

Douglas Taylor y Melville J. Herskovits: Correspondencia entorno al mundo garífuna y las afrodescendencias

*Douglas Taylor and Melville J. Herskovits:
Correspondence around the Garifuna world and Afro-descendants*

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Este número de *Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* reúne y publica un conjunto de cartas intercambiadas entre Douglas Taylor y Melville J. Herskovits entre diciembre de 1945 y septiembre de 1948. Durante este periodo, Taylor obtuvo apoyo financiero de la Viking Fund para realizar sus investigaciones de campo entre los entonces caribes negros [actualmente conocidos como garífunas] de Belice, además de incorporarse al Departamento de Antropología de la Northwestern University como investigador asociado, bajo la dirección de Herskovits.

También imprimimos *Preliminary Report on ethnographical fieldwork done among the Black Carib of Central America* [Informe Preliminar sobre la investigación de campo etnográfica realizada entre los Caribes Negros de Centroamérica] enviado por Taylor a la citada institución, con el fin de informar sobre los resultados obtenidos por sus esfuerzos etnográficos.

Me encontré con las cartas y el informe en el marco de una investigación posdoctoral, ocurrida entre 2014 hasta 2018, sobre la trayectoria académica, las actividades profesionales y la producción intelectual del antropólogo brasileño Ruy Galvão de Andrada Coelho en sus años vividos en el exterior —de 1945 a 1952. En mis incursiones por diferentes archivos, encontré el material que ahora se publica conservado en los Melville J. Herskovits (1895-1963) *papers*, ubicados en la Biblioteca central de la Northwestern University, en Evanston (Illinois). Saqué, entonces, fotos de las cartas y del informe, con la expectativa de, en otro momento, publicarlos. Estimulado por la invitación de mi estimado colega Alfonso Arrivillaga-Cortés, decidí que es llegada la hora de presentar este material que se quedó inédito por cuasi sesenta años, pero que asume gran valor por todos cuantos investigan o se interesan por la historia de la antropología en Centroamérica y, más particularmente, sobre el avance de los estudios sobre los garífunas (cf. Arrivillaga-Cortés & Shaw, 1997; Cruz Sandoval, 2002).

Desde ya, debo indicar que no soy un experto en la obra de Douglas Taylor, de manera que mi contribución en esta presentación solo consiste en situar al lector adelante del material, nutriendo la esperanza que otros investigadores avancen, por citar un par de ejemplo, en el confronto del contenido de las cartas y del informe con las descripciones contenidas en el libro *The Black Carib of British Honduras* (1951) y/o con la discusión propuesta por él sobre la proveniencia étnica de los rasgos culturales de los garífunas, a la luz de los estudios posteriores sobre el asunto (cf. Anderson, 2009; Euraque, 2004; González, 2008;).

El objetivo de esta introducción es presentar al lector las circunstancias en las que se escribió la correspondencia y explicar determinados temas, aspectos y personas tratados en ella. Douglas MacRae



Taylor (1901-1980) es más conocido por su inestimable contribución a la investigación de lenguas amerindias y criollas en la región del Caribe. Sus principales artículos sobre el tema se han recogidos en el libro *Languages of the West Indies* (1977), lo cual fue presentado, en conjunto con el lingüista Dell Hymes, por otro notable investigador de la región, el norteamericano Sidney Mintz (1922-2015). Taylor también fue responsable de la primera publicación de una investigación académica sobre los garífunas: *The Black Carib of British Honduras*, publicado por el Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology en 1951. Una referencia obligada para la producción intelectual contemporánea sobre los garífunas, su pionera monografía aún sigue siendo leída, citada e influyente, sea como punto de partida para una visión general de las principales instituciones sociales, estructuras lingüísticas y creencias religiosas garífunas, sea como fuente bibliográfica para la poco documentada historia sociocultural de esta población en la primera mitad del siglo XX.

En el prefacio de este volumen clásico, su autor registra de manera concisa:

The ethnographic material for the present survey of the culture of the Black Carib of British Honduras was obtained during twelve months in 1947-48, on a field trip financed by a grant-in-aid from the Viking Fund, Inc., New York, and carried out under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. Historical data on the Black Carib of Saint Vincent prior to their deportation to the Island of Roatán in 1797, and on Island Carib in early colonial times were secured largely at Northwestern University, during a visit of six months in 1949 financed by an additional grant from the Viking Fund.

The writer is truly grateful to the above institutions and to all those persons concerned in giving him help and advice, both in the United States and in the field. Especial thanks are due to Dr. Melville J. Herskovits, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University, and to Mrs. Herskovits for their unflagging interest, encouragement, and help, before, during, and after the field trip (Taylor, 1951, p. 7).

Las siguientes cartas transcritas y publicadas arrojan luz, tras los bastidores de la investigación, aclarando, entre otras cosas, las razones que llevaron a Taylor a seguir hacia Belice, gracias al inmenso apoyo académico e intelectual de Herskovits, pese a ciertas proposiciones defendidas por el lingüista y antropólogo inglés en su investigación. Como el lector verá, Herskovits hizo todo lo posible por obtener financiación para Taylor de la Viking Fund, movilizándolo contactos personales, firmando recomendaciones, facilitando documentos y asegurándose de que Taylor pudiera concentrarse en su investigación de campo.

El intercambio epistolar entre ambos comenzó por iniciativa de Taylor, entonces un joven y prometedor investigador con varios artículos ya publicados, que deseaba ampliar sus conocimientos sobre los aspectos etnolingüísticos de las lenguas amerindias habladas en la región de las Antillas Menores. Nacido en Yorkshire (Inglaterra) en 1901, Taylor estudió lenguas modernas (francés y alemán) y economía en Cambridge, donde también obtuvo una maestría. Posteriormente viajó a Alemania y Francia para continuar su formación académica y profesional. A partir de 1938, se trasladó permanentemente a la isla caribeña de Dominica, donde inició investigaciones científicas (en los campos de la antropología física, la lingüística, el folclore, la cultura material y el parentesco) con grupos indígenas caribeños locales. En una carta fechada el 28 de diciembre, Taylor se pone en contacto con Herskovits, le pide información sobre la obtención de ejemplares de revistas académicas y comenta la presencia de palabras y letras de supuesto origen africano en las Antillas Menores, aunque, en su opinión, no se detectan rastros de entidades espirituales o cultos africanos en la región. En su respuesta, fechada el 29 de enero de 1946, Herskovits muestra interés por el tema y pondera con el correspondiente la influencia de los procesos de “reinterpretación cultural” que han tenido lugar en la región, por lo que resulta imposible evidenciar retenciones africanas en “estado puro”.

