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Marcos Sánchez Díaz and Labuga's foundat íon

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Marcos Sánchez Díaz and Labùga s fdunda íon.[1]

Two h undred ears oG arifuna sètt ement in Centra America

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To the labúgana people

Caribbe ns in Central America

A few years before the end of the 18th century, the Central American Caribbean cost received the black caribbeans, deported by the English. After a long voyage, 2026 (664 men, 720 women, and 643 children) Caribbeans were abandoned at Roatan (Bay Islands, Honduras)[2] on april 12, 1797. Shortly after, they moved to the mainland and dispersed along the Central America coast.

The coast was a refuge for French blacks from Santo Domingo[3] (Houdaille:1954, La Gaceta:05.17:1797) who ijoined other blacks[4] living in the area. Here the Spain crown was not consolidated in the face of the English siege and the impassable environment. Their presence was reduced to towers such as San Felipe de Lara (in Lake Izabal, Guatemala) and fortifications such as Trujillo and Omoa (Honduras). The Caribbean proved to be key in the defense of strategic points.

Their arrival in Trujillo and the beginning of their dispersion was not long after. By 1802 they are found as far as Indian Town (later known as Stann Creek –and later as Dangriga–) and *Livingston* (Arrivillaga: l 988a:42), and near the Mosquitia Hondureña, on the Patuca River (Beaucage:1970:57). The structure of this mobilization presents a series of characteristics: Family units (parents, siblings, uncles, wife [or] sons, nieces and nephews, and relatives), who move under the command of a head of the family. Mobility (by locating privileged coastal sites for fishing, trade, smuggling, or in towns or anchorages that gave them work on the docks, or in timber cutting), whose logic was based on subsistence.

Their leading role in a Captaincy convulsed by the independence and during the first years of the republican life took its toll later, and many had to seek refuge in Belize, which remained on the sidelines of the revolts. Settlememts are consolidated that will last, others will be ephemeral, marked by the dynamics of the nearby towns. In the words of González (1988:58), *"always at the slightest disagreement, they decided to change from one place to another "*, movements that point to the consolidation of

1 It should read *ahari*, not *gubida*, which only exists at the moment of possession. As Gerardo Ellington would say,*"what happens is that you like the way it sounds"*. This and other critical observations I thank to Ellington, Salvador Suazo and German Francisco, wise connoisseurs of their people.

2 The structure of the group was modified due to the epidemic suffered , *"there were more women than men, no elderly people, and only three minor children* (Gonzáles: 1986:402) ". Most of the women procreated the year of there arrival.

3 AGCA Sig. A2-1 Exp. 2265 Leg. 120 Fol. 43. Date September 12, 1796. *"Notice of the arrival of black assistants from Santo Domingo"*.

4 Palma (1974) presents the complex panorama of the black (mullato, sambo, pardo, ladino, french, etc.) in interethnic relations in 17th century Guatemala.

their ethnic territory (Arrivillaga:1992:102). The lack of power on the part of the crown helped them to continue to develop a sense of autonomy.

Of bosses and leaders

Given that most of the deportees were teenagers and that the military structure involves leadership and verticality, some rivalry must have existed. For González (1988: 48), this structure of residentially separated groups, led by inherited leaders from San Vicente, must have been transferred to Central America. La Gaceta in relation to the visit of D. José Rossi and Rubí, referring to the Carribeans who arrived, presented a statement by one of the leaders named *Jack*: *"I don't rule on behalf of anyone: I'm not English, neither French, or Spanish, or want to be anything else: I'm a Caribbean, a Caribbean without subjection, I don't want to be otherwise, or want to have more* (*La Gaceta*: 26:06:1797:167)."

It is preserved in the memory of the Garinagú, other outstanding characters in the military related to this period (they already brought heroes, Vincentian warriors and then others will come). Pedro Gutiérrez, a character recognized by the Honduran state for his exploits in command of the Olancho battalion, fought successfully in Tegucigalpa in 1812 (González: 1988: 56). *Juan Bulnes "Walumugu"*, one of the great soldiers of Morazán, descendant of Satuye. A soldier named *Monteros* who, according to the oral tradition, participates as a member of the platoon that shot Filibustero William Walker (López: 1994). These characters and the strength of their actions as a whole were key to the recognition of their military role in the defense of the interests of the crown. In the last years of our character, within the framework of the Liberal Revolution (1871), many Caribbean people, at the time called *morenos*, remained associated with the army. This will be beneficial, since it will allow them to expedite land legalizations, or put pressure on lawsuits, but it will also mean the loss of precious communal possessions.

Aerial Photograph of the mouth of the Dulce River and the Port of Livingston. National Geographic Institute, Guatemala.

Their role as soldiers allows them to play certain roles in the correlations of power, and in future negotiation processes. There are lists, as in other news that make allusion to soldiers, captains and Caribbean lieutenants (La Gaceta: 18:06: 1799). The belief system also played an important role. This must have conditioned elements of their organization and the *buyei* priests began to play an important role. Because it was believed that these places were inhabited by evil spirits (from the mountain, beach, sea) called *mafia* starting in the 19th century.

The Diáspora

Most ethnographers (Taylor 27; Cohelo: 1995: 19, 47; Holm: 1978:25) who have worked with the garinagũ noted with interest the dispersion that Conzemius in 1928 traced as far as Costa Rica. But it was the works of Davidson (1974) and González (1988) that focused on the temporality of the settlements and the historical framework. The garinagú (Flores:1979; Centeno:1996; López: 1994,sf; Cayetano:

1990) meanwhile, they show an interest in the various acts of settlement along the coast. They emphasize as a core of collective memory the remembrance of the founders or those who promoted the settlement.

