink. The oil paint technique also had to be used on Palenque's Sarcophagus Cover because of its size, nearly 8 x 12 feet. It would have been impossible to match adjoining sheets without having the ink bleed.



Rubbing of Tikal Stela 31

On Tikal's Altar 5, oil also had to be used, as it was done on cloth which does not take the ink. On very delicate carvings such as Palenque's Throne of Temple XIX, a fine mulberry paper was used. Delicate work can be done in either oil or sumi ink.

The large sheets of heavy rice paper (1 x 2 meters) were fastened to the stone with duct tape. In both methods the paper was then wet down using a wide badger brush, then pounded into the stone with a wad of soft men's handkerchiefs or several American Airline washcloths (they generously gave them to us). Then when the paper was almost dry, but not quite, the ink was put on using a silk-covered cotton ball that was tapped against the pad that sumi ink had been spread on with a palette knife. When completely dry, the paper was then removed from the stone.

With the oil paint method, the mixture of oil paint was thinly spread on a piece of tin, then with my thumb, I would gently press onto the tin with oil and then on to the rice paper or cloth, building the intensity of color up gradually until the desired effect was achieved. This took forever as thousands of thumb prints were necessary to complete

just one monument. If done correctly there will be no ink on the back side next to the stone using either method.

Doing the rubbings of Tikal Stela 31 while it was still in Temple 33-2nd was quite an experience. In order to get into the tiny room, where the rubble that filled it had just been removed, I had to climb along a narrow plank which reached across the chasm to Temple 33-2nd, carrying my equipment with me. The only light in this cavern was through the small entrance opening, so I had to wait until my eyes were adjusted to the dim light, and keep my back to the opening so that I did not look at the light coming in. A fire had been built at the base of the stela in ancient times, thus ceremonially "killing" it. This beautiful stela depicting Siyaj Chan K'awiil (Stormy Sky), the 11th Ruler of Tikal, is one of

the finest of all Maya stelae.

Altar 5 is one of my favorite rubbings. It depicts two figures facing each other, the one on the left being Jasaw Chan K'awiil, the figure on the accompanying Stela 16, the twenty-sixth ruler of Tikal. The one on the right is presumably from Calakmul. It is thought that the discussion involves the exhumation of Jasaw Chan K'awiil's wife's bones. As the altar was so big, I asked Peter, who was going to Guatemala City for supplies, if he would buy two white bed sheets for me.

The next day, Peter and I anchored a sheet to the altar with a strong rope around the edge, thus pulling it tight. I did this reproduction in oil paint, by first lightly running a soft brayer covered with a thin coat of paint across the sheet, setting the position of the edges of the sculptured surface. From there on I proceeded with the time-consuming task of pressing my paint-coated thumb against the cloth. Only two rubbings have ever been done of Altar 5, one being in the Tulane University collection and the other in the De Young Museum, San Francisco.

The wooden lintels in Temples I and IV were the most difficult to do. They were immense, Lintel 4 of Temple IV being 180 x 199 centimeters, and on a very



Rubbing of Tikal Altar 5

high ceiling. The University of Pennsylvania had just sent steel scaffolding that could be adjusted to any height needed. Workmen fixed the top bars so that I could do the rubbing over my head, a very difficult thing to do because it was so large. While doing these rubbings, I often thought of Michelangelo working on the Sistine Chapel in the early sixteenth century. When through for the day, I could barely get down off the scaffolding, let alone climb down the temple, hanging on to protruding roots and trees. I loved working with the carved wood. It had a different feeling than when doing rubbings on limestone. As I had to pay such close attention to every detail as it appeared as I was applying ink or oil, it became natural for me later to understand how different Maya sculptures were made by the ancients.

Besides the daily work at Tikal which to me was a pleasure, there were plenty of non-archaeological happenings—having a wonderful breakfast in the workmen's village on a Sunday morning, racing in the jeep to meet the weekly arrival of the Aviateca plane, playing with the pet howler monkey that was so smart that he knew how to unlock the door to the ceramic lab (he once emptied the contents of all of the bottles of liquids used in reconstructing vessels), to just swinging in a hammock, visualizing how wonderful it must have been for the ancients living here, not taking into account, however, a slight problem—no refrigerators, no cars, no electric lights, no television, no computers, no telephones. Come to think of it, maybe they were better off. This was Tikal for me.

I had done rubbings of all of the sculpture at Tikal when a chance suggestion set the course for my future work. Dr. Alfred Kidder, the renowned Carnegie Institution archaeologist, famous for his excavations just outside Guatemala City at Kaminaljuyu ("Hills of the Dead" in the Maya Quiche Language) was visiting Tikal. He was intrigued with my rubbing recordings and said to me, "Merle, why don't you now go up and down the rivers and do rubbings of all of the other sites?" So, without giving it a second thought, this is what I did. Going off into the jungle with only a couple of natives didn't seem to bother me. My first grant was from the American Philosophical Society for \$1,000. Dr. Kidder was one of my sponsors. This paid for an entire summer's work in El Peten—plane fare down and back, all of the rice paper and rubbing supplies, food for four men and myself, our boat with motor, and the salaries of the men for the summer. Today this wouldn't even pay for the plane fare.

I have made rubbings in over one hundred Maya sites over the years, but I am going to pick highlights of some of them, not all.

## MOTUL DE SAN JOSE

One of the first places I went after Tikal was Motul de San Jose, across Lake Peten from the island on which Flores is located. It was an hour's hike in from the shore, even more by the time I was able to find the monument. It had been badly scorched years before when a man was burning the area to make a field for growing corn. This time, I found it hidden some distance off the trail, where I had to duck to crawl in. It was already in the process of being stolen. Saw cuts

were on the stela, and an oil can and used saw blades were nearby, as was the broken handle of an axe. I knew that the thieves would be back, but as it was the middle of the day, I figured I could do the rubbing. Had I known that in just a few years, one of Ian Graham's men would be shot and killed by looters come across in the process of stealing a monument, I would not have been so eager to do this rubbing.

## LA LIBERTAD TO SAYAXCHE

Of all the times I went between Flores and Sayaxche through La Libertad, when going to the Petexbatun sites, they were such unique experiences that I should record at least one of the trips. The first time, of course, was the most amazing, unbelievable. It took forever leaving Flores. We actually went down one street in San Benito six times, once picking up three ladies who took forty-five minutes to pack their suitcases, next to pick up some hundred pound sacks of corn that were tossed on the roof along with all kinds of other stuff, back to Flores to get some more passengers who also had not packed yet, and finally, two hours late, off for Sayaxche. The bus, which was really just an engine surrounded by the barest of framework, rattled along. In fact the driver had to hang on to the gear shift all the time to keeping it from jumping into another gear. There was no ceiling light, just a flashlight rigged up with a string that went up by the driver. He must have had some way of turning it on, but it sure puzzled me.

The only floorboards in the bus were a couple that were laid down the center. The woman across from me held her baby over the floor boards when it had to poop. Little boys just peed between the boards. Another woman had a basket with a mother hen sitting on her eggs with a dozen baby chicks around her. The man behind her was carrying a rooster that got loose, jumping at the mother hen. Feathers flew all over the bus, and peeping baby chicks were tossed into the air.

In La Libertad, a tiny village at midway, the streets were grass, the houses all very much alike—most had a thatch roof, but a few were of corrugated metal, most whitewashed, but some a sickly Paris green that they seemed to like, as the doors were almost all painted that color, as were the vertical slats on the windows. A man was whitewashing his house with a wad of cloth bound onto a pole, no brush. As we were close enough to one door where the driver was delivering three oil drum tops that are used to cook tamales on, I could see that at least the far wall was papered with old newspapers. Between all of the houses, fences had been installed of poles strung together with vines to keep them straight. Several fences were the underneath chassis of old rusted tractors of the FYDEP (the government agency in charge of El Peten).

We had picked up two venders, one who was selling cheap combs, the other had a bag full of soap and face powder. Neither was having any luck. One passenger went into a small *tienda*, coming out with a child's green plastic shoe. Apparently he had bought a pair for his child on his last visit, and either he left one shoe there, or his child lost her shoe before they left the store.

I thought we were leaving the village when we passed a small bakery. A woman had to have one of their buns, so the driver's helper went in and got it for her, then a man decided he had to have two buns. They were purchased, and off we started. Oh, no! A woman decided she had to have a whole box of buns, so we back up, get the box of buns, and yes, this time we did get on our way. Little children, small boys in just a shirt, or nothing at all, were running all over, excited about the bus being in town. A short ways out of the village, we came upon what at first glance looked like a toy village. It was the town cemetery. Little peaked corrugated roofs, all alike, were on top of little three foot crosses.

## SAYAXCHE

Our headquarters for several years was Julio Gadoy's place at Sayaxche on the banks of the Rio Pasion. We would store our things there from season to season instead of carrying them all the way back to Flores. Julio became a very good friend, and we spent many a pleasant evening visiting with him and many other



Sayaxche, El Peten

interesting people who were on their way to Seibal, Dos Pilas, or any of the sites along the way.

This is where we first met Trudy Blom. This jungle hotel had only one bathroom, and it was on the porch. As the door latch did not work, there was a sign inside telling people not to lock the door or they wouldn't be able to get out. In the middle of the night my husband Bob and I heard yelling and cussing like an army sergeant. In the morning we found out it was Trudy who was locked in. We met her in the morning. Trudy and I later became very good friends. She came to many of our Mesa Redonda conferences at Palenque, always dressed as if she were going to a Grand Ball—piles of jewelry.

The time Linda Schele, Mario Leon (the *jefe* at Palenque), and our small group had been on a trip to Chinkultic, we were staying at Trudy's place. At dinner

Trudy sat at the head of the table with her two large dogs on either side of her. I was sitting next to Trudy, and Linda, who had been sick the whole trip, was sitting next to me. The maid passed the soup and homemade bread, but when she came to remove the plates, Linda had only eaten a small amount of her bread. Trudy glared at Linda, rose, and in a loud voice said, "I was always taught to eat *everything* on my plate." Poor Linda slunk down on the bench. I told Trudy that Linda had been sick the entire trip, and this was the first thing she had eaten.

Well, things changed immediately. She couldn't do enough for Linda then, or for our puppy that I had paid an Indian ten pesos for in Comitán. She said our puppy could not have just scraps. She went to the kitchen and cut off a huge piece of roast beef for the puppy, just like we were having. After that, I always said that when going to see Trudy, it was best to either be sick or have a puppy. As that let out the sick business, we advised a puppy.

We met lots of other interesting people on the Gadoy porch, as this was the headquarters for all of our Rio Pasión and Petexbatún site work. Jacques and Parny Van Kirk had their small quarters on stilts at the edge of the Petexbatún.



Trudy Blom



Don Robertson, my mentor

He was a jaguar hunter who had fled Mexico with his wife, two small daughters, and only his gun, sure that his former partner was going to find and kill him. He told us about formerly being a cowboy and a bison hunter in Montana, a polar bear hunter in Alaska, and other strange vocations. What he was doing in Mexico, he never told us. Their 10 x 10 foot quarters had three built-in cots, one a double bunk, a tiny table in the center, and a small closet. There wasn't much room to get around the table that served for eating, working, and everything else where a flat surface was needed. They had a butane lantern. They cooked below on a fire underneath this "tree house." In this small space lived Jacques, his wife, two daughters, and a friend. The only way in was up a ladder through a trap door. I remember Jacques telling Parny that if anyone ever came when he was away, she was to shoot first and think afterwards.

We put two and two together from another story. When I had first met my future mentor Don Robertson of Tulane University in Mexico, where he and his wife Martha (also to become a very dear friend), were doing research one summer, and I was illustrating ceramics for Bob Rands, I went to their apartment in the Lomas District. He told me about the strange way they got the apartment. The woman who rented it to the Robertsons told them that the former tenants had just left, leaving all of their things, including a lot of little girls' clothes, all of their belongings, and a polar bear rug. They never came back, and since months had gone by, she let the Robertsons have it.



A coffee break on the way to Dos Pilas

## DOS PILAS

The first site I went to in the Petexbatun was Dos Pilas. The only other person who had worked there was Ian Graham, from Suffolk, England, who had started recording hieroglyphs at Dos Pilas just the year before. We were the only two recording monuments throughout the Peten at that time, Ian recording the hieroglyphs, and me the monuments as works of art. We have always been good friends, and I admire his great contribution to the study of Maya glyphs through the Harvard "Corpus."

My first time to Dos Pilas couldn't have been at a more miserable time, pouring rain, and mud everywhere. Just getting up the Petexbatun from Sayaxche and into the hidden cove where a trail was supposed to be, was exhausting. We were soaked before we started. The trail had not been used for over a year, and was so overgrown with new growth that I do not know how my workers Tranquil Flores, his brothers, Juan, Pancho, and Jesus, could find the way. It took forever, seventeen kilometers, but probably even more, with all of the backtracking we had to do because a storm had blown so many trees down. My boots weighed a ton, so caked with mud I could hardly lift them. There was no time to rest when we arrived, as an even heavier storm was on its way. The forest had to be cleared so that a *champa* could be made for cooking and eating, another thatch roof had to be made for the men's hammocks, and another one for me had to be put up. Dinner had to be cooked; we were starved, but couldn't stop for a minute until all of this was done.



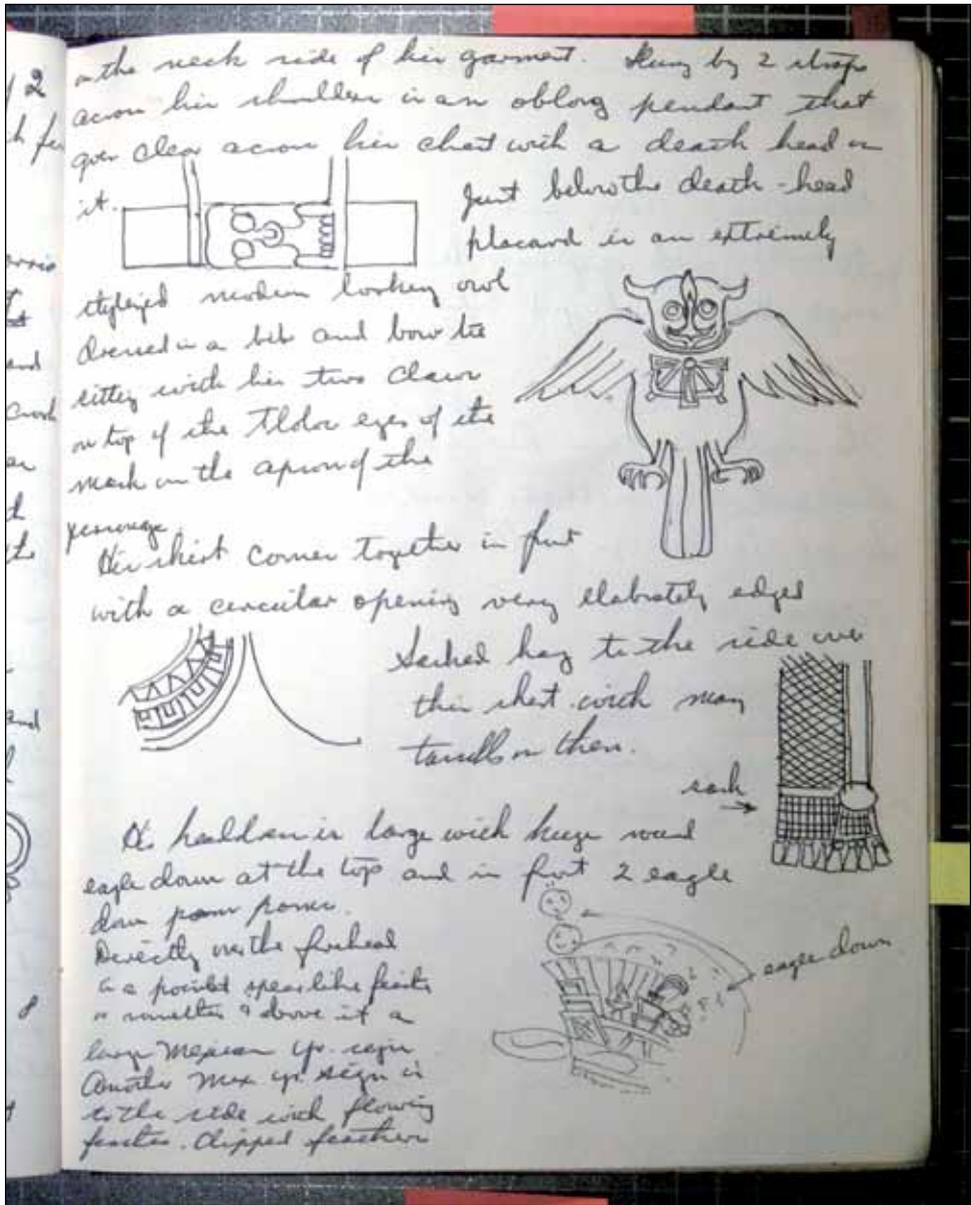
The Processional Stairs at Dos Pilas

In the middle of the night, the storm became worse—thunder, lightning even through the trees. Crash. The men's champa blew down, with the large center pole landing on me in my hammock. I wasn't hurt, but in the dark, new champas had to be built. By morning, all was clear. I was just about to jump out of my hammock, when I saw, just above my face, on my *mosquitero*, a coral snake, as if we hadn't already had a bad enough night. Tranquil quickly got rid of the snake, and after breakfast, we were ready to begin a day's work.

Scouting around that day, we discovered the beautiful "Processional Stairs." The forest had to be cleared for some distance in front of them in order for the stone to dry and for me to take photographs. They were breathtaking, and in excellent condition. Maya lords in long graceful, flowing gowns were shown marching across the stairs. There were row upon row of beautiful hieroglyphs, some being the Tikal Emblem Glyph. All of this, I recorded and drew sketches of in many pages of my field notes.

The next year when I was working at Dos Pilas, it was even worse getting there, as there had been a real hurricane that toppled many large trees across our so-called trail. We crossed three creeks, which are not always even there, and the last three kilometers was up, up, with no visible trail at all. This time I had my tent that I bought in Switzerland, a real godsend. The mosquitoes were the world's worst. These critters hadn't had a meal of juicy human blood for a year, so I was absolutely eaten alive. Smudge fires didn't even phase these greedy pests. The only place I was safe was inside my *casita*. During this year, the jungle had grown so dense that we had to use compasses to find the monuments, and my workers used machetes to cut trails to them.

I worked all day on the beautiful Stela 2 (5.55 meters tall when put together). The relief was in excellent condition. What a joy to be working on this magnificent piece, but what a job. I don't know how I ever finished, with those nasty mosquitoes devouring me. Tranquil brought hot soup to me at noon, as once started, I cannot stop or the whole rubbing will be ruined. At other times of the



From my field notebook

day, he would bring me hot coffee. My shirt and pants were completely soaked with perspiration, plus some of my mosquito blood.

The next morning it was raining. No use putting on my one other set of shirt and pants. In five minutes they would be as soaked and covered with mud as the ones I had worn doing Stela 2. I just put the muddy, wet clothes back on. My face was so swollen, I looked like I had the mumps. The rain finally stopped, and I did a rubbing of Stela 16.

Most disheartening was the time when we discovered that a large part of



Merle with Stela 16 at Dos Pilas

Stela 17 had been stolen. I had done a rubbing of it the year before, but wanted to take another look at it. The entire front had been sawn off with a power saw, and the inscriptions on the sides had been ruined. I sent one of my men down to Sayaxche to report the theft (it had apparently taken place just recently, possibly even that day). The police went up and down the Rio Pasion, but found no trace of it. Later it was discovered sandwiched between two sheets of marble ready to be shipped out of Puerto Barrios to some illegal destination, but the prisoner crouched at the bottom of the stela—there when I did the rubbing—was missing.



The paper pounded in ready for the rubbing of Stela 16



Finished rubbing of Stela 16

## BOB LOVES THE JUNGLE

As Bob Robertson went with me on many of the expeditions in the jungle, I should clarify who he is. I knew him (Lawrence W., called “Robby” by all the students) when he was headmaster and I was teaching art and engineering drawing at the San Rafael Military Academy, but I wasn’t dating him until 1964.

After the Military Academy, Bob was Dean of Robert Louis Stevenson School on the Seventeen Mile Drive, Pebble Beach, California. We were married on December 19, 1966, in the Church of the Wayfarer, Carmel, shortly before he took the new position as dean at Stevenson. We both taught there for nine years, until he retired as Dean Emeritus. Endowments were set up in both of our names at Stevenson. It



Bob Robertson (Lawrence W.) “Robby”

was, and still is, a great school. “Robby” was dearly loved by all the students for his understanding, his fairness, and for giving them a second chance. He was also the track coach and a history teacher. I taught Mesoamerican archaeology.

Being married to the dean, I have to admit that I took advantage of taking every chance I could to go to Mexico and work on one of my archaeological projects. Bob could hardly wait to join me in Mexico. For someone whose whole life had been at the administrative level, it might seem amazing that he loved every minute of being in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras, especially working in the jungle with me.

## AGUATECA

Just getting to Aguateca was an ordeal. It was up the Petexbatun, but even getting through to the place where a trail to the site is supposed to be took forever. We were constantly ducking our heads as we passed through overhanging trees, getting into a shallow lagoon where it was necessary for each of us to help paddle and push with poles, while one of our men walked ahead in the lagoon pulling the *cayuca*. The trail was so muddy that it was a struggle to lift my boots. Upon finally reaching the bottom of the escarpment, there was still another mile of climbing straight up. We went over two very slippery, wet, natural Maya bridges about three feet wide to get across the seventy-five foot path that spanned a bottomless chasm that some say was 150 feet deep. This moat apparently went all around the city, as a defensive measure. Heights don’t bother me, but that slippery, debris-covered, narrow trail was definitely scary when I looked down below. Had I slipped, there would have been no way of getting me out.



Aguateca Stela 3 in deep jungle

The jungle was so dense with first and second degree growth, that it was very difficult getting through it. Roots of large trees were wrapped around several of the stelae. At least it wasn't raining, and the mosquitoes, for the most part, had not received the invitation from their friends back at Dos Pilas.

The second time I was there, Carl Landegger and his young ten-year-old son were with us. Carl, one of my benefactors, who had himself discovered an ancient site in Bolivia, was used to dense jungle terrain. He was president of



Carl Landegger and Cary with Seibal Stela 10

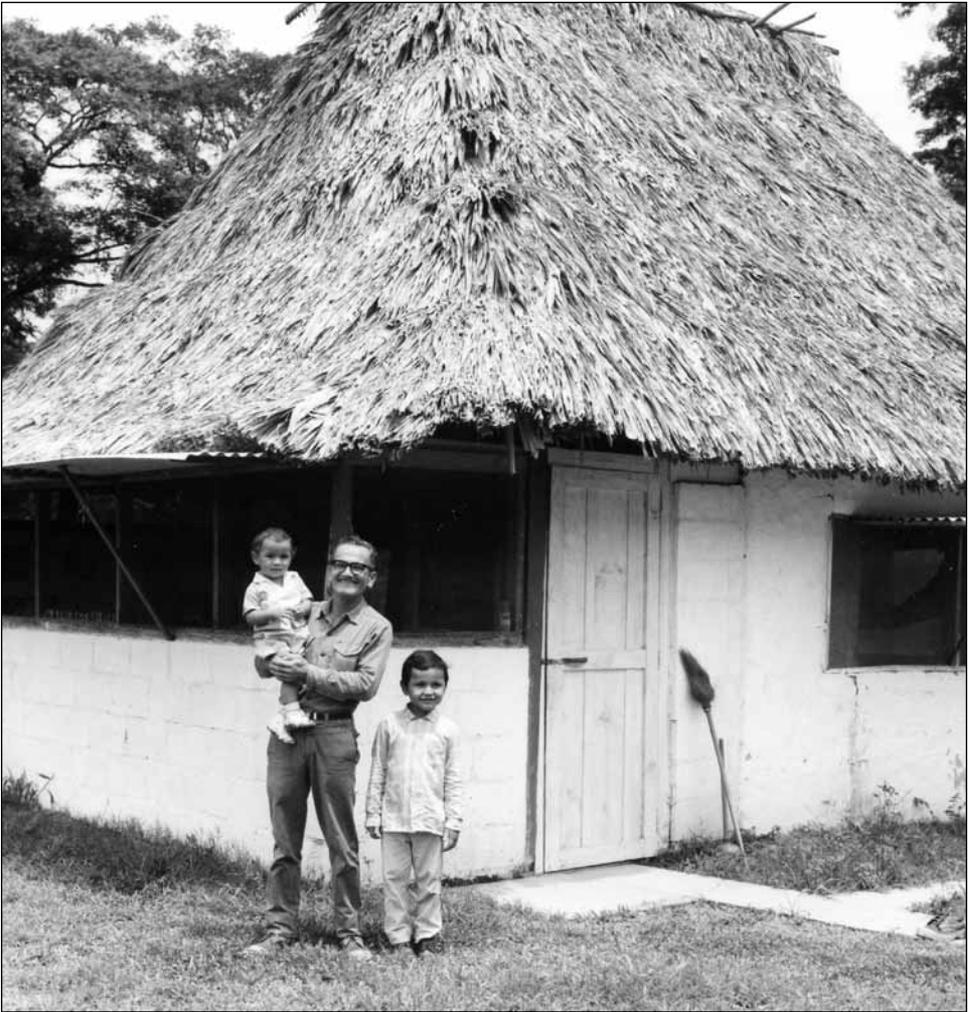
a company that built paper-making machinery and had offices all over the world. When I picked him up at the Guatemala City airport, I couldn't believe it when I saw he had brought this frail-looking little boy. What was I going to do? The Petexbatun area is not easy. Well, Carl was going to make a man of his son overnight. Surprise—Cary was a real trooper, never once complained, carried his own pack, and gathered wood to keep our fire going all the time at Aguateca. He was a delightful boy, and I was glad to have him along. I often wonder what he is doing now.

The Aguateca monuments were large and covered with moss and jungle debris that had to be painstakingly scraped off with split ends of green twigs, so as not to mar the stone, which in its damp condition is easily scratched. This took forever, but Bob, Carl, and Tranquil kept at it

every day, while I was working on a rubbing of a stela that had been cleaned the day before. Most of the Aguateca stelae had to be done in oil because of the dampness of the stone. Deadly snakes were everywhere, but we were so "on the lookout" for them that we had no scares.

## ALTAR DE SACRIFICIOS

The first time we went to Altar de Sacrificios was in 1969, when John Graham of U.C. Berkeley and Harvard had sent me in to record the monuments by means of rubbings. Bob, Tranquil, and our two boatmen were along. We stayed in the Harvard house, a screened-in, cement floor enclosure with army cots to sleep on,



The "Harvard Heaven" with Mechel and his two children at Altar de Sacrificios

a table, and some chairs, but the best thing about it was that we could escape the abominable mosquitoes. Altar had become so overgrown with jungle in the five years since Harvard had worked there, that it was hard to find our way around. Luckily, with John's map and our compass, we were not doing too badly. All day long, as I would be doing a rubbing, Tranquil would hold a smoking termite nest almost directly in front of my face, trying to keep the mosquitoes away. It didn't do much good. I was eaten on every square inch of my body; they even bit through the double layer of my jeans pockets. I was a mess, but Bob was worse.

Evenings were fun, playing poker and drinking rum, along with eating some of our goodies, like smoked oysters, or sardines in oil, with young Mechel (son of the Señor Mechel in charge of the area) and his wife in our screened-in "heaven." Altar is the government meteorological station for the Pasion. Early one evening the Guardia Rural came along to check, giving the report on Altar

and other areas along the Pasion, plus reporting our presence, and we told them of our official permission from Sr. Carlos Samayoa Chinchilla, Director of the Guatemalan Instituto de Antropología e Historia, and a special report from Sr. Romero Samayoa Rivera, who was providing transportation for our crew.

After working at Aguateca, we returned to Altar de Sacrificios for a much longer ten-day stay. If possible, the weather was ten times worse, and the mosquitoes had invited all of their friends around the world to come to the International Mosquito Convention. It was unbelievable. Tranquil and Bob cleared Altar 1 the first day and I did a rubbing of it. Like last time we were here, we burned termite nests, rotten logs, even kept a burning fire going in the heat so we could keep working. Nothing did any good. Mosquito repellent was just like an appetizer.

The only way we could dry the rubbings in that damp, rainy, humid weather, was to have several men fan burning dried palm fronds across them. Now nearly all of the Altar rubbings have burnt places and drops of my mosquito blood. Sometimes when I was doing a rubbing, a mosquito would stay biting me on the face for so long that he could no longer fly. Down would come the blood on to the rubbing.

One evening when the young Mechels were playing cards with us, the senior Mechel arrived, demanding to know who we were, even before being introduced. I showed him all of my papers of permission and also the rubbing of Altar 1 that was on top of the pile of rubbings. He had a fit, saying, "I take no orders from anyone. You are to be out of here by tomorrow morning or I will have the police come and remove you." Of course he couldn't do that. Romero Samayoa, his boss, had already sent him the papers telling him we were to be there. However, when I asked him about the monument no one had been able to find, he insisted it was there, but of course he did not show it to me. I still have my suspicions about that fellow, and did not trust him then.

The part-time caretaker of the site and his wife, the Minas, invited us to their house for dinner one night, and that was indeed an experience to remember. We had become quite well acquainted with them, as Bob was helping their two boys with their studies so they wouldn't be behind when they returned to Sayaxche.

The Minas cooked rice, *frijoles*, *tortillas*, coffee, and *guanabana* for dessert. We supplied canned corn beef. It was so comfortable and congenial sitting there visiting with them, in a mixture of English and Spanish.

Their Maya house had a thatch roof, pole sides with entwined vines holding the stakes upright, and a single door with a turtle carapace hanging at the side. The interior was divided into two sections, one to the left partitioned off with one side papered with newspapers. The main room had a large table in one corner with shelves above it, and in another corner, a raised cement table that held the cooking apparatus—two large cement blocks with an iron rod bent in three directions to hold any food that might be cooking. Fagots were pushed under it to control the fire. Under the stove, a mother hen was sitting on a basket of eggs, and a dozen baby chicks were hopping around. A hammock was strung across one corner, and wooden stools completed the seating arrangements. They had several lamps made from large medicine bottles in which a hole had been



Working in the rain, Altar de Sacrificios



Drying rubbings at Altar



Deep in El Peten jungle at Altar de Sacrificios

punched in the metal screw-on top. A piece of cloth was inserted through the hole and down into the bottle that was filled with kerosene. To keep mosquitoes out of the house they had two basins of dried termite nests giving off smoke, one at the door entrance, and another inside the house. We felt right at home. Altar de Sacrificios brings back many fond memories because of the people, not the mosquitoes.

## TAMARINDITO

In April, 1970, I took some of my Stevenson students to Tamarindito: Paul Saffo, Jeff Smith, Don Hart, Dick Millard, Steve Hyde, and Jim Kinslow. We were deeply impressed with the stairs; they were even more beautiful than I expected, and in almost pristine condition. They are in full color on the cover of my book



The Tamarindito Stairs

*Maya Sculpture* that came out in 1972. It was such a climb getting there that Paul still talks about my answer to his question, “How soon will we be there?” being, “Just around the corner.” We were so hot and exhausted by the time we got back to the river that we all jumped in with our clothes on.

## ITSIMTE

The same group of students went with me on a hair-raising trip to Itsimte. We started out at six o’clock in the morning, thinking we were going to transfer to a truck in La Libertad, but no—we just picked up a guide who knew the way. Off we sailed, full speed, across the savannah of tall grasses. I had no idea how our guide knew where he was going. At the base of a steep rise, he stopped the jeep. From here on it would be hiking. It seemed like almost straight up for six kilometers, on a trail that had been trod on by mules when it was very muddy. When we were there, this trail had dried just like the mules had left it—deep, uneven, hard clods of earth, making it very difficult to walk on. I had blisters on my heels by the time we reached the site.



Itsimte, where looters hijacked us by gunpoint: Paul Saffo, Steve Hyde, and Jeff Smith

Every place we looked, we could see that looting had been taking place. The first stela we saw had a deep saw cut across the top, and the base was lying a few feet away, with a saw cut across it where they were going to cut it into two pieces. Three inches had been sawed off the surface of another. Only one stela was as yet untouched. Quite a crew must have been working there to do all that damage at the same time. There was so little protection of the El Peten sites that monuments were being stolen or cut up all the time, hindering the decipherment by the loss of so many important inscriptions.

While I did rubbings of everything possible, the students were collecting evidence as to what the looters might be like, or who they were. Oil cans were around, as were cigarette cartons, empty sardine cans, and oily rags.

We finished as quickly as possible and headed down that awful trail to our jeep. Just as I was taking my boots off, a man in uniform came running up to me with a sawed-off machine gun in his hands. Seconds later, from all four directions men in police uniforms came rushing toward us, also with machine guns, and started going through every inch of the jeep. I was not frightened, because I

had the papers from Romero Samayoa in my pocket asking for police protection in El Peten, and I thought these fellows were the police. I was about to pull out my papers when Tranquil nudged me not to. Finally, I could not take a machine gun aimed at my stomach any longer, so I showed this leader my papers anyway. He looked at them briefly and saw the police notification at the bottom. None of them had handcuffs, carried by all the police I had seen in the area. Reluctantly, they let us go. I thought it strange that they did not apologize when they found out who we were.

Nothing was said for some time as we started back, until Paul said, "You know, at least one of those guys had a paper insignia on his arm." Tranquil said nothing. We went to see Julio Gadoy, who called the Sayaxche police chief.

If they were from La Libertad, the driver of our jeep and guide would have recognized them, as they had both lived there all their lives. Also these Itsimte looters would have recognized them. The most danger was for the four Guatemalans with us, as now their lives would be in jeopardy, and even the lives of their wives and children, who could be killed because these men knew that they had been recognized. He said that it was a miracle that we weren't all killed. However, as far as we Americans were concerned, we more than likely would have been kidnapped and held for ransom.

## NARANJO

It was decided that we should leave the area of Sayaxche right away. Luckily, I also had permission papers for working at Naranjo with me. We contacted Samayoa by radio, and he made arrangements for a covered truck to pick us up and take us to San Benito where we could get the bus to Melchor de Mencos, the starting point for Naranjo.

We were up most of the night packing our equipment for Naranjo. Upon reaching Melchor, near the Belize border, the bus driver let us off at the side of the road at the edge of town, as we did not know yet where to go. The students stayed with our pile of luggage and equipment while Tranquil and I went into town to find a place to stay and someone to truck us to Naranjo. There were no hotels in that small town, but we found a woman who had three rooms we could have. That left two of us with no beds. So, Paul Saffo, being the youngest, was elected to sleep on the rickety balcony, as was Tranquil. The beds cost \$1.00 each. The toilet facilities were in a two-holer that had fallen in a sixty degree angle so that the door would not close. Dinner was thirty-five cents each, but was exceptionally good at any price—armadillo, scrambled eggs, tortillas, frijoles, and coffee. This must have been the best place to eat in town, as there were seven police having dinner at the same time as us. They came there every night for dinner and for breakfast also.

The cot in my room had no sheets, a dirty pillowcase, and a thin blanket. I put some of my dirty clothes on the bed, and slept on top of them in the clothes I had on. The boys did not fare so well. Their beds were full of bed bugs, so they slept very little. Paul and Tranquil slept fine on mattresses on the balcony—no bed bugs.



My Naranjo workers:  
Paul Saffo, Don Hart, Dick Millard, Steve Hyde, Jeff Miller, Jim Kinslow

We finally found a man who had been there before; in fact he had taken Ian Graham in the year before, so he was familiar with the road. Well, it was not exactly a road, more like a two-rut roadway, and it took us two and a half hours to get there.

Fabulous, beautiful jungle greeted us at Naranjo—palm trees that looked to be almost one hundred feet tall, thick, lush green everywhere. Ian's camp was still fairly intact—table, benches, shelves, a chair made of deer hide, and champas that the boys slung their hammocks under. I erected my tent and then set off looking for the monuments.

It kept our guides busy bringing water to clean the stelae, as it had to be carted from three kilometers away. I was able to do rubbings of just about everything there. Some were immense. The boys cleaned the monuments, helped me pound the paper in, and also helped carry water. The only trouble were the ticks, probably coming from the deer-hide chair in camp. Also mules had been in there, and there are always ticks with them. We all had them, but Jeff had the most, picking them off by the dozens every night.

The last day we were at Naranjo, I had worked straight through from early morning until dark, trying to finish the rubbings before we had to leave. I was tired. When I came into camp, dinner was ready. One of the boys sat me down

in the deer chair and even took my boots off. Right then I should have been suspicious. Every evening we had been having our one small drink of rum mixed with Tang. They had mine ready for me and we all cheered. I was going to my tent to put on a dry shirt before eating, when I stumbled over the tent stake cord. Now this is where our stories differ. To this very day, these boys (now men) swear up and down that I was drunk on the rum. They had put all the rum in my drink, and they were all just having Tang. By the orange color, it was not possible to tell the difference.

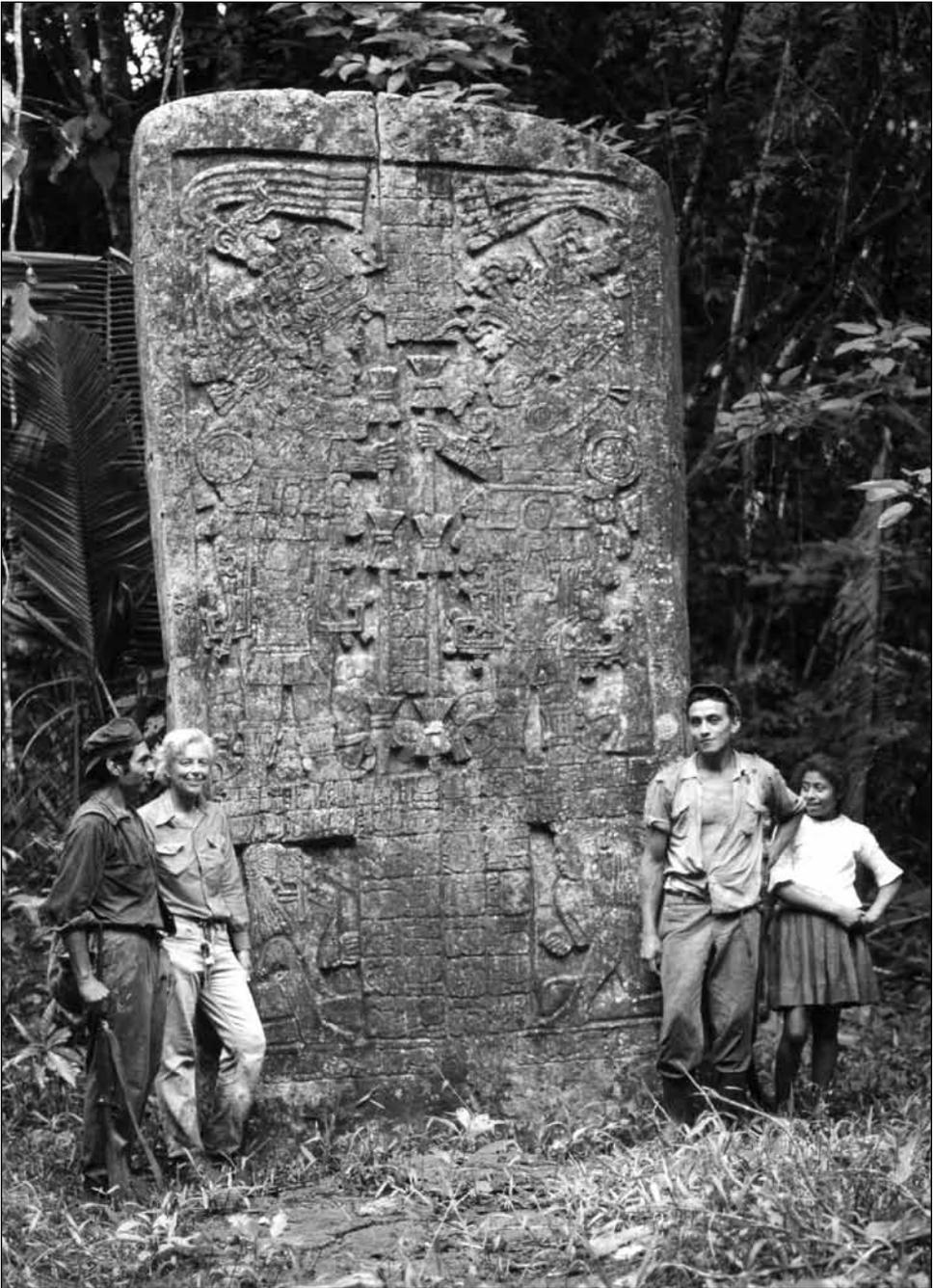
## IXKUN

A call came to me in Sayaxche from Romero Samayoa saying that there had been looting in the vicinity of Poptun, and he would like to have me go to Ixkun and make a rubbing of Stela 1 if possible before any damage was done to it. Bob stayed in Flores and off I went with my equipment in a duffle bag on the bus to Poptun, getting off at the seventy-nine kilometer mark, where the trail goes in for three kilometers to the small village of Dolores. I first went to the police station to inquire where Tortutiano Huil lived, my friend from the Tikal Project. The police asked where I was going, and when I told him Ixkun, he said that I would need two men and three horses to get there. When I inquired as to the distance from Dolores, he said that it was a very difficult nine kilometers, and I told him that I was used to hiking further than that in the jungle and would not need horses.

The Huil house was the first one in a long row of similar thatch-roof houses down a grassy street. Tortutiano was in Guatemala City with his son who was being treated for chiclero's ear, but would be back in the morning. Señora Huil invited me to spend the night with her. The little nine-year-old daughter Ofelia



My "Pied Piper" children at Dolores, El Peten



By Ixkun Stela 1

latched on to me as if I were a long lost aunt. She wanted to introduce me to her grandparents who lived at the end of the street. As soon as we started out, little children came rushing out of their houses and clung to me also. They were going to share with Ofelia the greeting of this strange blond-haired stranger. At every house we passed, my entourage grew larger until by the time we reached the end of the street, I had twenty-five little followers. On the way back, the Pied Piper's followers had increased even more.

Bright and early in the morning we were ready to start out for Ixkun—Huil, his brother, and I. The little Huil girl and her cousin started out with us, I thought going just as far as the trail started its descent. But no, they kept following us barefoot down the trail. To my surprise, they walked the entire way to Ixkun.

While the men were building scaffolding for me to work on this nearly three-meter tall stela, I put up my tent, built the fire for dinner, and started preparing it. I told the little girls that we were having *carne*; they grinned ear to ear, but when I opened the freeze-dry cartons and they saw this cardboard looking stuff, those grins took a downward turn. When it was cooked, however, they thought it was delicious. Freeze-dried ice cream—as they had never had ice cream, this was just something new that had a great chocolate flavor that they could chew. They liked it. They were excited about my *casita*. But how were the three of us going to sleep in it with only two thin blankets? We managed. It gets very cold at night in the jungle, so the three of us were huddled together in my little tent for two nights.