Para que se comprenda el interés de Herskovits en la presencia africana en el Caribe, así como su interés por los comentarios e informaciones enviados por Taylor, conviene recordar a grandes rasgos la influencia del proyecto de estudios de Herskovits sobre la continuidad histórico y cultural entre África y el Nuevo Mundo. Nacido en el 1895, en Bellefontaine, Ohio, en el seno de una familia de inmigrantes europeos, en su juventud Herskovits decidió convertirse en un rabino y llegó a frecuentar el Hebrew Union College en Cincinnati, pero la ausencia de fe religiosa le impidió avanzar. Durante la Primera Guerra Mundial se alistó en el cuerpo médico y sirvió en Francia. Al regresar a Estados Unidos, ingresó en la Chicago University, donde se licenció en historia.

Poco después se trasladó a New York, donde defendió su título de maestría en ciencias políticas (con el tema huelgas laborales en el Estado de Washington) en la Columbia University, donde estableció contacto con el antropólogo de origen alemán Franz Boas y su círculo cercano de estudiantes: Ruth Benedict, Ralph Lynton, Alfred Irving Hallowell y Margaret Mead. Bajo la orientación de Boas, Herskovits se convirtió en antropólogo y defendió su tesis doctoral, “The cattle complex in West Africa” en 1923, un estudio bibliográfico sobre las áreas culturales en África.

En la segunda mitad de la década de 1920, empezó un programa de estudios sobre los problemas de la aculturación y la preservación de las instituciones y las prácticas culturales africanas en el Nuevo Mundo. Por lo tanto, defendía la combinación de métodos históricos y etnográficos con el fin de rastrear el origen étnico, la procedencia geográfica y la especificidad cultural de estas supervivencias, denominadas de “africanismos”. En particular, sus intereses se dirigían a la dimensión religiosa, familiar, económica, lingüística y artística del fenómeno de la preservación, aprehendidas con base en un arsenal de conceptos que él forjó o acuñó: “aculturación”, “foco cultural”, “tenacidad cultural”, “reinterpretación”, “retención”, “ambivalencia socializada”, entre otros. En pocos años, consolidó su reputación como el mayor estudioso de las poblaciones africanas y afroamericanas en la academia estadounidense, construyendo una red intelectual internacional dedicada a la investigación de las supervivencias africanas en las principales naciones del continente americano; entre sus colegas y colaboradores figuraban el brasileño Arthur Ramos (1903-1949), el cubano Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) y el haitiano Jean Price-Mars (1876-1969). Entre 1928 y 1941, en compañía de su esposa, Francis Herskovits, llevó a cabo investigaciones de terreno en Surinam (1928), en la Costa del Oro [hoy Ghana], Dahomey [hoy Benín] y Nigeria en África (1931); en Haití (1934); en Trinidad (1939) y en Brasil (1941).

Durante la década de 1940, ya establecido como la principal figura y jefe del Departamento de Antropología de la Northwestern University, Herskovits creó el “Programa de Estudios Africanos”, primera iniciativa de este tipo en Estados Unidos, que empezó un conjunto articulado de investigaciones de posgrado con el propósito de mapear la distribución y la intensidad de los “africanismos” en todo el “Nuevo Mundo”.

A partir de estas primeras cartas, se estableció un diálogo regular entre Taylor y Herskovits. El 30 de marzo de 1946, Taylor pregunta a su interlocutor: “—Is anybody doing anything about the «Black Caribs»? [Edouard] Conzemius’ sketch is quite inadequate” (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41). Meses más tarde, ya con más informaciones etnográficas acumuladas, reconocería el mérito de las descripciones de Conzemius sobre los *dügü*...

En que pese el juicio negativo de Taylor, los precursores y excelentes artículos de Eduard Conzemius (1927, 1928) ya describían con precisión los aspectos de la lengua, los antecedentes históricos, las características físicas y las más sobresalientes prácticas culturales y religiosas, sin con todo encajarlas en un molde analítico e interpretativo más amplio.

En su respuesta, fechada el 20 de mayo de 1946, Herskovits declara:

The Black Caribs, I may say, have been a group I have wanted to see studied for many years. I even had a field trip all lined up for a young man who was taking his doctorate here. The unbelievable prejudice of the Honduran Government in refusing him a visa even for research on the ground that he was colored, prevented the realization of this work. I am hoping that it may be possible in the future to get someone among them. They are one of the most strategic areas for study in the whole Afro-American field. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41).

Sin embargo, desde el inicio de los años cuarenta, Herskovits deseaba un estudio más detallado del grupo, lo cual constituía un ejemplo fascinante para el estudio de la retención cultural y de la aculturación entre los afrodescendientes en las Américas. En *The Myth of the Negro Past*, su obra más afamada, publicada en 1941, Herskovits comentaba:

Known as Black Caribs, this unstudied people constitute one of the strategic points for future attack on New World Negro acculturation, since they represent an Indian-African amalgam that should establish a further control in the historical laboratory where this problem is to be studied (Herskovits, 1941/1958, p. 93).

En nota de pie de página, añadió: «The only published data on the Black Caribs are in a paper by Eduard Conzemius, “Ethnographical Notes on the Black Carib (Garif)”, *American Anthropology*, 30: 183-205, 1928» (Herskovits, 1941/1958, p. 309).

Herskovits intentó en 1942 enviar a su estudiante negro Hugh Smythe a Honduras, pero sus esfuerzos se vieron frustrados por el gobierno hondureño, que no autorizó su entrada y se negó a extenderle una visa debido a la vigencia del artículo 14 de la Ley de Inmigración de 1934, lo cual prohibía el ingreso de negros, coolies, gitanos y chinos en el territorio hondureño (cf. Anderson, 2008).