González (1995:402) shows that the census conducted upon their arrival lists 31 chiefs, who likely formed groups averaging 58 people. In my view, three or four dispersal cores must have formed from Trujillo, led in turn by different subgroups who initiated the first settlements, acting as bases for expansion and retraction to other locations: Livingston-Stann Creek (Guatemala-Belice); the Lower Coast (Departaments of Tela and Atlántida), adjacent to Trujillo; and the Upper Coast (Departaments of Colon and Gracias a Dios) heading toward the Mosquitia border. The latter group moved on to populate Pearl Lagoon in Nicaragua.

Settlements Acts

The lands towards the Patuca River, Upper Coast, were reportedly granted to Juan Bulnes, who appointed *committees* in Aguan and Bataya (Lopez:sf:43). The first wave corresponds to the Vincentian generation and took place in 1804. They established Iriona, by *Barimanare*; Cosuna and Punta Piedra the brothers, *Sana* y *Bregal*, Aguan by a man named Arriola, and Limon by Diriga y Yurina (Centeno: 1996:56). Then the settlements of the first generation of descendants occur. Sangrelaya was founded by two brothers, one of whom was remembered as *Juan Sambula*. Later, the *Velásquez* and *Centeno families arrived*. Sambula and Velásquez later moved to Pearl Lagoon. In Bataya, *Calixto Martínez* promoted the settlement. In Old Tocamacho, a man named *Sabio*, and in *Plaplaya* the most recent (and most distant from the Honduran coast), *Francisco Creen* of Cosuna (Centeno: 1996:57). Ciriboya *José Marín Vargas*, from Trujillo. Between Cosuna and Punta Piedra, *Calixto Ávila*, attempted to settle Punta Urraco, but it failed (Centeno: 1996:59).

On the Lower Coast, Guadalupe was founded by *Julián Diego* from Trujillo; Sambo Creek by people from Punta Piedra; and Río Esteban by people from Cayos Cochinos after losing their lands in 1823. Corozal was founded by *Manuel Cayetano* from San Antonio in 1864 (Lopez: sf:53-56); Río Tinto by *Andrés Harry, Juan Mejia, Evaristo* (surname unknown) and *Siriaco Ramos* in 1870, according to Guadalupe Bonilla, Harry's granddaughter. The hamlet Tres Cocos was founded by her father *Victoriano Bonilla*, while the place known as *Fingarugu* was established by *Obispo Mejia* (López:sf:70). González states that Chief *Babiar*, commanded three hundred Caribbeans in a place called Campamento, near Trujillo (1988:62).

Main Street of the Port of Livingston, at the end of the 19th Century. **Brigham A.M. William T** *Guatemala The Land of the Quetzal. 1887,* ***London.***

Stann Creek in Belize, with early occupation driven by timber cutting, remembers among its key settlers *Alejo Benni*, who arrived on November 19, 1832, from Roatán with 28 adults and several children. Apparently, Benni held a high position in the army commanded by Satuye (Cayetano: 1990:23). Barranco was founded in the early 19th century by *Santiago Avilez*, attracted by the abundance of turtle hunting. Some mestizos settled in the mid-19th century in what is now known as "Pueblo Español", which they inhabited until 1924. In *Seine Bight*, *Emanuel "Walpy" Moreira*, his wife, and his brother *Ubaldo settled in 1869*. Two more groups followed them, one led by *Juan Martínez* in the southern part known as *el Santuario* and *Mateo Augustine* in the north in the place known as *Villa de Agustine* (Bradley:1973).

After the abolition of slavery was decreed by the Guatemalan government in 1823, the number of escaping slaves increased. From Belize, many escaped into Petén territory in search of freedom. In 1824, 100 Black people settled in San Benito, adding to those already living in the area since 1805 (National Geographic Dictionary: 1983:241: III). Father Gonzalez almost half a century after San Benito points out, "... *its inhabitants are divided into Black criollos* and *Black who came from Belize; they speak Spanish with some difficulty, imperfect English, and have not forgotten their own language* (Garífuna, what else?). *They enjoy music but dislike mixing with the people from Petén"* (Gonzáles: 1867). Based on this language observation, it is likely they were Caribbeans. If so, this must have been the deepest inland settlement on the continent. Such isolation led to a rapid loss of identity, although the memory of the *"Black race"* remains alive among their descendants.

Migration to Pearl Lagoon in Nicaragua became significant especially after the division of the Honduran-Nicaraguán Mosquitia region, intensifying around 1870. Workers who went to the sawmills and maintained semi-permanent residences joined *Joseph Sambola* (originally from Sangrelaya) and founded *San Vicente*, in remembrance of their old homeland. No leadership status is noted for the Sambulas in their migration to Sangrelaya, but in Nicaragua, it is evident. In 1896 Honduran *Lino López* settled in Santa Fe (CIDCA: 1982). In 1907 Justo Point was established (founded on the former Elbo Point) led by the *Velásquez and Zenón families from* Tocamacho and Iriona

Women Garífuna in the interior of a house, [illegible] grating Yucca for the elaboration of the Cazabe. **Brigham A.M. William T *Guatemala The Land the Quetzal.* [illegible] *1887, London.***

An elderly Garífuna man making a ruguma, to squeeze the grated yucca. **Brigham A.M. William T** *Guatemala The Land of the Quetzal. 1887, London.*

(Honduras), (personal communication: Rosy Soley: 1985). *Orinoco*.[5] was founded in 1920 (though some claim 1915) by the Sambula family from San Vicente and Belize (Holm 1978:419, cited by CIDCA: 1982). Between 1880 and 1929, 16 families arrived in Pearl Lagoon, representing three generations from Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize (Davidson: 1978:38). *Tomas Estrada* from Stann Creek is remembered as an active figure in consolidating these settlements. Migrations ceased in 1910, although since 1906 they had become difficult due to border crossing issues. The same happened in Guatemala (with its Honduran and Belizean borders) fifty years later (Arrivillaga:1992:104).