Early in the morning, I started doing the rubbing of the large Stela 1. I studied it first for a long time, taking a lot of Polaroid pictures of the inset glyphs, before I even started. As it looked like rain, the men erected an immense piece of clear plastic over the stela, the scaffolding, and me. Taking the Polaroid pictures helped so much, as with such a “busy” piece it would have been easy to leave something out. It turned out perfect. While we were there, the men told me that they knew of another place, in the opposite direction from Dolores, that had a stela, but no one had ever been there.

This turned out to be not quite true. When we returned to Dolores over the trail that seemed to be nothing for two little girls in bare feet but according to the policeman was far too difficult for me without horses, it was raining hard. We were all soaked with both rain and mud, and the little girls looked like they had been rolling around with the pigs.

## IXTUTZ

The next morning the two men and I started out for Ixtutz, eight kilometers southeast of Dolores. I found out later that the site had been visited by Colonel Modesto Mendez in 1852, and Eusebio Lara, who made fanciful drawings of two of the stelae. It was also visited in 1946 by Merando Contreras when he briefly passed through it when tending his *milpa*, the one we had trudged through on the way in. No one had been there since then until I came in 1970. Pushing our way through second growth vegetation, we arrived in a very dense jungle. This was the site these men called Ixtutz. The rest of that day was spent cleaning the



My casita and two little girls, Ixkun

fallen monument and doing one rubbing. I noticed that we were standing right next to what seemed to be a series of stairs, in other words, at least one building was there. I would go to the Instituto in Guatemala City and ask for permission to work there the following year.

## ACCIDENT IN EL PETEN

When I arrived home from Ixkun and Ixtutz in July 1970, I was so excited about what I had found, that I was telling Bob all about it at the same time I was taking a shower. I slipped, and fell on the porcelain toilet, breaking my ribs, but worst of all hitting my thigh, so I had a massive hematoma almost as large as a football. Bob got me on the bed, but then I went into shock. Dr. Baldizone was called. Our friend Antonio Ortiz, the doctor, Don Hart, and Bob managed to get me down the narrow stairs on a mattress and into a truck to take me to the jungle hospital in El Peten. I went into shock again as they started to give me blood transfusions from Don and two young men from the Bahamas. Two nurses were found so that there would be a nurse with me around the clock. No one else was in the hospital; it was mainly for emergencies such as this. Bob had to go out to find

ice for me. The next morning they were standing at the foot of my bed discussing my case, agreeing that I should be in the hospital in Guatemala City for an operation on my thigh, but that I probably would not survive the trip.

After four days they moved me into Tono's house, so they could look after me and get some nourishment in me, as there was no food at the hospital. On the morning of the third day at Tono and Laura Luz's house, it was decided that I had to be taken to Guatemala City. We knew the pilot of the plane. He had three seats taken out so there would be room for a stretcher for me. Tono, the doctor, and Bob went on the plane with me. We were met by an ambulance that took me to the Bella Aurora Hospital, where I had my thigh operated on, draining all of that blood. Eight days in the hospital and I was moved to the home of our good friends Eileen and Robert Schaps. He was President of the Guatemala Coffee Association and the owner of the largest coffee *finca* in Guatemala. The next year when we returned to El Peten, we brought a much needed stomach pump for the Peten Hospital, as a "thank you" to Dr. Baldizone for saving my life.

## TO PERU

On Sunday, August 2, 1970, with the stitches having been just taken out, we boarded the plane for Lima to attend the International Congress of Americanists (ICA) meeting. With us were Ed Shook, Guillermo Guillermon, and my R.L.S. student Flint Stickney, who had just started Stanford in art history.

After the ICA meetings we flew to Cuzco, and instead of resting as advised, we roamed all over where we saw herds of llama and alpaca. Suddenly I couldn't breathe. The pressure on my broken ribs at that altitude was too much, so we had to go back to the hotel and fly back to Lima in the morning. Flint was to go on to Machu Picchu and meet us later in Lima, as planned.

At midnight the phone rang. It was Ed Shook telling us that the plane from Machu Picchu flying back to Cusco had crashed. Both Ed and Bob dashed to the airline office, but they knew nothing except that the plane had crashed, and they had heard that everyone aboard was killed. First thing in the morning Bob went to the American embassy to find out if Flint was on the plane, and to give them the name of his parents. Every day Bob went to the embassy and to the airport to see when the plane with the bodies was coming in. Nobody seemed to know anything. Our ambassador to Peru went on vacation the very day the terrible accident was announced. Bob was furious. He wrote some pretty nasty letters to our State Department about that.

All this time, I had to stay in the hotel room to answer calls from parents. The passengers were almost all college students who had been on an exchange program all summer in Peru, and this trip to Machu Picchu was to have been their last fun frolic. The only ones who were not part of this college group were the daughter of the president of Peru and Flint. All were killed, including the pilot and co-pilot.

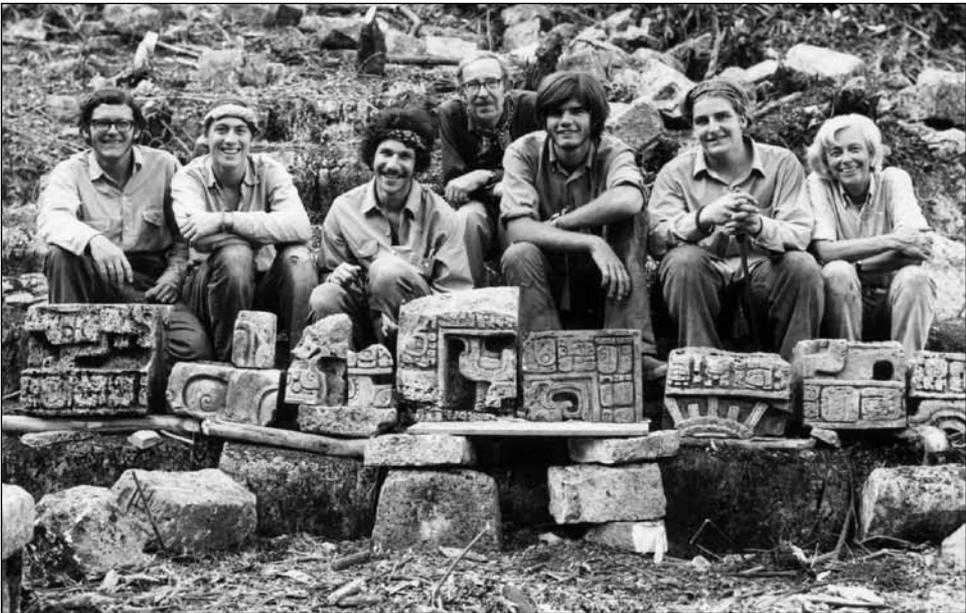
I have never wanted to return to Machu Picchu.

## IXTUTZ MAPPED

The next April, 1971, when I went to ask permission of Sr. Lujan to map and do rubbings of Ixtutz, he did not know where Ixtutz was, nor did anyone else. It was not on any map. However, they did give me permission to work there, even if they knew nothing about it other than a photo of the one rubbing I had done and a map showing the location.

This time I took my Stevenson students Arlen Chase, Tom Gardner, George Wing, Kevin Monahan, and Corey Smith, plus Bob. In Dolores we picked up Jose, Victor Manuel, Telmo Contreras, Merardo Huil, Hugo Trujillo, Felix Quixchan, and Olivie Mogul, our cook (wife of Felix), their little boy, and new baby. Three horses carted our supplies in. A more enthusiastic group could not be found.

Ixtutz was in very dense jungle, so much so that the very first thing that had to be done was to clear a space for our camp, at least for our sleeping champas that first night. In two days I think we had the best jungle camp anyplace. Of course I am not counting large establishments like Tikal, Seibal, or Caracol in Belize. Good sturdy champas were built for all, plus a large one for our drafting and mapping tables, and one over the cooking area. The men built an eight-foot-long table by splitting a balsa-like wood down the middle, making two-foot-wide, smooth boards. We all ate together, my students, the Dolores men, Bob, and me. Every evening after dinner the boys and the men would sit around the table and teach each other English and Spanish, and sing songs in both languages. They also had tacked the side of a cardboard box on a tree, listing each day the number of snakes killed, and by whom. The list would look something



Our Ixtutz crew:

George Wing, Corey Smith, Tom Gardner, Kevin Monahan, Arlen Chase, and Merle



Our Ixtutz camp deep in the jungle

like this:

	SERPIENTES	
lunes	2 barba amarillas	Arlen, Manuel
	1 coral	Tom
martes	2 barba amarillas	Kevin, Felix
jueves	3 barba amarillas	Corey, Arlen, Jose
	1 coral	Felix

And so it went, day after day. Some days no snakes were seen. None of us were ever bitten. The boys were trained how to look out for them, and they were good with the machete.

Corey was in charge of building the latrine of pole-constructed sides and a well smoothed seat with a round hole. The pit was deep, and a bucket of ashes was kept there to be poured into the hole after each use. Our shower was indeed ingenious. Bamboo stakes made the sides; the floor was wood slats with a seat to sit on, and a forked stick made a good place to hang clothes. A bucket was suspended above, with a rope attached to tip it. The idea was for the bucket to fill with rain water, then, by pulling the rope, water would come down on the bather. We waited for it to rain. It did not rain. Day after day, it did not rain.

The only water we could get was from an old *aguada* a kilometer away, where one of our men had to go every day and bring back water in a waterproofed sack carried on a tumpline around his head. It would then be strained through my Panama hat to get rid of bugs, and then poured into clear water bags for rationing, for drinking, making coffee, and cooking mainly. There was no water for bathing or washing clothes. Everyone had a different colored cup, so we just



Water had to be brought from a kilometer away



Making tortillas

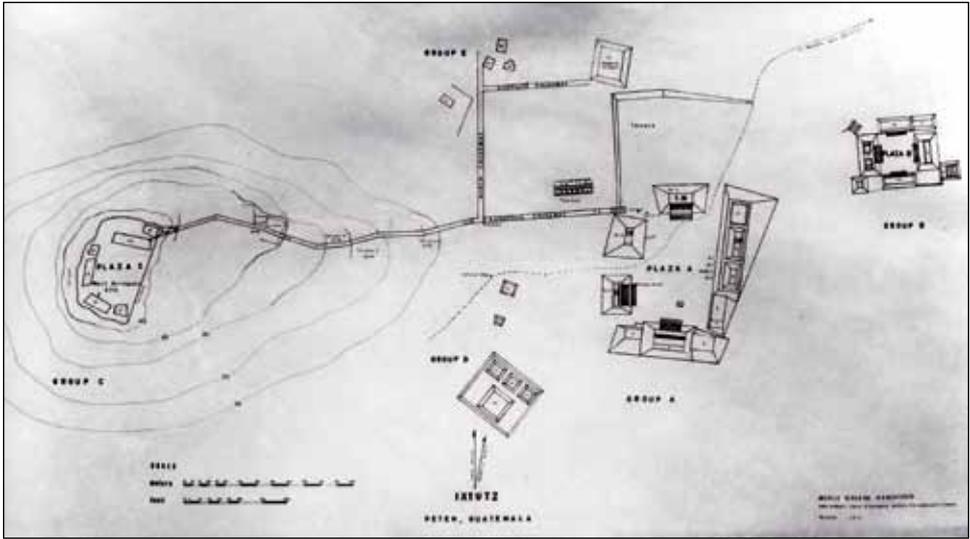
hung them on a branch of a tree with our spoon inside, not washing them. Instead of using our plastic dishes, we used the containers that held our freeze-dry food, disposing of them after each use in a deep garbage pit. Every morning a fresh basin of water would be put out to wash our hands and face, everyone using the same water. At noon, we all washed in that same water, rather muddy by then, but at night it was very muddy.

When we came in for dinner, we would be covered with mud and wet with perspiration. We would take off our wet clothes, hang them up to dry the next day in the sun, and put on our now-dry clothes that we had worn the day before. We slept in the dirty dry ones, and then wore them that day. Anyone else would have left and not put up with this sort of thing. Not this group, neither the Stevenson students nor the men from Dolores. It was incredible.

Everyone had a Fluid Beazard compass, and had taken a semester of training in mapping from former U.S. Army Colonel Houghton, who was teaching at Stevenson. We had mapped everything in the Pebble Beach forest, which was not all built up then as it is today. Clearing and mapping in Ixtutz went fairly rapidly.

Ixtutz turned out to be quite a large site. The main plaza that we named Plaza A, where we had our camp, was an area approximately 70 x 55 meters. Counting the basements of the structures in Group A, this would be an area approximately 170 x 70 meters. From this area, *sabes* (Maya roads) ran to four other groups, B, C, D, and E.

Group C, the Acropolis, was approached by a series of steps going up on the west to five terraces that were natural outcroppings of rock, some immense, such as the one at the approach to Terrace 4. George, Kevin, and Felix mapped



Our map of Ixtutz

the Acropolis, and found that the one structure they were able to crawl into had a corbelled vault.

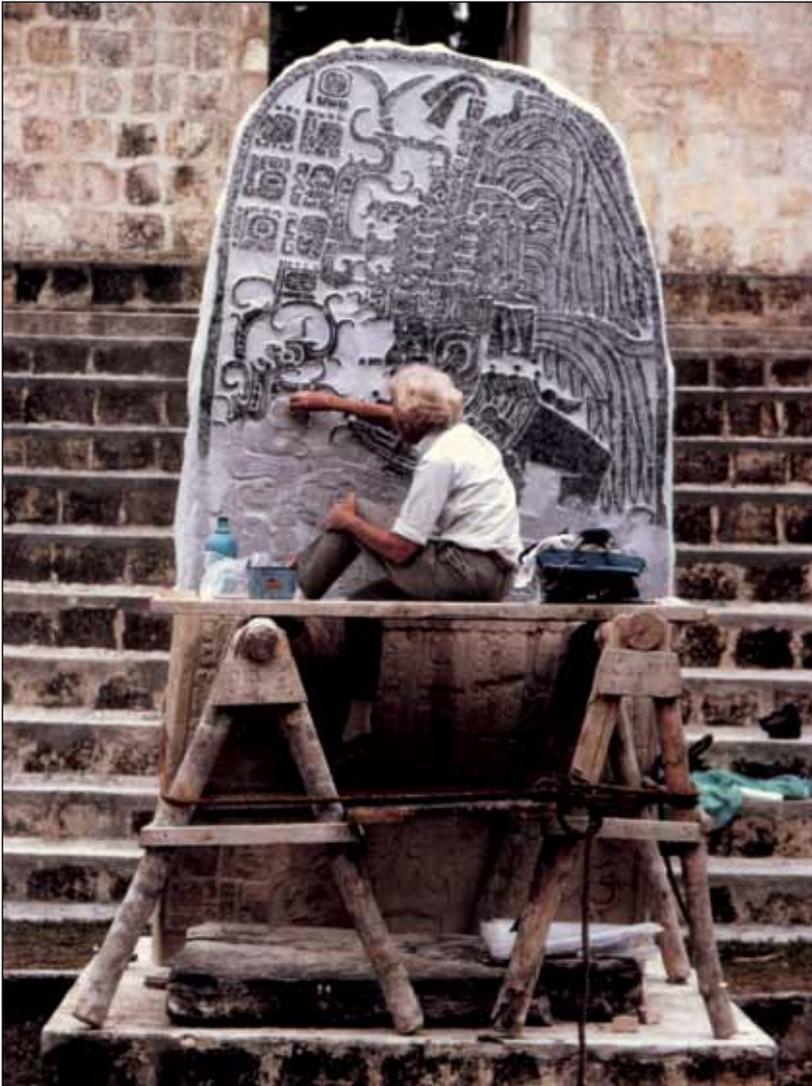
The most exciting find of the season was the discovery of eleven glyph blocks near the base of Structure 1. When it was close to our time to leave, I had a radio message sent to Sr. Samayoa about our find. He sent a message back saying that an army helicopter would be in to pick up the blocks, and for us to level a place for it to land. The helicopter never did arrive, and as we did not want



Arlen Chase at Ixtutz

to leave the glyph blocks unattended for some looter to steal, we covered them with brush and paid one of our men to stay with them for a week until a rescue team could come and get them. A relief person was to come from Dolores and bring more food.

I had done rubbings of all the stelae and taken photographs of everything. It was apparent to me that Stela 4 had no carving on any of the visible parts. We even dug a pit so that I could reach underneath about a foot, but could feel no carving, so filled in the trench. When we came out from Ixtutz, we went to Tikal for a short visit. We saw Ian Graham, so I told him about Ixtutz, and how to get there. Shortly after that, he and Eric von Euw went in to Ixtutz, which, fortunately for them, had all been cleared by us just a short time before, so was not



Doing a rubbing of Seibal Stela 10

yet overgrown. They made their own map (they did not find Group D however, off some distance to the southwest), but turned over Stela 4 using a block and tackle. They found the beautiful double panel of glyphs that I had missed. Other than the missing Group D, Ian's and my maps are very much alike.

## SEIBAL

One of the greatest experiences I had in the jungle was working at Seibal with Ledyard Smith. I felt that it was a great honor to be asked to work with Ledyard. He was a wonderful field director, loved and revered by all. On Friday, March 26, 1968, at 7:30 a.m. we took off from our headquarters at Don Julio Gadoy's in Sayaxche on the Peabody boat, down the winding Rio Pasion to Seibal. How I love that river. Except for a few small clearings, most of the way was through beautiful jungle with towering mahogany and *zapote* trees that were home to dozens of different orchids. Tropical birds by the hundreds kept up a constant symphony all the way. How fortunate to be hearing beautiful symphonies on a stage of green, orange, tangerine, and gold.

When we arrived at the landing place for Seibal, we had to climb a steep bank to the site, the total distance from river to camp being 2.3 kilometers. As we docked, we were met by a group of native boys whose duty was to carry all of our gear, supplies for camp, and the daily water supply in six large drums to the camp. These boys packed water in five gallon containers, plus all the other gear, each making ten trips, for which they were paid ten cents per trip. Not much, it seemed to me for such a difficult climb. The procedure at Seibal was to



Rubbing of Seibal Stela 10



Rubbing of Seibal Stela 3

be served coffee or tea upon arrival. That was nice. Besides Ledyard, the personnel at camp when we were there consisted of Gair Tourtellot, Richard Rose, Norman Hammond, Bob, and me.

Dinner was at exactly 6:00 p.m., not one minute later. The food was gourmet. Except for local fruit and vegetables, everything came from S.S. Pierce, London. Before this year (Ledyard's last of five), when orders were put in to London (a year ahead of time) for their liquor supply, they had always been listed as "arms and ammunition." This last year Ledyard put in (instead of "arms and ammunition") his liquor order—so many cases of Scotch, so many cases of Bourbon, so many of gin, etc.—and that is what he received.

The beautiful, long *zapote* wood table was always set as for a formal dinner. Down the center of the table was a long row of all sorts of bottles of liquor, and so many condiments that one could dream one was in India or some exotic place. The white porcelain plates, as well as the glasses were set upside down at each place. This was like eating at Maxim's. For instance, along with everything else we might be having for lunch, we would each have a half of a six inch diameter can of salmon. They had brought a refrigerator and large generator up that steep, muddy bank. What luxury. We even had Jello and other freezer-necessary food. However, there was an unspoken rule that was never mentioned, but all knew—only two drinks were allowed.

We were up early, as breakfast was at 5:30, and then to work. The monuments at Seibal, for the most part, were very well preserved, so it was a joy to do the rubbings. I especially liked the large Stela 10, showing a lord with non-Maya features, who carries a serpent bar and wears beautiful pineapple boots; Stela 8

depicting a lord wearing jaguar paws and slippers, and Stela 7, which depicts the accession of a ballplayer ruler, in all of his fancy costume, split skirt, huge waist protector, and padded knee. Stela 3, unique to Seibal, not even looking very Maya, is a masterpiece of Seibal sculpture. Its three divided registers show us oriental-looking figures engaged in animated discussion. It was exhilarating watching each detail come to life as I applied the ink.

Then there was the day when all hell broke loose shortly after lunch. End of solitude. A huge yellow bulldozer came crashing through the jungle trees, preparing the way for the new road from Sayaxche. At first, all we could see was this horrible yellow, noisy monster between the trees. I am glad that I worked at Seibal before civilization changed this gorgeous place, home of the jaguar, the toucan, the monkey, and the serpent.

On the last day of the season, we had gone back to Sayaxche, but upon arrival another boat came carrying a message from Ledyard saying that he needed me back at the site to do rubbings of some things he had forgotten. So back I went. Bob stayed at Sayaxche. By late afternoon of the second day I had finished the new rubbings. It looked like rain, but it was decided that the *motoristas* could get me back to Sayaxche before it became too stormy. That wasn't exactly the case. It was raining so hard that the tarp I had over me was useless, and I was soon soaked. There was no moon. It was pitch dark. Every once in a while, I would poke my head out from under the tarp, but could see nothing, except that it looked like the men were headed right for a bank. Of course they were not. These men knew their river.

Bob and Julio Gadoy were sitting on the porch in Sayaxche visiting, when they heard a motor. Bob said, "Well, it can't be Merle, as she would never come out in a terrible storm like this." Then who should hop out of the boat but me, soaking wet. Were they ever surprised. At least I made it.

## YAXCHILAN

I have spent a great deal of time at Yaxchilan, at the big bend in the Usumacinta River, the waterway that divides Mexico and Guatemala. It has always been one of my favorite places, a dream of a site that, if arriving by plane, appears as a white apparition that has been dropped from outer space.

One of the most exciting times at Yaxchilan was when I had come down the Usumacinta River from Sayaxche. I stayed with the Miguel De la Cruz family right at the top of the riverbank. The weather was so unpredictable, rain one minute, then sun the next, that I started in at daybreak to work on the stelae with either Miguel or one of his sons. The river water being too dirty with the river so high, I would chop off the end of a two- or three-inch diameter lanai vine, and use that pure, clear water.

One morning when I was walking alone on a narrow trail up to Temple 33, there was wild boar (or rather, I thought it was a wild boar) sitting in the trail. Knowing how dangerous they can be, I waited for it to go, but as it stayed there, I detoured around the trail, keeping at a safe distance. On the way back down the trail, the "wild boar" turned out to be a sow belonging to Miguel, that had

just given birth to a half dozen little piglets.

This was also the time that I was about to take a bath in the river and had taken off my clothes, picked a spot that was not swift, and also had a log jutting out that I could sit on. I sat on the log to wash my feet, when the log started to move. The log raised its head. It was a crocodile. I decided to stay dirty.

The six weeks I spent at Yaxchilan in June and July of 1970 were the most productive. Bob was with me, plus my Stevenson students George Wing, Nick Dodge, and Kevin Monahan. This was a six week season with no rain, unheard of for such a long period. The river was very low, so low, in fact, that one could get across it by hopping on stones. Eric Thompson told me that it was the lowest it had ever been since records had been kept. We could see the remains of the Maya bridge that at one time spanned the river.

The Miguel de la Cruz family did our laundry every day and prepared our meals. Matter of fact, they took all of us right into their family. What wonderful



Nick Dodge and George Wing recording data at Yaxchilan

caring people. Miguel had plants growing by his door that would take care of every kind of illness or bite one could think of—snake bites, bloody diarrhea, stomach aches, ear aches, constipation, and many other illnesses. They had a *Dorstenia contrayerva* plant growing in the crotch of a tree by their door for emergencies. The bottoms of the roots were boiled in water and used for bloody diarrhea, the small roots for stomach ache, and the tough serrated thick leaves (the flower) for snake bites. In addition to the de la Cruz camp, there are a lot of structures, stelae, and a ballcourt that stretch over a more or less flat area along the river for over 500 meters. Then the landscape rises. The first climb to Structure 33, with its beautiful roofcomb and great lintels over the doorways, is almost straight up. Lintels 1, 2, and 3 over the three doorways in this building are spectacular, but it was very difficult to make the rubbings.

Temples 29, 30, and 31 are at about 210 meters up the mountain, a difficult ascent. There was still considerable red, blue, and yellow ochre paint on both the interior and exterior when I worked there.

The most exciting rubbings done at this time were the Hieroglyphic Stairs in Structure 44, which we uncovered. Just uncovering and cleaning them was painstaking work, as we had to be so careful not to step on the stairs or mar them in any way. Nick was great at doing this. When we left Yaxchilan, after a most successful time, I had made fifty rubbings.

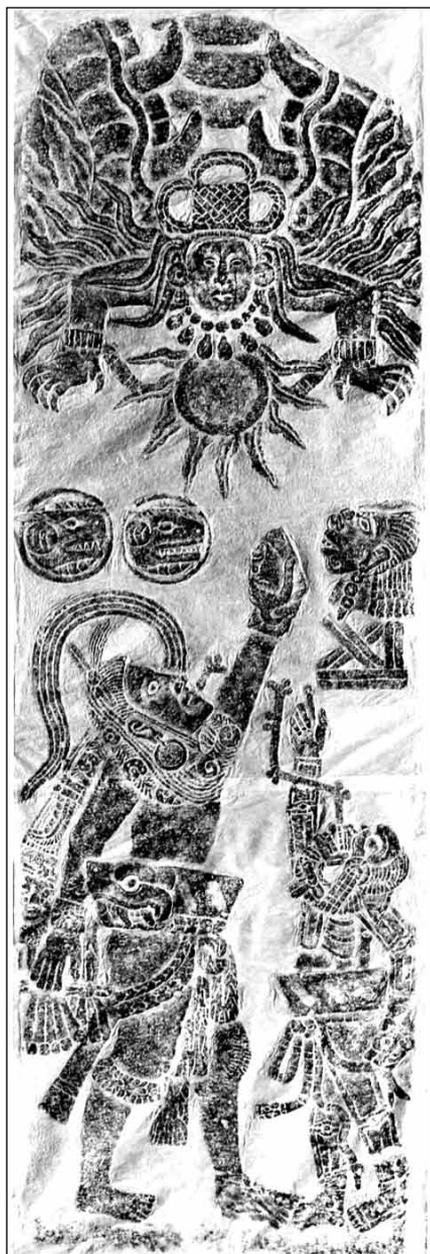
The most beautiful lintels from Yaxchilan are in the British Museum, so of course I had to go to London and make rubbings of them.

## TO EUROPE & THE BRITISH MUSEUM

It may seem that Bob and I went the roundabout way of getting to London, but our plane schedule took us to Stockholm first. We arrived there on June 8, 1969. I already had permission from Dr. Bengt Danielson, Director of the Museum of Anthropology to make rubbings of the monuments in the Maya exhibit that was there. Along with all of the other monuments, I did rubbings of two Usumacinta ballplayer panels that I later saw in a private home in Geneva. In the interval of a few years after the exhibit closed in Stockholm, these pieces were purchased by a man in Geneva. I had been invited to the new owner's lovely home on the shore of Lake Geneva for lunch with my friend Silviane Sandoz from Switzerland, and upon being greeted in the entrance hall, these panels were the first thing I saw. The owner was surprised that I knew about them and had made rubbings of them in Stockholm.

## WEST BERLIN

From Zurich we went to West Berlin (they hadn't taken the wall down yet), and from there to Dahlem. Under the direction of Dr. Dieter Eislib, Director of Archaeology in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Dahlem I recorded all of the immense stelae that had been brought to Germany from the Santa Lucia Cotzumalhuapa area at the turn of the century. These were the wonderfully pre-



Rubbing of Bilbao Monument 3

Cottage Hotel, we drove to the British Museum to pay our respects to Dr. William Flagg, Director of the Ethnography Department. We did not drive to the main entrance; we drove around to the private parking lot for museum officials and into their elevator.

Everything was already waiting for me. The sculpture area was cordoned off to keep tourists from interfering with my work or tripping on some of the

served El Baul ballplayer monuments. While workmen were hammering away at construction of the new museum wing, I was working on scaffolding that was built for me to do rubbings of fourteen of these wonderful pieces. What a joy. They are in pristine condition.

## LONDON, THE BRITISH MUSEUM

We finally arrived in London on a Saturday, in 1970, and took the train to Audley End where we were met by Sir Eric Thompson, then on to Saffron Walden. The next day he drove us all around the country, through many small villages, soaking up English history like no one but Eric could tell it, dates of old cathedrals, all about the Audley Mansion, now the property of the state, old St. Mary's College—turned into a retired clergy home with beautiful grounds—and the Church of St. Peter and Paul. The Thompson home, called "Harvard," was small but comfortable. For lunch Florence, Eric's wife, made a delicious chicken pie, and for dessert, a gooseberry pie that Bob couldn't stop raving about. She made the same pie for him the next day. While at the Thompson's I had a phone call from Carl Landegger, my benefactor in New York wondering where I was, as he had his chauffeur lined up to take us to the British Museum every day.

We arrived in the London station, and sure enough, there was Mr. Davies waiting for us in a shiny silver-gray Bentley. We couldn't have been more surprised. Before checking in at our quarters at the Swiss



Sir Eric Thompson

equipment. When I arrived the next morning to start, there was a man assigned to stay with me all the time, to get water, tea, or anything else I might want. Our chauffeur, Mr. Davies, showed Bob around London, and to the best pubs.

It was such a pleasure doing rubbings of the famous Yaxchilan "blood-letting" Lintels 24, 25, 15, and 16, especially since I had spent so much time at that temple, and then the Hieroglyphic Stairs at Naranjo, plus 26 other sculptures. The hospitality at the British Museum had to be the best there was anywhere. After finishing at the British Museum, we went to their storage building on the outskirts of the city to do rubbings of all the sculptures that they had from other sites. This was quite different, working in cold quarters

between row upon row of stacked monuments.

The second time I worked in the British Museum was in 1979 when I was doing research for Volume I of *The Sculpture of Palenque*.

I was making corrections to the Maudslay drawings. Elizabeth Carmichael and all of the personnel from the Museum of Mankind had all of the Maudslay photographs and negatives ready for me in a special room. I was indeed impressed, as this was a special privilege.



Rubbing of Yaxchilan Lintel 25

## UAXACTUN

Back now to the Guatemalan jungle. Bob and Don Hart went with me to Uaxactun. Nothing had been done since the Carnegie staff of Ed Shook, Jesse Jennings, and Robert and Ledyard Smith were there.

We were treated like the King and Queen of somewhere important. Visitors just did not come there. The

keeper of the site Sr. Aldana kindly put the three of us up in his house. Don slept on a cot in a corner of the room. This thatch roof house was unusually large, of pole and wattle construction painted white with stucco. The main living area consisted of a room 26 x 15 feet where our bed and Don's cot were, plus a large table where we ate. Half of the room was curtained off with a cloth stretched over poles, making another sleeping area and a place for the sewing machine of the wife, Juanita.

The Aldanas had two children, a girl named Blanca who was ten but looked no more than seven, and a boy a couple of years younger. When the rain became so bad that I could not work on the monuments, I would entertain the children. As Blanca did not have a doll, I made one for her by tearing up an old tee shirt of mine to make the doll's body, then stuffing it with kapok, painting the face, and giving it the final touch by making hair out of the inside stuffing of a piece of nylon rope. Next we made paper dolls. I cut a very plain cardboard doll, painted the face and body, then made piles of paper clothes for the doll.

## JIMBAL

In June, 1970, I was headed back into the same territory. John Graham of Harvard and the University of California, Berkeley, had asked me to go to Jimbal and record a stela there. Don Hart again went with me, going to Tikal to pick up guides to take us to Jimbal, which is halfway between Tikal and Uaxactun. When I went to see the guardian of Tikal, Sandoval, and told him what I was supposed to do, he did not want to go there. He wanted a ridiculous price for taking me in, which he refused to lower, thinking I would not pay it, so would not go. As I had already been paid by Harvard to do this, along with the airfare for two people, I had to accept. I told him to have a helper and be ready to leave at 6 a.m., and to bring their own water canteen. I was told that we wouldn't need to bring any water, because there was plenty of water in the aguada. Don and I brought our own water anyway, plus four cans of fruit cocktail and four of tomato juice. The rest of our food was freeze-dry.

If there had ever been a trail, it was no longer there, making traveling over that very rough terrain covered with fallen trees and decayed leaves very difficult in the heat. We came across a coral snake before we had hardly left Tikal. Then about half way there, I suddenly came upon a very large *barba amarilla* just ahead of me, where my foot would land next. I jumped high, over the snake, yelling "*Barba amarilla!*" As Don tells the story, he starts translating fast, "*Barba amarilla—fer-de-lance—deadly snake!*" and he backs up fast.

When we finally arrived at Jimbal, completely dehydrated by then, we looked at the aguada. Completely dry, not a drop of water. Neither was there any water in the lanai vines. It was an exceptionally hot, dry season. Sandoval told us he did not know where the stela was, so Don and I started hunting around and sure enough found it. *But*, the upper third had been just recently sawed off. When I pointed this out to Sandoval, he just shrugged his shoulders and said that we should then turn around and go back to Tikal. I was very upset. I still had my water in my canteen. I decided I was going to use it to make a rubbing



Drinking from a lanai vine

of the remains of this stela, so that's what I did, not sharing any of my water with the men. I told them, no, we could not make it back, we would go back in the morning.

Don and I pitched my tent, but, as there would be no rain, did not put the rain cover over it. We just lay on the floor and tried to go to sleep. In the middle of the night we were awakened by the patter of rain. We quickly jumped out of the tent, grabbing our cooking utensils to catch the rain. It stopped. Thinking the rain might start again, we positioned our pots all around



Jimbal stela showing stolen portion, Don Hart and Huil

the tent to catch any water, and got back in the tent. With no rain cover on the tent, water had seeped into the tent and created a muddy pool on the floor. We scooped up this muddy water as best we could and drank it.

On the way back the next morning, not a single lanai vine produced any water. When we came walking across the Tikal airfield, we could hardly stand up. We had hiked fourteen kilometers in and fourteen kilometers out, plus the extra two kilometers hunting for the aguada. One of the fellows in a Tikal jeep saw us, so came running to pick us up. We stood in a shower with all our clothes on and just let the water pour onto us.

## BILBAO & EL BAUL

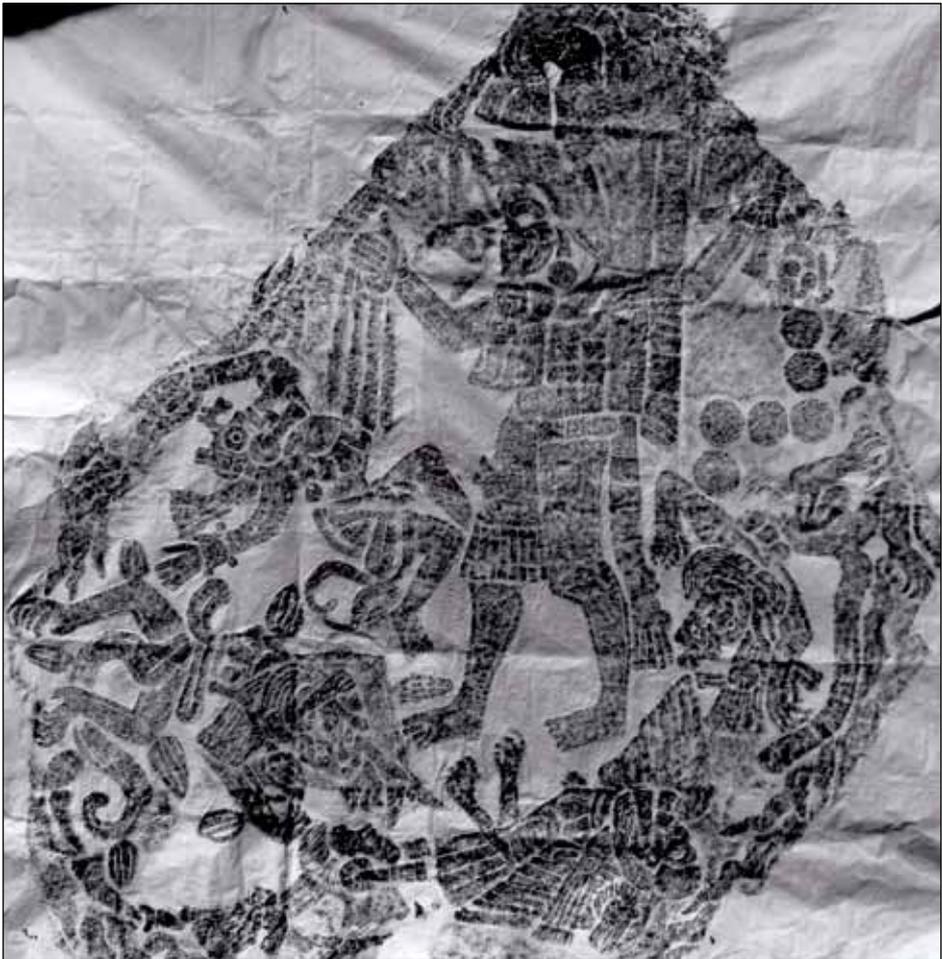
The trip to the Pacific Piedmont of Guatemala was an entirely different experience, in an entirely different kind of terrain. Lee Parsons, my archaeologist friend from Harvard, told me about the Santa Cotzumalhuapa monuments where he had been working for some time. I had permission to do rubbings of them, and



With my students on top of the El Baul Monument 4  
Merle, Don Hart, Jim Kinslow, Paul Saffo, Dick Millard, Steve Hyde, Jeff Smith

was given a letter of introduction to Don Jose Ricardo Muñoz Galvez, the owner of the coffee *finca* Las Ilusiones, where many of the Bilbao monuments are located. We stayed with the Muñoz family while I was working in the area. We were accepted right into the family. Breakfast was very early. The coffee was delicious; it was the “essence” of coffee that is made first thing in the morning with the coffee liquid (no water) from freshly ground beans. It is made fresh each day, kept in a bottle, and used only that one day. The process is repeated every morning. The *finca* Las Ilusiones is the only place I have ever had this delicious brew.

We went on horseback out to Bilbao Monument 21, the largest (4.02 x 3.38 meters of flat surface) and most elaborate of the Cotzumalhuapa narrative compositions. The central principal figure, a ballplayer, wears an elaborate turban with tassels, and an oversized belt that ties in front. He carries a knife in one hand and a cacao pod in the other. The figure on the left, probably a sorcerer, carries a puppet and a bone knife. To the right an old man sits on a throne hold-



Rubbing of the El Baul Monument 4



Rubbing of the huge Bilbao Monument 21 with the ballplayer scene

ing cacao pods in both hands. This bas-relief rock carving on the face of an enormous basalt boulder is tilted at about thirty-five degrees. This made it very difficult to work on, but exciting, as each little flower and ornament would appear as the ink was applied. As the boulder was in direct sunlight, it was too hot to be on it in my bare feet, and I could not work with my Keds on, so I worked in my socks the entire time. I was on that boulder non-stop for eight long hours, starting at 7:30 a.m. Bob would hand me water, both for the rubbing and to drink, but I never once got off. The water I drank came out in perspiration almost as fast as I drank it. Seven sheets of rice paper three meters by one meter were used for this one rubbing.

## OTHER SITES

### LUBAANTUN & NIMLI PUNIT



Karl Taube and I went to Lubaantun and Nimli Punit in southern Belize in 1983. Joann, Bob's daughter, had been visiting us at Palenque, with her new jeep. Karl was there also. We decided to drive to Belize and see the sites on the way—Xpuhil, Chicanna, Kohunlich, and Belize City, and from there to other sites in Belize. We stayed at the St. George Hotel in Belize City, which was pretty fancy for us, but Joann wanted to stay there. We tried to talk her into letting us borrow her jeep, as she wouldn't be using it. No way. She wouldn't let anyone drive it.

It ended up my hiring a private plane to fly us into the nearest landing spot for Nimli Punit, which was Indian Creek Village. From there it was just a half mile hike to Nimli Punit. First, however, we had to find a place to stay. That was not easy. There were no regular hotels. The one we thought was a hotel turned out to be a brothel, so that was out. Finally we found a very primitive place to sleep, which could by no means be called a hotel. Most of the twenty-five monuments at the Late Classic site of Nimli Punit were immense, the largest one, Stela 14, being seventeen meters in height. We did rubbings of Stelae 1, 2, 14, and 15. The first day, a boy of about ten years came up and wanted to help. We let him help clean the monument we were working on. He was so good, plus did not complain about fetching water for us, that we decided to hire him. For him, that was a lot better than going to school. We would give him a ride home every day after work. One day he did not show up until we were almost ready to leave. His mother said that he could not work for us; he had to go to school.

The unique thing about the structures, both at Nimli Punit and Lubaantun,

was that they did not use any mortar. The stone blocks were all carefully cut to fit in place.

## LAMANAI

A very interesting site in Belize where I did rubbings was Lamanai on the western shore of New River Lagoon, the headwaters of New River. David Pendergast had been in charge there since 1974. At the time I was there in 1976, Stan Loten, my architect friend from Ottawa, and Elizabeth Graham (David's wife) were there, making my stay in their camp right on the lagoon all the more enjoyable.

I had left my car with the Mennonites at their home along New River. The Mennonites are as honest as they come—wonderful people. I left everything I did not need with me in my car in one family's front yard. I hired them, at a very small sum, to take me by boat up the beautifully calm New River, where every turn opened up new vistas, new birds, and new vegetation. It was so peaceful.

The most interesting rubbing I did at Lamanai was Stela 9, the upper two-thirds of a tall stela with a figure wearing a high feather headdress. It was in pristine condition, and a joy to do. Sitting in the Pendergasts' screened-in loggia over a glass of rum with such good friends will never be forgotten.

## CARACOL

Arlen and Diane Chase have been the directors of the large, much publicized and filmed site of Caracol for nineteen years. The forty-eight meters high, expansive, two-tiered pyramid construction known as Caana has gained world recognition for its construction methods and the ways it has been modified over time. Arlen was my former Stevenson student who received a full scholarship from the University of Pennsylvania, where he also received his Ph.D. and met his wife Diane. They have the perfect set-up for a camp, and were the first to use



Arlen and Diane Chase with us at Palenque

sun panels for their electricity.

In 1987 the Chases asked me to come and do rubbings of the monuments. There were some so eroded that photography did not reveal any of the carving. They thought that possibly a rubbing might bring out some of the glyphs. Nikolai Grube and I were to be there at the same time, for me to do the rubbings and Nikolai to see if he could interpret any of the glyphs. Working together, this proved very helpful. Ed Kurjack and Rafael Cobos were with me on this enterprise.

## EL PALMAR

Almost at the corner of where Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala come together, is the site El Palmar. Ed Kurjack, who had been doing satellite mapping for NASA thought it a good idea, while we were doing rubbings at various sites in Yucatan and Quintana Roo, to go to El Palmar, where no one had worked since Eric Thompson had been there. The Mexican government was relocating peasants



Ed Kurjack taking photo of El Palmar altar



Photographing the El Palmar altar in Joann's tennis court

from the highly populated Tabasco region to the area around El Palmar. For the safety of the monuments, we thought it wise to record them.

Besides Ed and myself, we had with us Alejandro Martinez from INAH, Karl Taube, Louis Nevar, and Juan Briceño. We started right away hunting for the monuments Thompson had found.

A good part of our time was spent uncovering Altar 1, unrecorded by Thompson. It took all of us digging a ditch about one half meter deep all around the large altar so we could do rubbings of the circumference of glyphs. The fellows rigged up an overhead frame so Ed could hang out on it and take a picture of the altar, looking straight down. We later photographed the rubbing on the wall of the tennis court of Joann Andrews' house in Merida.