En una carta fechada el 27 de julio (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41), comenta su experiencia de investigación entre los caribes de Dominica y los caribes negros de San Vicente, así como sus planes de llevar a cabo una investigación en profundidad sobre estos últimos en Honduras. También menciona que algunos investigadores estadounidenses con los que estaba en contacto le habían aconsejado la posibilidad de solicitar una beca del Viking Fund.

Desgraciadamente, no fue posible localizar la carta enviada por Herskovits el 1 de agosto. En su respuesta, fechada el 6 de agosto, Taylor agradece a Herskovits su ayuda con la Viking Fund y comenta con entusiasmo la posibilidad de realizar “a collaborated attack on the Black Caribes” y de conocer a su “young Brazilian friend” antes de que comenzara la investigación de campo. En carta del 9 de septiembre, Herskovits afirma que “I do not think there will be any conflict between you and Mr. [Ruy] Coelho. Indeed, I think he will be fortunate that it will be possible for him to check his data against yours” (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41).

Estudiante de antropología en posgrado en la Northwestern University, bajo la supervisión de Herskovits, el joven brasileño Ruy Galvão de Andrada Coelho, entonces con 27 años, embarcaría para Honduras solamente en el setiembre 1947, donde se quedó, hasta julio de 1948, período en que él condujo su investigación de campo entre los garífunas ubicados en Trujillo, la cual resultó en su tesis doctoral, titulada *The Black Caribes of Honduras: A Study in Acculturation* (1955), finalmente publicada en Honduras en los años de ochenta (Coelho, 1981, cf. Ramassote, 2018).

En varios pasajes de las cartas, Taylor indaga a Herskovits sobre la llegada de Ruy a Honduras, hasta que finalmente los dos investigadores se encuentran en Trujillo y se quedan juntos entre 12 de noviembre y 5 de diciembre de 1947. En sus diarios de campo, publicados en portugués con el título de *Días en Trujillo* (2000), Coelho consigna la impresión positiva sobre el colega y los diálogos intelectuales ocurridos entre ellos.

A partir de entonces las providencias se precipitan. En la carta de 9 de septiembre de 1946, Herskovits define el destino de Taylor y de uno:

I take it you will be working in British Honduras and he in the Republic of Honduras. It will be interesting to see what differences, if any, are to be found between these groups. You will both, I take it, do a general survey of the culture of the groups with whom you are working, prior to your special study on language and his in certain psychological problems in the analysis of which he has been trained. This seems to me ideal, and I hope it is in line with your own plans. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44).

En el mismo día, Herskovits escribe a Paul Fejos, director de investigación de la Viking Fund, activando sus contactos para favorecer la obtención del auxilio financiero. Para reforzar su candidatura, decidieron que Taylor se convirtiera en profesor asociado del departamento de antropología de la Northwestern University.

Taylor llegó a Belice el 5 de marzo de 1947. Desde la aldea de Stann Creek, envió a Herskovits sus primeras impresiones y anotaciones sobre la cuestión de los orígenes étnicos de los garífunas. Aunque Herskovits no demandó en sus cartas a que Taylor le enviara informes de campo periódicos, como exigía a sus alumnos y asesores (Ramassote, 2021), el investigador inglés sí le envió descripciones muy detalladas de las principales ceremonias y ritos practicados por los garífunas, además de pedirle recomendaciones de lectura y consejos prácticos. La extensa y vívida descripción de un *dügü* se relata en una carta fechada el 10 de mayo y se retoma en la del 16 de mayo. Es innegable la fascinación y satisfacción con que Taylor describe los acontecimientos de los que fue testigo.

En su respuesta, fechada del 24 de mayo, Herskovits asevera:

My impression, like yours, is that this ceremony is basically African. That is why I should prefer the term “priest” to the one “shaman” that you use for the buyei. The drums, both as to their type and position in the ceremony, seem African. So do the facts that the *Dügü* is given when a person is sick; that it propitiates the spirits of the ancestors; that it given as the result of a promise, but, however, is often postponed; that more women than men dance in it. The possession you describe is African; the use of sacrificial animals also; likewise the fact that a few drops of the drink are poured on the ground as a libation before consuming the liquor. I should be interested in the reasons given for doing this, since elsewhere it is a very characteristic offering to the gods and dead. The incident of the children being fed, though somewhat different in detail, resembles strongly a similar part of a rite we observed in Brazil. As much explanation in native terms of why this is done, would be useful. The same holds for the whole pattern of obscenity toward the end of the rite. The fact that old women dance with young men is very striking, and reminiscent of practices and beliefs we have encountered elsewhere. The offerings in the lagoon might very well involve the powerful water-spirits, and reasons for giving such offerings, for overturning the boat, why the particular people who went to witness this part of the rite were included, and the like, would seem to be indicated. The fact that the dancing changed from clockwise to counterclockwise is definitely not African. I have never seen in Africa or among New World Negroes a ceremony where this happens. The prevalent direction of African and African-derived dances, without exception, is counter-clockwise. Similarly, I have never seen sacrificial cocks killed as you describe the killing. I suspect this, too, is a non-African pattern. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44).

En su carta del 1 de julio, Taylor expresa su desacuerdo con el presunto origen africano de los hechos descritos. Basándose en su amplia experiencia de campo entre los grupos caribes de Domenica, Taylor sostiene que:

However one cannot help wondering and comparing, and quite a number of cultural traits which you describe as African retentions (in T.V.) have been recorded among American peoples having had little or no contact with Africans, and from localities as far apart as Mexico and the Amazon basin (e.g. crossing or being passed across the corpse to immunize against baleful influence of the spirit of the dead). The throwing away of food for the dead is practiced by the local Mayas, who hold an 8th day ceremony (as in Dominica, and not 9th day as in Trinidad) after which only the spirit of the dead is believed to depart. While boiling wax or oil the Maya and the Dominican must not defecate or the product would be inferior on quantity or quality. Of course a great many similar beliefs, stories, rites may arise independently among people living the same sort of life, but the concurrence of a mass of minor traits apparently common to W. Africa and wide tracts of Central and South America seems to be such as warrants a demand for some further explanation. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44).