The most recent relocation for settlement was triggered by a repressive act suffered by the garinagú during the Honduran dictatorship of Tiburcio Carías Andino (1932-1945). After multiple conspiracies, on June 19, 1937, in San Juan (adjacent to Tela, Honduras), the army massacred most of the adult male population. With the help of a naval captain, the women and children escaped to Belize and founded the village of Hopkins (Cayetano: 1990:25, Flores 1979:41, López: 1994, Cohelo: 1995 :48). The dynamics of the event meant that the population, in this case, followed an endogamous model. Foster (1988:238) notes that elders refer to it as *águyugúarutuwa* (we repeat or return in marriage), referencing how most of its members were related. In a way, this was also common in other settlements.

As a result of the cariísta repression suffered by the Hobduran Garinagú, some unions in Stann Creek, Livingston and Nicaragua went on work stoppages (Centeno: 1996:51). In Guatemala and Nicaragua, the dictatorships struck facing the Pacific side, but the threat of repression remained. Belize followed a different path. With the arrival of banana disease (Sigatoka) in 1936, many Garinagú were forced to abandon their settlements. In their place emerged La Ceiba, Puerto Castilla, Tela, and El Progreso. The decline of one port to the benefit of another also affected Livingston when it ceded its primacy to Puerto Barrios. Between the World Wars, a wave of migration to the United States began, which would later become recurrent.

Gulfuiyumu

The various points of the Amatique Bay where the Garinagú settled, collectively referred to as *Gulfuiyumu*, *are: Punta Gorda, Barranco, La Guaira, Manabique, Punta*

5 Arawak toponymy, as well as *La Guaira*, in Amatique Bay.

Palma, *Baltimore*, *Río Salado*, *Ensenada San Juan*, *Sarstun*, *Cocoli*, *Queweche*, y *Labuga* (Livingston). Regarding their route upon arrival, if they arrived by sea (most likely), and considering the hydrodynamic forces of the bay, it is probable they were pushed toward Punta Gorda or Barranco[6] after passing Punta de Manabique. Oral tradition says they came *larigui weyu,* behind the sun. Their role in defending the area must have been crucial, as they also settled within - unusually - the *golfo dulce* in; *Jocolo*, *San Felipe*, and *Chocón*.

A few years after their arrival (1799), the *Audiencia* asked the commander of Trujillo to *"relocate some of the Black families left behind by the British on Roatán Island, originally from a French colony, to the fortresses of the Gulf, selecting those fit for agriculture and military service to serve in the batteries of the Motagua River* (Palma:1974:40)." If this happened, their continued presence in *Gulfuiyumu must have been earlier than previously imagined.* González (1988:57, AGCA B1.141 8 526/596), indicates that Pedro Gregorio and other Caribbeans were in charge of the San Felipe fort in 1819. Haefkens (1961) said they arrived in 1826, and Dunn (1960) two years later confirmed: *"The fort, however, consisted only of a ruined wall defended by about twenty Caribbean soldiers living there with their families.."* (Dunn: 1960:31)." Their presence was key for many more years. Brigham (1887:24) names a Caribbean, *Luciano Cayetano, as captain of the id Chocón*

Labuga and Marcos Sánchez Díaz

It is still fresh in the memory of the labugana,[8] and the elders of the coast that the founder of Labuga was Marcos Sánchez Díaz in 18 02. This fact is recorded in various monographs, though they differ regarding the year of arrival, the most common being 1804 (Taylor 1951, Cohelo: 1995 :46, Gullick 1976:29, Holm: 1978:26, Cayetano: 1990:27). According to González (1986:353), this discrepancy arises from interpretations of Kelsey and Osborn's account (1939), which names *Sánchez Díaz* as the founder. Two years prior, this had already been reported in Carrillo's book (1937), clearly influencing official sources such as the Diccionario Geográfico Nacional de Guatemala (1981:522:2). His arrival is a widely known fact preserved through oral tradition (songs, stories). It is evident that this event reached written sources through multiple paths. Arrivillaga (1988b:131), places it in 1802, based on oral testimonies. We summarize the account based on the narratives of Martínez (n.d.) and Sánchez (1977).[10]

"On February 2, 1802,[11] *Marcos Sánchez and his group of Black*

6 The Bay of Amatique of 54160.8 ha (starting an imaginary line that runs from Punta de Manabique to the mouth of the Sarstun River), receives the discharge of the Sarstun and Dulce rivers; the Motagua drains to the Caribbean. The pattern of coastal currents have contributed to the development of Punta de Manabique, a coastal sand barrier that extends in a SE-NW direction. The discharge of the rivers, the dominant winds (NNE) and the effect of the tides modulate the circulation of the estuarine system, and follows an anticyclonic pattern that begins at the mouth of the Sarstun and closes the circuit at the Punta de Manabique, forced by the coastal sand barrier (Expomex: 1993: 12).