One day a convoy of army jeeps was coming through. The last jeep got stuck in the mud and could not get out. Our men helped them. The soldiers were so grateful they were going to pay us, in guess what—a sack full of marijuana. We thanked them, but said no.

## CALAKMUL

In 1982 I took my Carnegie Institution architect friend John Bolles, who had mapped Yaxchilan, Calakmul, and Chichen Itza, to Calakmul and La Muñeca. He had been wanting to get back to La Muñeca for some time, but we hadn't been able to figure out how to get there, until Alfonso Morales found someone who knew where there was a logging road that went in. We had two safaris, a chain



John Bolles, the Carnegie architect, my friend



Ben Bolles, John's grandson

saw with a portable engine, and the nine of us—John, his young wife Gail, Juan Briceño, our guide, his brother, Bill Lende who was funding the expedition, Alfonso and Berto Morales, and Chencho Cruz Guzman. There was no real road at that time going in to Calakmul, just a rut that first went through the tall grasses of the savanna land, then across marshes of water, and that came up to our hubcaps. We were forever cutting huge trees that had fallen across our path. Suddenly, after driving through jungle forever it seemed, John said, "Turn left, fifty more feet, stop." We were there. How John knew, I will never understand, as it had been fifty years since he had been there.

John said it looked the same except for some trees having completely wrapped themselves around monuments. We pitched camp in the ruins and prepared dinner, while John walked all around and I did a rubbing before dark.

Juan Briceño, his brother, and Chencho had risen early, going to find meat for our dinner that day. As I was coming out of my tent, I saw them coming, carrying an ocellated turkey, and two great crested curassows, all endangered species. I was aghast. To them it was just food, but what a pity. They tore the entire back feathers off the ocellated turkey in one large piece, gorgeous iridescent blues, greens, and gold, a two foot long spread. The damage was done, so I wasn't going to leave those magnificent feathers on the ground. I put them in my tent and took them back to Palenque where they lay on the



Chencho with the ocellated turkey

table in the library for two years.

When I moved to San Francisco in 1982, a year after the Volcano El Chichon eruption, I laid them on the top layer in a suitcase, covering them with a towel to protect them. I had forgotten that it was against the law to bring any kind of feathers into the U.S. There had never been any mites or anything else in these perfect feathers, so actually there was no damage done, it was just that they should not have been brought in. I had them sitting on a table in my living room in San Francisco, when a friend asked me how I managed to have them. Not until that moment had it dawned on me. I now have them in a large lucite box hanging on my wall with lighting above. They are as beautiful as the day this proud bird strut-



Cutting our way into Calakmul with a chain saw

ted the forest in them.

The next day we did get John in to La Muñeca. He was the one who discovered this site, and someone had written an article saying that the temple at La Muñeca was built with a true arch. John remembered this temple very well, and he could not believe that it had a true arch and he had to see for himself. We plowed through a muddy road made by a logging truck into the jungle on the way to La Muñeca. Again, John suddenly said, "Stop. Twenty feet ahead is the temple." How he knew, again a mystery. He had a hard time climbing to the top with his cane and bad leg, but he was determined to do it. Sure enough, he was right. The temple had a corbelled vault, not a true arch. He slid down the temple on the seat of his pants, a happy, contented man.

## QUINTANA ROO

Xcaret is a small site next to a rocky *caleta* (inlet) along the coast of eastern Quintana Roo, right at the edge of the sea, on the lagoon of Chacalal. It was probably the ancient Maya port of Pole for embarkation to Cozumel Island. Anthony Andrews, who worked at all of these sites along the coast, counted thirty-eight layers of painted plaster on the lintel of one small temple by the sea. When I was there in 1985, I was able to count nine layers with the naked eye, but in 1987 when I was recording paint and destruction to structures for the National Geographic I was able to find, with my magnifying glass, all of Tony's thirty-eight layers. Colors ranged from a dark brick red to an orange red, and varying shades of blue and yellow.

Tancah is right along there also, but can't be seen from the road. There is one special structure, the Temple of the Processional Figures (Structure 12), a small shrine that butts right up against the road, that has the remains of a beautiful mural on the inner west wall. A group of processional figures march across the wall, one of the figures having a perfect, slender hand with beautifully kept nails holding a blue bowl.

One time when Rocio Gonzalez and I were driving in her jeep to Chetumal, we came upon a huge earth-moving bulldozer already smashing against the structure. Rocio, a small woman in bandana and shorts, jumped out, ran to the machine, and shouted at the driver to *stop*. He jumped down ready to give Rocio a piece of his mind for interfering with



Rocio Gonzalez



Kneeling players on the Copan Ballcourt Marker

the road-widening operation. She pulled out her INAH badge, telling him that if he didn't have that machine away from the Maya structure by the time she returned, he would be out of a job. When we returned, the road was directed around the Maya structure, and it was saved. I am waiting to go back there to see if that lovely small shrine is still there, or if "progress" has intervened.

## COPAN

Copan is nowhere near where I have just been talking about, but I must not forget this great city, to me one of the three most ideal spots where the ancient Maya built their cities—Palenque, Copan, and Chinkultic. All had water, fertile valleys where food could be raised, a location that afforded protection, plentiful forest, plus being aesthetically beautiful in themselves. The first time I was there was in 1953 when I had a group of San Rafael Military cadets with me. A few rubbings were made, but the one we all liked best was Altar Q with all of the Copan rulers

around the sides.

Work was difficult at Copan because most of the stelae are so deeply and intricately carved, almost in the round, that rubbings of most were impossible. The stelae that it was possible to do rubbings of, such as those with hieroglyphic texts, were so covered with a lichen that they were very difficult to work on as the lichen had to be removed. Days of hard labor helped to remove a lot of it. I did rubbings of sixteen of the glyph blocks from the Temple of the Hieroglyphic Steps. The three Ballcourt Markers are the finest rubbings I have done at Copan. It took three days to do them on mulberry paper, they were so delicate—they turned out wonderfully.

## RIO USUMACINTA AFTER DARK

Talking about wonderful people reminds me of the time I was going down the Pasion River from Sayaxche to Yaxchilan with seven of my Stevenson students. It was getting toward dusk and we were at the junction of the Pasion and the Usumacinta. After one more hour in the boat, we pulled up to the bank in pitch darkness and were told to climb the steep hill where a friend lived. When we arrived, the family was asleep, but came to the door, invited us in, made hot chocolate for all of us, gave us their beds, and then they moved out into the corn crib. I couldn't believe it. We were unknown, and certainly uninvited guests. They fixed us a great breakfast before we started on our journey in the morning.

Back at Stevenson, the students were asked to tell about our expedition. The student who was delivering the report did not talk about all of the Maya sites we had been to, or the work they had been helping me do, but told about what had impressed him the most, the time where this family along the jungle river, in the middle of the night, took all of us strangers into their house, fed us, and gave us their beds. He ended by saying that if strangers came to his home in the night, especially forlorn grubby ones like we must have looked, his mother would have shut the door in their faces.



With my Volume I on Palenque

## PALENQUE



I think it is about time I pass up, for now, many other Maya sites where I worked, and go to Palenque. When I first went to Palenque in 1962, there were no paved streets, just a mud rut down the center of town, no street lights, only one hotel (the Le Croix), only one store, Socorro Cordoba's, which sold such basics as salt, eggs brought in on horseback (each egg wrapped and tied in a corn husk), matches, flour, and lard. And there was only one restaurant, a screened-in affair that offered *huevos*, *café*, and *tortillas*.

Palenque was the center of much that happened, and also the headquarters from where so many rubbing, photographic, and acid rain expeditions took off, from 1964 on. By that time, and even before, I knew that my life was going to be devoted to Mesoamerican art wherever my headquarters were to be. The Guatemalan government had offered us a tract of land either on the Rio Pasión or on the small island in Lake Peten, to the east of the Island of Flores, and we considered that for some time, especially the small island. But Bob and I kept coming back to Palenque, we liked it so much, and I felt so at home there.

The decision was made—Palenque. It was in June 1970 that Bob and I decided to buy some property in Palenque and build our house, a retreat, but mainly a working center for Maya projects. We settled on a piece of property between Carlos Morales's house and a room on the other side owned by Moises Morales. As we were having breakfast, we called for Alejandro, who was a builder and owner of the company that supplied all building materials for the area. He was surprised that we could have made up our minds so fast. I drew a floor plan of the layout and the size of the rooms, paid Moises for the property and Alejandro for the material, then took off for Yaxchilan in two days, trusting that everything



Our street in Palenque—Calle Merle Greene

would be carried out as instructed.

Three months later we returned, the long way—Yaxchilan, Altar de Sacrificios, the Petexbatun, Belize City, Chetumal, Merida, and from there by train to Palenque. Pedro and I had to go to the governor of El Peten to get visas to get out of Guatemala, as we had come by way of the Usumacinta River, where no one even looked at our passports, so we were actually in Guatemala illegally. Pedro, bless his heart, fixed this with the governor, so we were all set.

When we arrived at the Belize-Mexico border, that was another story, even if we did have proper visas. They were about ready to close. The official in charge said we had to go back to Belize City and get our passports stamped there. That would have taken two hours over a terrible road, and by that time the customs office would be closed, necessitating our staying overnight in Belize City waiting for the offices to open the next day, and then another two hours back to where we were right then. I pulled a ten dollar bill out of my pocket and told him, "I know this is a lot of extra work for you, and you would like to get home, but I would like to pay for your being so kind as to stay a moment to stamp our passports." Two minutes later, I had all our passports in my hand, *stamped*.

We were across the border, but then the problem was to find someone who would take us and all our equipment, which was a lot, as we were bringing all of our things from Sayaxche. I think that Nick, Kevin, and George sitting on the road look-

ing like they were so worn out they couldn't go another mile, was what prompted one truck driver to take all of this stuff, plus five weary, dirty travelers. Staying overnight in Chetumal meant getting the bus to Merida. Very reluctantly, the driver let us bring all of our gear. He was not a happy driver.

The scenery on the way to Merida was very different from what we had been used to. We passed Maya houses all along the way, always with round corners, whitewashed, and with neatly clipped thatch, not the sprawling thatch of the Peten. They all appeared to be painted a brick red about one meter up, all the way around. Upon looking closer, we could see that they were not painted red. Rain pouring down from the roofs splashed onto the brick-red earth, causing it to spatter evenly up the white walls. Most of the houses had stone fences a meter high that ran right into the front of the house. Many of the houses had wells with a wood cover, which moved by means of a system of poles and ropes. The concave wood cover had a hole in the center that allowed rain to run into the well, but kept evaporation to a minimum.

One village we passed had a cemetery with everything painted blue, another was all painted that sickly Paris green. They were well tended. The Mexicans do revere and look after their dead. From Merida, we took the train to Palenque with all of our equipment.

Our house was already built up as far as the top of the windows. Building methods are quite different than we are used to in the States. Although the plan had the places designated where the electric switches were to be put, in Mexico the cement walls are all finished, and then they go back and hack out the cement to make places for the switches. It is amazing, the way cement ceilings are built. First poles are set upright about two feet apart over the entire floor of a room. Next, boards are nailed to the top of these posts, cement is poured on top, and the poles are left standing until the cement has completely set. Then the poles are taken down, as well as the boards on top of them.

Watching carpenters saw wood seemed backwards. Instead of sawing toward their body, in Mexico they saw away from the body. Seems awkward. When one of the men handed a saw to me to try, my saw cut was so crooked, they burst out laughing.

That Christmas we took my mother to Hawaii for two weeks. She loved it, and so did we—nothing to do but lie on the beach, swim, eat great food, read a good book (for me Evon Vogt's just-published *Zinacantan*), go to the lava fields, and watch native dances. We really wanted to see if our house was finished, so as soon as we returned to Pebble Beach, we booked flights back to Palenque, taking my eight-year-old granddaughter Carolyn with us. The house was almost finished, but not livable—no electricity, no water, doors not hinged—but it was coming along fine. The three of us stayed in a one-room-and-bath unit across the street, with a separate hammock slung for Carolyn and another for our dog Yax Pek, who thought he was human, not dog. He liked everything we liked, especially salad with lettuce and tomatoes.

We made a deal with Alejandro, that if he could have another room built, and *finished* by June 1, we would hire him to do it. Bob Rands and his wife Bar-



Bob and Carolyn arrive in Villahermosa

bara were coming on June 1 to work with me (or me with him), but we had to have a place ready for them.

By the following June, the day the Rands were to arrive, the door hadn't been put on La Selva (the name of the new addition of large bedroom and bath), and the bed frame had not been finished. I was in the room hammering the bed frame together when Moises appeared at the door, dashed in, grabbed the hammer, and finished the bed. He just couldn't take having a woman building something. I was used to using a hammer, still am, couldn't keep house without a hammer, saw, screwdrivers, and an electric drill.

Now, Bob was talented in so many ways—keeping our books, hiring employees, taking care of all the correspondence (both his and mine), dealing with newspaper people, and cooking (he took up cooking as his new hobby when he retired to Palenque). Having been headmaster of a prep school, and then dean at Stevenson for so long, he was an expert at dealing with people. When I would be working in the library on *The Sculpture of Palenque* all day, and visitors would come to the door, he could size them up immediately. If he liked them, he would invite them for cocktails at 5:00 p.m. If he didn't, he just dismissed them. But hammer a nail, fix a light bulb—those were not his talents.

I worked at Palenque, however, long before we built our house there, and before I had married Bob in December of 1966. I started working there with Robert (Bob) Rands, illustrating Palenque ceramics and doing rubbings of the sculpture in June, 1965.

On June 9th, 1965, I was in Mexico City, and had just received my *permiso* to do the Palenque rubbings, including the Sarcophagus Lid and Tomb. In a letter

to my mother, I wrote, "I am sure I could get into China easier than getting to do rubbings in Mexico. I have enough certified and stamped letters and documents with ribbons to fill a showcase, even those from the attorney and the United States Embassy, but I finally have the 'YES.' I don't need to worry about anyone else doing rubbings in Mexico, as nobody would go through all this, or even know how."

The years I worked on rubbings at Palenque produced some of the finest ones I did anyplace. The fine detailed sculpture reproduced excellent rubbings. Hundreds of the Palenque rubbings, as well as those from other sites have been have been used by many archaeologist and other scholars to illustrate their books. I was able to make excellent rubbings of all of the large Sanctuary Tablets, as well as the The Tablet of 96 Glyphs.

There were just the three of us, Bob Rands, Ed Sisson, and I at the ruins working. The first thing I started on was the Sarcophagus Lid, down in the crypt of the Temple of the Inscriptions. A rubbing had never been done before, and for that matter, it had never been photographed straight on, only at an angle, by Alberto Ruz. When Bob Rands saw my rubbing, he said that it was the first time he actually could see what it looked like. I worked locked in, with only a lantern to see by. It was quite a trick getting myself on top of the lid. As my sheets of rice paper were large (1 x 2 meters), it took seven sheets to do the rubbing. Also, I had to use oil paint instead of sumi ink, there being no way I could work on so much space and keep an inked area from running into the sheet of paper next to it. This made it a tremendous amount of work doing the rubbing, but gave me the opportunity to intensify shading and bring out the contour of the figure, which would not have been possible if I had used sumi ink. After two weeks of working on the Sarcophagus rubbing, doing parts of it over several times, I felt that Pacal was not only my friend, but a long lost relative.

While Rands and Ed were at the ruins, I got up every morning at 5:00 and Ed picked me up in the truck at 5:30, too early for any breakfast in town. At the *campamento* where we worked, we dined on bananas, coke, and coffee. While I worked in the tomb, I had to limit myself to one cup, as there was no way I



Bob becomes an expert at baking bread



Bob Rands sorts his potsherds

could get out if necessary, being locked in. The day I finished the Sarcophagus Lid was the day Bob and Ed were going to go to Agua Clara for two weeks, so I was by myself at the ruins all the time they were gone

A group of zoologists from the University of Kansas set up camp right in front of the *campamento*. They were making a study of the parasites carried by monkeys, bats, deer, and snakes. They would go out at night with their bright flashlights hunting for the monkeys, shoot them, and bring them back to hang on a line strung across our yard. I had learned to love these mimicking creatures, and did not like seeing these merry, scolding friends, hanging, lost of life,

before me every time I walked out the door.

When Bob and Ed left me on my own, they took with them our Coleman stove, our tea kettle, and our one pot. They also took the keys to the truck. I had a whole shank of bananas, twenty-four bottles of coke, and crackers that had to last until they returned. We had no water. The river was so low, there was none to drink, and we had no rain.

The zoologists had a watermelon. They shared it with me, as we sat talking under the same trees where the monkeys were hung like clothes drying on the line. They also had some water, and best of all—coffee. They shared that with me also.

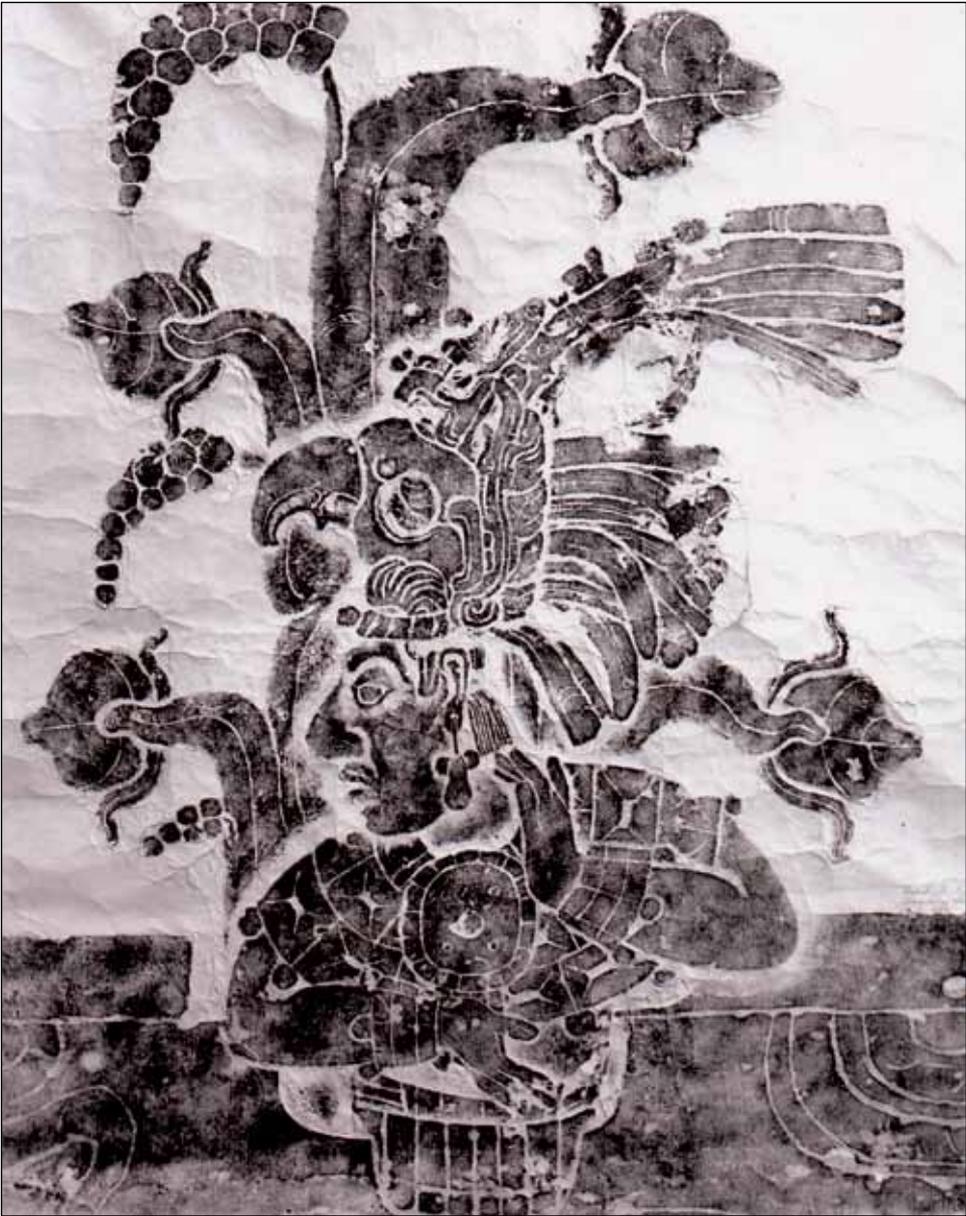
Mario Leon, the new *jefe* of the ruins, and his bride Amalea moved to a little house on the river across from the *campamento*. They took pity on me living on bananas, so would have me over for pancakes and brought coffee to me quite often.

By the time Bob and Ed had returned, I was ready to do the rubbings of the glyphs around the edge of the Sarcophagus Lid and the figures on the sides of the sarcophagus. Standing in the water on the floor of the tomb, trying to do the rubbings and not get the paper wet was no small feat, especially since the space between the walls of the crypt and the sarcophagus was barely wide enough for me to stand. All of the rubbing equipment had to be kept on top of the sarcophagus, making it difficult to reach when standing on the floor.

Inch by inch, as the different features of the ancestors of Pacal appeared, it was as though I was speaking with these dead kings—I now knew them, could



Sarcophagus Cover



Rubbing of the side of Pacal's Sarcophagus

call them a name. Being alone in the tomb was like being in their world long ago. I kept thinking of what it must have been like to have lived at Palenque in its heyday. I wondered how they managed to find or train so many good artists and draftsmen who designed, built, and sculpted temples such as this, accurately modeled human figures, and did vivid mural paintings on the walls that had been carefully designed before being painted. They were not artisans who had learned a trade, but artists who dressed their figures from the skin out, adding

each piece of clothing as they would have dressed themselves, then putting the next garment on top of the first. They must have had teachers who taught them, and made sure that everything they did was correct. I have often thought how true Longfellow stated it in "The Builders":

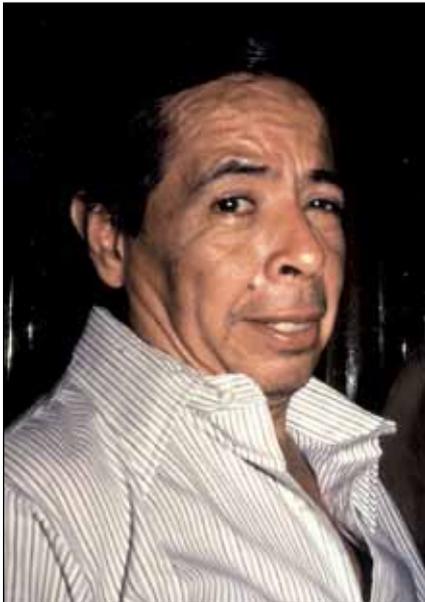
*In the elder days of Art  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part,  
For the gods see everywhere.*

## MOISES MORALES

Palenque was also the people—those who lived there when I arrived. The Morales family took over the entire La Cañada—Moises and Alicia with their eleven children, and Moises' brother Carlos and his wife, Socorro, with their ten offspring. I was the only outsider, but soon became part of that large extended family—cousins, uncles, and grandparents. Although Bob Rands, Ed, and I spent all of our time at the ruins, I rented one of Moises's rooms where I slept. Carlos fed us in his little one-table restaurant. We never knew what dinner would include, but it was always something good, whatever the family was having each night, I was sure.

Those first years I was at Palenque, Moises told me some incredible stories; how true some of them are, I have no way of knowing, except that I know the first two are true, and part of the third is true, because I was there when this fellow was acting crazy on horseback in front of Mario's house.

Story #1: In the fall of 1968, two former *chicleros* from the vicinity of



Moises Morales

Palenque went to Chinikiha and stole a glyptic panel and the upper portion of a stela with a figure. They were seen by two men, so they became frightened. One of the thieves told Moises what he had done, and was worried about what would happen to him when found out. Moises told him that if he would do as he told him, he would do what he could to help him. He advised him to get the wall panel and the large stela part, and they (he and Moises) would take them to the city hall. First, Moises would see if the *presidente* would forgive this fellow if he returned the pieces.

The mayor agreed to help get the pieces back, but he still wanted to know who the men were, and he still wanted to put them in prison. Moises told the mayor that he would not tell who the men were.

As the mayor said they would be put in jail anyway, Moises told him it would all have to be done very quietly, put the pieces in the mayor's car, bring it to the city hall, then tell the officials that the Palenque police discovered someone stealing the sculpture, tried to capture them, but they got away.

One of the pieces was in this fellow's truck, and the other was in his accomplices's house that was surrounded by police. This man convinced his neighbor to help, by piling loads of brush on a table that had the stela taped under it, and moving it next door. From there it was taken to the city hall. Moises never did tell who the looters were. I did a rubbing of both pieces in the city hall a few days later.

Story #2: A few days later the police picked up Moises and took him to jail. They asked him, "Do you have anything to say?" Moises replied, "I have noth-



Morales Family, 1964. Standing (from left): Kiki, Berto, Alicia, Moises, Alfonso, Chato  
Seated: Aidee, Aracely, Adriana, Anabel, Amalia, Alicia Chica with baby Alhena



The stolen Chinikiha panel

ing to say." Next question: "Don't you want to know what your crime is?" Answer: "No." This went on for some time, with the police getting more angry all the time. Finally Moises was taken by plane to Tuxtla and put in the terrible state prison. When he left Palenque, he would not get an attorney or anyone to help him. He told me, "Why should I defend myself, when I have done nothing to defend?"

There were 150 other prisoners in the prison, for crimes ranging from murder to stealing a few chickens. As no food was served, a congressman friend of Moises sent large amounts of food every day that Moises shared with the other seven prisoners in his cell.

This prison was known for its filth and paid murders within its walls. Moises became very good friends with Anide, known as "The Tiger of Chiapas," a young man, a murderer who would be fifty-four years old when released. He had terrible scars all over his body, one eye out, and one scar that ran from his nose over his forehead, indented to the bone. This all happened in the prison when he was first there and got into a terrible fight with another inmate who rammed an iron rod through his stomach and out his back, and ran a pipe through his eye, nearly killing him. He survived. He became the leader, the ruler of the prison. He made the inmates make a decent latrine, scour the walls and floors daily, build benches and tables, and insisted the killing of each other stop.

They knew they had to obey him or be killed.

When the judge released Moises from prison, he asked him if he had stolen the goods. Moises answered, "No." He also asked him if he could steal something such as this. His answer was, "I suppose that I could if I knew for certain I would never be caught, but I am a coward, and I am afraid, and do not like to go to prison." The judge said, "You are an honest man." The reply was, "No, I am not." Then the judge said, "Yes, to admit that is an honest man."

Moises finally convinced the Board of Governors to reduce Anide's sentence to ten years because he had done so much for the prison, but he died just a few years after this event. This story is part of a much longer account of this affair taken from my notebook that I wrote while Moises was telling it to me.

Story #3: I happened to be at the ruins one day by Mario Leon's house when a real nut, Harry Tangy, came in bathing trunks and a large sombrero, cavorting around on a horse, acting crazy in front of Mario's, riding up his steps and then into his house and out several times. It seems as though Mario could do nothing about it, as he had been told Harry was some big shot, and was to have free run of the ruins. As it was a Sunday, there were a lot of Mexican families having a picnic on the grass in this area, so it was embarrassing for Mario. Harry had his girlfriend Juliete Echaney with him. They also had permission to do a rubbing. I have no idea who gave them that permission, but I was very concerned when they put up a piece of cloth and ran a crayon back and forth over it. I was sure they were going to mar the stone.

Now Moises told me what happened next. Some time before this, Moises had been accused of stealing artifacts, which he did not do, but Harry and Juliete knew about it.

They came into the restaurant and introduced themselves to Moises, telling him they could cause him a lot of trouble. They told Moises that they were in the business of buying and selling artifacts, and that Moises had better not hinder them. They said they were going to Bonampak, pulled out a wad of bills (\$1,000.00 US) and told Moises they were his if he cooperated. He let them know that he wasn't interested in helping them. Harry said they were going to the Palenque Hotel, and Moises had better come along because they wanted to show him something. Then, at the hotel Harry carried out a sales transaction right in front of everyone. He was, in this way, framing Moises.

The next day a warrant came for Moises and Carlos, so they went to Mexico City to their attorney. A call came in for them to come to the home of Juliete and Harry, and to bring the attorney. Their house was a palace, three stories full of beautiful artifacts, stelaes, pottery, and much more. Juliete's husband, who had died, left one third of the property to her and one third to each of two daughters. When Harry came into the picture, it looked like he was going to make off with most of the property. One night the two son-in-laws attacked Harry and almost killed him. He had to be flown by private plane to Chicago. At the time of the telling of this story, he was still in critical condition in the hospital.

Story #4: It seems that a woman who was a friend of Moises insisted that she had a jaguar partner, a real jaguar, who loved her very much, and she loved him. She would visit him in the forest every day near Palenque. One day he dis-

appeared, which made her very sad. She told Moises that he was hurt, and she had to find him. Every night she would go into the jungle calling him. One day she did not come back, so Moises went hunting for her. He hunted for her for several days. He finally found her, dead, with her arms around a jaguar. Well, that is his story.

While I am telling about Moises, I should not forget about his falling for every pretty girl that came to Palenque, especially if she was French. This was no secret. He told his wife Alicia that was how he was, and she would just have to accept it. What could Alicia do with eleven children to raise? Nothing.

For all Moises's shortcomings and the crazy things he did, he was the one who was always there if needed, if you were sick, needed a doctor, needed medicine, something fixed. He would come any time of day or night to help.

One thing Palenque, but especially La Cañada, was noted for, was a party. Any excuse for a party was fine—regular holidays like Christmas and Easter were just a beginning—anybody's birthday, any saint's birthday, new baby, new dog, new car, new dress, letter from a long lost friend, but especially if someone was coming to visit, or just popped in unannounced. Neighborhood barbecues were the thing for Sunday. Always thin barbecued beef between tortillas with lots of salsa, beer, tequila (although not for me), and rum and coke (*Cuba Libre*) for me. If it was a festive affair, there would be a marimba, if not guitars. There was no age limit. Everybody came. No parties where children were barred. It didn't really matter if one had an invitation to a party. If you knew the person, you just came; if you didn't, you came with someone who did. If the invitation said dinner at 6:00, we wouldn't expect anyone until seven or eight, or nine.

One such impromptu party took place when we had to move a telephone pole and put a new tree in our front yard. This took all the male members of La Cañada to move the pole, as well as to plant the tree—so of course there was a party, this time the fellows all in dirty clothes.

David Morales, cousin of Alfonso, was the artist at Palenque who modeled the large Maya head in white cement at the junction of the road that goes into the town of Palenque and the route to the ruins. Alfonso and Chato (Alfonso's brother) had a hand in this piece also. Today it serves as the locator for tourists arriving in an unknown place.

## DR. SHIELDS

We met Dr. Karena Shields, a doctor of tropical medicine and an anthropologist at the University of San Diego. Her father at one time owned all of the land that is now the Palenque archaeological zone. She has a ranch in a valley where she flies partway to, and then for an hour has to ride horseback to get to her *ranchito*.

She told us about a trip she took in 1943, walking a Maya road from Yaxchilan to Ciudad Antigua, Nicaragua, following a certain type marker, the same as the one we saw in Yaxchilan. The "marker" was a stone disk about twenty inches high and the same in diameter, with a hole drilled through the center. She said these markers were set about twenty miles apart all the way to Nicaragua. My student George Wing was interested in what she had to say, and felt con-

vinced she knew what she was talking about, although no archaeologists were. Dr. Shields was interested in finding a young archaeologist who would like to follow the same trail that she did thirty years ago, and was not having much luck finding anyone willing to try that long trail, if there was such a trail. She was hoping to convince George that he should go. But George had getting into college to think about.

## PALENQUE LIFE

So much went on at Palenque, especially after we had our house Na Chan-Bahlum. From the beginning Chencho Cruz Guzman was my right-hand man on everything I worked on at Palenque. When recording the sculpture on the roofcomb of the Temple of the Sun, he would hold a ladder that I would be standing on, leaning as far back as possible in order to see what I was doing. I was not afraid, as I always knew that he would not let me fall.

Na Chan-Bahlum became the meeting place for every archaeologist working in Chiapas, the Yucatan Peninsula, and Belize, as well as a multitude of guests from around the world, some staying just a few hours, and others several days or a week or two. One of these visitors was the famous ethno-mycologist Gordon Wasson, author of *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality* and *Maria Sabina and Her Mazatec Mushroom Velada*, who came to interview me on my research on Usumacinta hallucinogenic mushrooms that involved a Lacandon Indian ceremony. Wasson questioned my findings, and had gone with a guide on



Chencho

a half-hour stay to Lacanha to ask them about the ritual I had described. Of course they wouldn't tell him a thing, coming in like that, unknown, in a plane, with a local guide. Wasson, his wife, my Bob, Bob Rands, and I did have a very pleasant two evenings visiting with him over cocktails on the porch of Na Chan-Bahlum.

Eric Talladoire and his wife from the Sorbonne, Paris, always stopped on their way to Tonina. I spent some time making rubbings of the material at Tonina

while he was there, as I also did at the time Claude Baudez, also from Paris, was working there. Then there was Annagrette Hohmann from Graz, Beatriz de la Fuente from Mexico City (the first art historian to work at Palenque), Paul Gendrop from Mexico City, and David Kelly and Karen Bassie-Sweet from Calgary. Karen also played a definite part in the Palenque Round Tables. Ursula Jones and Andrew Weeks came from London often, as did Hans-Jurgen Kramer from Germany.

Let me not forget George Stuart, who hung around Palenque so many times I cannot even remember, or the summer David and his mother Gene spent with us. Gene was writing about polar bears in the sultry heat of Palenque, while David was struggling with hieroglyphs in our library, as Linda would yell at him, "You just go and figure it out."

I so well remember the time in Mexico City when a famous old book store was going out of business, and George, a book fanatic like me, David, and myself, all in white shirts and pants, sitting on that filthy dirty floor picking out books, all covered with soot.

Linda Schele, then an art teacher at the University of Alabama, was driving through Mexico with her husband David and a student of hers, taking photographs of the Mexican ruins for the school archives. When she arrived at Palenque, she was mesmerized, as I had been before. The morning they left for Uxmal, we said goodbye, and hoped to see each other again. At five o'clock, guess who appeared at the door? Linda. They had been to Uxmal, but turned around and returned to Palenque. This was the beginning of a long, very dear friendship between the two of us. She eventually built a small room behind our place, but she never had a chance to use it, as there was always someone else occupying it, so she lived with Bob and me all the times she was at Palenque. She helped me a lot with the photography, as did John Bowles, Alfonso Morales, Malcolm Cleary (Bob's track star at Stevenson), and Gillett Griffin from Princeton.

The best part for Linda and me was the companionship, sharing ideas, and just having fun, coming up with all of the answers to Palenque's enigmatic questions one day, and changing our views the next. Linda and I agreed on almost everything, but when we didn't, we agreed to disagree. We would have lengthy late night conversations on the phone, never before 11:00 a.m. with Linda, but midnight was fine. There was



Linda Schele



Photographing at night



My photography crew:  
John Bowles, Merle, Alfonso Morales, Bob, Linda



Photographing the House A piers

also the “Crazies” letters, bits and pieces of new or questionable information between Linda, Floyd Lounsbury, Mike Coe, Betty Benson, Dave Kelly, and me. I still have a lot of them.

A lot of crazy things went on at Palenque that were often fun too. For instance, the summer that Peter Mathews was living with us at Na Chan-Bahlum, every morning before breakfast, and I do mean every morning, Bob and Peter played a crazy card game that was next to impossible to win. They had a book, in which, day after day, they recorded their scores. Neither one ever won. They had been egging me on, trying to get me to play, but I wouldn’t play their stupid game. Finally they said, “Just once, and we will leave you alone.” So I said,



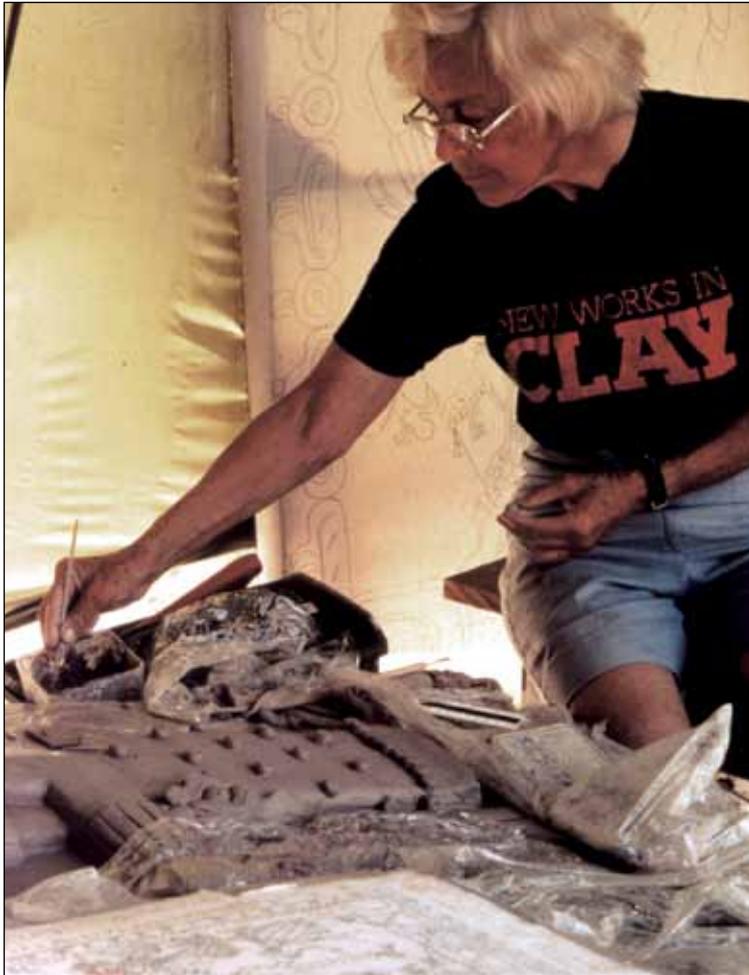
Wiggie and David Andrews, ages 6 and 4, helping on their first archaeological assignment, the Florida Project

“Okay, once only.” I played. I won. Were they ever mad, said it was just a coincidence. It could never happen again, and to be fair I had to play one more game. Okay, I played one more game. I won. I laughed. They didn’t think it was a laughing matter. They were furious, wouldn’t even speak to me all day. Added note—they never asked me to play again either.

## THE FLORIDA PROJECT

Besides doing rubbings, illustrating ceramics, and photographing everything at Palenque, I managed to do some painting also, as well as the Florida Project under the National Endowment for the Arts. Replicas were made, seven-eighths in size, first in clay and then into molds, of two piers of the Palace, the Bicephalic Room of House E, and a Medallion from House C. Mark Turner and Peter Mokler were a big help doing this, working in little *casitas* built in front of each pier. The Florida State Museum sent two helpers who were used to working with the dangerous material needed in making the molds. Much of this part had to be done before eight o’clock in the morning, before the heat set in. As we didn’t have time for breakfast, we had an orange squeezer and drank orange juice continually. We bought oranges by the barrel. These replicas were then placed in large mahogany cases and shipped to Gainesville and installed in the museum there. I painted three six-foot-tall paintings, showing what Palenque would have looked like in its heyday.

As Wiggie and David Andrews, age six and four, were with us, I put them to work on their first archaeological project, cutting gauze and painting varnish on the molds. Their mother Joann was laid up at our place because of terrible burns



Making a replica of a pier for the Florida State Museum

from a boiling radiator in her car. A happy Easter was had with Modesta fixing the turkey true Yucatecan style.

The two reconstruction paintings, "Ancient Trade at Palenque" and "The Temple of the Sun," look small on the printed page, but they are each actually six feet tall, as is a third companion to these, "Maya Family Life," which is in David Greene's home in Victoria. These paintings were done for the Florida State Museum in Gainesville in 1976, and resided there for twenty-five years along with the replicas that I did of the Palenque piers, the Bicephalic Room, and a medalion from House C. I did these paintings while living at Palenque, working all day on them, and then at nightfall all of the archaeologists who happened to be there at the time joined in on the critique session. I remember one instance when Bob Rands said, "Merle, you can't have that pot you have in the lower right corner because it had not been found yet." And so it went every night. These two now reside in my apartment.



My reconstruction painting of the Temple of the Sun



## MESAS REDONDAS DE PALENQUE



1973 was the turning point in Maya studies, especially in epigraphy. The summer of 1973, David Joralemon, Mayanist from New York, Linda Schele, Gillett Griffin, Bob, and I were sitting on our back patio of Na Chan-Bahlum having a rum and coke.

As all of us were so interested in the art and iconography of Palenque, we thought it would be great if we could get a group of scholars together who were also interested in the art of Palenque. We sent letters to a group of people who we thought might like to come, telling them of our plans.

When Bob and I returned to Pebble Beach and were just opening our door, the telephone was ringing. It was Mike Coe. He said, "Merle, let's have the conference this December." It was then September. I wrote letters to everyone we had first sent letters to, telling them of the immediate plans for a Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque from December 14-22, 1973. That was not much notice, especially as they were all asked to have a paper ready to give at the conference on the art, architecture, or iconography of Palenque.

The enthusiasm grew by leaps and bounds. There was no conference fee. Everyone made their own reservation for a room, paid their own airfare, and paid for all of their meals. Surprisingly this first conference was represented by fourteen universities in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The meetings were held in our house, Na Chan-Bahlum. We bought meters of black cloth (all there was in town) to cover the windows. People sat on our beds, chairs, and the floor. The coffee pot was always on, and everyone helped themselves.

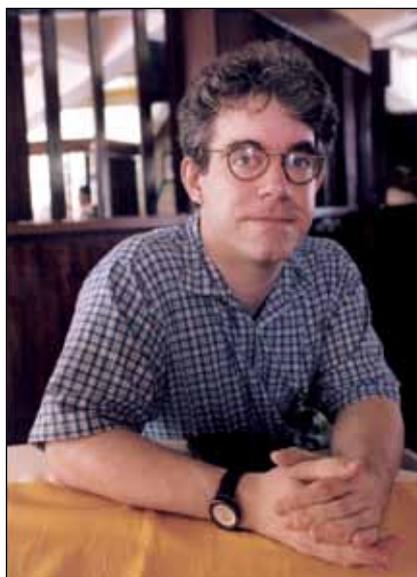
The topics ranged through art, history, chronology, iconography, early explorers, inscriptions, sacrifice, trade, and the surrounding area. Word soon got around about the event taking place in Palenque. All of the Palenque guides came. Soon we had students coming from the universities in Mexico City, Villahermosa, Campeche, Merida, Tuxtla, and the University of the Americas. After



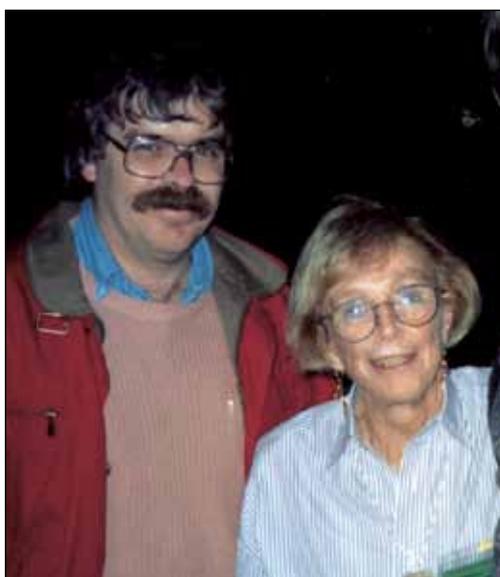
The Mesa Redonda at Na Chan-Bahlum



The First Mesa Redonda held in our house, 1973



David Stuart



Peter Mathews and Merle

the first day we had to move the meetings to the open-air champa of Carlos Morales.