En varios momentos, Douglas Taylor cuestiona la perspectiva de Herskovits sobre la procedencia africana de las prácticas, creencias y ritos descritos en la correspondencia. Esta divergencia contradice incluso las conclusiones de Taylor y Coelho en sus respectivas investigaciones académicas. Mientras Taylor defiende la primacía de la herencia cultural indígena, basándose sobre todo en sus investigaciones sobre los aspectos lingüísticos —el “pastel negro” cuyos ingredientes provienen de la herencia cultural indígena—, Coelho no duda en subrayar la centralidad de la herencia africana.

Una vez concluida la investigación de campo, Herskovits tomó la iniciativa de escribir a la Viking Fund para explorar la posibilidad de obtener recursos financieros para que Taylor pasara una temporada en el campus de la Northwestern University, con el fin de escribir un informe más sustancioso sobre su investigación, que daría lugar al libro *The Black Carib of British Honduras*. En una carta fechada el 5 de enero de 1947, informó a Taylor de su iniciativa:

It has been good to learn from Ruy that you and he are finding it so pleasant and profitable being together, and it has occurred to me that it might be worthwhile for both of you to continue this association while working up your materials.

To this end, I have taken the liberty of suggesting to the Viking Fund the possibility of a grant which would enable you to spend some time here at Northwestern during the next academic year, when you would have the resources of this Department to call on in writing your report. I am glad to tell you that Dr. Feijos expressed much interest in the project, and asked that I submit a request to him so that it could be presented to the next meeting of his Board of Directors. If, therefore, you will let me know at your early convenience how much time you would care to spend here, and an estimate of costs, I shall be glad to transmit your proposal. I believe there is a good chance of such a grant being made. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44).

Después de alguna vacilación, Taylor acepta el convite y permanece por seis meses en Evanston, en el 1949. El intercambio de cartas aquí publicado termina con el envío por Taylor del Informe Preliminar a Herskovits, quien, a su vez lo remite a Paul Fejos, en la Viking Fund. En una de las últimas cartas, Herskovits comenta: “His [Ruy Coelho] work has gone excellently, and between the two of you, I should say that the Black Caribs will no longer be a blank spot on the ethnographic and linguistic map”. (Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44).

Sí, él estaba cierto.

Antes del cierre, es necesario aclarar algunas decisiones editoriales en beneficio de los lectores. En primer lugar, la parte inicial de las cartas de Taylor fueron escritas a mano, de modo que por veces la lectura de ciertas palabras se queda difícil. Esto implicaba la labor de descifrar los manuscritos. A pesar de todos los esfuerzos, algunas palabras no se entendían y se decidió marcarlas por el uso del símbolo gráfico de ***.

Además, fue necesario suprimir algunos trechos en los cuales no había informaciones relevantes, los cuales son indicados por el símbolo gráfico de [...]; por fin, dos páginas – la página 5 y 6 de la carta con fecha del 10 de mayo– no fueron encontradas – ya no se decía por un descuido o no se encuentran en las cajas de los archivos.

Se decidió, para facilitar la lectura, realizar una actualización ortográfica de los términos garífunas que surgen en las cartas.

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Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41

Africana Manuscript 6, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44

Transcripción

Northwestern University Libraries, Evanston, Illinois, USA

Africana Manuscript 6, Box 35, Douglas Taylor, Folder 41

“Magua
Dominica, B.W.I.
December 28, 1945

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

I was very interested in your report Anthropology during the War I. France which appeared in n° 4 of this year's A.A. [*American Anthropologist*] and should be much obliged if you could give me further details of recent publications there in the Americanist field.

I lived in France before the war and became a member of the *Société des Americanistes* in 1938. However, for some reason, I received only one issue of the Journal – tome XXX, pp. 1-218. Am I right to believing that there should have been another fascicule for year (1938)? During the War I was, of course, unable to renew my subscription. I should now like to this, as also to get copies of all issues subsequent to the one received. Should I write to Dr. [Paul] Rivet at 61 rue de Buffon, Paris V, and how much money should I enclose? [...]

P.S. I have long whether you or any of your associates or pupils ever did any work in these islands (Lesser Antilles). Personally, I have come across no trace of African deities or cult – (obyá) obeah, ebwa (quimbois), “tit albert” and “grand albert” - all having a pseudo-Christian or even a Carib background.

On the other hand, a number of negroes claim to know that they are of Ibo or “oku” *** descent; and a number of creole songs (mostly those sung with bele [Belair] and Kaleda dances) contain what would seem to be African phrases. E.g.: - (said to be Ibo) “nahú ye*ré hímara [...] The words in square brackets are Creole, and mean let us all reply!”

2 (said to be oku) “ó kóko mílo kagu èle [piti piti nuke pwa pey-la]

3 (“ “ “ “) “pó mi baya, jó mi baya aku lele]

The words in square brackets in n° 2 are Creole and mean little by little we shall take this country. Perhaps you can interpret the others?

Douglas Ray Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
January 29, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor,

[...]

What you say about Africanisms in the Islands is very interesting. I know them but briefly, and have long hoped to be able someday to work on them. Haiti to the north, and Trinidad to the south, are the closest I have ever come. I think you may find some of the materials that Mrs. Herskovits and I obtained in the latter island, and which should appear late summer or early fall as a book entitled “Trinidad Village”, of interest to you, since we worked in a village where there was very little Africa on the surface.

The problem as I see it is not one of pure survivals, but of the reinterpretation in European terms of Africanisms that have been retained under changed form. In Catholic countries, Africanisms that are immediately recognizable are more readily found than in those where Protestantism made it impossible to continue the worship of African gods. The proverbs you cite are quite interesting, and I shall keep them in mind if an African turns up who might interpret them.

Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“La Frégate, prés
Le François
Martinique
30/03/1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits

Many thanks for your letter of January 29, and for the information given therein. I have written to Dr. Rivet, and hope to hear from him in due cause.

It is a great pity that such “backward” islands as Dominica should have to remain uninvestigated until they become “progressive” – that is to say until, along with good roads and comfortable hotels, they replace African and Caribs traits by pseudo-European ones! Unfortunately, I have never been able to procure recording apparatus, cinema, or serum for blood-tests, let alone more complicated tools.