7 A tributary of the river Dulce, close to the Golfete area.

8 Term to refer in Garífuna to the native "labuga" (Livingston).

9 In 1979 (53) establishes the event in 1806, and later (1999) indicates it for 1804.

10 At the end of the seventies, in the framework of the San Isidro Labrador feast, two mimeographed sheets with texts by Martínez (sf), and Sánchez (1977). The latter identifies himself as great-grandson of Marcos Sánchez Díaz. Both are based on variants of the oral tradition, but their erudition and handling of sources can be recognized.

11 The text (Sánchez:1977) is somewhat confusing, since it then points to October 13, 1805, but it is not clear if it is one of the many resettlements.

Black Caribbeans dwelling at Laguna de Perlas, Nicaragua. E.G. Squier, 1891. Taken from: Historia General de Guatemala. Association of Friends of the Country. Foundation of the Culture and Development.

Caribbeans deserted the coasts of Honduras where they were used as transporters and fled along the shores, from the Motagua River to Punta de Manabique until they reached the mouth of the Golfo Dulce" (Martínez:n.d.). *"They arrived aboard a 500 ton brig with 162 companions* (Sánchez: 1977)". They settled in the place they called *Labuga* (the river mouth, referring to its location at the mouth of the Dulce River). They spent some time in the bay. He traveled through *Tameja*, *Yojoa* and explored the area between what is now Livingston y Sarstun, founding *La Guaira* along the way. *"Marcos Sánchez Díaz, a descendant of Black slaves from France, is believed to have come from Haiti with the rank of Major in the Haitian army after the Independence of January 1, 1802* (Sánchez: 1977)" He died at the age of 113, in La Guaira, on land he owned, which he later donated to his brother Tomas Sánchez Díaz (Sánchez:1977).

Supernatural powers were attributed to Marcos Sánchez Díaz. *"He performed the miracle of purifying the area, as he drove out the plagues and got rid of venomous animals that made it impossible for human life to settle here* (Sánchez:1977)". It is said that he was a Buyei (priest), although other accounts mention that the buyei *accompanying him was José Máximo Castillo*. It is known that, due to mistreatment by the authorities and the difficult living conditions, he took refuge in Punta Gorda. In 1806, they were asked to return, as the authorities realized that without them, consolidating the settlement would be more difficult.

In the aforementioned texts, references to the period before their deportation from the islands, the official founding of the port, and the major events during the governments of Manuel José Arce and Francisco Morazán are frequent, when many were forced to abandon their settlements to head to Belize.[12]

12 The literary influence on oral tradition, as noted by González (1988), is evident and I would add, even encyclopedic. For example, the fact that the settlement became known as Livingston led to alternative interpretations. The most common attributes the name to an American with that surname who lived there (confused with the English traveler Livingston) another refers to the small *cayo* (islet) que se encuentra ubicado frente a la playa del puerto, y que dicen tiene vida, una piedra viviente, *living-stone*, que se mueve de un lugar a otro (Arrivillaga:1988b:131).

The Port of Livingston

On November 26, 1831, a decree was issued declaring that all settlements established or to be established along the coast would form part of the Livingston[13] District, located in the Department of Chiquimula (Pineda: 1869:470:I). The decree names Marcos Monteros as its founder. Monteros appears in a role that both oral tradition and later documentation attribute to Marcos Sánchez Díaz.

The need for port infrastructure likely influenced the Federal Congress decree of January 9, 1833. Article 1 stated that "*the bar in the Gulf of Honduras be designated as a major registration port under the name of Livingston*" (Pineda: 1869:775 :I). This decision likely displeased the Government of the State of Guatemala, which, in a note dated May 17, 1833, requested the decision be reconsidered and suggested evaluating the potential of the Bay of Santo Tomas, which could accommodate larger vessels.

The port was expected to receive 200 foreign families, protected by the immigration law approved on April 29, 1834. A Following a fire, a decree issued on October 16, 1835 ordered a return to the old port of Izabal while new conditions were established. As the most suitable people for consolidating the settlement were the Caribbeans, the port captain contacted Sánchez Díaz. His communication of April 1, 1836, summarized by Rubio, states ":"***in compliance*** *with orders from the state and federal governments to have the Caribbeans return to Livingston, the commander had met with Marcos Sánchez and persuaded him to return to the settlement, offering him a monthly payment of 10 pesos. The Minister of State approved the offer and instructed the commander to expedite the development of the settlement"* (1957:15). The effort was successful, and on September 10, the commander reported that during his visit to the port, he found Sánchez Díaz and more than 100 Caribbeans who had begun clearing and preparing the area. This urgent call made sense only the Caribbeans were capable of maintaining control and helping develop an area they had occupied for over three decades.

Despite the efforts, the population did not grow. The population census[14] conducted in late 1843 records Livingston as having 102 inhabitants; *"among whom was a certain Marcos Sánchez, likely the same man credited with founding the town and mentioned by the commander in his report to the ministry "*(cited by Rubio: 1957:15). Just a few years earlier (1825) there were said to be 200 inhabitants and a small military garrison to prevent illegal landings (Pineda: 1869:474:I). But depopulation seemed clear, considering García Granados' reference (1952:388:II), noting that in 1834 there were only two or three Caribbean families. However, this likely served to justify a European immigration policy. Land concessions to foreigners triggered migration in search of new possessions and increased land claims affecting farmers of different social backgrounds (Castro:1994).