The highlight of the conference was the discovery of the names of the rulers of Palenque by Floyd Lounsbury, Linda Schele, and Peter Mathews. At the suggestion of Fray Facundo Ramirez from the Mision Franciscane, Tumbala, they were given Ch'ol names, as that was the language spoken here. This was the beginning of concentrated study of Maya epigraphy. It immediately became the "talk around the Pre-Columbian world." Everyone became suddenly interested in reading the glyphs. Scholars such as David Stuart and Peter Mathews, both recipients of MacArthur Genius Awards, Victoria Bricker, Simon Martin, Nikolai Grube, Stephen Houston, Bill Ringle, and Martha Macri have been spending most of their time working on deciphering hieroglyphs. By leaps and bound this has accelerated, now being the number one Maya topic of interest world-wide.

The average attendance at the first meeting was fifty persons, but there were 104 the day that Dr. Manuel Velasco Saurez, a neurosurgeon and the governor of Chiapas, attended. The governor became a very good friend of Bob's and mine. He often came to our house to relax, and get away from all of the demands put upon him every time he appeared at Palenque.

So successful was that conference, and so excited was everyone about actually knowing the name of their most illustrious ancestor, Pacal, that the small village by the railroad station changed its name to Pacal Na.

Most of the attendees stayed over Christmas. Mike and Sophie Coe's kids slept in hammocks in our open-air upstairs, as did Don and Martha Robertson's two, Fred and Becky. The kids had a ball decorating our tree, each one wanting to do it his own way.

A lot of crazy things happened during the Mesas Redondas (Palenque Round Table Conferences). Before I go into the conferences, there is a very funny story

about our “car wash” that happened at the First Mesa Redonda de Palenque. Floyd Lounsbury, Linda Schele, Peter Mathews, and Jeffrey Miller were at the ruins. Betty Benson and I were sitting at the kitchen table working on plans for events that were to take place.

There was a “not very bright” Indian who was not a guard but just hung out at the ruins all the time. He was constantly bringing some little figurine to show me, trying to get me to buy it, which of course I never did. This day he just wanted me to give him a job. Betty and I were busy and didn’t want him pestering us, so I gave him a bucket of water and some soap and a rag and told him to wash our jeep. He kept coming in the house to get more water out of the sink, but always stooping way over. We couldn’t see what he was doing, but didn’t pay much attention to him as long as he left us alone. When we looked out the door to see what was taking him so long, he was standing by the car waving a dry rag at the jeep and lifting the bucket up and drinking from it. That was strange. What he had been doing every time he came in for water, was not getting water, but was putting rum in the bucket instead (we kept the rum below the sink). End of Car Wash!

Everyone voted for a second conference the next year at the same time, December 14-21, 1974. The meetings were held in the upper *champa* of Carlos’s Restaurante La Cañada, at the end of the block where our house was located. The Conference was formally opened, however, by Gobernador Dr. Manuel Velasco Saurez, in the Palenque Municipal Auditorium and Museum on the *zocolo*.

Dr. Velasco Saurez was in the office of the mayor, Sr. Esteban Corzo Blanco, receiving dozens upon dozens of petitioners who had a multitude of things they wanted him to do, or provide for their *cooperativa*. Knowing that he would never be able to get out of there by himself to come to the auditorium to open the Mesa Redonda, he instructed me to come to the mayor’s office and barge right through the room filled with men to where he was standing. Seeing me, he would take my hand, and out we would go. A man could not do this because the men in the room would not have let a man barge through them like I was told to do.

Governor Saurez had ordered a bronze plaque to be installed at the entrance of the municipal building and auditorium, the essence of which said that Pacal the Great, ancient ruler of this region, had been protector of the land and its agriculture and was expecting the people now living in this region to also protect their land and their fields as their ancestor had.

Another highlight of this second conference was the attendance of Dr. Alberto Lhuillier Ruz, famous for his discovery of the Tomb of the Temple of the Inscriptions that has the Sarcophagus of Pacal the Great, the most famous king of Palenque, who was born in AD 603, ruled Palenque from 613 to 683, the date of his death.

I had become a friend of Ruz’s from the time I was staying with Bob Rands in Mexico City illustrating thousand of potsherds and figurines from Palenque. Ruz would come over quite often to see Bob, who was a good friend of his. We would sit around the tin table in the kitchen discussing Palenque all evening. I was mostly listening, learning a lot.

Dra. Beatriz de la Fuente, my friend, who has the distinction of being the

first woman to work at Palenque, was also at the Second Mesa Redonda, and continued coming for every one of the Mesas Redondas after that. She became a very good friend of mine. Later she became Directora del Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas, UNAM, and the author of many books on the Olmec, the Huastec, the Maya, and the mural painting of Mexico.

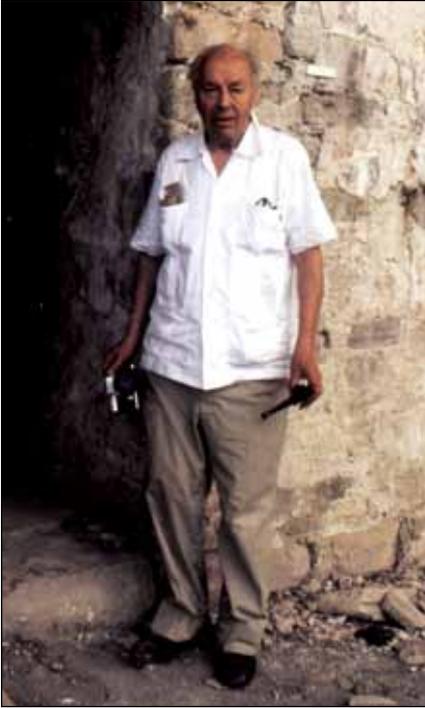
June now seemed to be the time most people preferred to have the conference, so the Third Mesa Redonda de Palenque was held from June 11-18, 1978, with the new governor of Chiapas, Solomon Gonzalez Blanco, opening the ceremonies. By this time, all of Palenque wanted to be in on the Mesa Redonda ceremonies, so the Inaugural was held in the large Cattleman's Hall. Children from Palenque marched in carrying flags from all fourteen countries attending—Mexico, United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, Canada, England, Australia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Algeria. Three embassies from Mexico were represented—the United States Embassy, the Canadian Embassy, and the Algerian Embassy. It was indeed very impressive. It seemed that all of Palenque was there.

Besides the regular sessions, Kathryn Josserand and Nicholas Hopkins hosted a session every afternoon for the citizens of Palenque, which was most appreciated by all of Palenque. They did this for every Mesa Redonda after this, it was so successful.

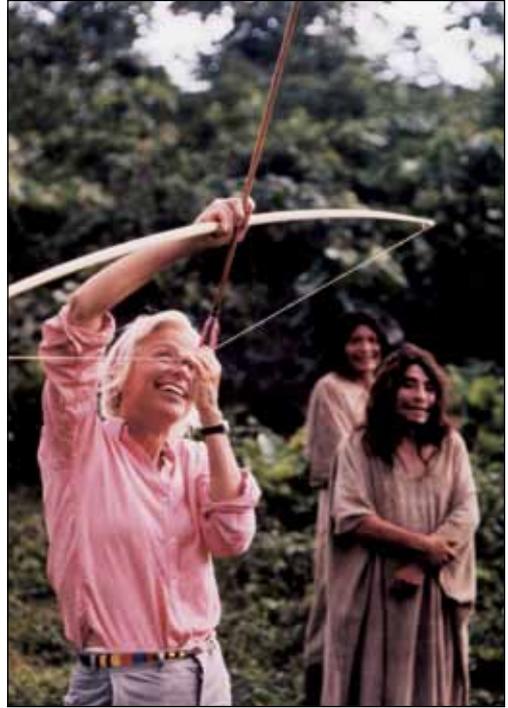
Giles Healey, who is famous for his discovery of the Bonampak murals, was guest of honor, coming from Bignor, England for the event. One day we sent five planeloads of participants to Bonampak with Giles. He had not been there since 1946, and was so happy to set foot there again. He said to me, as we were sitting on the bench in the first room, "Now I am happy. I could die right now." That statement was almost too true. He had invited Bob and me to visit him and his wife Sheila in their lovely old stone home in Bignor the next summer. I had known Giles for a long time, and had happy memories when at their home at Big Sur, California, where their twin daughters' huge white rabbit would greet us at the door. Giles had a great library and was always loaning his books to me.

Just before he returned to England he had loaned me the Maudslay volumes. He said to me at the time, "Merle, take all the Carnegie volumes also while you are here." I replied that I would rather just borrow the one I needed, return it, and then borrow the next one. I should have taken him up on it, because he let some "hippies" stay in his house while he was gone, who threw rubber inner tubes into the fireplace, burning the whole place to the ground, including his entire library.

Bob and I did visit the Healeys in England in September 1979. He took us to all of the Roman ruins in southern England where we had never been. One evening Giles and I were sitting by the immense fireplace in the living room, when he said he wanted to tell me the whole story of the discovery of the Bonampak murals, as there had been so many stories floating around. He wanted it written down. For one thing, he said he didn't discover the ruins, a jaguar did. He was stamping through the forest with his guide to whom he had given guns. A large jaguar came into sight, so that was all they were interested in. The jaguar dashed through some underbrush, with Giles and his guide tearing after him.



Giles Healey



Trying out the Lacandons' bow at Bonampak



By the Bonampak Stela 1 rubbing

The jaguar got away, but they were in an opening in the forest that happened to be the entrance to Room 1 of the Bonampak murals building. I wrote down everything Giles told me about his Bonampak discovery. Giles died five months later, on February 29th, 1980. Mary Miller has done extensive recording of the Bonampak murals.

Right after speaking at the Third Mesa Redonda, Dennis Puleston, a brilliant scholar at the peak of his career, was struck by lightning at the top of the steps of the Castillo, Chichen Itza. His two small children, who had accompanied him to Palenque and on to Chichen, were standing under the overhang at the entrance to the north side of the Castillo. They were not hit but were witness to this tragedy. Dennis was on the Tikal Project when I was there; his room along the aguada was right next to mine.

The Fourth Mesa Redonda took place two years later, in June, 1980, with the Inaugural Opening again in the Cattlemen's Association Auditorium with all the "pomp and circumstance" of a medieval pageant, so beautifully programmed by the citizens of Palenque, who worked all year preparing for this event. Socorro Cordoba de Martinez, Amalia Huerta, and Ofelia Morales de Sanchez were the driving force behind all of the festivities for not only this conference, but all those that were to follow. By this time, our Palenque conferences had become recognized worldwide as the most important Mesoamerican conference in the world. The list of participants and attendees looked like a "Who's Who" roster.

Not only Palenque was being discussed, but all other areas of Mesoamerican archaeology. The entire contingent from Belize came—Archaeology Commissioner Harriot Topsey, and the whole crew from Arlen and Diane Chase's Caracol project. Papers on Tikal, Bonampak, Cacaxtla, Uxmal, Copan, Lagartero, Tayasal, and Piedras Negras were given, plus others with historical significance, linguistics, and the codices.

Don Robertson's essay on Cacaxtla took a non-traditional approach to mural painting and showed how Maya artists introduced human beings in the Late Classic. Don, who became my mentor, was the most knowledgeable art historian I have ever known. Both he and Martha were forever looking after students as well as the underdog, or anyone being treated unfairly. Most of the time while he and Martha were living, I stayed at their home when in New Orleans. It seemed as though every evening it was overflowing with students. It is a wonder so many people could get in their small house, as it was so cluttered with piles of books and everything else, there wasn't much walking space.

When Don and Martha had a party, undergraduates and professors were both invited and treated alike—no difference. He really listened to his students, and believe me, they hung on to every word he said. If I was writing a paper, I would ask advice from Don. He would spend hours going into depth about my topic. One thing in particular I remember; he was always telling me, "Merle, get rid of the which's." I think I had better go through this entire treatise!

A set of huge dictionaries, along with magnifying glasses, were on the cabinet by the kitchen table where they ate most of the time. Any word that was discussed with differences of opinion as to its meaning, out would come the dictionary, right in the middle of the meal.

They always made me feel that I was part of the family. I was accepted in Tulane Graduate School to study under Don, but then I married Bob, and as he was headmaster of a private prep school in California, I thought I should stay there. Don died very suddenly in October, 1984. I designed his remembrance card and went back for the funeral to be with Martha. This was a great loss to future students at Tulane. Then when Martha died in 1992 that was another blow to Tulane.

Hal Ball died the same year as Don. Hal was a retired Pan American pilot who had his own plane, "Le Quetzal," and spent his time carting archaeologists all over to their remote "digs." He and Alberta came to many of the Round Table conferences, but came other times just to visit us. Hal would fly his plane low over our house, Na Chan-Bahlum, and circle it a couple of times. I would hear the plane, and knowing it was Hal, would jump in our jeep, and tear out to the airport to pick them up.

The topic of conversation of the Fifth conference in 1983 was the eruption of the volcano El Chichon that first happened on Palm Sunday, March 28, 1982. Bob had just died the year before, and I was all alone at the time. As there is a lot to tell about both of these disasters, I will be going into them later.

The Sixth Mesa Redonda, held in 1986 had 285 registrants, now the largest Mesoamerican conference in the world. This was an especially good conference, due in great part to the work organizing sessions all year by Don and Lois Benke. Lois's son Tim McGill worked with me two years at Chichen Itza on the rubbings of the Great Ballcourt and the Lower Temple of the Jaguars. He was a great help, especially on the scaffolding in the Temple of the Jaguars.

This was also the year that my granddaughter Anne was the Financial Director, a thankless job, as the peso rate kept changing every day. One day she was in the bank getting money, and the clerk gave her too much. Anne insisted her calculations were correct. The clerk insisted she was right. All this time there was



Anne was Finance Chief at the Mesa Redonda

a long line of people waiting to receive or deposit money behind her, and they were all hollering. Finally the clerk went all the way through the tape and the result was that Anne was right. During all of this commotion, the manager of the bank came over and found out what was going on. Every time after that when Anne went into the bank, the manager beckoned her to come to his window and not to wait in line. Who ever heard of anyone in Mexico not keeping the money.

My grandson Jim Metzler was there also, then a high school student. He was one of the bus drivers for the Mesa Redonda. A college student said to him one day, "How did you get this job?" Jim answered, "Merle is my grandmother." So much for privilege! Blair, my other granddaughter was there also, in the capacity of tending the "tea table" and sales of books.

This also was the year that the Usumacinta River hydroelectric dam project was in the headlines. It looked as though it was going to go through, thus covering many archaeological zones with water, but also devastating the ecological zone, displacing people, and creating untold damage to the land and habitat of many indigenous animals and birds. Everyone at the banquet the last night of the Mesa Redonda in the La Selva restaurant signed a petition opposing the dam project, and letters were sent from the embassies of all countries attending, opposing the project.

The project did not go through. We hoped that our small endeavor played a part in this.

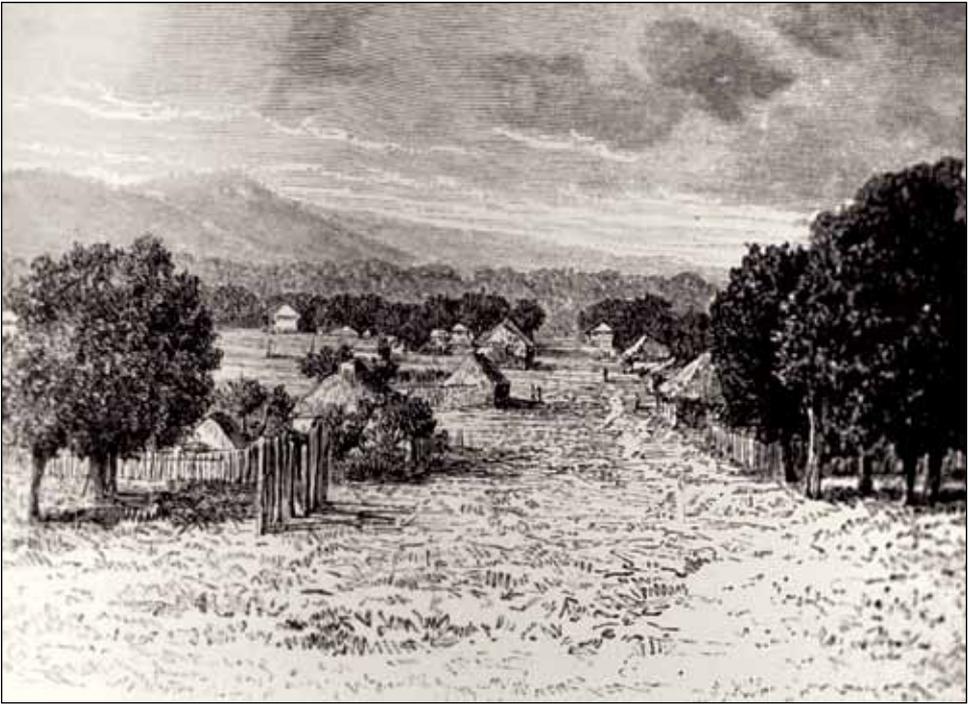
We also found out a lot about the Palenque bell that is in the town church from Dr. Arnulfo Hardy. Palenque was discovered in 1740 by the priest of Palenque and Tumbala, Don Antonio Solis. Most sources credit the discovery to Ramon Ordonez y Aguilar, but Ordonez did not even know Palenque. His information came by way of his uncle Antonio de Solis.

Fray Pedro Lorenzo founded the pueblo, Palenque, in 1567 when he brought Ch'ol Indians there. He knew of the ruins nearly 200 years before their "discovery." Between 1567 and 1573, Fray Pedro made two trips to Spain to legalize the foundation of the town and brought three bells back with him, one large, one medium size, and one small.

The small bell in the church bears the date 1573, so we know for sure that is the date of the founding of Palenque.

It was after this conference that the Palenque Mini Conferences were inaugurated by Elizabeth Benson, then Director of Dumbarton Oaks Pre-Columbian Studies. Those at the First Mini Conference at D.O. were Floyd Lounsbury, George Kubler, Tatiana (Tania) Proskouriakoff, David Kelly, Peter Mathews, Linda Schele, Joyce Marcus, and me.

At the first meeting all of us could feel the tension of opposing views between individuals. Almost everyone retired early. Floyd, Linda, Peter, David, Betty, and I stayed, however, late into the night. We were down on the floor on our knees with my rolled-out rubbing of the sides of the Sarcophagus Cover when we suddenly saw what the Maya were doing, how they were aligning their kings. It was exciting. The next morning Linda and I arose early and went to the dining room. There was no one there except Tania. We sat down together and had the nicest visit with her over breakfast. She was a lovely person, but



Palenque in 1573

quiet, and not used to being in a group of people where everyone is fighting for their own version of something. Linda and I were so happy that we got to know Tania then, if only briefly.

She was born in Siberia during a turbulent period in Russian history, and came to America with her family during World War I when her father was sent by Czar Nicholas II. With the Russian Revolution upon them shortly, the family remained in America. She became an artist for the University of Pennsylvania and the Carnegie Institution, a position she held until her death on August 30th, 1985.

All of these Mesa Redonda conferences led to the next step, the Texas Hieroglyphic Workshop, held yearly starting in 1978, with Linda in charge. These very successful workshops continue today in Linda's memory.

The Seventh Mesa Redonda, held in 1989, at the Mision Hotel was attended by over 325 persons, now indeed a world renowned international conference. The governor of Chiapas, Lic. Patricinio Gonzalez Garrido, opened the ceremonies in the Palenque Municipal Auditorium. An "*Homenaje a la Dra. Marta Foncerrada de Molina*" was given by Dra. Beatriz de la Fuente. Trudy Blom, the saver of the Lacandon forest, and the Indians as well, was honored at the speakers table for having attended nearly all of the Mesas Redondas. Trudy died in 1993, the sad loss to all of us of a dear friend.

A professional dance program was put on in our honor, directed by Socorro Cordoba de Martinez, Ofelia Morales de Sanchez, and Amalia Huerto de Leon that included numerous regional dances and rope twirling. Robert Laughlin,

from the Smithsonian again brought his group of Indians from San Cristobal, who performed the play "Monkey Business" which held everyone captive. Patricia Amlin showed the latest version of her "Popol Vuh" film.

A grand cocktail party and dinner was held on the grounds around the swimming pool sponsored by the Hotel Association of Palenque.

The Eighth Mesa Redonda, the Twentieth ("One Katun") Anniversary, 1973-1993, was the largest Mesa Redonda ever—425 registered participants from sixteen countries. Sixty-four papers were delivered. Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Honorable Presidente de Mexico, was represented by Dr. Santiago Onate Laborde and Dr. Arturo Gomez Pompa at the inaugural ceremony opened by Elmar Setzer Marseille, governor of Chiapas. Beatriz de la Fuente gave the inaugural address. This event took place on the lawn in front of the site museum. An elegant banquet was held immediately following. White tents, chairs covered with white bows, and flowers galore provided seating for everyone at a fabulous dinner. It was more like a wedding than a conference.

As I had been in charge of the Mesas Redondas de Palenque for twenty years, I thought it time that Mexico take over. Lic. Ma. Teresa Franco accepted it as an honor when I presented to her the sponsorship of the Palenque Mesas Redondas through INAH, Mexico, in the years to come. It was a sad time knowing that I would no longer be supervising the Palenque conferences, but it was gratifying that Teresa Franco was so enthusiastic about continuing them. This had been a very happy twenty years, much had been accomplished in getting Mesoamerica in the forefront. Great advances had been made in decipherment of the Mayan texts. Mesoamerica was in the forefront of television programs, and new books were appearing constantly. But best of all were the hundreds of friends I had made over these years, all of those who had given papers, the many, many who had worked so diligently with me promoting these conferences, all of those who kept coming back to the Mesas Redondas every time, and the citizens of Palenque and the state of Chiapas who helped so much. These are my treasures from all those years.

An elegant dinner party was held around the swimming pool, where the "Ballet Folklorico" was performed (this event, a year long in preparation, sponsored by Socorro Cordoba de Martinez). Bob Laughlin again brought his San Cristobal group which put on the play "The Jaguar Dynasty."

At one of the conference meetings ballet dancers came on the stage amidst flashing brilliant lights to greet Peter Mathews before his talk with a squirming pink piglet carried by Blair Greene. The auditorium went wild. Peter is known for his love of pigs. When I visited him in Melbourne he had two three-foot tall papier-mâché pigs dressed as humans that he had brought all the way from Holland, in the entrance hall to his home.

A wing of the new Palenque museum at the archaeology zone was named the Merle Greene Robertson Biblioteca in a ceremony on the lawn in front of the museum. I was deeply touched.

At the final banquet at Zacarias Hardy's Restaurante La Selva, I gave awards to Linda Schele, Beatrice de la Fuente, Alfred Bush, and Moises Morales for having attended every Mesa Redonda from the beginning. Betty Benson and Gillett

Griffin received awards for having been to all but one Mesa Redonda. I had one time taken David Kelley down into Pacal's crypt, and was showing him the only place where the Maya sculptor let his knife slip. It was on the big toe of Pacal's left foot and had a cut right down the center of the nail. Dave said, "Oh no, that is congenital. I have the same cut down the center of my big toe." This story had been getting publicity at the meetings, so at the banquet someone asked Dave to prove his "Pacal toe." Dave jumped on the table, took off his shoe and sock, and displayed his ancestors' toe. The room went wild. Dancing continued until I do not know what hour.

American Airlines had donated round trip tickets for two anywhere they flew, to be given to the person with the lucky number on their banquet ticket. Lynn and George Pitcher won the trip. I was sure glad that I was not the one drawing the tickets, as they were the parents of my granddaughter Anne's husband Derek. If I had drawn their ticket, everyone would have thought it was rigged.

The dedication page in our last Mesa Redonda volume read:

To the memory of the  
Founders of the First Mesa Redonda de Palenque  
Who have now passed on to the Other World.  
You will always be in our memories.

Jeffrey Miller  
Charles Smiley  
Paul Gendrop  
Bob Robertson  
Donald Robertson  
Marta Foncerrada de Molina  
Horst Hartung  
Martha Robertson  
Gene Stuart  
Sophie Coe

Now we sadly must add four more:

George Kubler  
Floyd Lounsbury  
Linda Schele  
Beatriz de La Fuente

## TWO DISASTERS



Of course there were hundreds of other things going on during the twenty years of the Mesas Redondas, and many of them Bob and I shared before his death on May 12, 1981.

I was walking down our sidewalk into Na Chan-Bahlum when a little white terrier dashed right in my path—like pulling a rope up in front of me. I fell, landing on both my elbows. I was taken to the doctor in Palenque. He put my arm on the machine to take an X-ray and I passed out. The doctor placed my arm on the table again, and I passed out again, so he sent me home saying I just had a bad fall. I just sat in a chair all night. The next morning Bob started having terrible pains in his stomach. Another doctor was called, who said Bob had acute appendicitis and needed to be operated on right away. I told him that Bob had his appendix out when he was twenty-one years old. He left. Just then our doctor friend from San Cristobal came in the house, examined Bob, and said we must get to the hospital in Mexico City right away.

We called our dear friend Augusto Molino, who was the owner of Clinica Londres, a fine hospital in Mexico City, and whose brother was the chief doctor. My friends threw a change of clothes for me in a tiny backpack, put it over my shoulder, and took us to Villahermosa to catch the plane to Mexico City. An ambulance was waiting for us at the airport. Bob was attended to immediately. Then a doctor looked at me and said, “And what is the matter with your arms?” Up until then no one had even noticed me, they were so concerned about Bob, and so was I. When x-rays were taken of my arms, I was told I had two badly broken elbows. I replied, “No, I will have one, but not two.” Too bad. My blouse was cut off, and to the operating room I went.

My daughter Barbara came to Mexico right away and moved me out of the hospital into the hotel with her where she could tend to me—feed me like a

baby, brush my teeth and all that. I was in casts that went perpendicularly out from my shoulders. It was the worst. Every day after breakfast we would go to the hospital and stay there all day with Bob. He seemed to be doing fine after the operation, and we were planning on going back to Palenque ten days after his operation, so Barbara went back to California. I then stayed with Kathryn Jossierand and Nick; Kathryn now brushed my teeth, etc. (How well I remembered this kindness at the time of Kathryn's sudden passing in Palenque in July of 2006.)

The day we expected to return to Palenque, Kathryn, Nick and I went to the hospital to have Bob discharged. He had passed away just fifteen minutes before we got there. It was a pulmonary embolism. This was May 12, 1981.

The Molinas, Augusta and Marta, then took me to their house. Their maid took care of my baths and feeding me. What wonderful friends I had. I had to go to the courthouse and sign the death certificate. How could I do that, when I could not use my hands for anything? The clerk insisted I sign. Augusto tried to explain to him that it was impossible for me to sign, but he would do it. No, the clerk would not let him, still insisting I sign. Augusto then turned his back, took my hand, or what looked like taking my hand, and he signed it. The clerk did not know.

Barbara and David came down immediately, as did Bob's daughter, Jo Ann and his son Jim. Bob was cremated in Mexico City and his ashes put in an urn that David carried to Palenque. All of my dear friends in Palenque took care of everything, as I was of no use at all with two broken elbows in those horrid casts. The following story I was told later, but did not know anything about it while these negotiations were going on. They went to the only church there was in Palenque to arrange for the service. The priest refused, saying that because Bob was cremated, he would not allow it. We all knew this rule was not true, as Marta Molina's mother, a devout Catholic, had passed away a short time before and had been cremated. My friends then went to the priest in Escarcega. He was happy to officiate, but the Palenque priest would not allow him in his church. They then went to Catazaja, the same thing—the Palenque priest refused to allow him in his church.

Then my friends got in touch with Fray Facundo Ramirez, the Ch'ol priest from the Mision Franciscane. He had been at our First Mesa Redonda and knew Bob well, and was honored to come. When the Palenque priest heard about this latest development, he announced that he would bar him from entering the cemetery where the ceremony was to take place. At this stage of the game, our friend the *presidente* of Palenque, Esteban Corzo Blanco told the priest if he hindered this ceremony for Bob in any way, he would have him put in jail. The mayor then had the entire Palenque police force stationed at intervals between the church and the cemetery, and a large group of them at the entrance.

Fray Fecundo and four Ch'ol in their brown robes, members of his church in Tumbala, were present at the grave site. The service was in Ch'ol, and the songs were all in Ch'ol. There were even marimba players. To me it was very touching, just like it should be. Chencho and all of his relatives had spent two days making a whole washtub full of a very special tamales, and another tub was filled with

beer, and a third with soft drinks. We were told that there were more people at this ceremony than had ever attended a service at the cemetery before—dozens from Palenque, and friends from Mexico City, Villahermosa, Merida, Escarcega and all over. David Morales had carved a tombstone with a portrait of Bob that looked just like him.

When the service was over, I was told that we must fix a table with Bob's picture, his pipe, his favorite foods, and other things he liked, with large candles burning. Then we had to be sure that there was plenty of beer, coke, and tortilla snacks, as friends would be dropping in for several weeks. This was all new to me. But you know who would have like this Ch'ol ceremony best of all?—Bob. He would have loved it.

## VOLCANO EL CHICHON

Ten months after Bob's death, another disaster struck—the eruption of the volcano El Chichon—on March 28th, 1982. The events pertaining to the volcano, I am writing from the notes I wrote at Palenque during the eruption, and that I sent to my friends by round-about messenger. On the evening of Saturday, March 27th, about 9:30, I was having a cool drink with Chencho, Deleri, and Charlotte Alteri on the patio of Chencho's quarters attached to my house, when we heard a loud *boom, boom*. We thought it was queer-sounding thunder, so waited for the lightning that never came. We kept hearing this *boom, boom*. We went out in the street in front of our house, and looking toward the west, saw what looked like shooting fire way off in the distance. It didn't look like lightning. It happened several times, but no lightning, no rain, so we went to bed.

I awoke at 6:00 in the morning, when I heard a knock at the front door. It was Moises holding out both hands filled with a white powder. He asked me what I thought it was. I said "talcum powder." At the same moment I saw a pick-up truck in front of the house covered with white, and filled with eighteen people all covered in white, like they had been shaken in a flour sack. This was the first car that had managed to get out of Pichucalco at 1:30 a.m. when fire was spouting out of the mountain El Chichon. I fixed four batches of coffee, and dashed to the store and bought bundles of sweet rolls for them. In town I saw twelve more cars, a Volkswagen, trucks, a few cars, and an A.D.O. bus from Villahermosa, all covered with this thick white ash. We could not find out anything from the radio. No news was being given.

Soon ash started falling in Palenque, then it stopped. We thought it was all over. By then we had heard that two towns near the volcano were completely buried. No one knew how many people had died. Some were sent to hospitals in Villahermosa, but most died.

On Wednesday Alfonso decided to go to Villahermosa to get new tires for my Safari, as they were worn out from that bad trip into Comalcalco and La Muñeca. I think the real reason he wanted to go to Villahermosa was to see if he could get any information about the volcano. The weather looked fine. Just this side of the Villahermosa Airport there was a three-car collision, a Renault, a Volkswagen bug, and another car. Alfonso saw it happening directly in front of him, so he pulled off the highway. While he was sitting in my Safari watching

the collision happen, a bus came from the rear, tried to avoid the three-car pile-up, and smashed full force into Alfonso in my car, throwing it twenty feet into the air and smashing it down into the other three cars.

Alfonso was knocked out, and had a four inch gash in his head at the base of the skull, bruised ribs, and a huge hematoma on his thigh. He got out of the car, and in shock, not knowing what he was doing, took the car papers, the tool kit, and of all things, one of the old tires that was in the back seat and started walking down the middle of the road bleeding. There were plenty of people around, but no one was helping Alfonso. A truck driver saw him and made him get in the truck and took him to the hospital, but Alfonso insisted on going first to the Hotel Maya Tabasco to find Luis Ariola, our friend who was a journalist. He finally got to the doctor who stitched his head. He had a concussion, so was told to stay in the hospital and be very still. This Alfonso would not do.

He had no money. The police had taken the 4000 pesos I had given him to buy the tires. The police took the car, and would not release it to the insurance company. In Mexico you are guilty of a crime until you are proven innocent, not the other way around. Alfonso's friend bribed the police not to put Alfonso in jail for something he had nothing to do with. They were holding him on three counts of criminal negligence, first for being in an accident, which of course he had nothing to do with, as he was off to the side of the road. The second count was for abandoning the car. Well, he was in shock, and couldn't very well stay in the car piled on top of the other three cars. He was lucky he wasn't killed. The third count was for the car papers not being in the car. Of course they were on him, as he would need them when getting the tires. What the police were doing was illegal, but Luis finally got it straightened out with a big bribe.

Alfonso stayed in the hotel in bed as he was told, but all the time trying to reach the car insurance company. By this time there were no lights in Villahermosa. It was dark, as it was in Palenque. The insurance company would not release the car to anyone but the owner, who was me. On Saturday morning, April 3rd, at 7:00, Manuel Leon was going to drive me in to Villahermosa, to hopefully see the D. A. and the insurance people. On that same day the president of Mexico was flying into Villahermosa to assess the volcanic damage. There were so many refugees from Pichucalco that the hospitals in Villahermosa could not take care of them all. We heard that the governor thought that the eruptions were over, so sent the people all back home (we found this out later from our newspaper friend). That was when the really huge eruptions took place, on Sunday, April 4th, when hundreds of people who had returned to the little towns near the volcano all perished.

By 7:45 a.m. Manuel and I noticed that it was getting darker. Chenchó got on the radio and heard that there were more eruptions going on at El Chichón. Ash started falling in Palenque, so we had to abandon the trip, but I got xeroxes of the car papers, and a *poder* (power of attorney, to turn the car over to Alfonso), and put these on the A.D.O. bus to Villahermosa. What happened to them, we never found out. Alfonso returned to Palenque about 5:00 on a second class bus. The police station was closed, and so, not being able to get anything done, he saw no reason to stay in Villahermosa.

It was pitch dark, had been since early afternoon. Ash was falling like a terrible snow storm. The next day it was still like midnight all day long. In the



Ashfall from Volcano El Chichon on our street

morning there was an inch of ash over everything—porch, walk, trees weighted down to the ground, and our cat Cele (means crooked tail in Ch'ol), who looked like a dust mop full of ash, was having a hard time breathing. For a while there was light, but then it was dark as midnight, and strangely quiet—no birds singing, no insects cheeping, no dogs barking, not a sound. Trees began cracking from the weight of the ash; now three inches of ash was over everything. I stayed in the library all day, there is so much ash coming in the house. I sealed all the windows in the library with duct tape, although the windows were already sealed. I could not have the dehumidifier or the air conditioner on, or more ash



Ashfall from Volcano El Chichon at Palenque

would blow into the library. I had one candle, and was saving it as I did not know where I would get any more.

The banana trees were all cracking from the weight, and the beautiful hibiscus tree in the front yard was weighted to the ground. I only had a small amount of water, so we couldn't flush the toilet, wash any dishes, or bathe. The cattlemen were very worried, as they would soon lose all their cattle. Palenque is big cattle country.

Every little while I would hear a big boom, but did not know what it was. Poking my flashlight out the door, it still looked like a bad northwestern snow storm. Everyone was now trying to shovel the ash off their roofs, a difficult thing to do in the dark. Chenco came over and told me that one restaurant was open in town, "The Maya," but it was necessary to wade through two feet of ash to get inside. One could not walk on top of that ash—one's feet went all the way through to the ground, the ash coming over one's knees.

The next day, April 5th, was probably the worst. There was a little bit of light, but the snow storm of ash poured down all day and night. The windows in my house were the kind that swivel, and with some panes broken, ash poured in on top of the tables, beds, cabinets, dishes, and all over the floor. I would shovel ash from the doorway, and ten minutes later, it was piled up again. Impossible to control. Six more inches fell during the night, and in the morning it was two feet deep in our street. Everyone in La Cañada was trying to shovel the ash off their roofs before they caved in from the weight. My roof was holding up, probably because it had just been re-thatched. The next day all of our eighteen banana trees were down.

The birds and small animals, and our beloved monkeys who came to my house every day must all have died, we thought, because not a sound was heard. I kept my puppy Chinkultic locked in Xibalba under the library, so I thought he would survive, but about my poor cat I had serious doubts. A friend had come by to tell me that he was dead, lying in the ash in front of the house. I went out with a flashlight to see. Cele was not dead yet. I brought him in the house, washed all of the ash out of his sealed-shut eyes, brushed the ash out of his fur, and he started to move. I didn't know what I could do to keep him from getting outside. The cattlemen were by then really worried, as their cattle were all dying.

Another, even worse eruption occurred on Monday. Palenque was the worst hit, as far as ash fall in the state of Chiapas, except for the four hamlets near the volcano, Francisco Leon, Niapa, Volcan, and Guayabal, which were covered with molten lava. The truck full of ash-covered people in front of my house that first day had picked up little children on the road, whose parents, knowing they were all going to die, put their children on the road, hoping some truck would come by and pick them up. A few were saved that way.

Palenque was declared a disaster area. Soldiers were on the road keeping anyone from getting into the town. There was no water. We had one and a half five-gallon jars of water when this started, enough to last a while if used only for drinking and making coffee. At first we washed dishes, but they were covered with ash before we had a chance to dry them. We gave up on that, used paper plates turned upside down until there was food ready to put on them, otherwise we would be eating half ash. We each used our own glass, keeping it turned upside down, but never washed it. Washing clothes was out of the question. I wore a wet washcloth around my nose all the time except when I was in the library. I kept a thick rug at the entrance, and before I entered, I took off my ash-covered pants and tee shirt and hung them on a hook, stepped inside the library and put on clean pants and tee shirt, stepping on another towel wedged against the door. The bottom cuff of my pants dropped off, as if I had cut it off with scissors. The soles on two pairs of my shoes just fell off. That ash was like ground glass.

I had sealed the windows in my bedroom, and piled all sorts of things I was trying to protect on half the bed. I tried to sleep on the other half, on top of the sheet, gritty with ash, no matter how much I shook it off. At eighty-four degrees, shut in that bedroom, by 4:00 a.m. I could take it no longer, so would go into the library. If there was any electricity, I could at least have the fan on, but it was still eighty-four degrees there also. Most of the time, I had just my candle, but that was better than being shut up in the bedroom.

Deleri became sick, as did her baby, their lungs clogged with ash. Only

Chencho could help. All of Chencho's relatives in the Tulija Valley had lost everything; their roofs collapsed on all of their houses, so they were all either staying at Chencho's house in town, or with Chencho and Deleri at my place.

Nearly everyone in Palenque who had a car had left for Cancun, away from the ash. The mayor and his family left. All of both the Morales extended families left, except Moises. Many tried to induce me to go with them, but I could not leave all of my work, my drawings, the photos and negatives, and my books, all of my research material I was working on for the volumes of *The Sculpture of Palenque* for Princeton Press.

Charlotte was still there with me, which was a big help, but everyone else was gone. Alfonso had given me a revolver to keep under my pillow, as there was a lot of looting going on, mainly from persons who did not live in Palenque. Luckily, I never had to use the gun. To tell the truth, I was a little afraid of it, because I am a pretty good shot with a rifle or shotgun, and I was afraid I might accidentally kill someone if I aimed it.

My friend Guillermo Aldana from the National Geographic came to report on the El Chichon disaster. He needed someone who knew the area, and the police protecting it to go with him, so Alfonso went, with his head still in bandages. They came back reporting seeing dogs, cats, and cows all lying dead on top of a landscape that looked like the surface of the moon. I remember Alfonso telling me, with tears streaming down his face, of seeing the arm of a child sticking out of the ash surface.

Our small amount of water didn't last long with so many people needing it. Then we had no water. A friend came by in his jeep that afternoon, really a miracle, as no one had been by in a car. He wanted to help, so I asked him if he could go to the water company and see if they had any jars of water. Luckily, they had two jars, as no one had any way of getting to the water company to get it. Then with all of Chencho's relatives needing water at our place, that also was soon gone. Chencho solved that problem. We stole the water in the tank of the house behind ours, but we did not feel guilty because there was no one living there then.

What had happened was that the city water supply that comes from the ruins and the Chacamax River could not flow through the pipes as they were completely clogged with ash, to the point that they had burst. The ash was clogging everything. The city had trucks come into town to remove the four-foot, and in some places five-foot high piles of ash that covered the entire main street. Then the ash was dumped just outside of town, so when the wind blew, it all blew right back in.

One thing we noticed was that there were no *cucarachas*, no spiders, no lizards anyplace. Even my tiny two inch long pet gecko who lived right by the sink was gone. I was sure he was dead, but after about six weeks, he showed up again in the same place. At the same time the little yellow bird that came every morning to sit on the windowsill by the stove was back also. Somehow they made it.

Things were getting pretty bad, as after two weeks there was not much one could buy at the stores to eat, as no wholesaler trucks had come to Palenque. We had some canned foods, but no variety, so eating whatever we could get was just to keep alive. I lost a lot of weight, which I certainly did not need to do. Easter came and went, no one at the ruins, when just the year before there had been



Ashfall on House C in the Palace

6000 visitors. Still no rain. We were getting pretty tired of wearing wet washcloths over our noses. Even though it no longer was raining ash, with every little wind, more blew in from the street. More roofs went down, on the Pemex garage in town, and many right there in La Cañada. I thought I had been protecting my lungs by wearing the mask over my nose, but I suddenly realized that ash was getting in anyway, as every morning I would cough for about three hours, and my ears were hurting a lot, so they also were full of ash.

When I went out to the ruins, getting a taxi, as I still had no car, it was incredibly beautiful, white all over—buildings, trees, the ground. I took a lot of pictures. The Eastern Court was so beautiful, all bathed in white. The prisoner figures on the eastern side, instead of showing their reds, were all glistening white, and the floor of the court looked like snow that no one had stepped in yet. I stood there in awe at this beauty, the result of such a terrible disaster.

We had no rain for six weeks, then when it came, more roofs went down with added burden on already ash-filled thatch. At the ruins, especially on figures of the Eastern Court that are at a slant, the rain, mixed with the powdered glass-like ash, worked like scouring powder. All of the red paint was scoured off. My photographs are all that now will prove that paint was once there.