The words for songs (not proverbs as you state) which I sent you are only samples of much still (but not less long) to be found among the old folk in Dominica. Of course, it is useless to try to record the old songs and dances (Carib as well as African) without proper apparatus.

Is anybody doing anything about the “Black Caribs”? [Edouard] Conzemius’ sketch is quite inadequate.

You do not say what tribe might be meant by those who say that they are “oku” descendants. I could find a little material regarding purchase and baptism of slaves in Dominica, should it interest you. However, I have been there 9 years, and am anxious to get to another field!

I look forward to greatly to reading your book “Trinidad Village”. Apart from articles in the *American Anthropologist*, I have read little about the negro, in Africa or in America. The War made it almost impossible to get new books down here; and I am only now trying to catch up on my reading. As a matter of fact, I have only just finished your *Mith of the Negro Past*. Without doubt, it is, of its kind, the most interesting book I have read since Sapir’s *Language*. Specialization is really a deplorable necessity – the more since there is no “clearing-house” for the specialists’ various fields of knowledge. To take an example from phonetics: the negro’s confusion of certain consonants such as: t x k, n x l x r, might be attributed to African, Indian (vide Raymond Breton’s Carib dictionary) or European (cf. Sp. Playa, Port. Praia, It. Spiaggia beach) origin. The same is true of other beliefs and customs, and particularly those relating to the so-called “rites of passage”.

Personally, I have found very many of the non-European traits extant in Domenica today, to have been recorded in the middle of the seventeenth century by Breton and others for the Island Carib. Hence, I have, perhaps erroneously, conclude that such derived from these latter. You, and others, find corresponding traits on W. Africa; and still others in Europe, local or old time. With regard those traits which are common only to the W.I., to S. America (parts), and to Africa, is one to conclude (1) that the Carib and Arawak had, by 1640, adopted many linguistic and other cultural traits from the Negroes without giving any in return? Or (2) that there was some pre-Columbian contact between Carib/Arawak and W. Africans? (3) that such similarities are a matter of pure coincidence? Or (4) that two-way acculturation took place at a very early date, and that it is not now possible to say what trait derived from where? I think you will agree at all events that, in certain localities at least, American Indian traits were passed on to and conserved by the Negro population.

I have, in the past year, written a number of articles concerning various aspects of my attempted study of the remaining Island Carib; and have much material yet to be written up. Unfortunately, the only one so far published, is swarming with printer’s errors. I send it to you nevertheless. Another should appear soon (if it has not already done) in the *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. May I send you reprints of all of them as I receive them. I should much appreciate any advice and criticism you are willing to offer.

Sincerely,
Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
May 20, 1946.
Dear Mr. Taylor:

Thank you for your letter of March 30, and the reprint you sent with it. The paper on Carib influences on Creole is most interesting. I think with this beginning, a triple attack on the Creole spoken in Dominica and elsewhere on the basis of a knowledge of all of the three stocks involved in its formation – Indo-European, Sudanic, and Carib – would probably tell the story. I agree with you that Suzanne Sylvain has gone farther that is justified in attributing African influences, and this despite the fact that she was undoubtedly influenced by the published *Suriname Folklore*, and which I reprinted in the *Mith*. Certainly an almost obvious methodological principle, unfortunately seldom observed, is that we must take all possible sources of influence into consideration in any analysis of provenience.

The questions you raise about the non-European traits in present-day Dominica but described for the Island Carib of the seventeenth century, are some that I suppose only sustained research can answer. My own bias would be for the fourth alternative, namely that two-way acculturation took place at a very early date, and the integration has been such that historical dissection is extremely difficult. I should be the last to rule out the possibility of Indian influence on Negroes. In Dutch Guiana, for example, the Bush Negroes have taken over the whole Indian cassava complex, and everywhere in the New World Negro religious custom in the African manner, incorporates “Creole” deities, sometimes with Indian names, that represent a recognition of the power of the autochthonous gods.

I read your article in the *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* with great interest. I think you have a great deal in here that is African, probably integrated with earlier Carib beliefs, and also with European ones. I just haven't time to go into these correspondences in detail, but many of the spiritual beings you speak of, and some of the customs that you include under life circle, are particularly striking to one with a background of Africanist research. As to derivation of words such as *obia* and *zombie*, they present difficult problems, but I think they are undoubtedly African, and expect to be able to document this one of these days.

I am glad you liked *The Myth*. It was an interesting job to do. I am sending you, under separate cover, some of my reprints, which I hope you will find of use and on which I would welcome your comments. I would particularly call your attention to the paper in *Afroamerica* where certain methodological devices that you may find useful are set forth. The Black Caribs, I may say, have been a group I have wanted to see studied for many years. I even had a field trip all lined up for a young man who was taking his doctorate here. The unbelievable prejudice of the Honduran Government in refusing him a visa even for research on the ground that he was colored, prevented the realization of this work. I am hoping that it may be possible in the future to get someone among them. They are one of the most strategic areas for study in the whole Afro-American field.

With kind regards, I remain
Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits"

"Ann Arbor, Michigan
July 27, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits:

I was hoping to meet you during my visit to this country, but find that you are too far away to make that possible for me.

During the past 8 years spent in the West Indies I have assembled a good deal of material (physical, measurements, material culture, social organization, language, and folklore) concerning the Carib remnant in Dominica and Carib Negro mixture there and in St. Vincent. Some of this has been published, more is in press, and still more awaits tabulation, illustration etc.

I am very anxious to supplement such knowledge as I have gained of these people by a study of the Black Caribs of Honduras, who have, as you ***, retained a form of the Island language and who are supposed to number about 15,000. This study might later be again supplemented by one on such a group as the Galibi of Pointe Isère, French Guiana.

Unfortunately, increasing obligations coupled with the decreased purchasing power of fixed incomes (especially of in \$ sterling) makes such an undertaking impossible for me without material assistance.