13 The name of Livingston is in honor to the North American jurist Eduardo Livingston author of the penal code enabled on April 8, 1834 (B. 64.5 Document 6373 Leg. 361 of the General Government Archive) in the country. The initial name of the port was Liwington, as it appears in the writings of the French traveler Valois (1861).

14 A.G.D.G.B 84.10 Legajo 1145. Document 26160 (cited by Rubio:1957:14).

15 The commandery of Izabal had 6 towns and 1 curate, adding its population (Izabal:300, Castillo:60, La Boca:83, id. de Motagua:50, Livingston:200, El Mico until Encuentro:200) to 893 inhabitants. The least populated area in the table drawn up by Manuel Francisco Pavón on September 9, 1839 (Pineda:1869:121:I).

"SHELLING" TURTLES.

Turtle hatching by black Caribbeans. E.G. Squier, 1891.

Alfred Valois, in the tenth chapter titled *"Lewingston"*, recounts his arrival aboard the schooner *Aurora,* captained by an Englishman and piloted by several Caribbeans. Although most travelers left notes on the coastal inhabitants, Valois's descriptions are particularly noteworthy for his encounter with an elderly Caribbean (allegedly 132 years old, likely exaggerated)[16] named *"Tata Marco"*. He spoke fluent French and claimed to be the port's founder and former commander. Valois was surprised by his vitality. He was a well-known and respected figure along the Central American coast (1861: 177-182). Nearly a century later (79 years), other travelers would mention him again, as we will see (Kelsey y Osborne:1939:118).

We have not been able to verify it, but collective memory also recalls that when Justo Rufino Barrios traveled to the USA, he passed through the port of Livingston. There, he visited the settlement of la Guaira, inhabited by the chief known as Marcos, the founder of the port. Justo Rufino Barrios allegedly asked the authorities to grant him the respect and attention he deserved.

Colonizing Santo Tomás did not succeed, and during the second half of the 19th century, little was said about its settlement, Livingston[17] remained the preferred location. During a visit in 1874, the political chief of Izabal described the port: *"As is known, it is made up of Caribbean people, except for a few families of different origins who have settled (...) they móstly engage in seafaring and fishing; y as for agriculture, it is always seen as secondary, they only grow plantain, yucca, yam and other root vegetables"*. Over time, it was expected that they would help with grain production to support the local population. The report adds, *"they have been actively encouraged to grow coffee, sugar cane, and other crops that thrive excepciónal well in those fertile lands (...)* (cited by Rubio:1957:15)."

16 " ... *he was one of these privileged phenomena of these lands; he is bravely going into his second century and the weight of this long existence does not seem to weigh him down at all* (Valois:1861:169, free translation).

17 The same had happened to the attempts of English colonization on the margins of the Polochic where they founded Abbotsville, and later New Liverpool.

In the 19th century, pressures to equip Livingston with infrastructure increased. Since export trade was suffering due to delays and high transport costs in the ports of Izabal and Belize, rehabilitating Livingston would help with the coffee trade from the *Verapaces.* After some pressure, Decree No. 226 was issued on November 9, 1878, to authorize its use as a port of entry and exit. Article 2 ordered the transfer of the customs office from Izabal to Livingston, and the remaining articles called for an engineer to draw up the plans for the necessary buildings (Rubio:1957:15). On June 14, 1882 (Government Decree 287), declared that the Port of Livingston, including the area from the Sarstún River to Santo Tomás and the village of San Felipe, would be a FreeThus began the port's golden era (Arrivillaga y Shaw:1997).

Yurumein:[18]

For the ethnographic description of the event, we rely on the case of Livingston. The movement begins on the eve of May 14, when delegations from Belize, Honduras, Puerto Barrios, and locals residing in the United States arrive. The festive atmosphere continues all night long. The center of activities is the Brotherhood of Saint Isidore the Laborer specially arranged for the occasion. Among cassava bread, fruits, and many plants stands the image of the saint, which is honored through the night to the sound of harp, violin, and small guitar performed by q'eqchi' musicians. Before dawn, a group heads to a nearby beach, sometimes to a *dabuyaba.* There, using plants, bird nests, hats, pants, and shirts, they try to mimic characters who have spent a long time at sea. At sunrise, another group waits on the town beach and sees them arrive in canoes. Both groups perform the *hungühugü* rhythm, typical of *chügü* rituals, and many of the songs are remembrances of Saint Vincent (according to Cohelo: 1995:42, the songs remember it as a lost paradise).[19] The arrival of the group in canoes is the most emotional part, symbolizing the arrival of Marcos Sánchez Díaz and his companions. A procession then begins through the town, joined by the image of Saint Isidore, which is also adorned with many plants.

Settlement Acts

Few have documented the settlement events of the garinagú. In Belize, it is celebrated on November 19, the date when Alejo Benni arrived with others from Roatán. In 1941 *Domingo Ventura* and *Pantaleón Hernández* succeeded in giving this celebration official status in Stann Creek; two years later, it was already common in Toledo (Cayetano: 1990:35). In 1977 it was declared a national holiday: *Garifuna Settlement Day,* on November 19, the result of intense efforts by Garifuna intellectuals. Although it is now a national holiday, the structure of the ritual (in Punta Gorda and Barranco) remains similar to that of Livingston. In Honduras, it is celebrated on April 14, with special significance following the 200 years anniversary in 1997, perhaps more as a political event than as an act of transmitting collective memory.