The second eruption, on April 3rd, lasted for thirty minutes, but the third eruption on Palm Sunday, lasted for forty-five, accompanied by pyroclastic flow, superheated gas, dust, and water vapor, which reached a temperature of 1450 degrees Fahrenheit, and rushed out at a hundred miles an hour in flows two hundred feet deep and up to five hundred feet across. The ash that it spewed out continued for fourteen days. When an eruption of this type occurs, there is a great amount of pulverized pumice with the trapped gasses, which include sulfuric acid, carbon, and sulfuric oxide. So there is a great deal of toxic acid that is being propelled into the atmosphere with tremendous force. This affected the weather world-wide for several years.

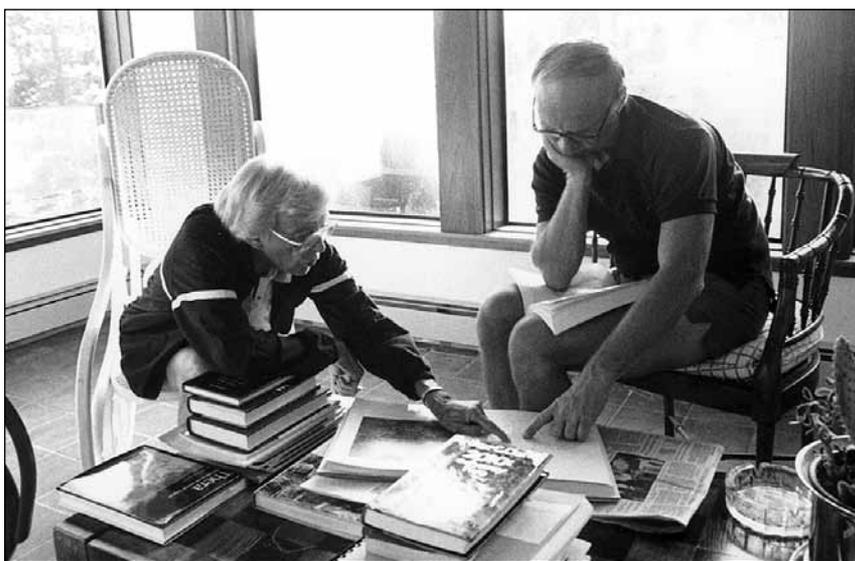
## CROSS GROUP PROJECT



Archaeological investigation of the Cross Group was begun in 1996, mainly because of the interest of Don Marken, who supplied a good portion of the funds for this investigation for the next three years. This was a joint project of the Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute and Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History, called Proyecto Grupo de las Cruces.

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) was undertaken at the Cross Group under Bill Hanna and Pete Patrone. Lee Langan was the coordinator. Alfonso Morales was our Principal Investigator and has remained as such including the present time. During much of the survey I took time to paint views of the familiar ruins.

Unfortunately Don died before we were able to complete our investigation of Temple XIX. It was here in this unusual temple that the now renowned altar-like



Merle with Don Marken, outlining the Cross Group Project



GPR team: Pete Patrone, Roger Helmandollar, Bill Hanna with Merle

platform was uncovered with a very large glyptic text and portraits of three figures on the west face and seven on the south, the central figure there being a very important king of Palenque, K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb. The other important find in this temple was the standing limestone pier with K'inich Ahkal No' Nahb and two attendants on one side, and a beautiful painted stucco figure on the adjacent side. The restoration of this temple is an example of how preserving the past, as well as making it available to tourists, has awakened other project investigators.

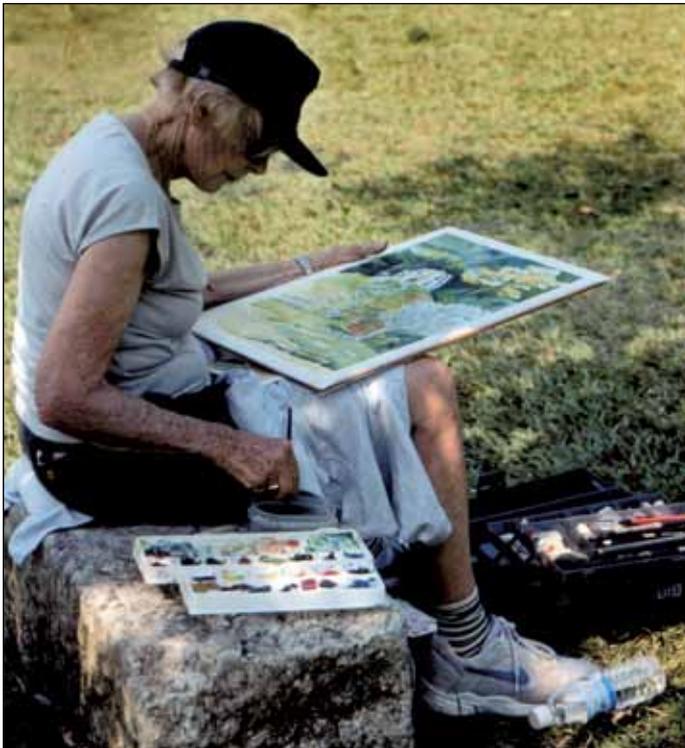
The last rubbings I did at Palenque were of the Temple XIX platform's intricate and finely carved panels from the west and south faces, showing ten figures in all, plus rows of hieroglyphs, including the names of the figures. The



Julie Miller and Alfonso Morales, Principal Investigator



The Temple of the Inscriptions



Merle painting in Stephen's Plaza during GPR surveys



Replica of the sculptured pier in Temple XIX  
in its original location



Merle's rendering of one of the red figures  
on the wall of the tomb in Temple XX



Rubbing of a portion of the Temple XIX platform



Mo (Maureen Carpenter, Director of Temple XX) with Kirk Straight

central figure on the south side is Palenque's ruler K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb, in the role of what is known to archaeologists as the deity GI, leaning to receive the headband held by the figure on his right. This king apparently ruled for two decades. The text on the south face is unique in Maya epigraphy in that it records mythic episodes not found in other inscriptions from Palenque or elsewhere in the Maya world.

The rubbings of this platform were made on fine mulberry paper with sumi ink in order to pick up the intricate detail of the glyphs. Just seeing each small line appear as I applied the dabber of ink to the paper was a thrill.

Nearby Temple XX has an early tomb beneath a later building. Although we have not actually been inside the tomb, we know what is in there: nine life-size figures on three walls painted in red by an excellent artist who worked



Merle and Lee Langan carrying  
The Explorers Club Flag #139



Seeing inside Temple XX on the computer for the first time



Damien Marken digging at Temple XIX

very quickly. We have been able to see all of this by using a digital camera suspended inside the tomb through a ten centimeter hole at capstone level. To do the drawings of these figures, I used a number of different shots to come up with the final figures as painted on the wall. Maureen Carpenter was in charge.

I should note here also that Lee Langan and I carried The Explorers Club Flag No. 139, in 2003, while work was being undertaken on Temple XX.

## PETER'S EL CAYO HIJACK



There were so many different versions that went to press about the time Peter Mathews was hijacked and held hostage with his workers at El Cayo in June of 1997, that when Peter was rescued, he and I sat down in my bedroom at Palenque, where we wouldn't be disturbed, and he dictated to me the real story about what happened at El Cayo. El Cayo is two thirds of the way downriver from Yaxchilan to Piedras Negras. There were numerous groups of Ch'ol villagers living in the area, who are not all friendly to each other.

Before Peter set out for El Cayo with his co-worker Mario Aliphat from Palenque, Peter told me where he was going, and that he hoped to bring the beautiful El Cayo Altar 4, a monument commemorating the twenty-year katun ending 9.5.0.0.0 (AD 731) by Aj Chak Wayib, an underlord of Piedras Negras, to the Maya community of Frontera Corozal. The top of the altar is carved with the lord carrying a huge human-head back pack. The hieroglyphic text is on the top of the altar, all around the circumference, and on the three legs. The 1.2 meter diameter, sixty centimeter high altar is in pristine condition. The plans were for Mario to come to Palenque and take me to Frontera Corozal so I could make a rubbing of it for the record. If I did not hear from him within four days, I would know something had happened to them, and so send someone in.

Peter and Mario had been working at El Cayo for two previous seasons. It was actually in 1993 when they found the altar. They had just been to El Desempeño to talk to the villagers about continuing working at El Cayo, and were told that there had been attempts to loot the altar, and they had reported that to the Community Council of the Lacandon region, who in turn reported it to INAH. The safety of the altar immediately became top priority. The villagers of El Desempeño agreed that it should be removed to a more secure location.

Frontera Corozal, upriver from El Cayo and Yaxchilan, was the logical place, as it was the headquarters of the Supreme Authority in Community Affairs of the Lacandon. Frontera Corozal sent two representatives from their council, and five other men to accompany Peter back to El Cayo. The plan was to fly the altar out by helicopter to Frontera Corozal, so it would safely be under the protection of the Ch'ol Maya, whose ancestors carved the altar. They had the permission from INAH to carry this out.

Peter, Mario, and three other Mexican archaeologists arrived on Wednesday, June 25, and were well received by the community. The next day they began re-excavating the altar (which they had previously buried for its protection). On Friday, June 27, when they arrived at the altar, they were confronted by sixty to seventy angry Ch'ol from communities around Desempeño. They were held hostage all day.

At Palenque, we knew by this time that something had happened to the archaeologists. Alfonso Morales, principal investigator for our Proyecto de las Cruces, Palenque, sent scouts out to find their whereabouts, and see if anyone knew what was going on. We knew they were being held hostage, but that was all. Na Chan-Bahlum quickly became headquarters for rescue attempts, and all communications between areas in Mexico, as well as Canada, Australia, and the United States. The news network from all four countries were either at our place or calling us day and night. We had to keep our phones open.

We hired a heavy-duty truck, filled it with blankets, food, and first aid supplies. Alfonso and Christopher Powell drove into the jungle as far as Nuevo Jerusalem trying to find them. They had taken several Jesuits who we knew were considered friendly by the people in the area of El Desempeño, knowing they would be able to talk to them and get information, if they had any. We hired a plane to scout the area along the river, which Peter and Mario heard flying overhead, but by that time they had escaped across the river to the Guatemala side and were hiding. But this is getting ahead of myself.

The whole group with Peter's workers were being held hostage in the plaza of El Cayo. Although authorization papers were shown to the confronting villagers, and explanations given about the safekeeping of the altar, they paid no heed. Two of the men from El Desempeño were tied to trees for the day for trying to explain this to them. Peter was ordered to pay for ten bags of cement and several loads of sand with which to cover the altar. They were then told they would have to pay 15,000 pesos (wages for one hundred of their men for three days). As Peter could not pay this with the money he had at El Cayo, they took his nine hundred dollars in travelers checks, everyone's cash, cameras, field equipment, field notes, personal packs, and their boots, this last to prevent their escape alive. They were told to leave, but as they neared the river, they were being fired upon from the rear. They were all beaten with rifle butts. Peter's nose was broken, as were his glasses, Aliphath's back was badly hurt, and Martin Arcos's ribs were broken and his spleen ruptured.

When they were all told to line up, it was then that Peter thought that they were all going to be killed. He told the men from Frontera Corozal to run as fast as they could, because he knew they could not swim. The others got to the water

as fast as they could in the dark. A dugout canoe was found on the river. They put the badly injured Martin and Mario Aliphath (who could not swim) in the canoe, while Peter and the other two Mexican archaeologists pushed and guided the canoe across the high and dangerous Usumacinta River to the Guatemala side in the dark. They hid in the jungle until daybreak, then started through the dense jungle, barefoot and in great pain, toward Piedras Negras. They heard the plane we had sent, but did not dare go near the river as they feared they might be shot at or chased from across the river. One of the men still had his leather hat, so it was torn in pieces and wrapped around their feet, tied on with vines. Deadly snakes were a real danger, but fortunately they did not encounter any.

They walked the whole day through thick jungle in the rain, a good part of the time, Peter said, in circles. They had no food or water. The next day a boat came along going downriver to supply the camp at Piedras Negras and rescued Peter and his four companions. The following day the boat took them back upstream (they hid under a tarp so they would be not be seen while going by the scene of the attack). They arrived in Frontera Corozal on June 30, then transferred to a truck which brought them under military escort to Palenque. A sorry-looking group, beat up, clothes torn to shreds, no shoes, black eyes, Peter with no glasses.

Martin Arcos was taken to the hospital immediately, where he was operated on for a ruptured spleen. It was nip and tuck for a few days. The doctor who had done the operation moved Martin from the Palenque general hospital to his own hospital at the edge of town. I went to see how Martin was faring, and the doctor had me come into his office first. He wanted me to pay for Martin's operation and hospitalization, which I had already paid. I told him I was not about to pay him twice. With that he said he would not let Martin out of the hospital until I did. I told the doctor that it was going to cost him plenty, because I was not going to pay the cost twice. A couple of days later, all of Martin's relatives from Frontera Corozal came and demanded that he be released from the hospital. They bodily took him away, so there was nothing the doctor could do. The next time I came to Palenque, the hospital was boarded up and that doctor was no longer in Palenque.

## N.G.S. & ACID RAIN



Acid rain and dry deposition were playing havoc on Maya sculpture all over Mesoamerica. The National Geographic Society gave me two grants, one in 1985 and the other in 1987, to check the causes of so much destruction to monuments. It had been known for some time that acid rain was ruining sculpture worldwide, such as our Lincoln Memorial in Washington, as well as famous Gothic cathedrals throughout Europe. Chemical pollutants from oil refineries and industrial areas that are blown hundreds of miles from their source are the most powerful tool in the destruction of stone.

Acid rain in the Yucatan peninsula and Chiapas is the result of oxides of nitrogen and sulfur dioxide that are carried in the upper atmosphere, acted upon



Acid rain impact on Temple of the Inscriptions pier



Acid rain erosion at Chicanna

by sun and rain, and then fall on monuments as sulfur dioxide and nitric acid.

Dry deposition, accumulated deposits of debris on monuments, is one of the worst culprits. When rain comes in contact with this buildup of debris, it destroys the stone the same way as acid rain. If rain beats onto the monument with force, the water washes over the debris, carrying a portion of the debris away, but if the rain comes from a direction that does not beat against the monument, but just trickles over the dry deposition, it adds more to the buildup of debris rather than washing it off. A good example of this is the Great Ballcourt at Chichen Itza where there is far more black scab on the west side of the court than the east.

Other agents destructive to monuments include natural jungle growth, with lichens, algae, and fungi that attach themselves to the stone, eating away at a surface that substitutes for soil. Porous limestone is the perfect home for microscopic animals that bore tiny holes in the stone. Volcanoes, such as the sulfur-rich El Chichon near Pichucalco, are also enormously destructive; the latter deposited a fine mist of sulfuric acid denser than any volcanic cloud since the great 1883 eruption of Krakatoa.

Vandalism, which I thought would be at the top of the list of destroyers of monuments, was surprisingly at the bottom. This is not to say that vandalism plays no part. It surely does. The child's foot on Pier C, the Temple of Inscriptions, was ripped off in broad daylight at the time I was living in Palenque. Whole monuments have been looted in the Campeche area. Talking with natives about destruction to monuments in the many sites I covered in this study was one of the most rewarding aspects.

## YUCATAN



Before going into Yucatan, I will tell about my very dear friend for over forty years—Joann Andrews of Quinta MARI, Merida. I worked for her husband Bill (E. Wyllys Andrews IV) illustrating ceramics from Dzibilchaltun. Joann has made Quinta MARI my “home away from home” all of these years. I have a special room, “Merle’s room.” Her whole extended family are family to me also—first Modesta, now Transita, and all their children. Joann is an extraordinary person, petite, charming, knowledgeable on any subject, but especially on orchids and horses. The books she has written on orchids of the Yucatan are supplemented by the hundreds of orchids at Quinta MARI.

She plays tennis daily in the court at her home and rides daily also. The riding has been curtailed any number of times when Joann either fell off the horse or was trampled on, in one case nearly killing her.

Joann’s fame is primarily for her non-stop raising of money for conservation. The huge nature reserve in the Chenes-Rio Bec area, the largest in Mesoamerica, is all due to Joann and her work as President of Pronatura.

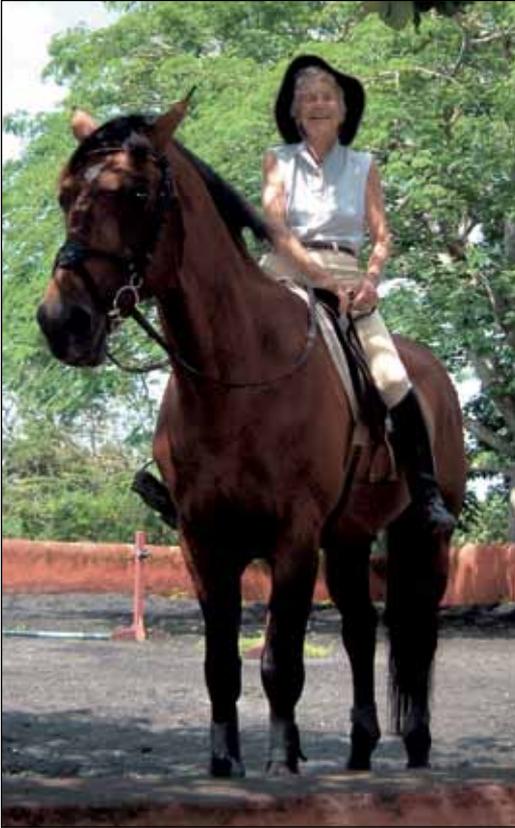
Her daughter Wiggie has been my protégé, working with Ed Kurjack and



Joann hosting the Christmas party



Joann Andrews



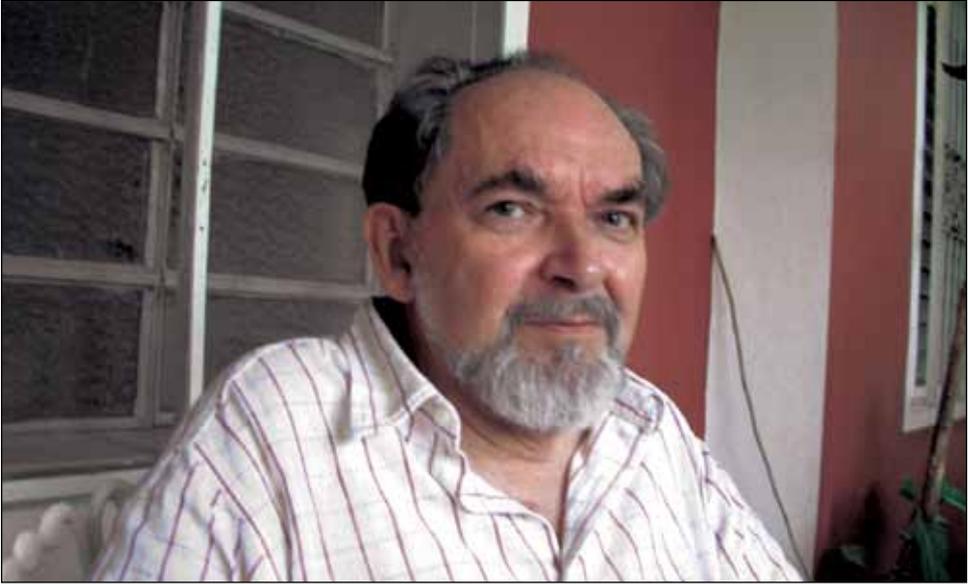
Joann on her horse

me most of the time we were at Chichen Itza. Wiggie has also been to Europe with me tracking down sculpture that was once at Palenque, on painting expeditions with me, and a big help in organizing the Mesas Redondas de Palenque.

Making rubbings in the Yucatan Peninsula was quite different from being in the jungles of El Peten. Ed Kurjack and I worked together in Campeche, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, and Belize. He knew the field like the back of his hand. Ed was the greatest person to work with. He knew how to deal with everyone, from government officials to the workers in the villages. There wasn't anything he wouldn't do for his students, from paying his own way to Mexico City to plead on their behalf, to helping them with their dissertations. He always knew where to get the best workers for



Wiggie, Ed Kurjack, and Merle at Chichen



Peter Schmidt

our projects. Everyone liked Ed and considered it a privilege to be working with him. Ed became a very dear friend of mine through all the years of working together in Yucatan.

## CHICHEN ITZA

After working on the monuments in El Peten and especially the delicate and beautiful panels at Palenque, I had a hard time appreciating the crude sculpture at Chichen Itza, much of it alike, and yet different, but none with the beautiful detailed carving of Palenque. It was easy to see that there was a school of sculpture at Chichen where neophytes were allotted unimportant portions of columns, while seasoned craftsmen worked the more important areas, especially faces.

At Chichen Itza Dr. Peter Schmidt, another of my dear friends, was actually in charge of our Chichen Project, as he was the INAH archaeologist in charge of Chichen Itza. Everyone who has ever worked with Peter loves him—a calm, intelligent, caring person who gives his workers credit, and helps them to advance.

At Chichen Itza, Wiggie Andrews, Carlos Carmona, Ed, and I became a team, always working together on the Rubbing Project.

The Great Ballcourt was our first undertaking at Chichen. I do not know why I picked the hardest thing to do first. I do know that when we started doing rubbings of the six sets of games that are depicted on the sloping walls, I thought it would never be possible to finish. We started early in the morning, but by eight o'clock the wind would tear the paper off as soon as we started wetting it. Don Benke, my friend who owned an awning and tent-making company in



Rubbing of a portion of the Great Ballcourt

San Francisco, came to our rescue by making blue and white-striped tents, each about twelve feet long that conformed to the slope of the ballcourt walls and had zippers to let in air. We used them for all of the Ballcourt Panels, and also on the Northwest Colonnade. Lois Benke's son, Tim McGill, worked with us for two seasons on the Great Ballcourt. He was indispensable. It took three seasons to finish.

Our crew on the Lower Temple of the Jaguars consisted of Ed, Carlos, Tim, Bill Ringle, and myself. We managed to do rubbings of the entire building, even the parts that Maudslay was not able to include. We were high on scaffolding made of foot-wide planks. We discovered that there were women warriors.



Elayne Marquis helping with rubbings

The biggest enterprise at Chichen Itza was doing the Northwest Colonnade and the East Colonnade. It looked impossible. At that time, I was still able to get the heavy 1 x 2 meter rice paper from Japan; otherwise It would never have been done. As it took three seasons to ac-

comply, we always had quite a crew—Ed, Wiggie, Carlos, and me, plus about four of Peter’s INAH men, and several others. One year my granddaughter Blair worked with us, as did Elayne Marquis, Willy Kohn with a Ph.D. in half a dozen subjects, and Felix Villalba from Madrid, Spain.

Ed, Carlos, and I were doing rubbings of the lintels on the top terrace of Las Monjas, Chichen Itza. We had finished all of those difficult pieces except Lintel 7A on the outside of the structure. I left momentarily and told Ed and Carlos that we wouldn’t do that lintel. It was too dangerous. It would mean hanging high above on the outside of the building where a fall would kill them. Guess what? Of course they rigged up a rope-sling anchored to stones in the building, and Carlos hung on the outside in a sling doing the rubbing of the last lintel. Their answer to me was, “We just could not have the record missing one very important lintel.”

Wiggie and a couple of our helpers were recording the color down in the Chac Mool Temple. No one is allowed down there, so we had an INAH man staying with our generator at the top of the stairs that descend to the Chac Mool. When he was gone, a man and his little six-year-old boy came down. I explained that they were not allowed there. The man left, but the little boy stayed talking to me. I asked him where he was from. He said, “Here.” “Do you mean in Piste?” He said no, he lived right there in the temple. I wondered what was going on, so I went upstairs with him. His father



Carlos Carmona risks his life doing the outer Las Monjas rubbing



Blair helps do rubbings at Chichen

was standing there waiting to go down to the plaza below. Then the conversation goes like this. Me: "Your boy says he lives here. Does he mean Piste?" Father: "You have to believe." Me: "What do you mean by that?" Father: "If you believed, you could fly right over there to the Castillo." Me: "Well, I don't believe, but you apparently do, so let's see you fly over to the Castillo." End of discussion in Spanish—they leave.

Although it was a tremendous amount of work on the N.W.C. (Northwest Colonnade), we had a lot of fun. Looking at those figures, noting all of the details, we became very familiar with the ancient techniques: if the sculptor was right- or left-handed, if he was a neophyte or an accomplished artist. We also



Where our Chichen logo came from

could tell that faces were assigned to the very best artists, and those just learning did the lower register with the three-part figures (part human, part bird, and part serpent with bifurcated tongue). Doing thirty columns of four sides each was a task I would not care to undertake again. I feel as though I know every tiny piece of each column.

In 1995 when Ed, Carlos, Wiggie, and I were doing rubbings of all of the columns in the Place of Sculptured Columns, I carried The Explorers Club Flag #152. These columns are unique as well as being for the most part well preserved, with especially good heads of the figures depicting the many different kinds of nose plugs. Peter Schmidt was his ever-

wonderful self, giving us a portable phone, so we could call him when we wished to leave. A truck would soon come to pick us up with all our gear. What luxury! In the mornings, before going to the ruins, although we had already had our breakfast, we always sat and had a cup of *café* with Peter, Pepe, Pancho, Eduardo, and sometimes Rocio Gonzales. Such wonderful friends. No wonder I love Chichen.

Chichen was home for a number of years. We were given cottages at the Mayaland a couple of years. That was great, more high living. We stayed with



Carrying The Explorers Club Flag #152  
at Chichen: Merle, Carlos, and Wiggle

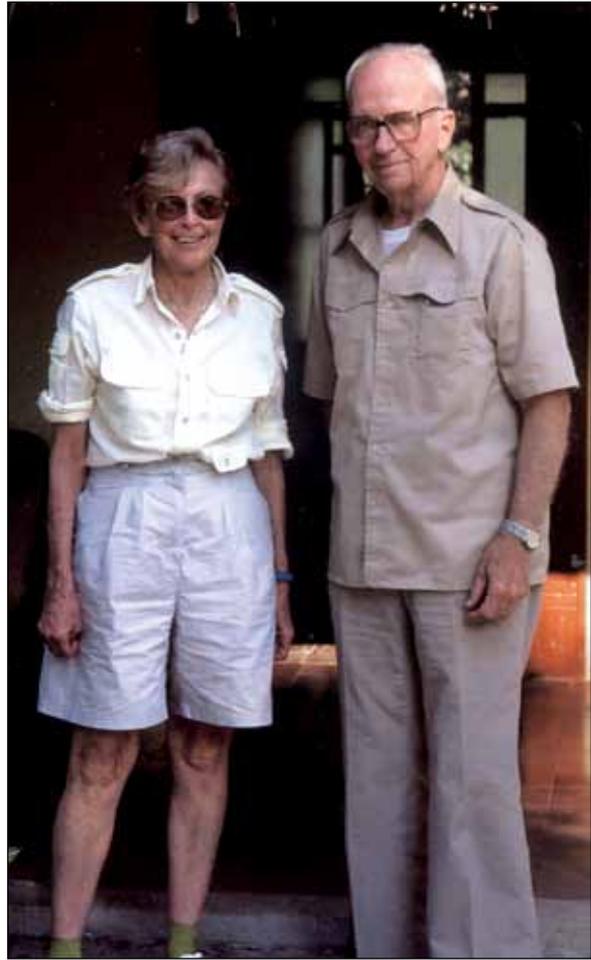
Carol Gadoy at the Piramide Inn several seasons. I remember especially the year all of Peter's crew were staying there also, as was David Freidel from Southern Methodist University and his group who were working at Yaxuna, a nearby site. In the evening everyone would sit around the tables on the patio overlooking the pool and exchange stories.

For two seasons we were given cottages at the Hacienda Chichen for the entire summer by Carmen Barbachano. At that time they did not rent cottages in the summer months. We had the pool to ourselves. We also had the "Casa Victoria," a run-down building belonging to the Hacienda. Charles Lincoln had rented it, but the summers he was not there, he let us have it.

James Michener, his wife and film crew, along with Charles Lincoln who was Michener's guide throughout Yucatan, were our guests for dinner one night.

He told me he would like to come to the ruins and watch me do a rubbing in the morning, so arrangements were made, but the next morning, word was sent that Michener was ill and could not come to the ruins, but he wanted me to come to his room at the Mayaland. We had a delightful conversation. I liked him a lot. The film crew took pictures of us together, along with one of my rubbings that he had asked me to bring along.

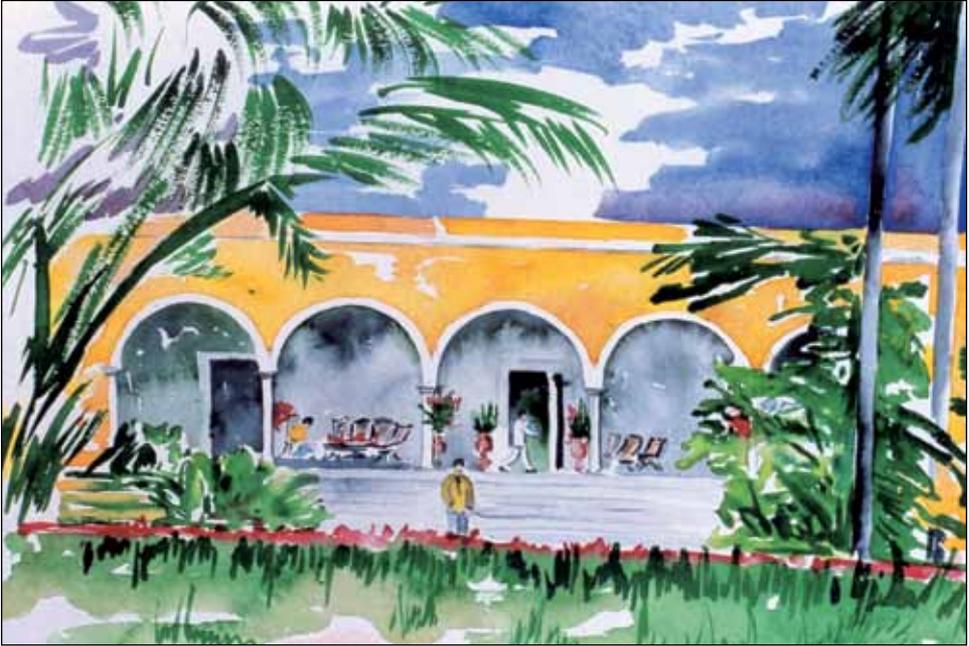
Doing the rubbings in Chichen Viejo in 2001 (the Initial Series Group, the Templo de Los Falos, the Casa de Los Caracoles, and Los Buhos) was such fun—forget the work. Under Peter Schmidt, we recorded almost everything there, living like kings and queens at the Hacienda Chichen. At the Hacienda, all the cottages are named after the Carnegie people who



James Michener visits us at Chichen



Izzy Gonzalez, Bruce Gordon, and Belisa Barbachano Gordon



My painting of the Hacienda Chichen, Belisa's baby

worked there at the turn of the century: Sylvanus Morley, Tatiana Proskouria-koff, Karl Ruppert, Earl Morris, Ann Axtell Morris, Jean Charlot, etc. My friend Belisa Barbachano Gordon had a new cottage built and named it for me, "The Merle Greene Robertson Suite." What luxury—huge room, sofa, coffee table, upholstered chairs, desk, refrigerator, coffee maker, private enclosed patio with iron furniture and hammock. This became the headquarters for our crew.



The Initial Series Group, Chichen



Our Initial Series crew: Jose, Francisco, Izzy, me, Khri Villela, Eric Spross



Applying the paper on the Casa de los Monos

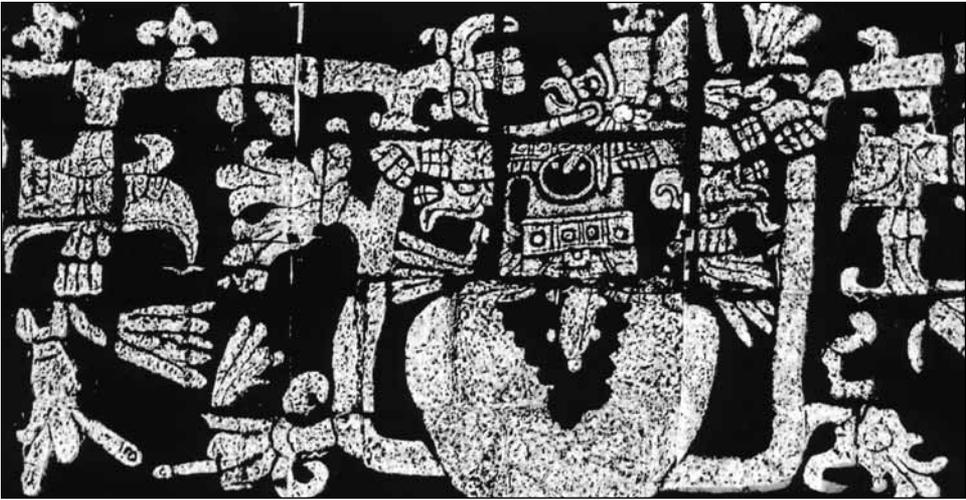


A finished product, with Eric, Jose, Merle, Francisco, Izzy

Our team working at the Initial Series Group consisted of Eric Spross, Khristaan Villela, Izzy Barbachano Gonzalez, Francisco and Jose (INAH workers of Peter's), and for a short time Peter Mathews and Joel Skidmore, who found a new area that had more Bacabs in the sculpture. Besides doing the rubbings, we were working on a joint paper on the Bacabs of Chichen. They are everywhere. By the end of the season we had found 273, but there are more.

The Casa de los Buhos (Temple of the Owls) had been completely restored by Peter and his crew. When I first saw it, all that was visible was one little owl block. We did ten panels of rubbings with owls. They are on every jamb. One little owl, we became attached to, calling him "Pouty."

There are a lot of motmot birds in Chichen Viejo. While we were busy at



Rubbing of a portion of the long Caracoles



Khris Villela by a rubbing in the Temple of the Owls

the Temple of the Owls we saw a tiny (few days old) motmot right on the ground in front of us. It was too small to walk or fly, or had a broken wing or foot—it had apparently fallen out of its nest. We picked up the tiny bird, took some great pictures, but there was nothing we could do to save it. Once out of its nest, the mother would have nothing to do with her baby. Sadly, a rodent would soon have the little bird. That is the way of the jungle.



Motmot chick

## TRAVELING THE WORLD



So many other things were going on between the times I was working at archaeological sites. I have been fortunate to travel far and wide, and on many of these trips I have painted.

### PARIS & AIX-EN-PROVENCE

I must not forget the times my grandchildren went to Europe with me. Anne was the first to go with me on a watercolor painting trip. We arrived in Paris on a beautiful day. What a joy to show Anne this city I love so much. In the States two hundred years is ancient, but here history goes back so far that two hundred years is yesterday. Walking along the Seine, discovering little hidden streets with fifteenth century churches, still in beautiful condition, having lunch at Les Deux Magots and Café de Flore where the waiters brought table and chairs across the way for me to paint, or Le Petit Pont along the Seine, where the waiters insisted on bringing me wine all the time I was painting. I nourished the flowers with it when they weren't looking. At other times it was the Procope, the first notable café in Paris, where Napoleon Bonaparte's hat still graces a table as one enters. As the Procope was owned by my friend Claudine's uncle, we got to investigate every corner, painting and eating such delectables as strawberry mousse.



Anne on a painting trip to France with me

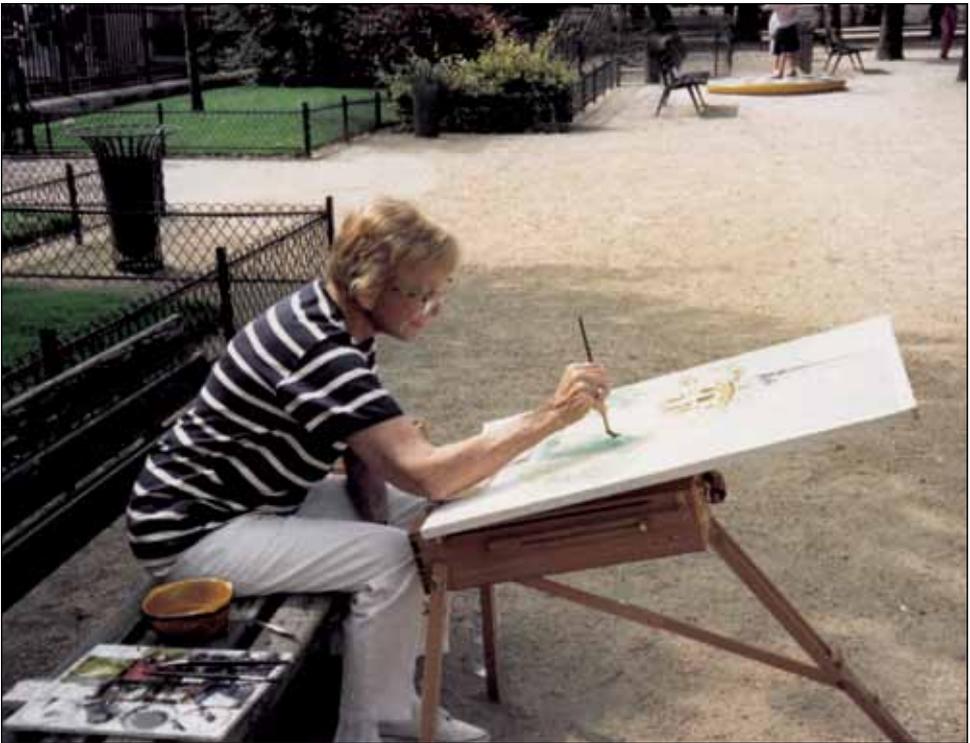


My painting of Cafe de Flore, Paris, where I painted often

We went to Aix-en-Provence and had a great time there, staying at the Grand Hotel Negre-Coste on Cours Mirabeau, where we had a great view-room, but the shower was somewhat of a mystery. We ended up by having a minor waterfall in our room. Anne was the one who discovered the Rue Cardinale and the wonderful church St. Jean de Malte that I later painted so many times, and where the wonderfully preserved eighteenth century Hotel Cardinal is located, just one half block from the entrance to the church. I have stayed there in my favorite room at least nine times.



Painting along the Seine, Paris



I painted Notre Dame so many times I could do it with my eyes closed



St. Jean de Malte in Aix that Anne first discovered

The small Cezanne Museum is almost across this narrow street. It has only a few very small paintings of Cezanne's. The city must have spent thousands of dollars embedding 6 x 6 inch bronze plaques in the sidewalks everywhere in Aix that Cezanne would have walked. As he was born and grew up there, these plaques are in the sidewalk all over town. It seems a pity to me that the city did not invest in purchasing some of Cezanne's paintings rather than putting all that money into sidewalk plaques that tourists are now digging out of the cement for



So many good places to eat and to paint on Rue Italia, in Aix



The dolphin fountain we painted so many times

souvenirs.

I could go on and on about Aix-en-Provence, one of my very favorite towns in France. I feel that I have come home every time I arrive. Blair has been to Aix twice with me. We painted so many pictures of our favorite fountain, the Quatre Dauphins, on Rue Cardinale, trying to get those dolphins just right, that we often said we didn't want to ever paint dolphins again.

One of the most fun experiences painting watercolors in Aix-en-Provence was when we painted La Grande Fontaine at the end of Mirabeau. It is a huge circular fountain occupying the whole intersection of streets that come into Mirabeau. As we started early in the morning (I was doing a large 24 x 30 inch painting that would take all day), there was plenty of place for us to sit on



The fountain on Mirabeau, in Aix, where Blair, Karen, and I painted all day

the curb, where ordinarily cars would park. Blair, Karen Holly, and I had all of our paraphernalia for painting laid out, no one in our way. Perfect. However, as the morning got underway, cars started filling up the parking spaces, that is, all but ours. Drivers kindly did not try to park where we were. The police did not ask us to move either—really nice people. When we needed clean water, we just dashed across the street and helped ourselves to water from the fountain.

The Hotel de Ville was where we painted so many times. There were great restaurants where the owners would let us sit at a table painting all day if we wished; one in particular would often bring us little tidbits. Of course we kept purchasing coffee, even if we didn't want it, and often had supper when we were finished.

Both Blair and I sold several painting while there. We were having dinner at the Thai restaurant one evening and the owner bought both my painting and Blair's. A men's bar on the Place Richelme bought my painting the first time I was painting there. The next year, I wanted to show it to Blair, but really didn't want to barge in among all the men lined up at the bar to see it on the wall, but this did not bother Blair. She barged right in.

The summer that both Blair and Karen were with me, we planned to stay at the apartment owned by Dr. Roux, who lived near the Cathedrale Saint Sauveur, an excellent location for painting. When I arrived, I discovered that the doctor would be living there with us, but we would have free reign of the house. There were two bedrooms. That would have been fine for Blair, Karen, and me, but the one bedroom I was assigned to was a very small room with one bed, and a closet full of the doctor's clothes, as were the two chests. Blair was to arrive

the next morning. Where would she sleep? The room that Blair was assigned to was a tiny alcove up a few steps, but had no bed. The doctor pulled a large chair against a stool, saying that would be fine. Blair's first night was not as expected—the stool and the chair kept coming apart, with her on the floor. The next night, she moved in with me, a tight squeeze in a single bed.

Worse yet, Karen was arriving, so we had to move. We finally found a huge apartment that during the school year was rented to a group of students. It was reluctantly rented to us. It occupied the entire second floor, had four bedrooms, a kitchen with one pan, two dishes, and no silverware, and a window that was sealed shut—this in the heat of the summer. The lady who owned the building told us we must shut all the shutters and lock them by 7:00 p.m. for safety. It was hot. We were not going to close the shutters. She came by and reprimanded us, insisting we lock the shutters. After that, when she came by, we bid her good evening, to which she never replied, shut the shutters, waited until she had gone, and then opened them for a night where cool breezes could come in.

## THE CÔTE D'AZUR

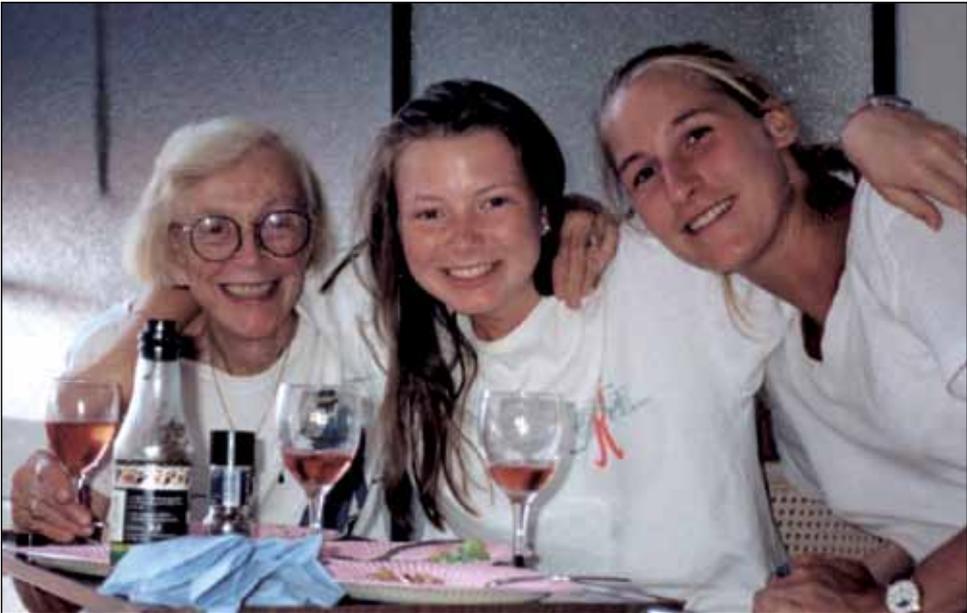
When Blair, Karen, and I were in Beaulieu we went everywhere painting, as the train was just a couple of minutes away. My friends who owned the Hotel Comte de Nice, invited the three of us to sail to Monaco and see the International Fourth of July Fireworks Competition, and enjoy a picnic supper on the yacht. We were out in the middle of the bay at Monaco. The fireworks were unbeliev-



Claudine was in charge of all of my San Francisco art exhibits

able—red, blue, green, yellow, gold—huge sprays shooting a thousand feet into the sky, then another, and another, all kinds of formations. I have never seen anything like it. Italy won.