Dr. [Charles] Voegelin has mentioned the project to Mr. Cowan, but I do not think the latter is very enthusiastic, and Dr. Voegelin fears that he will want to put it off till next year. On the other hand, many people have advised me to try the Viking Fund. Naturally I would stand a better chance if someone well known to them like yourself would help me by preparing the ground, so to speak. As you have already indicated this group as of special interest, I take the liberty of asking if you will help in this matter.

Sincerely,
Douglas Taylor"

"Ann Arbor, Michigan
August 6th, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

Many thanks for your very kind letter of August 1st, received yesterday; as also for the reprints, and letter of May 20, which arrived here via Dominica and Florida some days after I last wrote you.

Financial considerations alone oblige me to return to Dominica by the first opportunity. Otherwise, I would certainly remain here until the end of the Linguistic Institute's summer session, and then go to see you at Evaston before going to New York. However, it is just possible that I shall be compelled to stay on for some weeks yet, as I received a telegram some days ago, announcing that the "****" departure from New Orleans had been cancelled, and that future sailings for Martinique would be from New York. I am still waiting to get details of these latter.

On the other hand, should I have to sail before you return east, I shall nevertheless try to contact the people you mention on my way through New York, and just hope that something may come of it before too long, even though I cannot remain in this country.

Your generous offer to help me obtain Northwestern Univ. sponsorship for the project sounds good to me, but I must admit that I do not know what the appointment as Research Associate entails. Until such time as I can sell my property in Dominica, I should find it extremely difficult to live in this country on my private income.

The idea of a collaborated attack on the Black Caribes appeals to me a lot; and I hope it may be possible for your young Brazilian friend and myself to meet somewhere before the actual fieldwork begins. I have been living with Dominica Caribs,

on and off, for more than 10 years; and suspect that much of the ***-ethnographic picture of the Black Caribs will prove to be similar, if not identical with that of the former. My main interest in the latter group is linguistic: - why have they kept the Island Carib language longer than the relatively purer Dominica Caribs, and how and to what extent has it changed *** little of it Conzemius recorded shows decided affinities with the St. Vicent rather than with the Dominica dialect; although, of course, the Carib linguistic material I was able to obtain was extremely meagre in both islands – a few sentences and anecdotes, one or two songs, and a number of isolated terms; and all this from about half a dozen informants who claimed to have uses the language as children when speaking with their parents. Such as it is, however, this material checks up pretty well with Breton's seventeenth century dictionaries and grammar from which I perforce had to obtain most of whatever knowledge of the language I have acquired.

I should be very much obliged if you could give me any information about the present-day Black Caribs other than that contained in Conzemius' article – such as: present location of main settlements, religious affiliations, if any, second language most commonly used (if any) – Spanish, English or French Creole (which I can speak fluently in its Dominica form).

From what you said in your letter of May 20, (about young colored man being refused a visa) I was hoping that I might get first into the field but if it should *** possible to raise funds for two people to attack the problems raised from two different angles, that would certainly be ideal. The time required would be about one year (perhaps slightly less), and I should like to begin, as far as possible, immediately (say October or November. This for two reasons: 1) I should like to return to Europe, at any rate on a visit, before the end of next year; and 2) it would be much better to avoid too long lapse of time between my Dominica experience and the Honduras job.

Very many thanks for your help and kindness

Sincerely,

Douglas Taylor”

Africana Manuscript, Box 41, Douglas Taylor, Folder 44

“Department of Anthropology

September 9, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor:

[...]

I do not think there will be any conflict between you and Mr. [Ruy] Coelho. Indeed, I think he will be fortunate that it will be possible for him to check his data against yours. I take it you will be working in British Honduras and he in the Republic of Honduras. It will be interesting to see what differences, if any, are to be found between these groups. You will both, I take it, do a general survey of the culture of the groups with whom you are working, prior to your special study on language and his in certain psychological problems in the analysis of which he has been trained. This seems to me ideal, and I hope it is in line with your own plans.

As soon as my desk is cleared, I shall move in the matter of the Research Associateship. In order to do so, however, I should have from you a curriculum vitae to present to the University administration, with the Departmental request. This should include such information as date and place of birth, higher education and degree, research experience and a bibliography of your publications, together with any academic or other positions you may have held. I have many of your publications here, so that I can get them out of my files, to forward them with the request. I anticipate no difficulty, and am very glad to do this.

[...]

With best regards and all good wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Melville J. Herskovits”

“Department of Anthropology

September 9, 1946

Dear Dr. [Paul] Fejos:

It was good to learn of your interest in Mr. Douglas Taylor's proposal to study the Black Carib of British Honduras in the light of his work among the Caribs in Dominica and other West Indian Islands. As he may have told you, we here have been interested for some time in his research program, and I am glad to commend his project to you in the highest terms.

I particularly hope he can be aided to do this work because it ties in very closely with the research on Negro peoples being done in this Department, and will make it possible for Mr. Taylor materially to extend our knowledge of New World Negro peoples, and also do a first study in which the problem of Negro Indian acculturation is seriously attacked.

Trusting that Mr. Taylor will be awarded the grant for which he is applying, and with best personal regards, I remain
Very sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“The Viking Fund
September 12, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits:

Many thanks for your letter of September 9th. I was sad to hear that you have been ill, and trust that you are now fully recovered.

Yes, we are interested in Mr. Douglas Taylor’s proposal to study the Black Carib of British Honduras, and upon your recommendation, and I shall present it to our Board of Directors at the earliest opportunity. I feel sure they will give it serious consideration.

When Mr. Taylor visited me, he told me that although he has no institutional affiliation, he believes he could be appointed Research Associate of your Department at Northwestern. If this is so, it would be facilitate matters greatly for our Board to know that this project would be carried out under the auspices of Northwestern and under your expert guidance. In that case I am inclined to believe the grant would be made without hesitation.

With all good wishes and kind regards,

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Paul Fejos
Director of Research”

“Department of Anthropology
September 17, 1946

Dear Dr. Fejos:

Thank you for your letter of September 12th. I had proposed to Mr. Taylor that we nominate him as a Research Associate in this Department, and am only waiting for the necessary information to present this to the Administration. However, that is only a detail. If you wish to make the grant to Northwestern, so that the research can be carried out under our auspices, and with what direction we can give him, I am sure we shall be very glad to accept it in his behalf.