In Livingston, the event coincides with the celebration of Saint Isidore the Laborer, led by the brotherhood of the same name, founded in 1892. It is likely that it originated from the deconstruction of ancestral rituals, as its dramatic structure, paraphernalia, and performers (Buyei, mediums, musicians)

18 *Yurumien*, means San Vicente, while *Yurumeina*, defines the ritual that represents the arrival of the first Garífuna to a certain site on the coast.

19 The texts of the songs are also an important space of memory of these events. Songs that allude to the death of Satuye in San Vicente (Cohelo:1995); to the transfer *Dena Vinegu Bea* (When we found white sand), (Holm:1978:23); or to the foundation of Labuga by Marcos Sanchez Diaz, give proof of the importance of recording these events.

Garínagu of Livingston, 1901.

resemble them in parts. Since it falls within the celebration of Saint Isidore (May 15), there are intersections with Judeo-Christian tradition. [20] However, it is a celebration that affirms autonomy and strengthens the identity of the settlement subgroup, as occurs in other communities.[21]

Among Oral and Written Sources

Reading the event from the perspectives of orality, ethnography, and written documentation shows both convergences and differences, which lead to questions: *Where and when was Marcos Sánchez Díaz born Was he Haitian, Vincentian, Trinidadian, or from a neighboring island How did he acquire the brig? How old must he have been to be the commander of the vessel and a leader Regarding his long life, did he truly become a centenarian?* On another note, *who was Marcos Monteros? A Ladino? A Garífuna? A lieutenant of Sánchez Díaz? Were they rivals or was it an official imposition that ultimately failed?* In the ethnographic field, we might also ask: *Is there anything else left of Sánchez Díaz beyond his memory in oral tradition?* Let us attempt some answers in light of the sources and etnography.

Of his age we count as references the margins of the temporality of 1802, when he arrives in Labuga in 1861, when Valois visits him (who attributes 132 years to him, version that seems to us exaggerated). Martínez (n.d.), indicates that he died at the age of 113 years. Gonzáles notes that most of those who arrived in Roatán were young, around 20 years old (1986:337). Since Valois visited him when he was already over 100, he must have been a fully grown adult upon arriving in *Labuga*. Apparently, he was visited by Justo Rufino Barrios on his way to the United States (according to oral tradition). Oral tradition holds that Valois's age estimate was incorrect. He still had much to do in 1861, and 132 years was far too much. In that sense, Martínez's version seems more accurate. If Barrios did visit him, he likely died a few years later. What is certain is that both travelers and ethnographers were struck by their encounters with long-lived

20 For Guillick, from the 19th century onwards, the *saints "were considered capable of modifying their conditions and Christian symbols were used to protect against evil spirits"* (1988:291). This increased during the 20th century

21 The Nicaraguan case is exemplifying, here isolated from their territorial space they lost many cultural elements, but the memory of the settlement, their origin and some parts of the ritual structure remained relatively intact.

individuals and always mentioned it. If he was 25 or 30 years old in 1797, he would have been 84 or 94 in 1861. If he was over 30, he was likely an active participant in the so-called Caribbean insurrection in Saint Vicent, which occurred a few years before their deportation.

In my opinion, he was Vincentian, like the other founding leaders of the first wave of dispersal (even into the 19th century). They were often confused with *French blacks* or *Republicans* because of their shared sympathies with political ideas also embraced by the Garinagú. If he was Haitian (or Trinitarian, as Gonzáles suggests in one version: 1995:403), he was likely married to a Caribbean woman, something feasible given the numerical predominance of women. This was the only way to ensure a net ter of kinship and common interests. Still, his nationality remains a mystery, which has also drawn the attention of authorskli e Gonzáles. He does not appear in the censuskta en upon their arrival. *"It is reasonable to believe that the founder of Livingston was actually a Haitian who adopted a fiennifer fiacqueline Rosales Antón in Honduras and had departed from Trujillo in a dugout canoe, not directly from Haití or Trinidad"* (1995:404).

It is also likely that (as in other cases) there was a certain influence from literature.[22] The reference to the Haitian Revolution had a great impact, especially in the Francophone Caribbean. This vie would be reinforced with the rise of nev political principles based on a clear vision of Black identity. Why not see in Sánchez Díaz, a kind of *Toussaint L'Ouverture,* who is admired by many literate Garinagú.