Three entire summers were spent in Mougins, renting the lovely cottage of my friend (and also my daughter Barbara's friend), Anna Murdock, who lived in the large chateau right next to my cottage. This was where Barbara first studied under the famous French chef Roger Vergé. After two seasons with Vergé, she studied in Paris and received her diploma from the Ritz school, then went on to schools in Belgium and Luxembourg under pastry chefs, all leading up to her being the owner/chef of Barbara's Cuisine, catering large parties and weddings out of Palo Alto, California. This then led to her and Bob's moving for six months out of every year to Hasselt, Belgium, where she was writing her cookbook on Belgian cuisine. I will be telling more about Belgium later on.



Blair, Karen, and me living it up

Mougins was a perfect place to paint. The first two years I painted in oil, besides watercolor, as I had my nice covered patio. After two years, I realized that oils were a lot of trouble, so from then on I just painted watercolors. I became a member of the Association des Artistes de Mougins, a French painters society. It is the light that captivates me in southern France, mountains a golden pink one moment and a lavender so vivid the next that one can almost smell it.

I did dozens of watercolor paintings in and around Mougins. Just a short train ride away was Cannes, where I was able to purchase any painting supplies I needed. I even discovered coffee that comes in a carton in a machine. When you are ready to drink it, you just pull a tab, wait three minutes, and *voilà*—one has *café*. The Best croissants in all of France are made at a little patisserie in Beaulieu.



They make the very best croissants in France here in Beaulieu



With my friend the artist Michel Boulet  
in St. Paul de Vence

Beaulieu-sur-Mer was a great starting place for all along the Côte D'Azur: Villefranche only five minutes on the train, St. Paul de Vence, Eze, and Biot, where the paintings of Léger in the Musée Fernand Léger were well worth the long hike from the train stop.

I have been to St. Paul de Vence every time I have been to southern France. Besides all of the galleries and wonderful places for me to paint in this hilltop fortified town, there is the Foundation Maeght just across the way, one museum I love to go to over and over again—the garden of sculpture of Miro, the ever-changing, wonderful exhibits of the finest artists. In St. Paul de Vence, my good friend Michel Boulet, the artist who does whimsical caricatures of dancers and children on bicycles, has his studio—Gallery Michel Boulet. I first met him when I was trying to find the bus stop to St. Paul

de Vence after I had stepped off the train at Eze. A Frenchman had given me the wrong advice, so I went into the only store near there and asked. A man standing there told me that he was going to St. Paul de Vence, and I could go with him if I would like.

This was Michel Boulet. He had lived in Holland a long time and spoke perfect English. Also we had mutual friends in Leiden—Ted Leyenaar and his wife Paula. We had a great conversation all the way. He said if I wasn't in a hurry he would like to stop in La Colle sur Loup and meet his partner Marita Szelinski. We hit it off right off the bat, becoming very good friends. Every time I came to St. Paul de Vence after that we had a celebration. When I returned in 1996, I went into the gallery which Marita ran, but there was someone else there. I asked where Marita was and was told she had died two days before. I went down to Michel's studio, and we just sat and cried. I have his original painting of the Magician Pulling the Rabbit from a Hat, plus several other large prints of laughing children riding bicycles and in a circus. They all bring back happy memories, and sad ones also.

Eze-Village was another great painting place—climbing the thousands of steps that lead every direction, all the way to the top. Your legs have to be in good working shape to negotiate all of that. The restaurant and Hostellerie du Chateau de la Chevre d'Or is one of the grandest eateries on the Côte d'Azur. I had been painting all morning, but had a reservation for lunch there. I was in white pants, not a fancy dress, but at least I had no paint on my pants. I wasn't too sure how the dress code would be, but the maitre d' showed me to the best table in the restaurant. The service was excellent, and when the cheese service came with at least fifty kinds, my waiter picked out a wonderful selection for me.

## MATT'S TURN

As Blair seemed to be going with me to France every year, Matt, my twelve-year-old grandson, thought it should be his turn. I met him at the airport in Paris—a kid in a way-too-big tee shirt and floppy pants arrived with an airline woman. Then I had to prove that I actually was his grandmother. That took a phone call to the U.S.—Matt wasn't helping much either. We went to the Louvre, as he said he would like to see the Mona Lisa, but he wasn't impressed. We went to Notre Dame—said he'd seen much bigger. Where? No answer. We go to the huge Carousel, supposed to be the largest in the world. "I've seen bigger." What am I supposed to do with this kid?

I was beginning to think he wasn't having any fun at all, and I was trying so hard, or thought I was. Then we went to Sens and visited my friend Claudine Marken's brother's farm. Matt loved it. He was out in the barn pitching hay with the men, riding the tractor, and best of all, riding a motorcycle around and around the farmyard. He was in his glory. Then we went to Beaulieu-sur-Mer where I had my apartment for the summer. The owner, Commander Michael Healy, a retired British naval commander, was in charge of the ships coming into the Mediterranean. He had his own boat at the Beaulieu dock, and invited Matt



Matt goes to France with me

to go there with him. Day after day Matt scrubbed the boat, scraped barnacles off the sides, and rode Michael's motorcycle all around the marina.

He was taking French in school, so that trip was supposed to be giving him a chance to speak with French-speaking people. I would send him to the patisserie to get a baguette and something for dessert, but I would not go with him, because then he wouldn't say a thing in my presence. Every evening we watched the Tour de France on television. Now Matt brags about going to France with his grandmother.

## NORWEGIAN FJORDS

The 47th International Congress of Americanists was in Stockholm in 1994, so, as I was the Honorary Vice President that year, I went, Blair along with me. We stayed with her cousin Fred Davidson, who had his own apartment in town. Two girls (friends of Fred's) lived next door, both of them supposedly trying their hand at "working" before college started in the fall. These kids ran on a different clock than I did—up around 11:00 a.m., out "on the town" at midnight, and back home around seven in the morning.

Blair became very good friends with the girls, especially Elizabeth, whose parents owned a large tract of land north of Stockholm with a castle, where her grandparents lived. Her parents invited the two of us to spend a weekend



Elizabeth's parents' castle out of Stockholm

with them. What a gorgeous place. Every room in the castle was furnished beautifully, flowers in the vases, books lying on tables, not a speck of dust anywhere. We had tea with the charming grandparents in the castle. Elizabeth's father then took us down in the dungeon, where he and his brother had spent many happy hours hiding from each other in the many secret places, even a lower dungeon that was pitch black, where prisoners were chained and left to die in years gone by. It was scary.

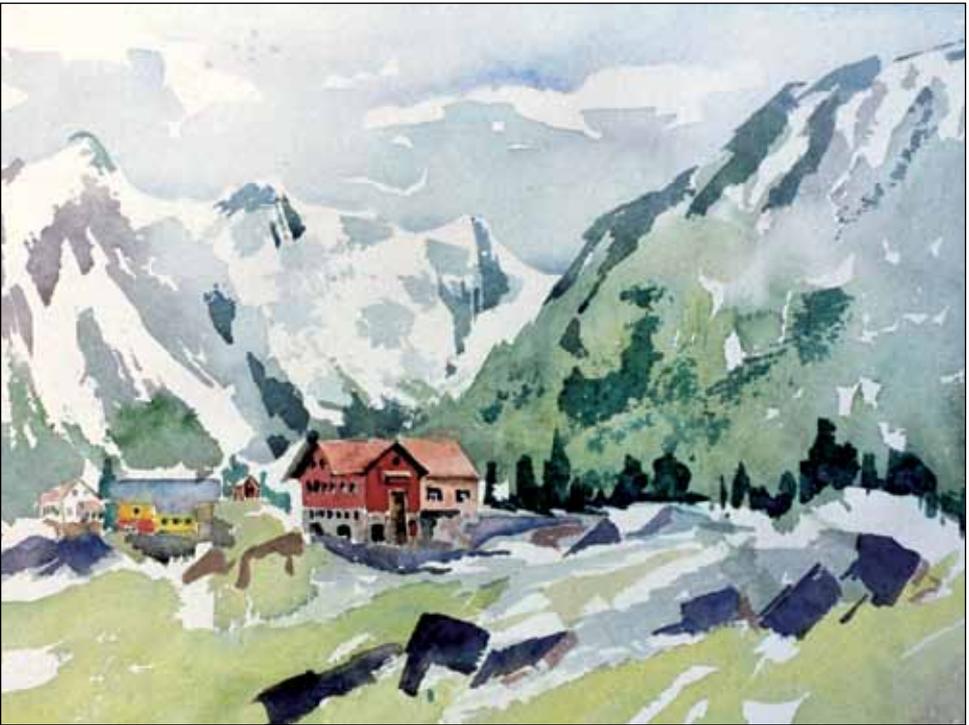
I went to a few of the sessions at the Congress, but most of the time explored Stockholm, and painted. After a week in Stockholm, Blair and I took the train to Bergen, arriving in cold, pouring



Cruising the fjords of Norway



Deep in the fjords at Mundel



The fjord cloud view changed every hour at Mundel



Smoked salmon and caviar in Bergen

rain with no umbrella. We both found great Norwegian hand-woven sweaters to keep us warm. The next morning our boat was ready for us to go on a fantastic trip through the fjords. The end of the fjord beneath the Jostedal glacier was breathtaking. Every minute of the way, we were out on the deck craning our necks to see the ever changing, unearthly beauty of the fjords. Our nineteenth-century Hotel Mundal, tucked against the fjord, couldn't have been better. The proprietors knew I was a painter, so gave us a wonderful room—one wall of almost solid windows looking out at an incredible view of cloud formations over the fjords that changed every half hour. A painter's heaven. For the better part of five days, we painted at that ever changing view. On occasion I went to another room, to paint the large red barn that loomed so striking against the snow, and even hiked to the end of the glacier to paint another Norwegian wonder while standing in the snow.

When not painting, we sat with new found friends in soft leather chairs by an immense fireplace that held logs six feet tall. Of all the places I have been all over the world, the fjords of Norway, and especially Mundal, is where I would love to return.

When we returned to Bergen, where it is said to rain ninety percent of the time, we had three whole days of sunshine, and again in our shorts and tee shirts. Great painting weather. Along the harbor, there were tables overloaded with every kind of seafood and other goodies. For a very small amount, we had bagels smothered in layers of freshly smoked salmon and heaps upon heaps of caviar. We both love caviar, and the huge bowls were sitting there for us to help ourselves. We did, several times.

## TURKEY

Turkey is another favorite country of mine for painting, and just for people-knowing. The Turks are kind, honest, and so clean. Their religion requires that they wash before touching any food, so no one on any of the trips that I went on with Mary Dell Lucas was ever sick. I went with Mary Dell on five trips to Turkey, the first time in 1988. I immediately loved it. My part was to explain Byzantine art to the group.

Byzantine paintings are all over, especially in Istanbul at the pink Aya Sofya, usually referred to as Sancta Sophia with its overpowering dome, constructed of light, hollow, porous clay bricks made in Rhodes. Byzantine frescoes were awesome, especially when seen close, as was possible on the high semicircular side walls. At the right-hand side of the south gallery were the impressive frescoes of the Empress Zoe (1028-1250), who is shown with her three husbands Romanus III Argyris, then Michael IV, whose head was painted in where that of Romanus had first been, then Michael's portrait was removed, and that of her last husband Constantine IV, who outlived Zoe. It is his portrait that we saw. The Blue Mosque was another of Istanbul's favorite places. Here, as upon entering all mosques, we had to leave our shoes outside. Hundreds of shoes—row upon row of shoes, but none were ever stolen.

I have painted dozens of reflections of Turkey—in Istanbul, Bodrum, Cappadocia, Antalya, Kas, Kekova, Fethiye, Pamukkale, Ephesus, to name a few. I loved Cappadocia where we could climb high up into early Christian churches called "Fairy Chimneys," with murals all over the walls in many of them, sanctuaries of early Christians, who at the time of Emperor Justinian were secretly practicing the new religion. One church, with better than ordinary paintings covering its walls, was covered with graffiti and obscene phrases as high up as an arm could reach. No one seemed to be doing anything to protect these jewels. What a pity.

We went into one underground city, some thirteen stories deep, where it is said that as many as 10,000 people lived in the fifth century AD. The passageways were steep, narrow, and dark, very difficult negotiating. I descended as far down as the third story with difficulty.

On every trip to Turkey we spent at least a week on the yacht the *Sef*, sailing along the blue Aegean. Our craft was actually a *gulet* that looked more like a pirate's ship than a modern vessel. I still think of the "wine dark sea" of the Iliad when remembering our sails to Kas, Bodrum, Fethiye, Antalya, and those other wonderful seaports, plus all of the ancient Greek ruins of Homer's time right after the siege of Troy around 1200 BC when many of the Greeks settled along this transparent sea, building Perge, Telmessos, Aspendos, Side, Simena, Phaselis, Demre, Myra, Kekova, Patara, Pinara, Letoon, and Xanthos, all of which we explored.

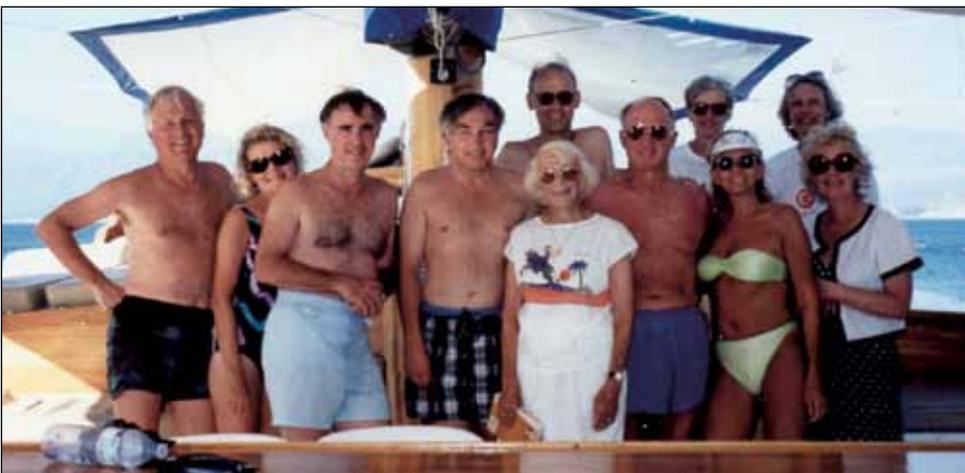
The "most fun" trip to Turkey was when Mary Dell took a group of my friends who all knew each other—Alec and Gail Merriam from the De Young Museum, San Francisco, Nancy and Dr. Bill Newmeyer (my hand doctor from long times past), who have also been with me to Mexico and Guatemala, Don and



The *Sef*, on which we sailed the blue Aegean

Claudine Marken, my French friends, Dick and Ann Otter from San Francisco also, Dr. Eric and Joey Rosenthal, and me. All being friends made it very special. Everyone loved the varieties of *baklava* that were picked up for lunch at some seaport for three days. From then on, no one wanted anything for dessert but watermelon. We had all kinds of seafood for dinner, caught just minutes before going into the pan—mullet, swordfish, lobster, and squid. Once we had octopus that the captain caught off a rocky shore. We watched him beat it against the rocks for at least thirty minutes, preparing it for our feast that night. We all loved diving off the boat in the crystal clear water while Mary Dell went sailing off on the tiny wind-sail skiff we had aboard.

Kas, one of my favorite places, is a little town be-



On the *Sef*: Dick Otter, Joey Rosenthal, Eric Rosenthal, Alec Merriam, Bill Newmeyer, Merle, Don Marken, Nancy Newmeyer, Claudine Marken, Ann Otter, Gail Merriam

tween Fethiye and Demre/Myra. I have been there several times, once staying for a week with just Joan Walton, my high school and college friend from Seattle. Kas was an ideal place to paint, to get to know some of the Turkish people, and to talk to them about my painting. I was sitting on a curb painting a sarcophagus that was in the middle of the street, when the couple sitting on their steps across from me invited me to come to their carpet store and have tea with them, but first making it known that they just wanted to visit with me, and not to sell carpets. We became instant friends. They were building a new home along the sea, and after finding out that I would be back the next year, invited me to come and stay with them. This has happened so many times. So many wonderful, friendly people in this world.



Mary Dell Lucas, leader of the Turkey trips

I was watching a young man who was painting a picture on the wall of a store. He was very good. We started talking. He loved to paint in watercolor, but it was next to impossible to get either paper or paint where he lived. I said that I could send some to him after I returned home. The day before we were to leave Kas, I went to pick up my laundry, which had been promised for that day. No one answered the bell. I was asking the woman who lived next door if she knew when they would open, but she thought they were out of town. Just at that moment, the young painter came along, saying he knew where they lived. We went there, but found out they had gone to Bodrum. My young man then went to the parent's home, but they had gone with them. He said he would mail my clothes to me. I wrote down my name and address, and was about to give him the money. This, he would not take, because he didn't know how much it would cost. I wanted to pay enough to cover whatever it would be, but he insisted *no*.

At 8:00 a.m. the next morning, just as our taxi drove in to take Joan and me to the airport, along came my friend, tearing down the street with my bundle of laundry. He thought the laundry folks would be back by midnight, so, sure enough, they were.

I sent him a nice supply of good paper and paint, for which he sent me a nice "thank you" card and a Turkish scarf.

The greatest experience I had in Turkey, was the time I was given the home



Rami Koç's name on his door at Simena,  
a true antique slab

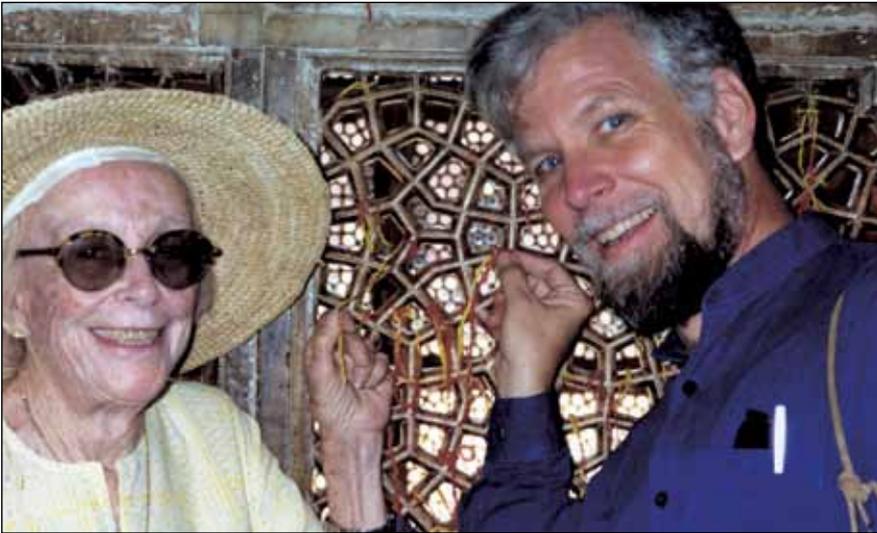
of Rami Koç, high on the bluff overlooking the Aegean at Simena. His home was built right on top of two "house tombs," which was illegal, but being the wealthiest man in Turkey, he could get away with it. It was right next to, and looked out upon, the ancient hilltop ruins where the Lykian fortress castle looms defensively, and where there is evidence that can be seen of Crusader, Byzantine, and Antalya times. That was one of the views that I painted a number of times. From the balcony of my bedroom I could look directly down on an ancient sarcophagus half buried in the transparent turquoise sea. The plaque at the entrance door to the house was an ancient Greek ram, taken from some building in the area. Koç's name in Turkish is "ram." A few steps from the door

was an enormous ceramic urn nearly as tall as me, a Greek artifact also.

The caretaker of this estate and his wife, who lived in separate quarters on the property, supplied me with fresh water every day and, whenever I wanted a change from eating my own cooking by myself, led me down the nearly vertical hill to a tiny restaurant perched on the edge of nothing.

I did something in Istanbul that I never, never would have done in the states, or anyplace else, for that matter. One day I was going to exchange some money, but it was necessary to cross a very busy thoroughfare with no stop lights. I had been waiting for quite a while, but the cars kept whizzing by. A young man came along, saying that he could see I couldn't get across the street. He stepped out into the street, held up both hands and the cars all stopped. We walked across. He asked me where I was going. I told him I was going to the money exchange about three blocks away. He said the one a block further gave a much better rate. He would show me where it was. Sure enough, he was right. After I received my money, back we went where I had come from, again the young man went into the street, held up his hands, stopped all traffic, and across we went. Sometimes you just know when to trust someone.

I have stayed at a number of hotels in Istanbul, but my favorite has to be the Yesil Ev, which means "Green House." It is an old refurbished mansion close to the Blue Mosque, has a delightful garden where dinner is served, and antique furnishings in all the rooms.



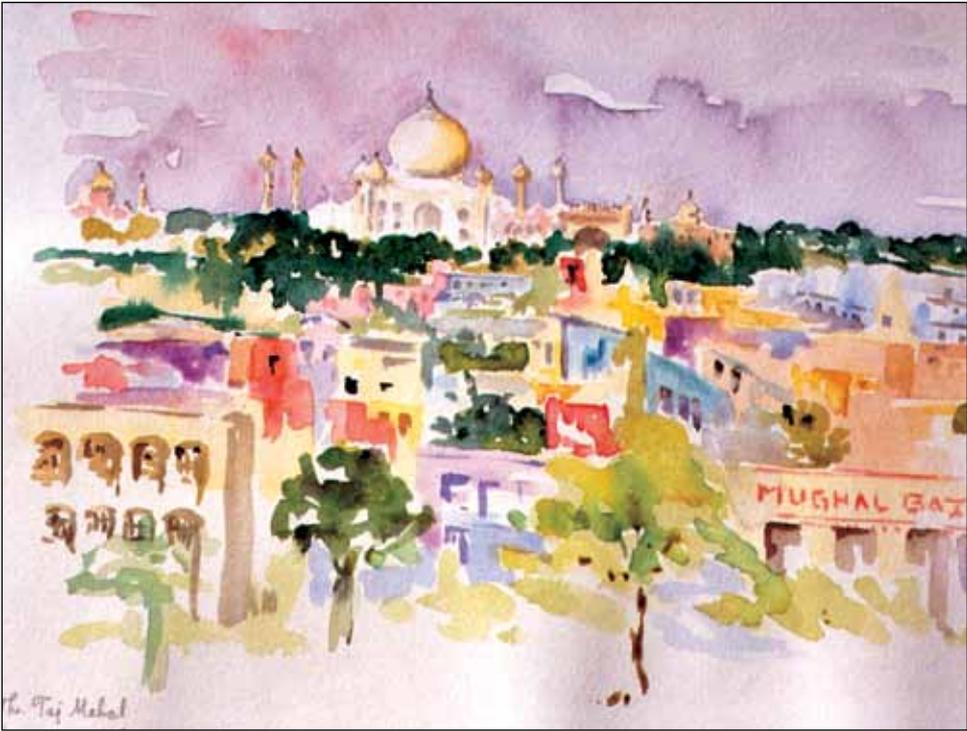
John Bowles, my “professor” in India

## INDIA

While I am talking about my favorite trips, I have to say that my March 2000 experience in India with John Bowles, my dear friend and former Stevenson student, has been the most fun of all. But then I keep saying that, it seems. John graduated from Harvard, studied art in London and Florence, and then received a master’s degree from Harvard as well. He knows Indian art inside and out. John also knows everyone, or almost everyone, it seems, in India—how, I’ll never know. John had every detail of the trip planned and reserved before we even started. My plane into Delhi arrived a day after he was expecting me. We stayed at the India International Center, our suite being the VIP Suite where we entertained John’s friends one evening. At a dinner that evening in my honor, I met a lot of very interesting Indian professionals, especially Dr. Jyotindra Jain (Director of Delhi’s Craft Museum, the country’s leading museum for tribal and folk arts), Dr. Professor Alok Rai, from the Indian Institute of Technology, Yas-hodhara Dalmia (an art historian), and architect Syed Mohammed Imran and his wife Latika Dixit, daughter of the mayor of Delhi. I was overwhelmed.

Our next stop was Agra for three days, where our Taj View Hotel suite had windows across one whole side of the room looking directly at the Taj Mahal. I did my first painting of the Taj from that window. There are no words to describe the ethereal beauty of this marble monument built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan to commemorate his wife Mumtaz Mahal (Exalted One of the Palace), who died in 1631 after giving birth to her fourteenth child. Seven months later the emperor started building this famous mausoleum, which took almost twelve years to finish. The gardens *chaharbagh*—a type associated with funerary architecture—were in pristine condition, probably spruced up to perfection because President Clinton was to arrive the following week.

I had purchased Indian clothes the day of my arrival, under the supervi-



View of the Taj Mahal from our room

sion of one of John's friends—three sets of *salvar* (pants), *kameez* (over-dress), and *dupatta* (scarf). One night we went by cycle rickshaw to dinner at the hotel where Clinton would be staying. What fun, especially coming home in the dark where the rickshaw driver kept riding in front of cars, over curbs, and in muddy ditches—and me in my best “outfit.” We liked our hotel a lot better, nicer dining room, better food, and none of the bare, all white interior. We thought that hotel had probably been selected for the president of the United States because of its bare lobby and common rooms that left no place for hijackers to hide.

Besides the Taj Mahal, there were other great palaces we visited, and painted, including the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah (otherwise known as the “Baby Taj”), Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri, and Sikandra (where the many large and bold cream-colored monkeys were a real nuisance, and made painting difficult by constantly trying to snatch away my hat).

The ruins of Sanchi, which date back to the third century, include a large *stupa* (the oldest such Buddhist monument in the world), surrounded by elaborately carved stone gates. It is John's favorite place in the country. Our room had two bathrooms, one for men, and one for women, a rather strange arrangement. Every day a sweet old gardener would greet me with a bow as I came out on the porch and present me with a small bouquet of flowers bound with a green straw. The gardens were ablaze in color. One day a group of about twelve monks arrived from Sri Lanka just as I had started a painting of the *stupa*. These monks

in their saffron robes were what “made” the painting.

While at Sanchi, we met John’s friends who were working on various projects at nearby sites. One was Julia Shaw, an archaeologist finishing her doctorate at Cambridge; she was surveying the innumerable archaeological features within a 750 square kilometer area around Sanchi. Another was Meera Dass, a Bhopal-based architect, who focused her study on the nearby ancient Hindu Caves of Udayagiri (dating back to the fourth and fifth century AD). We became good friends and still keep up an e-mail correspondence.

Meera and her husband Ishwar wanted me to give a slide lecture on Mesoamerican art at Vidisha, a town near Sanchi. I had brought slides, against my will, but John insisted. Everything was set. A good audience was assembled (we sat on cushions on the floor), but something happened to the projector. It did not work. I gave my lecture, or rather very informal talk—with no slides—to a group who knew nothing about Mesoamerica. It was quite a comparative question and answering session, with everyone seeming to enjoy it. I thought—why bother carting slides along?

In Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh (the largest state in India), we spent a whole day at the 200 acre National Museum of Mankind, mostly admiring fascinating displays of tribal art along its “Mythology Trail.” The museum’s director, Dr. Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty (who John had met at Harvard while they were both students), was already expecting me to give a slide lecture at the museum. Ha! That was why John wanted me to bring the slides. It was fun, and the projector *did* work, and there were a lot of questions from the audience, for the most part questions asking about comparisons of Indian and Maya design. After Sanchi, I knew what the questions would be like, so I was prepared.

Inside the museum, there were great murals by the Gond tribal artist Ram Singh Urveti, also a friend of John’s. He came over to our hotel before dinner to show us a lot of his new work. I bought six of his paintings, and John (who has quite a collection of Gond art) bought some also. Ram Singh was getting ready for a one-man exhibit in Bombay. We found out later that he sold every painting. I treasure those I have.

Next we went to Orchha, which is my favorite place in India. The archaeological site is divided in two by the Betwa River. The most fascinating to me was the Laxmi Narayan Temple (on a hill overlooking the main palace)—wall after wall of which is covered with murals showing chariots drawn by elephants, scenes of Rama and Laxman killing the demon Ravana, the five Pandavas fighting a pitched battle as described in the *Mahabharata*, Krishna playing the flute, Rama holding ceremonial court, scenes of Vishnu, and much, much more. We spent hours looking at it. Best of all was my teacher, who knew all about the stories being told.

When I was painting at one of the Gates of Orchha, a group of little children sat quietly right by me all the time.

We had wonderful quarters, a separate little house covered with bougainvillea, with a big bay window that looked out over wondrous views. Breakfast was brought to us in the little bay-dinette. It was perfect. As we were walking about town one day, I noticed a sign saying there was a tribal fair in a large sunken



Ram Singh, the Indian tribal artist

area. John said it was okay if we went in, although upper caste Indians would not go there. It surprised me how welcome we were. Little children clung to our clothes. We tried some of their food, and watched all kinds of things being made—molten lead jewelry, molten glass being blown into tiny bottles, toys being made for children, but not these children who probably would never get to play with them. It was sad.

The only place we saw any tourists was at Khajuraho. There we saw men in shorts, tee shirts, and baseball caps, with their name tags prominently displayed. In India, for a

man to wear shorts is just not done. Indians just looked askance, used to the dumb Americans and Germans. The reason travel agents bring everyone to Khajuraho is for them to see the thousand of depictions of what Westerners call “erotic art,” but which actually has religious significance in India.

Our man drove us from Orchha to Khajuraho. What a trip. I wouldn’t have missed it for anything. Cows, cows, cows, more sacred cows blocking our way for miles. I asked what would happen if a cow was hit by a car. John asked our driver. It took five minutes of explanations to John in Hindi before I got the answer. There are many problems—depending on who hit the cow, how bad it was hurt, if it died. If a government official or a politician hit the cow, nothing would happen. If an ordinary person hit the cow, two years in jail, plus a big fine. If the cow was injured but not killed, it would depend upon how long the cow had to be treated in one of the government’s animal hospitals that we had seen along the way—and on and on, always depending upon something. I asked what would happen if we accidentally hit a cow. The driver said, “Get the hell out of here as fast as we can.”

Besides plowing through cows, the scenes of daily living we passed were so interesting, whole families threshing wheat the old fashioned way with hand tools, entire villages where cow dung had been formed into flat pads about twelve inches in diameter and stacked neatly in decorative heaps, either along

the road or by every peasant's hut. This is let dry and then used for fuel, the only kind they have.

Next to Orchha, my favorite in all India was Benares and the Ganges. We stayed in an old mansion that had been converted into a small hotel called The Ganges View, owned by a friend of John's. We had the whole top floor and balcony to ourselves, from which we could watch the antics of men and boys throwing purple water all over each other on Holi Day, which was always on March 20th, a day like Mardi Gras, where different classes exchange roles for a day. The fellows below us along the river tried to induce John and me to come and join in the fun. No thanks. I didn't want my few clothes and my hair doused with purple dye.

John's good friend Ramachandra Pandit, better known as "Ramu-ji" (a tabla player and longtime administrator of University of Wisconsin's India Year



Painted along the Ganges

Abroad program at Benares), together with his wife, Dr. Alison Bush (a Canadian scholar of ancient Indian poetry), invited us to their home. They also invited Rabindra Narayan Goswami-ji, the famous sitarist who, along with Reamu-ji, has performed internationally, including the White House in Washington. They played a one hour concert. It was wonderful—and to think he came just to play for us.

John rented a boat that actually would seat about twenty people on open air benches sheltered by a roof to keep the sun out. We both took our painting things, me with my watercolors and John with his colored pencils, going slowly up and down the Ganges along the *ghats* of Benares (a continuous series of steps leading down from the city directly into the river), painting one scene after another as each unraveled before us—naked little kids swimming in the dirty water along with the water buffalo, playing on the steps of the building along the water—standing on their heads, turning somersaults, all naked—women bathing and washing their hair, washing their clothes, a cremation taking place where multitudes were gathered paying respect to the deceased relative. The cheapest cremation would have been by electricity, but if the family could gather any money, a wooden pyre was by far the most auspicious way to go. The remains, even if not completely burned would be put into the Ganges. We painted on the Ganges for two days, but I could have happily have continued for two weeks.

We flew from Benares back to Delhi, but instead of going into the city, we were met by our driver who took us to what must be the most elegant and exotic place in all India, the Nemrana Palace Fort, two hours out of Delhi. It was once a combined palace and fortress caravansary. Camels and elephants would take their riders and cargo right up into the palace that has now been converted into a hotel. It would be all but impossible to walk up that long roughened ramp in anything but Keds. Our quarters were unbelievably large and magnificent, furnished in fine antiques and beautiful paintings on the wall. The two bedroom areas and writing area were all one enormous room. The bath was likewise fit for a king. The tub, twelve feet long and six wide was filled by gold lion's heads spurting out water from their open mouths. A large pool, every morning filled with rose petals, was in the patio out our door. What a wonderful way to end a wonderful trip.

## CHILE

In 1992, when on my way to Easter Island, I first went south from Santiago to Puerto Montt in Southern Chile for a week to paint the lovely fishing villages. It seems as though everyone there must be a fisherman. They buy bright paint for their boats, then, with what is left, they paint their houses. The front may be blue, the roof green; door, yellow; fence, pink. It is such a lovely sequence of color—like a rainbow all along the shore. My favorite view was on the hill, looking down on the roofs of the houses, with hundreds of sail boats in the bay.

I found a wonderful taxi driver the first day named Jorge Valderas. He knew all the best places for me to paint—had the eye of an artist when it came to pick-



Puerto Montt, Chile



Beautiful Fruitilla in the Lake District, Chile

ing out views he knew I would like. One place I painted was on a precarious cliff—on the edge of nothing. He set me up, brought huge stones for me to put my paints on, and stayed with me all the time. One day he brought his two little boys, ages six and eight with him, about the time I was finishing a scene along the beach. I gave each of the boys paper, paint, and a brush, and showed them how to go about it. The eight-year-old Cesar caught on right away, could paint absolutely straight lines of a fence that went on for some distance, like the one I had been painting.

Jorge took me to Fruitilla, about an hour away, where I painted the lovely painted houses along the lake facing Volcan Orizaba. What a delightful small town. We also went to the river that comes from the glacier of Orizaba, where I saw a gorgeous scene of a field of yellow flowers that stretched as far as the eye could see, and a lone red barn with two black and white cows in the distance, which made me sit back and realize that this was real, and not a fairy book scene I was dreaming about.

## EASTER ISLAND

A full day in Santiago and then I took off with Mary Dell Lucas's group for Easter Island (Rapa Nui), a six hour flight into the middle of the Pacific, the middle of nowhere, one might say—2340 miles from Concepcion, Chile, 1400 miles from Pitcairn, the nearest inhabited neighbor. It is so isolated and difficult for ships to come near shore that boats no longer go to Easter Island. We stayed for eight days.

I had many surprises in store for me. I knew that Easter Island was known for the huge standardized, but all slightly different, standing stone statues, *moai*, that no one knows how they were built, but I did not know that there were about 1,000 of them on the island. More than 250 of them are erected on platforms, *ahu*, sometimes only one *moai* on an *ahu*, but up to fifteen. Others are scattered all over the island. It took some climbing to reach some that I wanted to paint, especially those by the Rano Raraku quarry. They ranged in height from two feet to thirty-two and a half, but that one was apparently too big and heavy for the islanders to move.

The group of six *moai* on a platform along the sea, the Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena, was the group I loved to paint the most. Four of the figures still had their hats (*pukao*) in place, and only one was without the head. To me, they made a very aesthetic and appealing group, especially being along the seas, as they were.

We climbed to Orango Village, where early inhabitants lived in low rounded rock shelters. To get inside one, I had to crawl on my hands and knees through the low doorway into a dark interior using a flashlight to see the carvings on the walls. Looking over the steep rocky edge, looking down upon the tiny island Motu Iti, and hanging on for dear life, we could see fantastic aboriginal carvings on the stone. The carvers must have been acrobats to be able to carve in such a precarious position.



Two *moai* on Easter Island

We climbed to the edge of a volcano where we could look down on the algae-green water, an intriguing scene I would have loved to paint. Then to make this a special time, we were fortunate to be on Easter Island for the Rapa Nui yearly festival of dances in native costume or lack of any wear at all except tattooing all over brown bodies. Festive boat races were held in reed boats like the ancients. Tiny Hanga Roa Village had its appeal also, especially to see the native wood carvers. The British Museum representatives were there also to buy pieces of the sculptors' work for the museum, but I had already bought the only beautiful ninety-six centimeter long Rapa Nui *ua* (power stick), and a Rongorongo board with the symbolic writing on both sides. The Brits wanted to buy my *ua*

from me, but I would not sell it.

The second time I went to Puerto Montt, Chile, was in 1996 with my daughter-in-law Valerie and new baby Jonathan. Most of the time was spent in Fruitilla right on the shore of the lake. The weather being perfect, I was able to do a lot of painting, my best in Chile. When it was time to leave for Santiago, our taxi was held up by new road construction so we barely made it to the airport. Having checked our luggage, we were in the small waiting room for boarding passengers. I set down the case with all of my paintings plus all of the rolls of film while I held Jonathan so Valerie could get her backpack on. Just then the announcement came to get on the plane. We dashed out. It was not until the plane had taken off that I realized I had left my painting case in the boarding room. Our flight was the last of the day, so the boarding room was locked. Upon arrival in San Francisco, we phoned a friend who worked at the airline office, explaining exactly where I had set the case. We suggested having an ad put in the papers offering a good reward, but were told that no one would pay any attention to that in Puerto Montt. We had to accept the fact that I had no paintings. This had to be an "inside job," as no personnel is allowed in the boarding room after takeoff. I suppose whoever stole my paintings either put them for sale on the sidewalk just outside of Puerto Montt where souvenirs are sold, or else sold them for practically nothing to hotels. I would like to go back and see.

## JAPAN

Japan—I had always wanted to go there, but it just never happened until Karen (the Karen Holly who went to France painting with me) and Conrad Asper called and said that 1998 would be their last year in Japan after having worked there for seven years. They wanted me to come while they were still there. They both spoke Japanese fluently. Conrad was Director of YMCA Japan, which meant that he dealt with large companies and foreign diplomats that were interested in Japanese youth. Karen worked for an international banking institute where she dealt with financial institutions from around the world, foreign dignitaries, and the Ministry of Finance. Both of their jobs were very demanding, taking their every moment of the day and into the night.

One day I went into town with Conrad. He took me to a local shrine near his office. Sitting on the steps of the shrine, I was able to see its reflection in the high glass building across the street. It was a typical Tokyo juxtaposition of old and new. I had been painting there for some time when a Japanese man came along and watched me for a while, but said nothing. Upon leaving, he left a yellow envelope by my paints. Packing up, thinking it was an advertisement for something he had left, I was about to toss it out, but opened it instead. Inside was the equivalent of \$2.00 US. Now I was puzzled. I met Karen for lunch, so she asked the waitress if she knew what that was about. Indeed she did. Evidently the man liked what I was painting, and was happy that I liked his city enough to be painting there. The envelope was a "thank you" gesture. I still treasure it as one of my fondest memories of my trip to Japan.

Children went to school six days a week, always dressed as if they had just bought a new outfit for that day. On the train, they were always bent over a book—not a moment wasted. I saw mothers leaving little five-year-olds at the huge central train terminal, going off in one direction to their work destination, while the little ones knew exactly how to negotiate those complicated train exchange sections that were all over the city. I never did figure out how. There were rubberized treads in all sorts of different patterns on the floors of all of the train stations. Blind people knew these signs and were able to transfer wherever the needed with no help from anyone. It was amazing.

One time Karen and I were visiting one of the large shrines when a group of six well-dressed school girls asked if they could interview me for their school project. They didn't want to interview Karen, as they could tell she lived in Japan and spoke the language well. They each had their notebook and wrote everything down. It was fun. We then noticed that there were dozens of schoolgirls with the same assignment. These same six girls later wrote to me in San Francisco enclosing an *origami* they had each made. What nice students.

Karen took some time off work so that we could go to Kyoto, Japan's old and still most historic capital. We rode the Nozomi Shinkansen (bullet train) into Kyoto, where Karen and I visited the Heian Shrine, Kiyomizu Temple, and the Silver Pavilion. When we visited the Heian Shrine, luck was on our side. There was a traditional Shinto wedding underway, so we were able to see both the beautiful bride and the groom in very traditional Japanese wedding attire. The bride motioned for me to take their picture. Apparently that would bring good



The Heian Shrine in Kyoto where Karen and I witnessed a wedding

luck to them. We both were able to do a number of paintings in Kyoto.

Because of Conrad's job, we were invited to a grand dinner and symphony put on by Rover, the British car company that often sponsored Conrad's charity events. This formal affair started out with a cocktail party that would beat all the cocktail parties I have been to put together, even the 100th Anniversary of The Explorers Club at the Waldorf Astoria, New York, in 2003, if one considers all of the exotic foods that were served. Then everyone was ushered into the famous Suntory Hall (opera house), where we had the best seats in the house to watch the symphony perform. It was wonderful. Then we returned back to the hotel for a banquet dinner. I visited with the British ambassador, Sir David Wright, a real down-to-earth person. I liked him. All the ladies received beautiful orchids in pots to take home. Overall, it was quite an affair. We didn't get home until the wee hours.

## SCOTLAND

Although I didn't get sick at any time working in the jungle or on painting expeditions all over the world, I seemed to have gained a reputation for breaking bones. On my first trip to Scotland in 1982, I had one of the worst breaks. It was just a year after Bob had died. I was scheduled to give a paper at the International Congress of Americanists (ICA) in Manchester, England. My friends Don and Lois Behnke went with me.

After living it up at Inverlochy Castle we drove over very narrow roads to St. Andrews, the golf capital of the world. I was walking along a street looking at books in a window when I stumbled over a broken section of the sidewalk that stuck up three inches above the rest of the walk. I fell and could not get up. I had a broken knee and would have to go by ambulance to Dundee where the Royal Surgeons were. So off I go with the ambulance siren on all the way to Dundee. I was ushered into the hospital and put in a curtained-off cubicle where no one came to look at me for an hour. That, after the siren blasting all the way there.

When I was brought back from surgery, I was in a cast from my hip to my foot. I also found out that the nurses and kitchen staff in all the hospitals in Scotland and England were on strike, and that there was only a skeleton crew. The Bank of Scotland had come and taken my purse, and I could not get it until I left. The one nurse in our ward made coffee for us each morning. For lunch and dinner, all we had was a thin soup with one meatball in it. A vendor came around each day selling cookies, sandwiches, candy, nuts, and newspapers, but as I had no money, I could not buy anything. All of the other patients looked to me like "death's row." If it hadn't been for two teenage girls who played their cassettes all the time, I would have gone nuts.

When it was time for me to leave the hospital, I was wheeled into an inner sanctum where the treasurer kept all the money, and where bills were paid. They had already taken out all the money from my purse to pay the hospital, as if I wouldn't pay. I was told to leave my crutches at the airport and they would be sent back to the Dundee Hospital. What was I supposed to do with no crutches?

A nice social worker came and saw that I was properly put on the train with two seats (one for my right leg) for the trip to Manchester where the ICA meeting was taking place. I did give my talk at the University, although on crutches that were very difficult to manage with such a large cast.

## ANGKOR WAT

Angkor Wat is nothing like Palenque, except the amazing growth of a city out of the jungle. But I should start with the first time I went to Cambodia with my son David in 1991. One of his client companies invited us to a gala celebration in Hong Kong. As David wasn't married, he took me, which was wonderful. There were parties every night featuring something special, gifts in our rooms that included silk embroidered kimonos for each of us, a lovely tea set, and more.

One free day we took a boat to China, hired a government car and driver, and spent the day visiting all of the sites the Chinese government wanted us to see. We went to a market where they sold everything; cats by the dozens were in cages, waiting for someone to buy them for supper. David said he was going to buy them all and let them loose, until I reminded him that as soon as he did that, they would all be grabbed, and in someone's dinner pot.

In Bangkok we stayed at the Royal Orchid Hotel, a large elegant hotel along the river with a wonderful view of boats passing by. Our suite had two bathrooms, and was furnished with fresh flowers and exotic fruits daily. I bought



David and me in Hong Kong at the reception

a lovely pair of sapphire and diamond earrings. It was on the streets where we found the real bargains though, lovely men's silk shirts for \$5.00 US that would have sold for \$200 in the States, and Thai silk ties at "give-away" prices.

David said he had to get back to work, but I stayed and went to Chiang Mai. As the plane landed, I grabbed a taxi to the hotel, asking the driver if he knew of anyone I could hire by the day to take me all over northern Thailand. He said that if the hotel did not have anyone, he would do it. Immediately I had a driver, Thana Rawmalee, who spoke good English, knew everyone in the villages, and was a delightful companion. Every day he would pick me up at 6:30, and off we would go for the day, sometimes not returning until 9:30 or 10:00 at night.

In Chiang Mai, we went to the Wats Chedi Luang, the Wat Chiang Man, and the Wat Phra Singh where we saw many young monks in their saffron gowns getting ready to make their morning pilgrimage for food around town. Seven miles out of town we climbed the 290 steps to the top of the Wat Phrathat. What I remember most of all about that temple was all of the gold. Gold everywhere. We bought little pieces of gold foil to add on to the Buddha, as did everyone else.

One of the most exciting places was the elephant training camp. There were still over 40,000 elephants in Thailand when I was there. We sat on log benches watching them take baths, move huge logs, and even play with their babies. Lo and behold, sitting right next to me, in this far-off jungle, was one of the mothers from Robert Louis Stevenson School. Neither of us could believe it. I rode an elephant up over the hills, through the jungle for about thirty minutes on a very jarring ride, but loads of fun.

But going up with Thana to the Golden Triangle, 208 miles from Chiang Mai, was the best. He knew all of these hill tribe people—old women whose front teeth were all of gold, dozens of little naked kids running in glee as soon as they saw him, knowing that his pockets were full of candy, the high villagers with rings of gold around their necks so tight I thought they must choke. They wore gorgeous colored multi-tiered hats. Old men were sitting around playing dice and smoking tobacco. No, not really tobacco; this was the country of opium poppies, illegal, but who knows. Then on to Mae Sai on the Burma border where troops of soldiers keep an eye on the road, ready to shoot anyone trying to cross. It was here that we went to a jade factory that made beautiful Burma jade rings. I had always wanted one, and I knew exactly what I wanted. After much bargaining, I finally got the ring I wanted.

On the way back we sidetracked some miles to a Wat where a German, turned monk, lived. He was a friend of my friend Waldemar Sailer from San Miguel de Allende, who told me that the monk would be delighted to see me, and that he spoke English. He invited us into his open-air home, and his monk-in-training, a boy of twelve in orange tee shirt and shorts, served us tea and biscuits. We spent a delightful hour with him, hearing how he had become so disillusioned with the world fifteen years ago that he came here and became a monk. He spends his every day now in prayer.

Then in November 1998 Claudine Marken and I went to Bangkok and Angkor Wat.



Our friend, the German monk in Thailand

The first two days we spent in Bangkok at the Royal Princess Pathumwan Hotel, right next to the Mah Boon Krong shopping center, and across from Siam Square. The next day we took Bangkok Air to Siem Reap, staying at the charming Angkor Village, right at the edge of Angkor. Our guide Koy (So) with Phnom Penh Tourism (the Siem Reap branch) was terrific. He picked us up every morning after breakfast in our “floating” hotel, and we spent every day with him from morning til night. We saw no tourists to speak of, and yet we understood that the following year they were coming in droves. I guess we really were lucky.

Angkor Thom (within Angkor), once a fortified city, is said to have once had a population of one million inhabitants. It is enclosed within a square wall eight meters high and twelve kilometers in length, which is encircled by a moat 100 meters wide, once the home of fierce crocodiles. It is now so entwined and held together by the massive roots of immense trees that they are the only means by which the buildings stand. These roots look like molten lava flowing from an active volcano. We had to be careful where we went for fear of stepping on a mine. A little boy about eight years old with a permanent grin on his face attached himself to me the entire time we were there, even while I was painting the aesthetically beautiful roots of a tree holding the temple doorway in its clutches. The only people we saw were men who had either one, two, or three limbs blown off by the mines set by the communist-led Khmer Rouge, who caused the deaths of fifteen percent of the Cambodian people.

We drove approximately twenty-three kilometers from Siem Reap to Banteay Srei, over a muddy, rocky, very poor roadway that had been cleared of mines about 250 meters on each side so that farmers could grow some rice. Be-



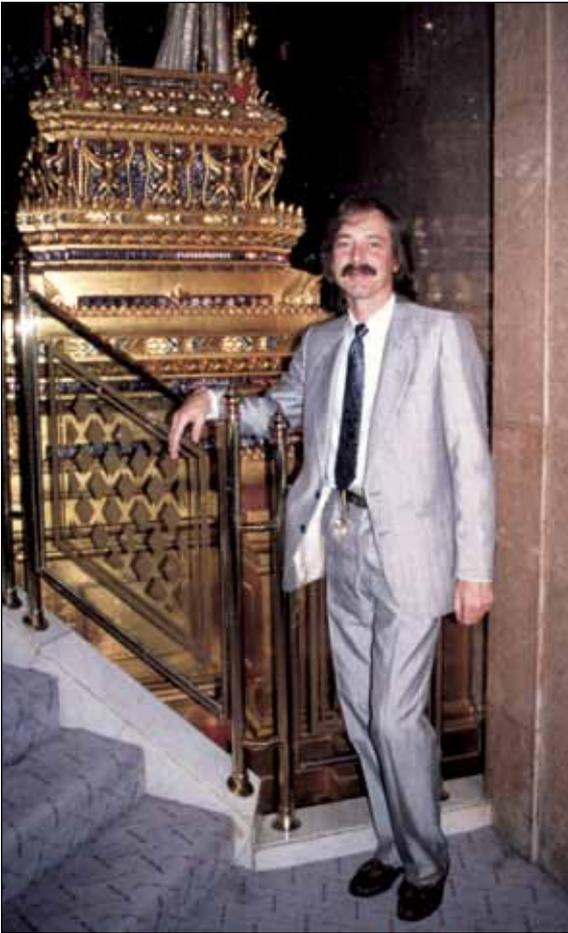
The roots of trees in Angkor Wat are holding temples together

yond that, the area was still filled with mines, some even in the so-called cleared area. To think that half a nation could just kill their relatives and neighbors for no reason, other than that they didn't believe as they did, is unthinkable. They didn't ask, they just killed, killed, and killed some more, until everyone was dead. Along the road we saw several signs that read, "If you see a land mine—one of you stay right there and don't move. The other go notify authorities and direct them to where the land mine is."

A school half way between Siem Reap and Banteay Srei had a beautiful fence of white columns such as one might find on a chateau in Southern France, that went on the distance of a city block. No kids. They only go to school when they want to, and that is never. The cost of the fence alone could have fed a large number of children for a year.

Banteay Srei, with its lovely pink sandstone and laterite temples, and beautiful voluptuous celestial maidens carved in stone, has to be one of my favorite places in the Angkor world. It was also a perfect place to paint. The sun shone on the sandstone bringing out multiple shades of pink, rose, and burnt umber. I could have painted here for a week instead of just one day.

Angkor is huge, twenty-three kilometers in length, all of it fairy tale wonderful, unbelievable. About 5:30 when the light cast perfect shadows on the eastern front to Angkor Wat, I sat on the bank across from the wide moat of shining water, while I painted until dusk. Crossing the long walkway that led to the entrance, we met groups of skipping children and women in colorful silk gowns, all either carrying a baby, or one about to be born, but more often than not, carrying a baby in their arms and also their womb, and holding the hands of one or two wee toddlers.



Greg Giustina, my former RLS student, took us to lunch here

At Ta Prohm, it was the huge smiling face above a doorway about to collapse that I couldn't take my eye from. Surely that beautiful head, as tall as me, would soon crumble to unrecognizable shards. At the Elephant Terrace, backed by long rows of monster sculpture, as well as dozens of marching war elephants, men were trimming trees astride elephants, while other elephants were hauling the trimmings away. The World Monument Foundation was working in this area, the only place where any preservative restoration was being undertaken at Angkor. Their job looked almost impossible—whole sides of buildings leaning over thirty degrees were being shored up with just a few planks. No, we didn't walk near them.

When I painted at Phimeanakas, a group of little children watched me all the time. When I blew on the paper to

help the paint dry, they made fans of palm and waved them across the paper, knowing they were helping. I was touched, so didn't stop them. Bayon was exquisite with its 500 meters of war elephants, horses, and foot soldiers depicting a battle that took place on the river or the Great Lake. Daily life was beautifully carved in stone along the walls of one temple—men carrying rice in pots strung on a pole, smoking opium, birthing, playing chess, lowering a pig into a boiling tub of water, beating rice, dog fights, craftsmen hammering, preparing fish, prostitution, and betting at cock fights.

While at Angkor, I was taking note of things similar to Maya. There were some, but probably a lot more, if I had just been looking for them more carefully. Mike Coe, who although a Mesoamericanist has written a book on Angkor Wat, has probably noted a lot more than I did. I saw similarities in Baphuon, Angkor Thom, where hunters were shooting birds with a blow gun, like the Maya Hero Twins; holes in buildings from which doors were swung as for example Palenque's House A; corbelled arches, and cruciform arches, irrigation ditches,

raised fields as in Belize and Campeche, and palanquins (some roofed), as on Maya vases.

From Siem Reap we returned to Bangkok for a couple of days, having a great dinner at the Oriental Hotel, guests of my former student Greg Giustina from Stevenson School.

## AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

My good friend Peter Mathews, whom I have known for thirty years, teaches at Latrobe University in Melbourne. In 1998 he invited me to visit him and Janet and have an exhibit of my rubbings and my archaeological paintings at the Latrobe Art Gallery. The Rubbing Exhibit had all the “glyphers” intrigued by the hieroglyphic text from the Palenque Bench in Temple XIX. Those who attended the exhibit seemed to appreciate seeing Maya hieroglyphs as well as watercolor paintings from Mesoamerica, as neither had ever been shown in Australia before.

I went alone on the Ghan train to Adelaide and Alice Springs, a two-day first class trip where I met many really nice people, most of whom were from London. Pat Gladwell from Billericay, Essex, UK, and I became good friends and met again when we were in Alice Springs. I was not impressed with Alice Springs. It was too commercialized, with souvenir shops everywhere and stores selling Aboriginal paintings at ridiculous prices.

I painted at the first Alice Springs telegraph station, restored as it had been between 1895 and 1905. This station was midway along the Overland Telegraph Line from Darwin to Adelaide that played a key role in Australia’s develop-

ment. Opened in 1972, the line reduced Australians’ isolation from the rest of the world. Now messages from Australia and beyond could reach Europe in just hours, instead of many days by sea.

My favorite place in the Outback was Ayres Rock, where I stayed in the Sails in the Dessert Hotel, an elegant place out in the “no-where.” A guide would drive me the fifteen minutes to “The Rock” where I painted and would come and get me when I wanted to go somewhere else, all free. Ayres Rock is huge, six miles around it if you wish to hike, which I did not. It takes up the whole



Peter Mathews, my pal from long years past, 2005

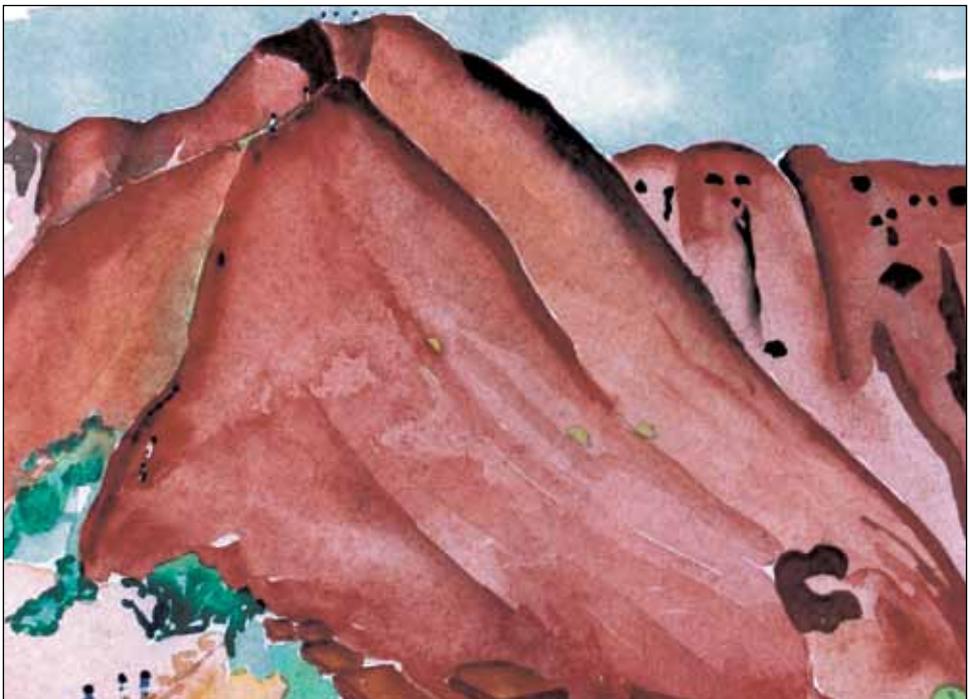
of one's vision, nothing else to see. Spectacular. I wanted to paint the gorgeous deep reddish purples that changed color every half hour. I also painted at The Olgas, about one half hour from Ayres Rock. Again, the reds changed before I could even get the paint on the paper. I could have stayed a week just painting here.

It took two days to get to Alice Springs from Melbourne on the train and plane to Ayres Rock, but it took five hours to fly from Alice Springs down to Melbourne at a cost of \$313.50 AU one way. That showed me how huge Australia is.

A few more days with Peter and Janet, and then off to New Zealand, arriving in Auckland at midnight in pouring rain. By morning it was just drizzling. I was able to paint a very satisfying painting of all the boats in the Auckland harbor that David immediately wanted a soon as he saw it. It is now in his yacht in Victoria, B.C. The windows in every store in Auckland were full of black rugby outfits, tee shirts, sweaters, coats, caps, everything. New Zealand is an "all out Rugby" country. There is nothing like it anywhere else.

I was headed for the Bay of Islands in the northern-most part of the North Island at Russell, where the America's Cup had just finished a short time before my arrival. I stayed at Okiato Lodge, a short drive out of Russell, a beautiful resort. A great place to paint.

I thought I would get blown away the day I went on a Kings Dolphin Cruise out into the ocean. It was so rough, the captain was constantly yelling at all of us to hang on. I and several others were trying to take pictures of the dozens of



Ayers Rock, Australia, a beauty

dolphins that were leaping out of the water. I hung onto the rail with one arm wound around the rail, and with my right hand shooting my camera, just hoping I would get a good picture. I did. We saw two dolphins carrying their newborn babies on their underside. They do this until the young are sometimes one or two years old. The captain said that in all the years he has been sailing, he has seen this only once before. Twice in one trip—he couldn't believe it.

## SPAIN

I have attended and given a paper at many meetings of the International Congress of Americanists around the world. The meeting in Granada, Spain, in 1987 was one of more exciting ones, possibly because of its exotic locale. Wiggie Andrews and I had flown into Madrid where we met Felix Villalba, who had worked with us on the Chichen Rubbing Project. After being entertained by him in Madrid, the three of us drove to Granada, passing mile after mile of olive orchards—nothing but olives. Half-way there we had trouble with the car, so Felix let us out at a wayside pub off in the nowhere while he went to look for a mechanic. It was not the greatest place to be. Wiggie and I, especially Wiggie, had quite a time keeping the drunken farmers off us. Felix couldn't figure out why we threw ourselves all over him in delight when he arrived two hours later. We had made it known that we were waiting for Wiggie's husband who would be along any moment, otherwise why would two women be way off at that lonely pub by themselves?

Wiggie and I gave our paper, as did our friends Will Andrews, Ed Kurjack, and Arlen and Diane Chase. I spent every possible moment at the Alhambra, being carried back to the opulent days of the Arabs. The filigree and mosaic work is some of the finest I have seen anywhere. The Court of the Lions was one of the grand places, as were the apartments of the rulers. I even did some painting in between moments of wandering all over the Alhambra and attending meetings.

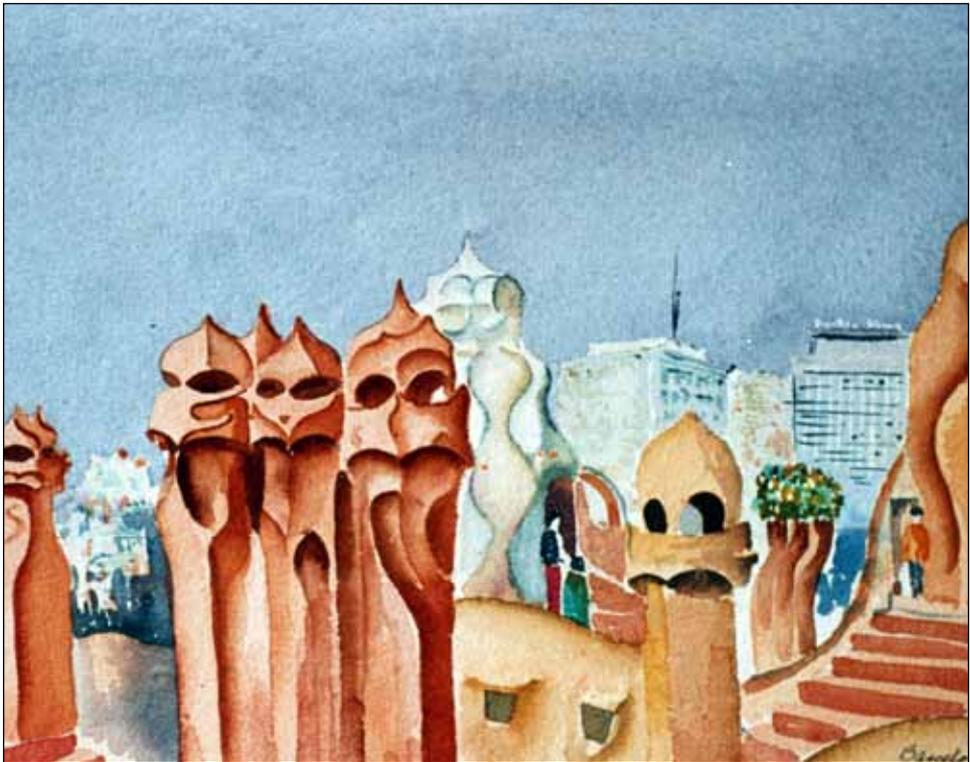
After the conference Will and Patty Andrews and I drove all over Spain. With their perfect Spanish, they had the ability to find great places for us to stay at very low prices, something I would not have been able to do myself.

In Carmona, the ancestral home of my co-worker at Chichen Itza, Carlos Carmona, there is a *parador* within the walled small town of very narrow streets. We had lunch there at the same time a convention was taking place. It certainly was not an archaeological convention, where the dress is "anything goes." These attendees were all smartly dressed, women in long fur coats and beautiful dresses and plenty of jewels, the men in black suits and ties. Toledo, a large city with beautiful cathedrals and Arab-type buildings, was our last stop before Madrid. The weather had turned bitter cold, and with the rain it was difficult to find places where I could safely paint. Will had to get back to Tulane as he had classes to teach, but I planned to stay, and with hopes of the rain letting up, have a chance to paint. I was freezing cold when they left, so I went back to my hotel planning on getting in a nice hot tub of water, and then crawling into bed. No such thing. There was no hot water, nor was there any heat in the room. The

next morning the weather had not changed, so I decided to go to Madrid. It was a Saturday, and no banks were open to get travelers checks changed. I had just enough cash to get a taxi to the train, pay the fare, and just enough, I figured, to get to my hotel from the train station.

I told the taxi driver my hotel was on the Plaza de Cortez. He looked at me, wondering what I was talking about. Well, this driver must be new that day, I thought, if he didn't know where the most prominent plaza in the city was located. I showed him my map. "Oh," he said "Plaza de las Cortes," quite different from Plaza de Cortez, no such thing. All the way into town, I was watching the meter, not where we were going. When we came to the corner where my hotel was supposed to be, everything was boarded up. I looked at the meter and my cash. I had no more, but I saw a hotel across the street, the Palace Hotel. I paid the driver and got out at the hotel, went inside, and told the man at the desk to hold my luggage while I went to find a bank.

I walked all over, but could find no bank, but coming around again, I saw an American Express office right across from the hotel. But even luckier than that, I saw the name of the hotel I was supposed to find, right across from the American Express on the corner, the name in a tiny bronze sign that said "Hostal Residencia Mori, Piso 3." In I went, got in a tiny elevator and went to the third floor and down the hall where a tiny plaque said Hostal Residencia. Yes, they



Gaudi art was what took Blair and me to Barcelona

had a small room, more like in a ski lodge, but nice and warm and spotlessly clean, hot water and a big tub. The rate was \$15.00 US per night. I said I would take it for three nights.

I went back to the Palace Hotel to get my luggage, but they had already checked me in, and to get out I would have to pay one night's charge. So I stayed, as I had to pay for it anyway—\$200.00. It was Christmas week and the lobby was taken up with an enormous Christmas tree where carolers were singing. I had dinner by the Christmas tree listening to the carolers. The next morning, after breakfast, I checked out with my luggage. The doorman wanted to call a taxi for me, but to his amazement, I simply wheeled my suitcase across the street to my very nice \$15 per day room.

The next time I was in Madrid was when I was tracking down artifacts that had come from Palenque, so was welcome everywhere I went. I was invited to the Biblioteca Nacional by some scholar friends of mine to see the *Codex Tro-Cortesianus* (the Codex Madrid). That was a real treat. The workers in that department had not even seen it, so when I was taken into the "inner sanctum" they came also. The codex was in three wrappings, each having to be signed for each time it was opened. When the codex itself appeared, it was handed to me. I was almost afraid to touch it. One thing I noticed was that the first pages were much better than those at the end, more carefully drawn and more carefully painted. This surprised me, because I had never noticed that when viewing the best copies.

Blair and I went to Barcelona in 1997, mainly to see the Gaudi art. There was a great *tapas* restaurant on the Plaza that we frequented almost every day; in fact, we only went to a proper restaurant once. We had a field day painting in Barcelona, painting at almost every Gaudi building.

## ROME

The head of Club Med, Enzo Iale, has offices in Paris, but his home is just out of Rome. He had been collecting Palenque figurines for a long time. He told me that his parents would love to have me come and stay with them in Italy and photograph his entire collection, as it had never been photographed. He believed that these artifacts should be catalogued, so it always made me wonder why he was collecting them in the first place.

Bob and I flew to Rome in July 1979. Enzo's parents were delighted to have us, and although they didn't speak a word of either English or Spanish, we got along fine. The first evening there, they invited all of their relatives to dinner to meet us.

The next day I started unpacking the collection that had never been unpacked. The Iales could not understand why they couldn't take us all over Italy instead of my photographing every day. We did go to some great places, Roma Antigua, which intrigued me so much we went three times, the Vatican, and all over Rome. I have over 1100 35mm color slides of Enzo's figurines. Counting all of the 35mm color slides from Palenque, and those from collections, plus photographs from galleries and museums in Europe that Wiggie Andrews and I discovered in our hunt for things from Palenque that were no longer there, I

must have over 3000 photographs and slides of Palenque figurines or parts of Palenque figurines.

Almost all of these have been documented as to provenance, size, color (if any), type—such as human, god, or god impersonator, animal, bird, woman, child, warrior—and details of costume, plus whether hand-made or mold-made.

## SWITZERLAND

I love Switzerland, but then I guess I can say that about so many of the countries where I painted. I first went there shortly after working at Tikal, visiting my colleagues from there—Hans-Ruedi Hug and Hattula Moholy-Nagy. I flew into Zurich, stayed at the small Hotel Adler on Rosengasse 10, in the middle of



Schaffhausen, Switzerland

“Old Town” and one short block from the canal, right on the Hirschenplatz and Niederdorf Str. where everyone seemed to congregate. I have stayed at the Adler many times.

The time I visited my friend Silviane Sandoz, we went not only to Zurich but just about everywhere else in Switzerland. Silviane was a medical receptionist in Nyon, who had a week’s vacation to show me around her country. When in Nyon, I stayed at her home with her two daughters. This was right next to the castle where, as a child, Silviane attended school. We went to beautiful Interlaken, and on up the winding road to where we took the bus to Mittelallalin and the Drehrestaurant Metro Alpin, at an altitude of 3500 meters. I bought a great alpine hiking stick before we started, because after getting off the ski tram, it was quite a hike over ice to the restaurant that turns continually, but very slowly, around and around. It was great fun watching the daredevils who jumped off into space from this lofty precipice with only their feet attached to a tiny shoe for landing, while we sat by the window eating hot dogs and sauerkraut and drinking beer.

In 1991, I went to Schaffhausen, staying at the famous gourmet “Rhein Hotel Fischerzunft,” where my daughter Barbara told me I absolutely had to stay. Not only that, but I was supposed to eat a different specialty dinner every night, and take notes and make sketches of everything I had. All of this because I had the



My hotel, The Three Ostriches, was at the end of the Charles Bridge

good fortune of having a daughter who was a chef in the process of writing a cook book. I painted many paintings there, but also in Stein am Rhein, where I was entranced with the fronts of buildings completely covered with whimsical paintings such as were on the "Hotel Restaurant Adler." I painted quite a few pictures while in Schaffhausen, quite different than the scenes of France.

## PRAGUE

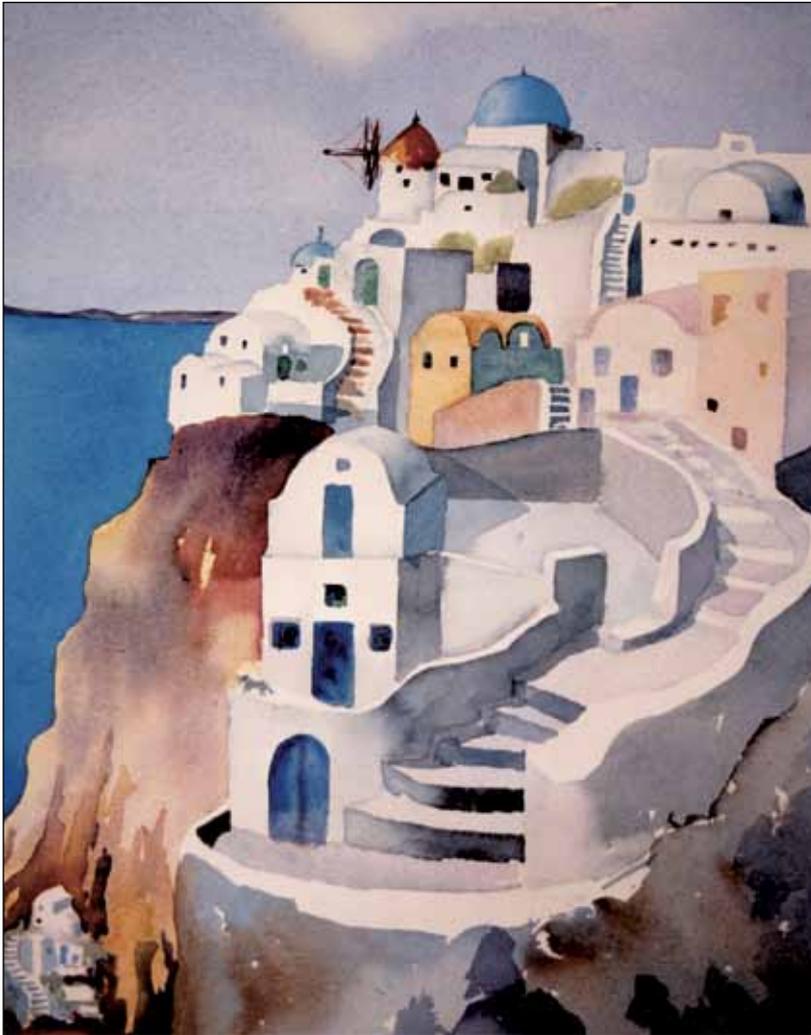
Prague, a painter's paradise, was very different architecture-wise from the rest of Europe. It is one of continent's most beautiful and wonderfully preserved cities. I loved my ten days at the delightful little Hotel U Tri Pstrosu (The Three Ostriches), at the Mala Strana side of the Charles Bridge that crosses the Vltava. My room was small, but so perfect—I could lie on my bed and look up at the ceiling painted with Renaissance scenes, or look out my window at the bridge, so close, listening to the musicians playing below me. Singers and musicians appeared in clusters all along the way. Whatever your music taste is, stop there, sit on the pavement, and enjoy. The few cents you throw in the pot seems more worthwhile than the expensive operas in the town's center.

I spent days painting, marveling at everything before my eyes. Puppets in Czechoslovakia have been famous since the seventeenth century. So I went to the Puppet Theater one evening. It was packed, and what fun.

A violin concert held in the top-most room of the building across from the Clock Tower, put me in touch with some very good violin players, and also gave me a chance to communicate with a small group of people seated in a small room. It was like going to a neighborhood gathering where good music could be listened to with friends.

I had come to Prague from Istanbul. The young man sitting in the seat next to me and his sister were returning from a few day's holiday in Istanbul. They had come to Prague five years before with no money, but an appreciation of Czech art. They had set up a business several places in Prague where they would translate letters, send faxes, and things like that. They lived in a very small apartment with no furniture to speak of, just boxes and sleeping bags, but they had a knack of knowing good art and where to find it. They spent nothing on themselves, but put every spare cent they made into buying Czech art. At the time the young man was telling me all of this, they already had bought over one hundred Czech paintings. They invited me to come and have a meager meal with them and see their art. They were not selling it, but planning to eventually return to the United States and take it with them. At the price today of Czech art, they must be doing very, very well. They were a nice couple, and I enjoyed them.

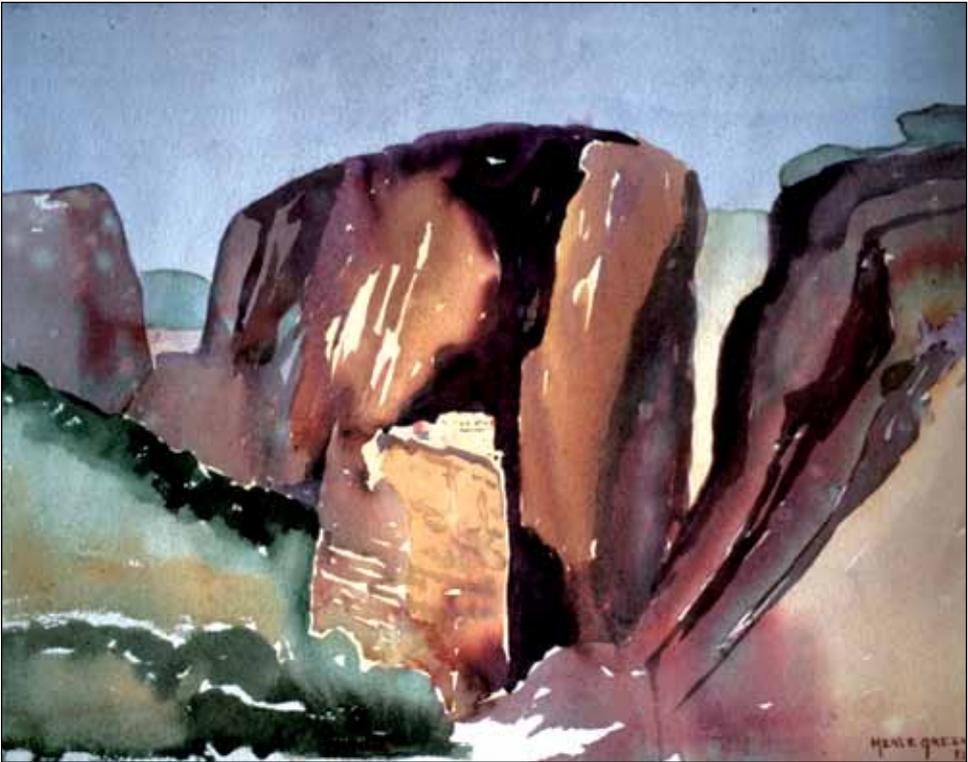
While in Prague. I went to the Karlstejn castle, seventeen miles out of Prague. What a spectacular place. There was a lot of climbing to see the whole place, but the frescos on the walls were well worth it, as were the living quarters of the knights. A woman and her two daughters and I had become acquainted, so we had lunch together at a nice restaurant at the foot of the castle. A lot of times traveling alone is a great opportunity to get to know people from other countries, and share thoughts about what we have seen, such as this proved to be.



Stayed on Santorini for two weeks

## GREECE

Looking back on some of the great experiences I have had reminds me of the month I spent in Greece in 1993 in the painting classes with AWCS artist Jeanne Dobie. There were seventeen of us. We met each other in Athens, and from there went to Meteora, several hours north of Athens, where thousands of sheer, towering rocks formed in the Tertiary period are awe inspiring. There is nothing like it anywhere. Of the twenty-one monasteries that once stood on these rocks, six function today. One that we visited was the Monastery of the Transfiguration, built on the largest rock of Meteora at a height of 475 meters above the Pinios River. It was first built in 1380, then restored in 1387. The fine frescoes dating to the sixteenth century are worth all the trouble getting there. Until recently, the only access to the monastery was by rope ladders and a rope hoist. We climbed



I painted on the precarious Meteora rocks 475 meters above the river

along narrow passages with small steps hewn in the rock. When these monasteries were built, provisions had to be hoisted up the 475 meters by rope with a net bag attached to it.

We painted, sitting precariously on sloping rocks so high up that people below could not be seen. It was a tricky business, but fascinating. I was painting on one huge boulder high in the clouds. I had just finished three paintings when it started to rain. No protection. We had a hard enough time carrying our gear, let alone things like umbrellas or ponchos. Yes, it rained all over my paintings. But it did something to them that I call the “Meteora Touch.” They were very different, but beautiful. Two of them I sold as soon as I returned home.

From Meteora we went to the Greek Islands, Santorini and Mykonos. I loved every bit of it—Mykonos with its winding little streets and tiny seaport, no tourists, just us—another painters’ paradise. The intense blue of the sea, the white buildings piled on top of each other, set against the sun, became a multitude of different shades of dancing color. We painted from early morning until around 4:00 p.m., when the wind came up so fierce that I was sure I was going to blow right into the sea. Santorini was great, with its steep streets, its hidden alleys, and building in shapes so unbelievable one would have thought we were in never-never land.

Before dinner every day we gathered together for a critique of our paintings. When the classes were over and everyone went home, I had fallen so in love



How I love Venice!

with Santorini that I stayed on for another week, as did Jeanne Dobie. What I had learned most from this experience was the use of pure transparent color. I have studied under many teachers—at the University of Washington, at the Instituto Allende under James Pinto, Fred Samuelson, and others, always learning something new that has helped me to develop my own particular painting style.

## VENICE

I could gladly return to Venice any time. It is one of my favorite painting places. The first time there was when I was living in Beaulieu-sur-Mer and saw an ad in the window of a travel agency about an incredible deal by bus to Venice. I signed up right then for this trip coming up in one week. My friend Anna Murdock

decided to come along also.

Anna bought a gondolier's hat, so I had to have one also. I was wearing it when they filmed me at Chichen Itza in the Imax film for the Museum of Civilizations in Hull, Quebec. The Museum of Civilizations invited me to the opening of the film, so I saw it both in English and in French. While there, I stayed with my long-time friend Stanley Loten and his wife Bobby. I had known Stan since our days at Lamanai, Belize, David Pendergast's site

Getting back to Venice, we tried Harry's Bar, but were not impressed. Painting and exploring all of the dead-end streets of Venice filled the days.

In 1998, Blair and I went to Venice on the spur of the moment after leaving Florence and Arezzo—a great painting week. I already had a reservation at a hotel a half block off Piazza San Marco in three weeks time, so called and made arrangements to also come immediately in addition. I was to be coming right back to Venice for the "Maya" exhibit, when I would be rooming with my long-time friend and travel companion, Betty Benson.

The invitational opening of the exhibit was a madhouse. They handed us a glass of champagne as we entered, but we had to gulp it down before someone knocked into us and spilled it all over our clothes. I did get to talk with Peter Schmidt, one of the curators of the show. We had been in a gondola the day before when we saw the Chac Mool sculpture from Chichen Itza, being transported by gondola to the Palazzo Grassi, hanging very precariously over the sides. The gondola was way too small for so large a piece. I held my breath. Just one big wave from a passing motorboat and the whole thing would have been in the canal. Luckily, it made it.

This was a great time in Venice for me, because Betty had worked on her master's degree researching Tintoretto, an artist who I did not know very much about. We saw everything he painted in Venice, all explained to me by the "Professor." It was great. Martha Macri and Judy Alexander were there that week also, so we all had a ball. One doesn't really need a street map of Venice because for the most part there are no street signs, just follow your nose. When an interesting church appears, go in. You will find a wonderful little-known painting of a famous Venetian artist.

## JOURNEY OF ODYSSEUS

Susan Dutcher and I went on the most wonderful expedition with The Explorers Club in September 2002: the "Journey of Odysseus." I have always loved that period in history, ever since I had a wonderful teacher in graduate school who thought nothing had ever been written except *The Iliad*. We read Lattimore's translation then. My professor would get so excited, he would jump up on his desk. His enthusiasm was contagious. We all felt the same way, would come to class early and stay late, as he did also. As soon as I knew I was to go on this trip, I read every translation of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* over again.

Susan and I shared a stateroom on the beautiful new "Sun Bay" that carried a crew of fifty to attend to eighty-five of us. On our free day in Athens we went to the Parthenon, the National Archaeological Museum, and a great bookstore just



With Susan at Ithaca, the homeland of Odysseus



The Sun Bay on our Explorers Club "Journey of Odysseus"



A sketch of Troy

three blocks around the corner from our hotel, the beautiful new Athens Plaza, the only decent hotel that was open. All of the others, as well as everything else in Athens, was being rebuilt for the 2004 Olympics. The city was a mess, construction everywhere.

The first night on the ship, we sailed for Turkey, the starting point for Odysseus on his ten-year trip finding his way home to Ithaca. As Don Marken and I had been to Troy on the trip with Mary Dell Lucas to Turkey, I decided I didn't want to wander through the mostly uninteresting remains of Troy, so I settled at the top of a mound with my painting things and proceeded to do a painting of Troy.

At 5:00 p.m. we sailed the 248 nautical miles to Nauplion, Greece, arriving there about 1:00 p.m., then going to the fortress town of Mycenae and the nearby Beehive Tomb. I couldn't believe its size—about thirty feet in diameter, and very tall.

We loved Nauplion, a Peloponnesian town situated on a bay of the Aegean where we would very much like to return for a couple of weeks, for me to paint, for Susan to swim. We went to Pylos where we saw King Nestor's Palace with the beautiful tile floors; to Valletta, Malta, where some went to the Calypso Caves where Odysseus was held for three years, and where he put out the eye of the Cyclops, and escaped himself by clinging to the underbelly of the ogre giant's largest sheep.

When we went to the megalithic prehistoric sites of Hagar Qim and the Tarxien temples, it reminded me of when Bob and I were in Cuzco, Peru. The



The Sun Bay crew held a midnight party for The Explorers Club

huge pink stones, some higher than a person, were perfectly put together. It was amazing. On following Odysseus, we went also to Trapani, Sicily, Naples, and the Cave of the Cumaean Sibyl, Pompeii, and Herculaneum—which I liked even better than Pompeii, more lovely frescos, painted buildings, and just more of everything than Pompeii. At Lipari, the magnificent temple like the Parthenon stood out all by itself against a background of virgin forest. At Taormina, we could see the mighty Mount Etna from the grandstand of the large Greek theatre. Only three days after we left, Mount Etna erupted. It was upheaving streams of smoke when we were there. Then Corfu, where Odysseus was washed ashore, and finally Ithaca, the homeland of Odysseus. A ship any larger than ours would not have made it into Ithaca. Lucky us. I fell in love with the tiny village immediately and started making plans as to how I could return for several weeks and paint there.

We went through the Corinth Canal at night, so we were all up watching our tight squeeze between very high banks all the way through. And from there back to Athens.

One of the fun nights on ship was a party given by the crew down in the kitchen for The Explorers Club. They kept making donut-like pretzels which we dipped in a dark chocolate sauce. They were so good we just kept eating and eating. What a fun party. What a great cruise.