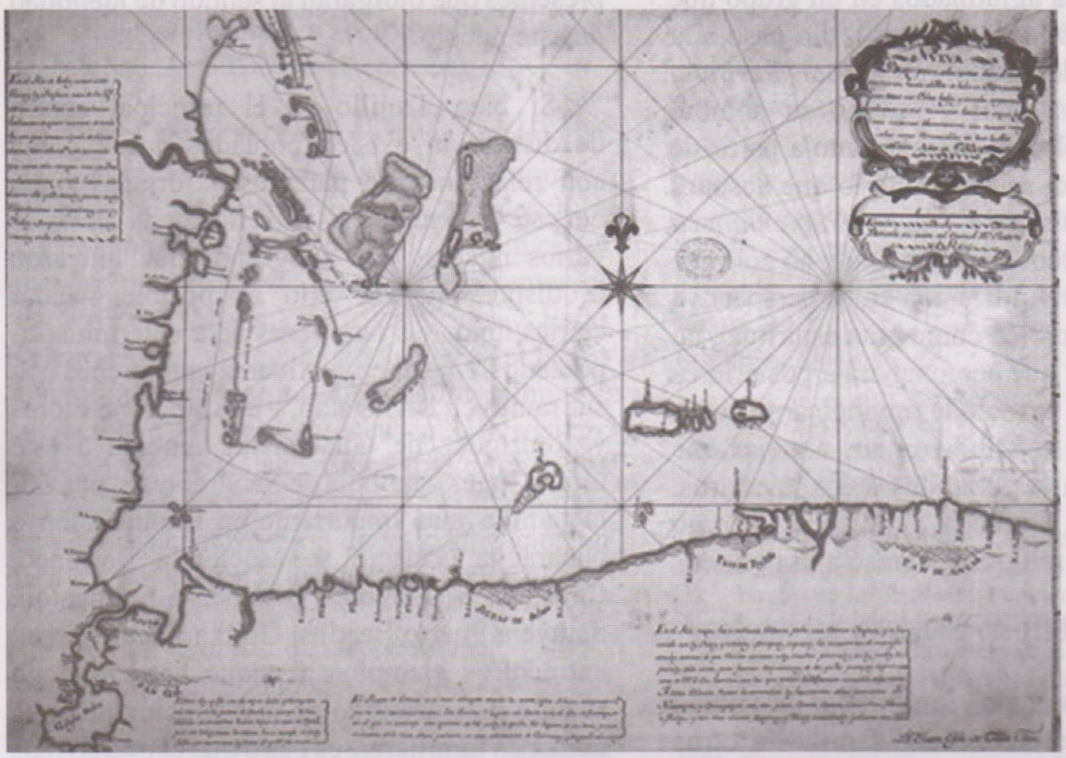
The idea of leaders being between 20 and 25 years old makes sense when we consider age roles today and place them in historical perspective. Ethnographically, we find that elders are respected and listened to as sources of wisdom, but leadership tends to fall to the youth most of the time.[23] For example, the transfer of leadership within a brotherhood can fall to a young woman even when there are older members available for selection. The same happens in the sacred sphere, buyei initiations often occur early, and the most devoted mediums are the youngest, the purest, and the most spiritually sensitive. Ultimately, this is because they represented a numerical majority, allowing them to enact certain generational cohesion logics, just as they do today. On the other hand, we lean toward thinking that there must have been groups incompetitions for leadership, resulting in variations from the average (58 people) suggested by Gonzáles (1995:402). Sánchez Díaz arrived with a group of 162

As for how he might have acquired a brig to travel; *Did he steal it? Was it a form of payment? Did he find it adrift? Was it for war booty? Was it left behind by the British?* Any of these could be possible causes. The literature of the time refers to such vessels as common in naval practices, used for attacks (La Gaceta:18.06:1799) or for trade, making them frequent targets of raids (La Gaceta:3.07.1797) . Let us recall that the British themselves abandoned them with the vessel *Princes William Henry,* in Roatán.

The key role played by the Garinagu in the development of coastal settlements is also preserved in oral tradition. In relation to the arrival of Sánchez Díaz, there is often mention Caribbean vanguards involvedin building forts or transporting all the goods

22 *In this regard the text of Sanchez says: "We all know that Haitiis the first Republic of Black Race in America and the first in Latin America to obtain its Independence fighting more than fourteen years against the power of France as well as Spain and England, then it is therefore founder and settler of Livingston, Marcos Sánchez Díaz, coming several times as Captain of his brigantine (schooner) for that purpose, which he achieved*(Sánchez: 1977)".

23 López notes, for example, that when they arrived to Honduras, the yappointed a 21 year old young man they called John Botis (n.d.:28) as their chief.



Description of the coasts of the Caribbean in the Kingdom of Guatemala, from Cape Camarón to the Río Valiz River, 1753. General Archive of Indies.

that arrived from Spain to the river port of Gualán (Martínez:n.d.). The claim that in 1833 support was requested to develop the settlement in exchange for payment is denied by oral tradition and by messages conveyed in the *chügü* by *gubida*, which affirm the opposite. If he returned and consolidated the port, it was because it was the place chosen for them. In this context, the observation made by some people seems relevant: clearing the place of mosquitoes and swamps, refers more to the sanctioning (rather than selection) and preparation of the place for its new inhabitants. This makes sense when we consider that Livingston likely had a healthy beach. We should note that this version of the story, that the place was prepared for future arrivals, is something that Kelsey and Osborne (1939:118) point out.[24] It is likely that these comings and goings were more frequent, as oral tradition indicates he returned to Livingston in 1806, and likely a couple more times.

It is highly likely that Marcos Monteros, whom official documentation records as the founder, was also Garífuna. The strange thing is not that Monteros is listed as the founder, but rather that he is later omitted. On the contrary, there are repeated records of attempts to locate Sánchez Díaz in Punta Gorda; *were they trying to recover a lost ally?* Or perhaps correcting a tactical alliance gone wrong.[25] Some authors (Gall:1981:522:2 and González:1995:403) have recorded the version of a Haitian founder in both figures. It is likely that this confusion stems from the fact that they were two commanders in conflict aboard the same brig.

24 *"... Marcos Sánchez Díaz, specifically, was its founder. He was a witch doctor who, arriving in this marshy, mosquito-ridden regions, disposed of the insects in short order by this magic ... established a settlement at the mouth of the rio dulce wich they named Labuga. Later, when a port was established there and the virgin of the Rosary named as its patron saint* (Kelsey y Osborne:1939:118). He adds that he changed his name from Labuga to Livingston.