## BELGIUM

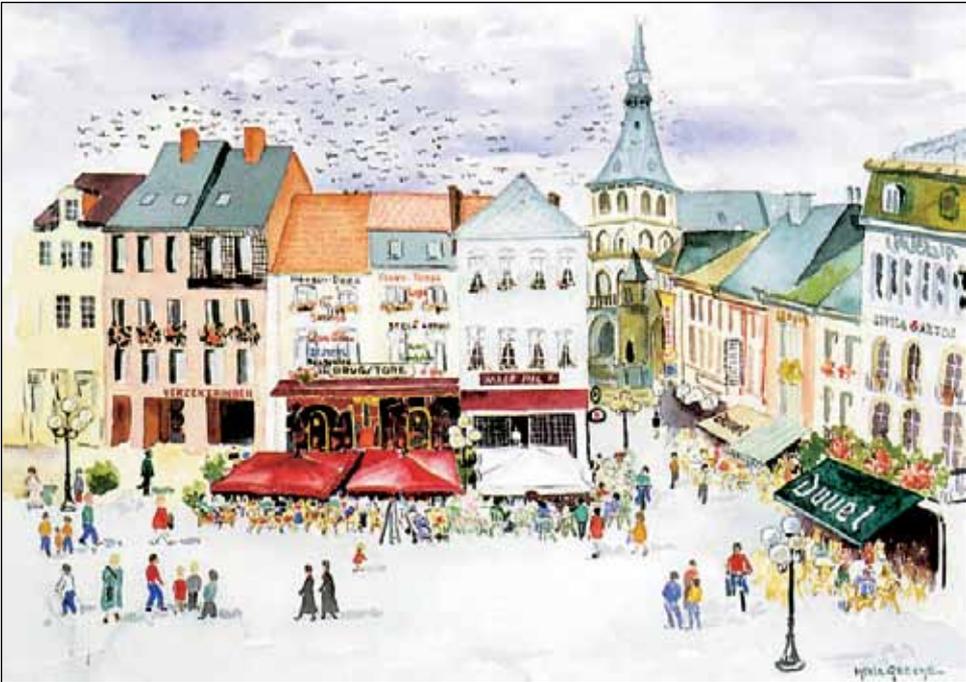


For eight years, starting in 1991, I went to Belgium, painting dozens of Belgium's Michelin Star restaurants, plus many great ones that did not carry a Michelin star. Barbara, my daughter, the chef and owner of Barbara's Cuisine, an upscale catering service in Palo Alto, and her husband Bob Southwick, who was a consultant for companies doing business between the United States and Belgium, had a home in the lovely Limburg town of Hasselt. I stayed with them for a month every summer, going with Barbara to all of the restaurants where she was consulting with the chef-owners. I do believe she knew every chef in Belgium. I painted all of them, most of the time while we were still eating.

One of my big surprises in Belgium happened my first summer there. Barbara and I had been to Brugge for lunch at a very fine restaurant, but were invited to dinner at the famous restaurant "Le Scholteshof" by the chef-owner Roger Souvereyns. I simply could not eat another thing, so begged off going. When



My daughter Barbara and Bob



Hasselt, Belgium, where Barbara and Bob lived half of each year

Barbara and Bob arrived home late, they woke me up to tell me the news. Roger Souvereyns had invited me to come and stay at Le Scholteshof for five days, so that I could paint there. My first reaction, other than being so elated by this generous invitation, was, "How am I ever going to be able to eat so much for three meals a day?" Barbara told me that I could have anything I wanted; all I had to do was tell them. As I arrived in the morning, I did not want a big lunch, as I knew that dinner was going to be fantastic. I told the chef I would just like some soup. Well, the soup I had was the best I had ever tasted—a large piece of gray ruffly in a mouth-watering broth, a meal in itself.

There were a few rooms for overnight guests, as people come from all over Belgium and France to the restaurant, and do not want to drive home after a three hour dinner. My room was charming, antique furniture and original Flemish paintings on the wall. The weather was perfect, so I painted both inside and outside the restaurant, inside doing "Roger's Famous Stove," "Le Scholteshof Dining Room," and "The Blue Room." I also painted a table full of red poinsettia's for the cover of a Christmas brochure for Roger. There were many views outside for me to paint, the pond with geese, the red apple trees, the entrance, the famous garden where every kind of fruit, vegetable, and herb used in the restaurant was grown. That was truly a wonderful five days. After that, every time I came to the restaurant, Roger presented me with a box of his special chocolates.

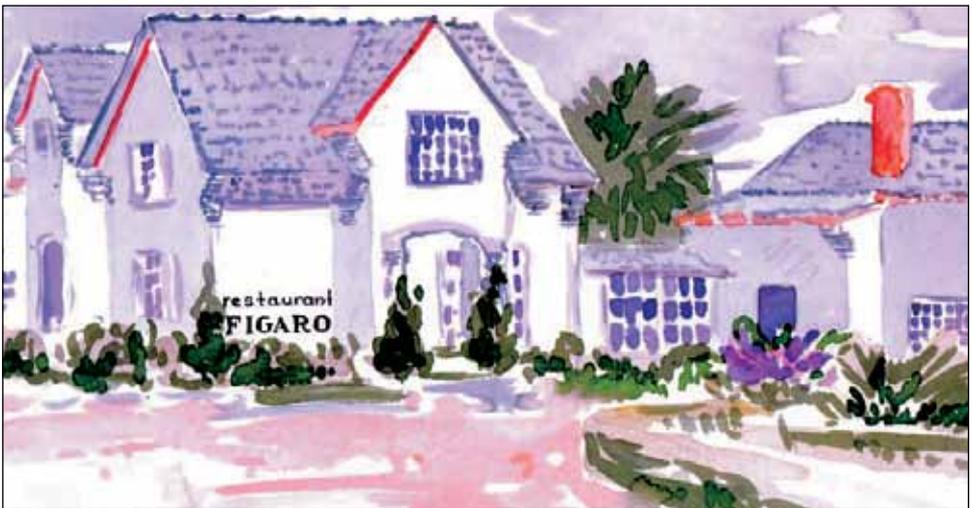
One of the appetizers that Barbara worked on with Roger Souvereyns was asparagus and salmon served on individual tablespoons. Parboiled asparagus tips wrapped in smoked salmon and topped with sprigs of chives were set in the



Le Scholteshof, where Roger invited me to stay for five days to paint

spoon on top of a tiny bit of vinaigrette. This was not only eye-catching, but delicious. Barbara scoured the antique shops and flea markets collecting old spoons, all different, and all lovely.

Another favorite Belgian restaurant was the “Figaro,” just outside of Has-selt. The chef-owners Jacques and Luk Colemont were good friends of Barbara and Bob, and soon became friends of mine also. This was a charming restaurant that served the best imaginable food. Either Jacques or Luk usually joined us for



The Figaro, one of my favorite places to eat in Belgium

coffee and dessert that was served in another room in a cozy setting with soft comfortable chairs. Hors d'oeuvres were served in a similar setting before going into dinner. This was the usual procedure in all of Belgium's best restaurants.

"Kasteel St. Paul," near Lummen, turned out to be the restaurant where we went when we had something to celebrate, like our birthdays, or Carolyn's coming. A more charming quietly-sophisticated setting for dinner would be hard to find. We were always greeted at the door by the owners Vera and Tony Robyns and their little white dog. Aperitifs and hors d'oeuvres were always served in a cozy room off the "Great Room." After dinner, we would return there for the many desserts and coffee, along with an hour more of good conversation with our host and hostess.

The "Auberge du Moulin Hideux," in Noirefontaine, was quite a ways from Hasselt, so we would stay overnight. That was always fun. This lovely rambling hotel restaurant that served "oh so good" Belgian food was made especially good by not having to leave, but being able to sit around the great fireplace and just relax. Also I had plenty of time to paint.

The "Hostellerie Tros Marets, Relais & Chateaux" out of Malmedy, situated at the top of a hill, was where we went for lunch one beautiful day in September, when the trees were all in their gayest dresses of orange, brown, burnt sienna, and gold. The owner, a good friend of Barbara and Bob, sat with us during part of the meal. I was painting the room while we were eating. I was getting very good at doing that. I asked the waiter for some water for my paint. He brought me a sterling silver antique bowl with water. That is the fanciest water ever to be used on any of my paintings.

There are wonderful restaurants within the city of Hasselt. "Restaurant Luk Bellings," referred to also as the "Savarin," is a charming aristocratic mansion house that has Tuscan wall decorations radiant with pastel colors adorning the walls. The intimate space created by Bridgitte and Luk Bellings was always welcome when a quiet evening was needed.

"Restaurant Cloverblat," not too far from Barbara and Bob's house, was frequented by us many times. The culinary expertise couldn't have been better. A small friendly place, here again owned by good friends. We ate there often.

*Moules* (mussels) in Belgium are served in dozens of different grades—jumbo, imperial, extra, and super. Belgian *moules* have to be the best. Every year, upon my



Lillian Bonner and her Restaurant Jean that served the very best mussels

arrival in Belgium, the first place I would have dinner was at “Restaurant Jean” in Hasselt, owned by our good friend Lillian Bonner, who, I swear, serves the very best *moules* anywhere. The standard order for *moules* in Belgium is two pounds per person, served in its large cast iron pot, and always with a huge order of French fries on the side.

Another Belgium “must” is the “Belgian Waffle” that one buys on the street, or best of all, at the train station. This is not what we think of when we think “waffle.” It has the appearance of a waffle, but the syrup is cooked into it, so it is not sticky or runny. You eat them with your hands as you walk along the street. The same with *frits* (French fries). You buy them on the street in a paper cornucopia. Traditionally, mayonnaise was squirted on them, but I have noticed lately that catsup is available (the U.S. version). French fries are not from France, however. During the war, the French soldiers liked them so much that they began to be called French fries. The name stuck.

The approximately forty-mile-long Belgian coast is the source of fish of every kind, taken daily to the towns of Belgium. It is said that Belgians consume over thirty-seven pounds of fish per person each year. Early one morning Barbara and I went from Brugge to Ostende in time to see the fishermen bringing their catches in. Along the waterfront, fish mongers had set up dozens of canopied stalls with fish of every kind set in small plastic dishes for tasters to buy. We bought dishes of *crevettes gris* (tiny gray shrimp), *moules*, fried calamari, fresh herring with onions, and fresh sardines, to name just a few that we had. Then for lunch, we went to a famous restaurant across the street and each ordered different fish. We stayed overnight along the sea at the “Auberge des Rois Beach Hotel,” just a short distance from Ostende. For dinner we had more courses of fish. Barbara wanted to try out every way top chefs were preparing seafood. Tallying that day’s feasting, we counted twenty-five different fish we had each eaten.

Bruges has some great restaurants also. Our visit to the Michelin three-star “Restaurant De Snippe” was not only a great success for the food, but a great place for me to paint. We sat at a table where Barbara and the chef-owner Huysentruyt sat discussing food, and I sat painting, looking toward the mural-painted wall across the room—all three of us eating gourmet food served impeccably, as only a three star restaurant would do. These restaurants were used to me painting at the table while eating. Sometimes, the food would get cold if a “wash,” for instance, demanded my complete attention. There were two gentlemen having lunch at a table by the mural painting. They had apparently noticed that I was painting, so stopped at our table when leaving to see what I had done. They liked it, but asked why I hadn’t put them in the painting. My reply was that I would have liked to, but I would never paint guests in a restaurant, that doing so would be intruding on their privacy and arousing the chef’s dislike for intruding on his guests’ privacy.

Chef Pierre Wynants of “Comme Chez Soi,” Bruxelles, the top three star Michelin restaurant in Belgium, told us that there were ten seasons of food, starting with black truffles in January and February. He only serves food that is in season at that moment. While interviewing him in Bruxelles one morning, Barbara and I were served samples of the hors d’oeuvres that were to be served at a special

luncheon that day. What a delightful way to have an interview.

“Restaurant De Egge,” just around the corner from Barbara’s and Bob’s, was always something very, very special. Marianne and Bernard Schenkel were special friend of ours. We were always delighted to see their two small children. Barbara always had some little toy for them when we arrived, and the little tots always jumped in glee when they saw her. The Schenkels seemed like part of our family. When Barbara passed away, Bob gave her copper cooking vessels to Marianne and Bernard. It was something Barbara would have wanted to do.

This is just a sample of the wonderful restaurants in Belgium where I went with Barbara, and painted scenes for the book she was working on, *Belgian Cuisine*. I have tasted a good many of Barbara’s creations, as she tried everything out in her “restaurant-style” kitchen in their house in Hasselt, where friends and chefs came to partake. I still think her “rabbit with prunes and golden raisins” is the best thing there is to eat.

When she was diagnosed as having breast cancer, all work stopped on the book, and one hundred percent of her time was devoted to getting well, but sadly, on April 18, 1998, she passed away in Hasselt, Belgium. My dear friend Linda Schele died the same day, at the same time, of the same thing. It just didn’t seem fair.

I went to Hasselt in the early fall of 1998 to help Bob arrange things in the house and get ready for the exhibit of my paintings of Hasselt and other places in Belgium at the Hasselt Museum. Carolyn came over for the opening, and to meet Barbara’s friends. The place was packed—all of Barbara’s, Bob’s and my friends, all of the city officials and many people from Hasselt, as well as many other parts of Belgium. A special room held the four large paintings that I had done of the four sides of the Grote Mrkt. These I had given to the city of Hasselt



With Carolyn at my exhibit in Hasselt



I painted four large pictures of the Hasselt Grote Markt in memory of Barbara

in Barbara's memory.

I managed to spend time with my dear friend Simone Verbeemen, who was, and had been for years, the "mother" of the Hasselt basketball team. She "lived" basketball, but all the times I had been staying in Hasselt, we managed to meet for coffee someplace in the Grote Markt or at the "Theo Massin Patisserie" almost every day, usually with Barbara also. Barbara had worked with Theo at the Patisserie for four and a half years learning the art of making delicate cakes and tarts. This is probably what I miss most about Belgium, taking a few minutes out during the day to have coffee with a friend, no special arrangement days ahead of time—just do it. There is always time for a friend, never "I'm so sorry, but I have an appointment that I must keep, let's do it next week."

Many are the happy times I have had with the Peeters family—Jos, Christine, and Liesbet, who spent two summers living with me in San Francisco while she was on a university grant working for an international banking firm. Jos was updating his company's beautiful old building, and wanted me to paint a picture of it, which I did from two directions, a two-day session for each.

My other special Bruxelles friends whom we stayed with often were Guy and Gerhild Onderbeek. They always had rooms ready for us, a pleasant cocktail around their fireplace, and then off to dinner at one of Guy's restaurants. Gerhild spoke, wrote, and read so many different languages that I am still amazed. Here I am struggling with my Spanish, French, and Flemish.



Lunch at the Jos Peeters home

## TULANE UNIVERSITY



One of my first large rubbing exhibits was at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1972. A symposium was held at Tulane at the same time. I was one of the speakers. Such a fun time. That was when I first met Augusto and Marta Foncerrada de Molina from Mexico City, who became such staunch friends of mine.

May 1987 was a very significant time in my life. I received my Doctor of Humane Letters at the graduation ceremony. My children Barbara and David, and Alice and Rick Cieciera, and Joann Francis, Bob's daughter, came down for the big affair, which also meant a lot to me. Wiggie Andrews, who had been working with me at Chichen Itza for some time, received her BA at the same graduation ceremony. I was sitting on the stage, and Wiggie was sitting in the first row in the auditorium. I didn't dare look at her because she was having a hard time keeping from laughing. Joann celebrated with an elegant dinner party for both of us.

Tulane has had a special place in my heart from the time Robert Wauchope was Director of the Middle American Research Institute (MARI) to the present time when E. Wyllys Andrews V (Will) holds this position. It was because of Tulane that I received my first grant (The American Philosophical Society). It was Don and



David and Barbara come to the graduation ceremony



My exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1972

Martha Robertson who took me under their wing (yes, right into their home). Will and Patty Andrews now always have a Merle's Room. Tulane supported my work in the jungles of Guatemala and Mexico through Edith Stern and Doris Stone. Will has always been most supportive in all of my endeavors, as has Tom Reese, Executive Director of the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane, and Hortensia Calvo, Doris Stone Director of the Latin American Library. David Dressing, Curator of Manuscripts and Photographs of the Latin American Library, takes very good care of my Archives and keeps everything up to date in acid free drawers and row upon row of special shelves.



Wiggie, Joann, and me at Tulane graduation, 1987



The rubbings are stored on special shelves



Joann (front right) gave a gala dinner party for Wiggie and me; Doris Stone (front left)



Hortensia Calvo and me in the Latin American Library



Patty and Will Andrews

The rubbings can also be viewed in binders holding the 8 x 10 inch photographs.

I have now given Tulane all of my years of archives, some four thousand rubbings, including over four thousand 8 x 10 inch photos of Maya sculpture, all of my illustrated field notebooks, thousands of negatives and transparencies, and thousands of prints of Maya sculpture. Included are hundreds of drawings, maps, all of my architectural drawings, all of my *permiso* letters and important correspondence, and much more. Tulane also has my collection of over 1000 negatives along with their 8 x 10 inch prints of the Irmgard Groth Collection. It is my hope that having such a collection will induce scholars to come to Tulane to do research.



Irmgard Groth, my professional photography friend

## MORE HIGHLIGHTS

P. A. R. I.



I had been recording the sculpture of Palenque since 1964, using my own money to pay the expenses. My intention had never been to do this work to make money. I saw the necessity of recording and preserving as much as possible of the ancient Maya art still remaining, and before any more of it deteriorated or was stolen. It was getting expensive.

In 1982, the Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute became a not-for-profit, tax-exempt institute under the laws of the State of California. As of this writing I am Chairman of the Board, with David Greene Managing Director. The Board consists of Will Andrews, Paul Saffo, Joel Skidmore, Jeffrey Smith, and David Stuart.

PARI carries on and supports research in Mesoamerican art, history, and epigraphy, and has published works in these fields, as well as ten volumes of papers from twenty years of the Palenque Mesas Redondas, seven monographs, *The PARI Journal*, and *The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque* by David Stuart. PARI has also supported working grants and qualified scholarships whenever possible. At this writing we are conducting work at Palenque and Chichen Itza.

Valerie Greene was the very successful editor of the *PARI Journal* for a long time. Now Joel Skidmore has devoted his time and expertise to putting out the journal.

Today the Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute has hundreds of members from thirteen different countries. Our website, [www.mesoweb.com/pari](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari), produced by Joel Skidmore, is considered to be one of the best Mesoamerican websites. Joel has also directed a film, "Merle Greene Robertson: Mayanist." He can be counted as being one of the top Maya scholars today.



My family at the Aztec Eagle Award: Barbara, me, Matt, David, Preston, Blair

## AWARDS & GALAS

I shouldn't forget the gala affairs we had when the Mexican government gave me *La Condecoración del Aguila Azteca* (the Aztec Eagle Award) in 1994. After the big reception at the Palace, Sylvia Trejo put on another wonderful reception for me at her home. All of my friends were there, my family, Joann Andrews, Barbara MacKinnon Vda. de Montes, Peter Schmidt, and Ruben Maldonado from Merida, and all of my friends from Mexico City, like the Molinas, and even some from the U.S. It was a super fun party.

Then there was the fun with old friends in Guatemala when in 2003 I was awarded the *Orden del Pop*. Billy Mata, my long-time friend was instrumental in



Peter Schmidt, Barbara Montes, and Ruben Maldonado who came from Merida



Barbara Montes and Joann who came to the big Mexico City affair



Sylvia Trejo who hosted a party for me at her home after the Aztec Eagle Award



Federico Fahsen and Billy Mata present me with the "Orden del Pop" in Guatemala



Sr. Samayoa who helped me throughout my time in El Peten



At the Palace of the Legion of Honor in 2004

that I am sure. And then the next year I was given the *Reconocimiento Especial "Toh"* in Merida. This was celebrating the "Festival de Aves de Yucatan," where Barbara Montes and Joann Andrews were in charge. At the exhibit, where a lot of my "bird" rubbings were on display, all of my Merida friends showed up as well as our crew from Chichen Itza.

The party the De Young gave for me at the Museum was such a surprise, especially when so many of my friends showed up from distant places like Mexico and India. Alec and Gail Merriam and Kathy Berrin were behind this I am



Mike Coe and me at the Fine Arts Museum gala

sure. Mike Coe was a principal speaker, along with Kathy Berrin and Mary Miller. I still can't believe it happened. I had a small party for long distant guests at my place that was an intimate get-together.



Kathy Berrin and David Stuart at my party in San Francisco



David, me, and Valerie



David and Valerie's home out of Victoria, Vancouver Island

## MY FAMILY & FRIENDS



My family and friends have played a large part in my life, besides the times various ones have worked with me at archaeological sites or off on painting trips in Europe. I don't see as much of my son David and family and wife Valerie as I would like to, and my nine-year-old grandson Jonathan and seven-year-old granddaughter Madeline (Maddi), as they live out of Victoria, on Vancouver Island, in Canada. Their twenty-eight acre place is a wonderful place to go, that is, when it is warm. They had my 90th birthday party there, which was a gala affair—so many friends.

The last time I was at David's they were going north a couple of hours to buy two Great Pyrenees dogs to keep the deer from eating all of their flowers. I went along for the ride, not knowing that these people also raised "ragdoll" cats. Well, when I saw this room full of tiny ragdoll kittens, I simply had to buy one. So now I have my dear little Victoria, called Vicky, who is the smartest little cat there ever was. Okay—a lot of other people say the same thing, but Vicky really is smart.

Matt, a senior in college, is busy studying and working night and day it seems, and Preston is now a college sophomore. I mostly see these grandsons



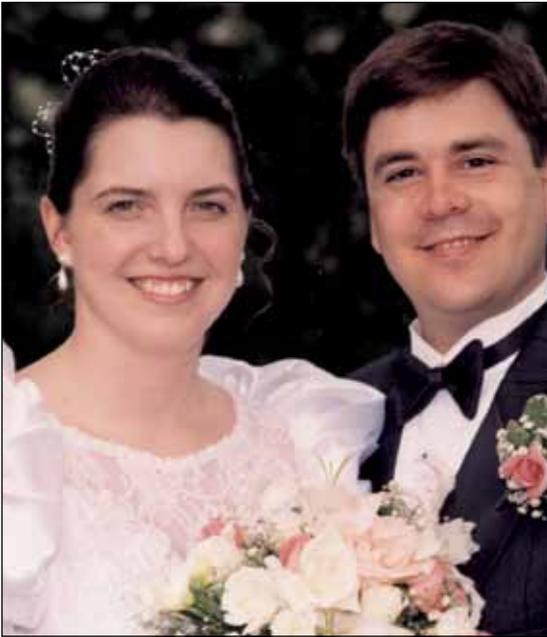
Matt, Blair, me, Carolyn, Anne, and Preston at David's, 2003



The Pitcher family: Alison, Anne, Derek, and Lauren



Granddaughter Carolyn and Rick Petree



Carolyn and Jim Metzler, my grandson



Tim, Blair, and Tommy Morgan

when I am at David's.

I see a lot of my granddaughter Anne, Derek, and little Alison and Lauren Pitcher, as they live so close—Los Altos. They either come up to my place to see G.G. (stands for great grandma), or come and bring me to their house for lots of fun times. Carolyn Petree, my other granddaughter, and her family of husband Rick and three live-wire boys Michael, Colin, and Shane, all baseball kids who live on a big acreage in Loomis, get over here less often—too many baseball, soccer, and basketball games.

Every year Carolyn, Anne, and I go on a weekend fun retreat by ourselves, living it up, leaving their husbands and kids at home. My grandson Jim Metzler, who lives out of Baltimore with his wife Carolyn, the math brain, and three kids Zac, Kevin, and Kristen all came to spend a week with me last year at the Hacienda Chichen. What fun getting to know these little tykes.

I miss Blair and Tim, Tommy, and brand-new Jake Morgan, especially Tommy who really came to see "kitty," as they have now moved to Nevada. I now don't have a painting pal, as Blair is pretty well tied up with her two little ones.

It is always such fun getting together with Bill and Nancy Newmeyer, my hand-saving doctor who along with his wife became my very good friends. We have been to Tur-



The Greene family at Christmas 2004



Alison and Lauren Pitcher, my great grandkids



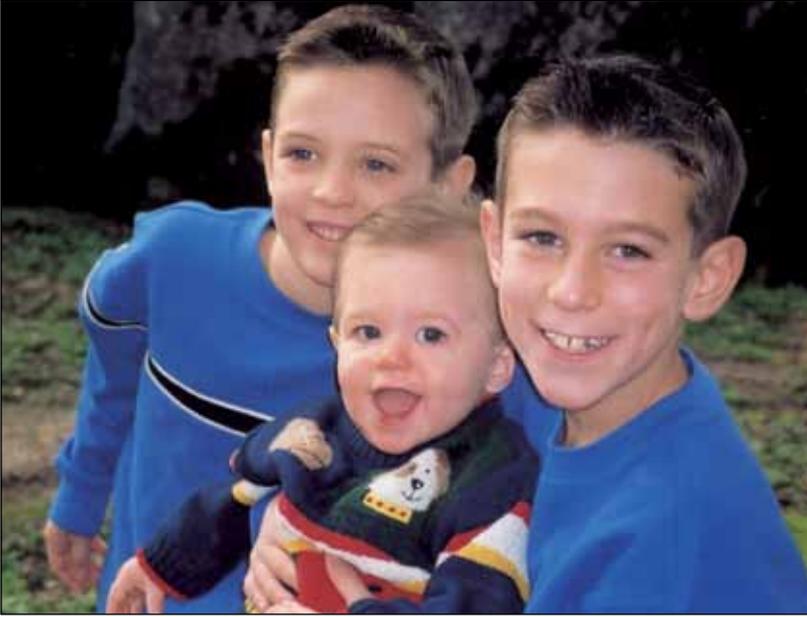
Zac, Kristen, and Kevin Metzler, my great grandkids



Jonathan and Madeline Greene, grandkids

key, Mexico, and Guatemala together—such fun. Joel, I see every week at our “Wine” Wednesdays where we sip water and discuss all of the new things in Meso-american archaeology, and believe me, Joel keeps up on it all. As soon as he arrives there has bound to have been something happened to my computer. Deborah Skidmore, I miss so much, as she is allergic to cats, but she still gives me Jin Shin Jyutsu at her place.

Lee Langan, without whom this text would never have been written, is over here all the time fixing something on my computer that I have goofed up. I guess by now that you have gotten the idea that I am not exactly computer friendly. We, and also Karine, enjoy The Explorers Club that meets once a month to hear a good



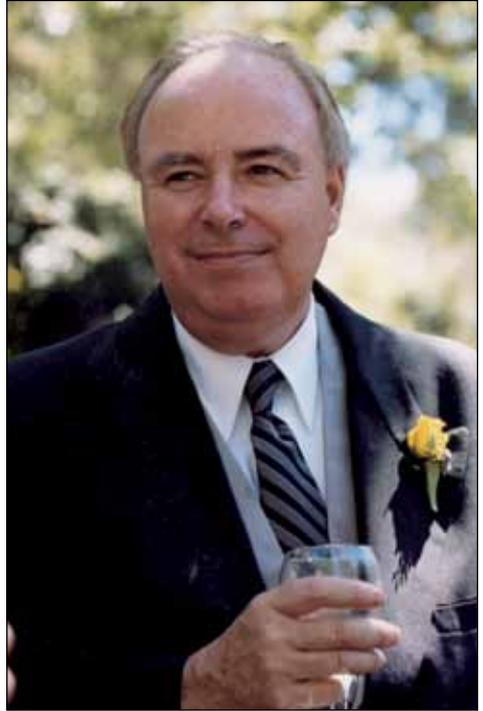
Colin, Shane, Michael Petree, great grandkids



Madeline, Alison, and my 90th candles



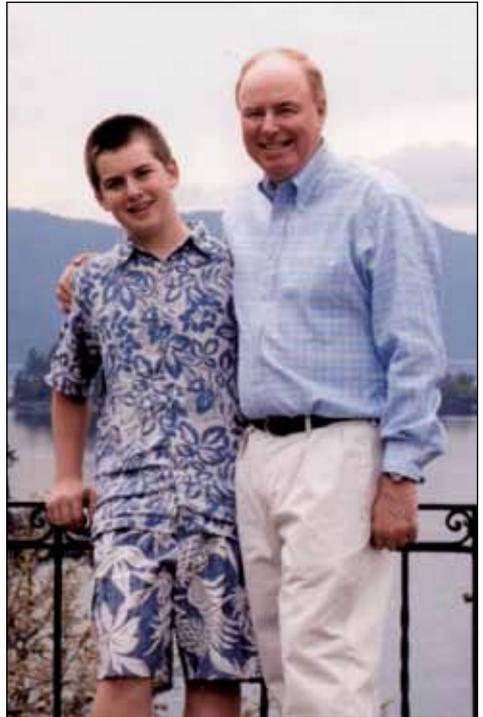
Matt Greene, my grandson



My son David



Jonathan and Madeline



Grandson Preston, his dad David



The Morgan family: Blair, my granddaughter, and Tim, with Tommy and Jake

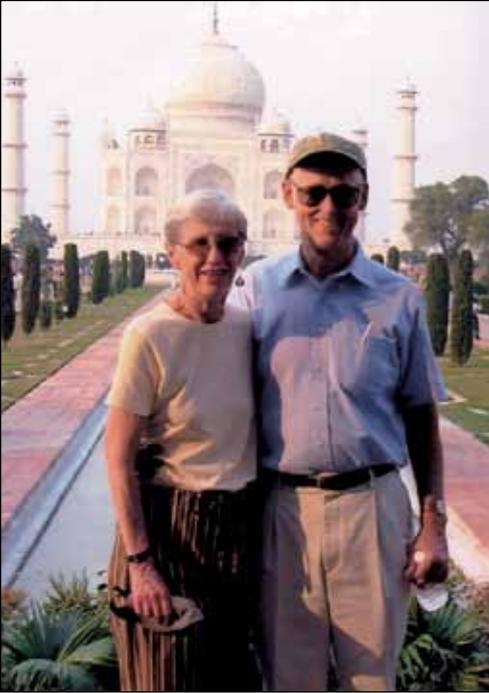
speaker, eat sumptuous food, and visit with good company.

Claudine Marken and I get together every week, for any reason or no reason, but walking round and round the block and guzzling tea. We have been all over (well not quite all over) France together. She was the organizer of all of my San Francisco painting exhibits. Her son Damien, my adopted grandson (or maybe he adopted me), is the only one in my family so far that is into archaeology. Damien worked for us at Palenque, got his Masters at the Sorbonne, France, and is now in the Ph.D. program with David Freidel, working at El Cayo.

Elayne Marquis, who has worked with me at Chichen, and I have been



Vicky, my ragdoll cat, the most intelligent cat there ever was



Bill and Nancy Newmeyer

many places, including Amsterdam where she bought the neatest silver-encased skull that set all the customs people on red alert getting on the plane for home.

Susan Dutcher and I get together every weekend possible—to go shopping, have cappuccino, and just bum around. She loves Vicky, and Vicky loves her. Susan just moves in with Vicky when I am to be out of town for any length of time, except when it is Susan and I both who are gone—like when we went to Chichen, or on The Explorers Club Odysseus Cruise.

Ginny Fields, my good friend who is Curator of Latin American Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and who puts on such great exhibits, I see as often as we both can make it. The same with Dorie Reents-Budet and

Carolyn Tate, although neither are very near; we usually get together at meetings now. Justin and Barbara Kerr, I first met at Tikal in 1963, where Justin was photographing the glyphs that I was recording by rubbings. We always get together in New York every time I am there, usually with Julie Jones.



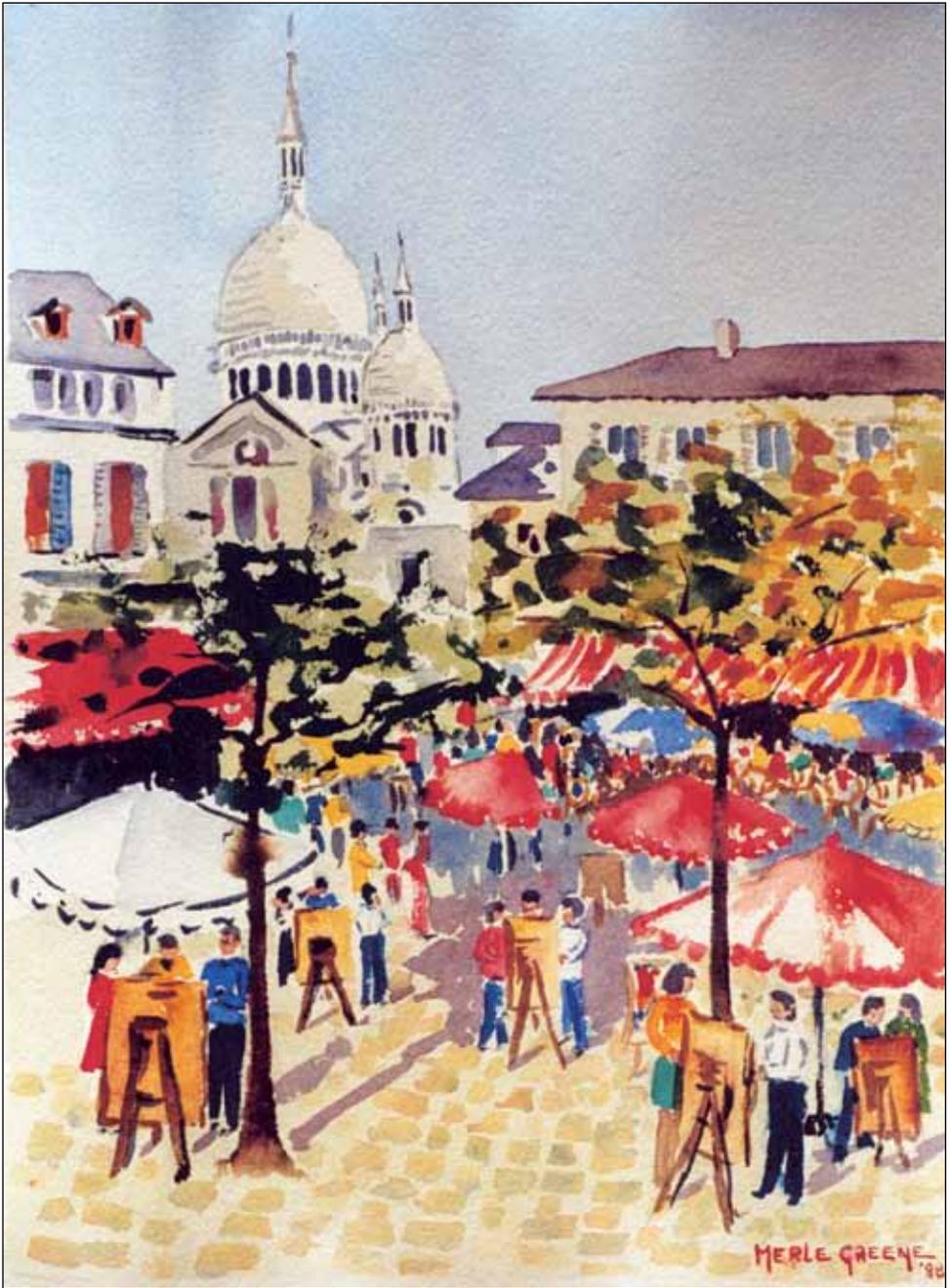
Martha Macri with her just published book at David's

# WATERCOLOR PAINTING



Painting in Angkor Wat, Australia, Easter Island, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Easter Island, England, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holland, Honduras, India, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States.





Painters in Paris

## A NEW ME



I am now a “new me.” All the time for the past few years I have been blaming my hearing aid for not being able to hear properly. Thanks to my doctor friend David Schindler, who found out that it was a massive tumor in the parotid which required removal, I had surgery at UCSF Mt Zion Cancer Center.

I could no longer wear a hearing aid because my external auditory canal was removed. The tumor was so deep that Dr. David, with his persistence, constructed an instrument that I now hear through that bypasses the external ear and goes directly to the cochlea (inner ear). I now wear this instrument and headband made in Sweden that goes around my head and connects directly to the brain. What modern science can now do is amazing! I hear fine with my new “Indian headdress.” All I need is some feathers to make me that Blackfoot Indian chief I wanted to be as a child.

I count my blessings for having such a wonderful family and friends, especially those who were so supportive at the time of my cancer surgery—Carolyn Petree, my granddaughter, Susan Dutcher, who brought me cappuccino in the hospital every morning at 6:00 a.m., Joel Skidmore and Deborah, who came every day to the hospital and calmed me with Jin Shin, Claudine Marken, Bill and Nancy Newmeyer, Lee and Karine Langan, Ben Bolles, and my dear friend Betty Benson who still phones me every few days from Bethesda.

After writing all of this, I look back over my life and realize that my most valuable assets are my family, my son, all of my eight grandchildren and my ten great grandchildren, and the many friends I have here in the Bay Area and all over the world.

For all of this, my dear friends, I am the most fortunate person in the world.



The “new me” wearing my Swedish brain-hearing headgear



Where I live, The Park Lane (the light building on the right, top floor, corner)

## PRINCIPAL PUBLICATIONS



In addition to ICA conferences and other international symposiums where I gave a paper, close to one hundred articles have been published on different phases of art, archaeology, iconography, and the ballgame. A few of the most important books are listed here:

- 1967, *Ancient Maya Relief Sculpture*, with Sir Eric Thompson, The Museum of Primitive Art, New York.
- 1972, *Maya Sculpture of the Southern Lowlands, the Highlands, and the Pacific Piedmont*, with Robert Rands, and John A. Graham, Lederer Street & Zeus, Berkeley.
- 1983, *The Sculpture of Palenque, Vol. I, The Temple of the Inscriptions*, Princeton University Press.
- 1985, *The Sculpture of Palenque, Vol. II, The Early Buildings of the Palace*, Princeton University Press.
- 1985, *The Sculpture of Palenque, Vol. III, The Late Buildings of the Palace*, Princeton University Press.
- 1991, *The Sculpture of Palenque, Vol IV, The Cross Group, the North Group, and the Olvidado*, Princeton University Press.

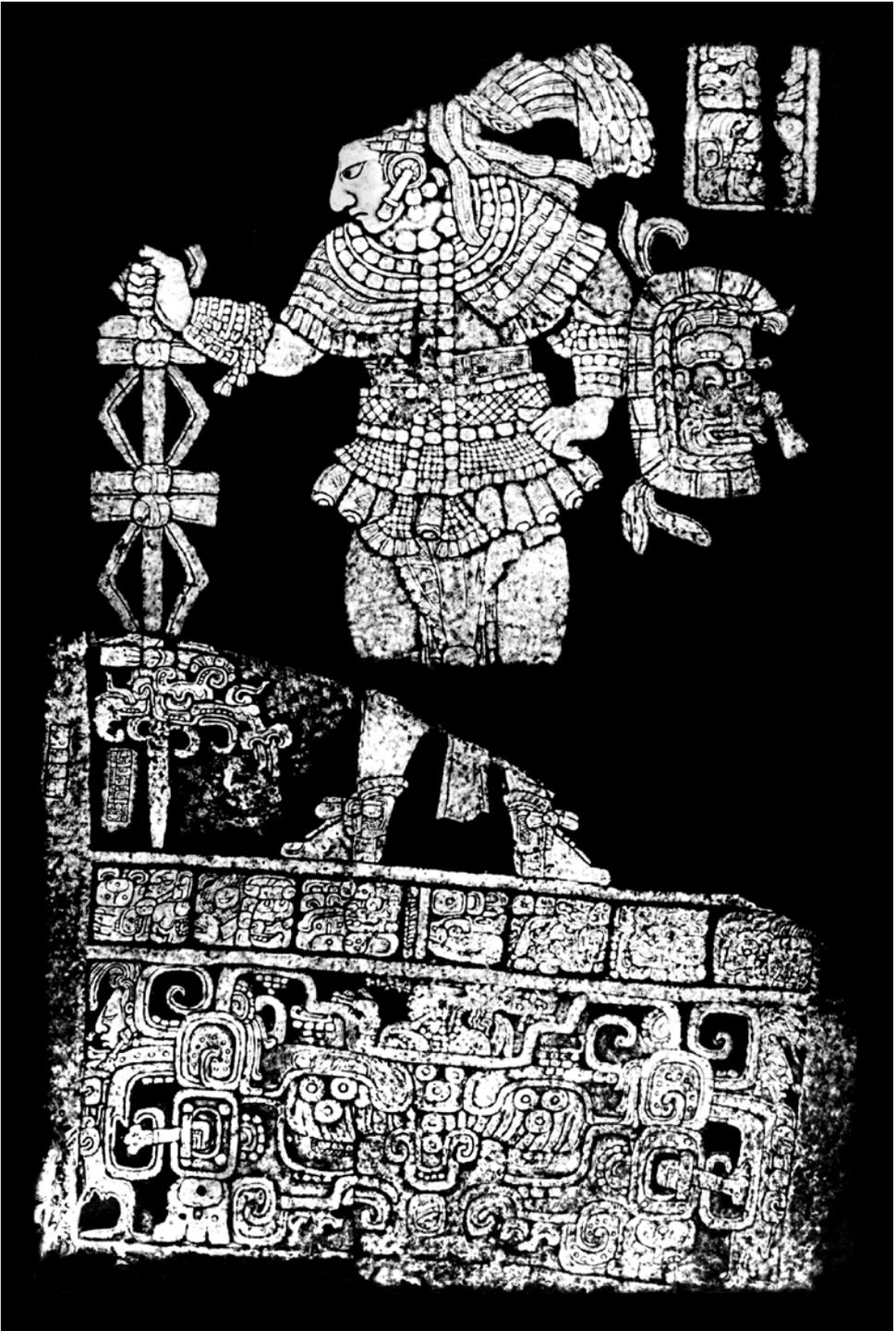


Rubbing from the Platform of the Eagles and Jaguars, Chichen Itza

## EXHIBITS OF THE RUBBINGS



Exhibits of my rubbings have been shown at major museums all over the United States, opening first in 1965 at the Lowie Museum, Berkeley. It was John Graham and Albert Elsasser, Director of the Lowie Museum, who first recognized the value of monuments being recorded in this way. Then in 1966 the Field Museum, Chicago, put on a spectacular exhibit with many posters, brochures, and newspaper articles in color telling about it. A huge photograph of the lower portion of Bonampak Stela 1 with me beside it, evidence of how immense the stela really was, stood at the entrance. In 1967, a number of museums had the exhibit. The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, of which Governor Nelson Rockefeller was President and Founder, hosted the show, both of us being interviewed on TV at the Museum. The book *Ancient Maya Relief Sculpture: Rubbings by Merle Greene*, with the Introduction and notes by J. Eric S. Thompson, was designed by Julie Jones, Curator of the Museum. The book won the award "Best Designed Book of the Year."



Rubbing of Bonampak Stela 1

In 1969 the exhibit at the California Palace of Legion of Honor was designed with the museum walls all painted black, setting off the black and white rubbings beautifully. Everyone said it felt like they were walking right into the Maya past.

All of the rubbings are in the Merle Greene Robertson Archives in the Latin American Library, Tulane University.

The following is a partial list of exhibitions of the rubbings:

Lowie Museum, Berkeley

Museum of Primitive Art, New York

H.M. De Young Museum, San Francisco

Field Museum, Chicago

Stanford University Memorial Museum, Stanford

University Museum, Philadelphia

Cranbrook Institute of Art, Cranbrook, Michigan

The Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans

Latin American Library, New Orleans

Newcomb Art Gallery, New Orleans

Allentown Museum of Art, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Sheldon Memorial Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska

University Museum, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Mobile Art Museum, Mobile, Alabama

Childrens Museum, Nashville, Tennessee

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle

Portland Art Museum, Portland

INAH Archaeological Museum, Merida

Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden

Gallery MGR, Hacienda Chichen, Chichen Itza

Latrobe University Gallery, Melbourne, Australia



Rubbing of Yaxchilan Lintel 24