25 ***"...evidence shows that even the 2000 Caribbeans who were landed on Roatán were divided by internal squabbles within a month. Perhaps dissension or factions fostered survival, providing platforms for new ideas or other alternative courses of action"*** (Gonzáles:1986:351).

In the mid-1980 s, a group of young Garífuna who had formed a collective called *Ibimeni* (meaning "sweetness") gave rise to the formation of the group *"Despertar Garífuna Marcos Sánchez Díaz"* ("Garífuna Awakening Marcos Sánchez Díaz").[26] As the name suggests, this was an awakening, and from this movement emerged what would later become the *Organización Negra Guatemalteca* ONEGUA. Marcos Sánchez Díaz was not only a bastion of vindication from the perspective of a hero, but also a spiritual guide, a guiding figure who would accompany future organizations. He was not only honored as a hero; they also offered him his favorite clams, which are much appreciated in ancestral meals. He transitioned from hero to *gubida*, and from *gubida* as a religious symbol, he returned to the political sphere.

Settlements: Heroes, Gubidas, and Ipshi

The settlements and the subsequent mobility of branches of a family unit to other coastal sites have strengthened the web of intra-ethnic relationships through kinship networks. The first settlers occupy a central place in collective memory, preceded by their Vincentian heroes *Satuye* and his brother *Duvalle.* These fierce defenders of the Caribbean cause in Saint Vincent eventually entered the spiritual world in Central America. They are part of the model that, in Garinagu imaginary, established new norms and parameters for the new setting to which they arrived, expelled from the Lesser Antilles. Here, they survive as central figures in their history, to whom others would later be added. They embody the exercise of memory in relation to the ancestors and the veneration of the protective *aharis* by the current generations who contribute to the sense of identity of this people.

Although Trujillo is the main center of dispersal, there are communities with kinship ties forged outside that reference point. This supports the idea of several cores with subgroups that initiated the dispersal. Thus, it is possible to identify certain family units with specific communities. Martínez or Álvarez, from Honduras, have branches in Livingston and Dangriga. Flores and Rodríguez from Guatemala also extended to the latter. The Sambula family from Sangrelaya appears to be the most important in the migration to Nicaragua. Palacio is associated with Barranco, Cayetano with Dangriga, Sánchez with Livingston, Satuye with Puerto Barrios, Guiti with Sambo Creek, among other examples. Although a more detailed study of the evolution of these family units is still needed, it is clear that the most significant event during this period was the change of most surnames to Spanish, leaving only Sambula, Guiti, and Satuye unchanged. Even today, nicknames still play an important role, *as*

Port of Trujillo, J. Ogilbi, 1671.

they did during their early years in Central America. Among them, we find their heroes: *Sana, Bregal, Diriga, Yurina Barimanare, Walumugu* (as noted by López: n.d.), who still do not bear Christianized names.

Another way to strengthen interethnic relations is through patron saint festivals organized by brotherhoods dedicated to the veneration of a saint, or by clubs. In a certain way, this reflects an expanded logic of kinship, gender, and generational structures. These celebrations, like that of Saint Isidore the Laborer, function as communal exchanges when delegations from other communities are received. They correspond to those subgroups that define the settlements, and their participation and interaction in such events reaffirm their involvement in a larger unity, the Garífuna people.

Among the settlement events, the Belizean one is particularly noteworthy. Here, the hero-settlement relationship is a well-crafted representation aimed at Belizean identity and, within it, the recognition of the Garinagú. Thus, *Settlement Garifuna Day* is not just a celebration for them, it also represents a form of recognition from the Belizeans. In Guatemala, more than two decades would pass before a national day as achieved. It origins stem from partisan political interests at the national level, and its impact has yet to approach the significance of the Belizean case.

Sánchez Díaz came to be a central figure for the *Labugana*. Everything indicates that his legacy remains alive in their memory. His status as a hero is well established, he fought, led a group, and founded a settlement. He gained cultural importance when his memory became embedded and, through its reproduction, acquired a vindicator character, a kind of *"first father"*, or more precisely, *"those who settled first"*. He also has a clear and swift path toward becoming a *gubida* (his life as exemplary), and due to his role as a figure (hero), he occupies a special place and is someone (a *gubida*) important in the celebration of ancestors rituals. This celebration represents yet another way to reclaim the territoriality defined by the *dabuyaba*, the site of religious events and a key reference point in relation to the settlement. Thus, the hero enters the sacred realm through the reproduction of ritual pathways, as the ancestors who dwell in *loubabagu*, the far side. Here: *Satuye*, *Duvalle*, *Benni*, *Castillo*, *Sambula*, *Ávila*, *Martínez*, *Cayetano, Lambe,* among others, together with *Marcos Sánchez Díaz,* remain as heroes and vigilant *aharis*,

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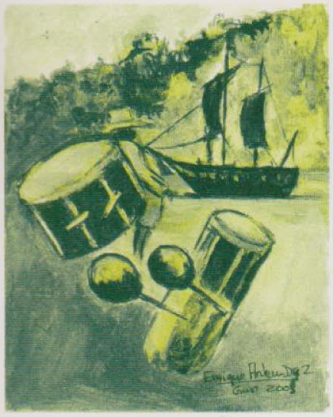

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