With kind regards, I am
Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Department of Anthropology
September 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I hope my earlier letters, written before you sailed, reached you. The Monday after, I received a letter from Fejos, which seems to indicate that your project is by no means shelved. I answered it at once, and I am enclosing a copy of my reply, too, so you will be completely au courant. Since the matter of the Research Associateship seems to be figuring in this matter, I will appreciate it if you forward to me at your very earliest convenience the information I requested, if you have not already done so.

I have been wondering if you had any information that would hint the African provenience of the Black Caribs. It has been my experience that the British slaves’ owners preferred Gold Coast Negroes, who are usually spoke of in the contemporary documents as Coromatynes, or Cromantees, or something of that kind, while the French preferred those from the Dahomean-Yoruban area, these being named Popo or Paapaa, or something of that kind. All seem to have had Negroes from the Niger Delta region – Ibo, or Oil River, or Calabari, as they were variously termed, and from the Congo. It would be a great help in directing Mr. Coelho’s reading if I could know on which area emphasis was to be laid.

I hope you had a good trip and found everything in good order at home.

Very sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Latham Hotel
28th Street
New York City
September 22, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

I have to thank you for letters of September 9th and 13th, the first of which crossed my last one to you. I am indeed sorry to learn that you are still feeling weak, and hope that you soon again regain your strength. I must apologize for having bothered you at such a time, and did so only because I expected to sail on the 15th, and feared you might not have received my first letter. The shipping strike is responsible for the fact that I am still here, but the latest report has it that my ship will finally sail Tuesday or Wednesday. Had I known of this detail, I would have been possible for me to go to Chicago to see you, as I should very much have liked to do [...].

My knowledge of Negroes cultures is limited to that of a few West Indian Islands, and I really have no idea of the conditions I shall find in Honduras, nor can I find any helpful books on this part of Central America. Whether I shall remain in British Honduras, or go on to the Republic depends, of course, upon what I find on getting there. However, from Conzemius article (a copy of which I have, of course, read) it would appear that most of the British Carib settlements are to be found in the latter country. Thank you for your offer of help in the matter of the Research Associateship. I hope that the information enclosed will meet the case.

I am look forward to reading your book on Trinidad Village. When do you expect it will be published? When does Mr. Coelho hope to leave, and does he still intend to travel via Dominica and St. Vincent?

Curriculum Vitae

Douglas Rae Taylor, born October 5th, 1901, at Batley, Yorkshire, England. Educated at Mill Hill School, London N.W., and Peterhouse, Cambridge University, where he studied Modern Languages (French and German) and Economics and took the degree of Master of Arts. Latter followed for one semester (without examination) History and Philosophy courses at the University of Heidelberg, Germany; then spent two years at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques in Paris taking the diploma in the Section Diplomatique of that school. From then on lived most of the time in France, and travelled in Ceylon, India, the West Indies, and most European countries. Was occupied during this period writing articles and short stories for European periodicals. First visited the West Indies and became interested in the Caribs of Dominica in 1930. Settled in Dominica in January 1938, and from that time on has made numerous visits – some of as much as six months duration to the Carib Reserve on that island. Is now anxious to carry on research among the Black Carib of Honduras, and later among the Galibi and Roucouyenne tribes of French Guiana.

Bibliography of Publications on the Carib of Dominica

The Island Carib of Dominica, B.W.I. (*American Anthropology*, Vol. 37, pp. 265-272, 1935)

Additional notes on the Island Carib of Dominica, B.W.I. (*American Anthropology*, vol. 38, pp. 462-468, 1936).

The Caribs of Dominica (*Anthropological Papers*, n° 3, Bulletin, B.A.E. n° 119, pp. 103-159, 1938)

Columbus Saw Them First (*Natural History Magazine*, Vol. XLVIII, n° 1, 1941)

Certain Morphological Influences on Creole (*International Journal of American Linguistics*, vol 11, pp. 140-155, 1945)

Carib Folk Beliefs and Customs from Dominica, B.W.I. (*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, n° 4, 1945)

Kinship and Social Structure of the Island Carib (*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, n° 3, 1946)

[Notes on the] Star lore of the Caribbees (*American Anthropology*, vol. 48, 1946).

Loan words in Island Carib (*International Journal of American Linguistics*. October, 1946)

Semantic Bases of Island Carib (same journal, in press, 1946)

Island Carib Texts and Analyses (same journal, in press, 1946)

Carib-Creole Tales from Dominica B.W.I. (*Journal of American Folklore*, in press, 1946)

(in collaboration with Dr. Walter Hodge)

The Economic Botany of the Dominica Caribs (manuscript awaiting publication by the Botanical Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

I have also, in manuscript form only and not yet disposed of for publication, papers in

The Physical Anthropology of the Dominica Caribs and The Material Culture of the Dominica Caribs

Sincerely

Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology

September 26, 1946

Dear. Mr. Leland,

In accordance with our telephone conversation, I am writing to transmit the Departmental request that Mr. Douglas Rae Taylor, M.A. (Cantab.), be appointed as Research Associate in Anthropology, without salary, for the academic years 1946-1947 and 1947-1948.

Mr. Taylor, now a resident of the Island of Dominica, British West Indies, is, as can be seen from the curriculum vitae and bibliography which I enclosed, a man of high competence and proved achievement. The quality of his work with the Caribs of Dominica (and also of St. Vicente, which he does not mention) has been recognized by publication in our best anthropological journals. I am sending herewith two of his publications for your inspection.

His work on the Caribs relates to the work of the Department not only because of its value as ethnographic documentation, but because this group is ancestral to an important though unstudied population of mixed Negro-Carib Indian composition that, since the eighteenth century, has been living in British Honduras and the Republic of Honduras. It is natural that Mr. Taylor's interest should turn to this group, and a compliment to us that he turned for advice and guidance.

After correspondence with him, he has been encouraged to apply to the Viking Fund for a research grant of \$3,000. I am enclosing a letter from the Director of the Viking Fund, which indicates that the fact that we are interested in the project, and willing to assist Mr. Taylor in carrying it out, will be a determining factor in their decision. For this reason, also, in addition to the fact of Mr. Taylor's achievement, we should like to see this appointment made.

Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits"

"Magua
Dominica, B.W. I
October 5, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits

Many thanks for your letter of September 20 with enclosed copies of correspondence between Dr. Feijos and yourself. I appreciate and am most grateful for all you have done and are doing on my behalf; and assure you that I will do all I can to make a success of the project should it be realized.

[...]

With regard your question as to the possible African provenience of the Black Carib, I am quite unable to help you. [Jean-Baptiste] DuTertre and/or [César] Rochefort state that the first white settlers (French?) in St. Vincent found Negro-Carib crossbreeds who did not differ in language or customs from the other (pure Carib) inhabitants. It is usually held that these were the offspring of Negroes who, through shipwreck or successful rebellion, had escaped from a Spanish, Haiti bound slave ship. Rochefort also reports that both Dominica and St. Vincent Caribs had (by mid seventeenth century) acquired some Negro slaves whose (half Carib) children they reared as their own. Labat found (I 1719) many more Caribs than in Dominica, and still more Negroes and half-negroes who were being, he says constantly supplemented by fugitives from Barbados. It therefore seems likely that the Black Caribs deported in 1796 descended largely on the African side, from slaves of the English, and, to some extent, from earlier slaves of the Spanish. My own stay in St. Vincent was short, and I heard there nothing about African provenience. Most of the so-called Caribs of that island appeared to be more Negro than anything else, although still very proud (much more so than the much purer Caribs of Dominica!) of their Indian descent. I could of course return to St. Vincent and try to discover more in this score from local records or traditions, but this procedure could yield at best only tribal origin of much later comers. Here in D., the only indications I found of African provenience, were the Ibo and a tribe call Bokú.

[...]

Very Sincerely,
Douglas Taylor"

"Department of Anthropology
October 26, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor,

Thank you for your letter of the 5th. I have forwarded to the Administration our Departmental recommendation that you be named Research Associate in Anthropology, and I shall let you know as soon as I have word of any action on our proposal. [...]

From what you write about the Negroes on St. Vincent, and from what I gather from Conzemius' article, there must be a considerable Gold Coast element in the Black Carib population. It has been our experience that the Ashanti Fanti cultures of the Gold Coast, the culture of Dahomey, and that of the Yoruba of Nigeria, have predominated in the New World. Ibo elements seem to be relatively sparse, and survivals of Ibo custom are not found even where we know from the documents that a considerable number of Ibo were imported. Congo elements to a small degree are found everywhere, but the ethnographic materials from Congo are so poor that more precise determination will have to wait on research in Africa itself.

In the intensive preparatory work Mrs. Herskovits and I are giving Mr. Coelho and Miss [Erika] Eichhorn, the student who will work in Haiti next year, we are stressing Rattray's work on the Ashanti, my own book on Dahomey, and such materials on the Yoruba as can be found. I would suggest that you would find all of these of use to you. From the New World, I have the feeling that for the Black Caribs our two books in the *Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana*, *Rebel Destiny* and *Suriname Folklore* would be of greatest use to you, though our forthcoming book on Trinidad, which should appear in January under the title *Trinidad Village*, and my book *Life in a Haitian Valley* would also give leads and suggest methods in the approach to the

study of any culture of partial African derivation.

[...]"

"Department of Anthropology
October 30, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I have just received the following wire from Fejos at the Viking Fund: "Fund granted, \$ 3000, Taylor research Black Carib under your direction. Check follows." I hasten to offer my felicitations, and best wishes for a most successful field trip. The check will be deposited with our treasurer and shall have a draft for \$ 1.500 sent you immediately. The remainder will be at your disposal whenever this is convenient to you. [...]

With kind regards, I am
Very sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits"

"New York,
November 1, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Viking Fund, at a meeting on October 29, 1946, considered the request of Mr. Douglas Rae Taylor for a grant-in-aid for a Study of the Black Carib of Honduras under your direction, and voted an appropriation of \$ 3.000 for that purpose. [...]

There are no limitations or conditions attached to this grant, as the policy of the Fund is to rely upon the integrity and scientific ability of its grantees. However, we would appreciate receiving at your convenience periodic reports on work in progress, and a final report on accomplishments.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Fejos, Director of Research"

"Magua
Dominica, B.W.I.
November 12, 1946

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

I received your letter of October 30 with the welcome news the day before yesterday. Of course it is entirely due to your kind and sympathetic help that I have succeeded in obtaining the grant; and I wish you to know that I do feel truly grateful. My only worry now is lest I should disappoint you.

As far as I have been able to learn, the only way of reaching B. Honduras from here is by way of Antigua, and thence by airplane Jamaica and Belice, B. Honduras. I shall plan to leave here immediately after Christmas. From all accounts, the Caribs are scattered along the coast south of Stann Creek, around Livingstone (Guatemala), and all along the coast of Honduran Republic, but I imagine that it would be futile to make any detailed plans before arriving in the country. Has absolutely nothing been written about these people except Conzemius' article? [...]

Many thanks for your advice reading literature to take with me into the field. I shall certainly get your *Rebel Destiny* and the book of Dahomey.

Until I hear from you again
Very sincerely yours,
Douglas Taylor"

"Department of Anthropology
November 26, 1946

Dear Mr. Taylor

[...]

You will probably have difficulty getting *Rebel Destiny* and Dahomey. If you do, let me know and I shall be able to lend you copies. As far as literature in the Black Caribs is concerned, I know nothing other than the Conzemius article. That is one of the reasons why I feel that straight ethnographic description, with problems of provenience and affiliation left for later analyses, is the order of the day for all fieldwork among the Black Caribs for a while, since obviously we must have the data before we can attack these other problems.

Please let me know if there is anything further I can do for you. It should be a fascinating field trip, and I look forward to a very substantial addition to our knowledge in both the Indian and Negro fields as a result of your research.

Very sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Stann Creek
British Honduras
March 5, 1947

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

After considerable delay, I finally landed in Belize on March 1st. The delay was caused, first by illness, then by lack of a boat connection to Antigua, and then by waiting around in Puerto Rico trying to get a transit visa for Cuba. I finally gave the latter up as bad job, and flew around via Miami.

This is the most northerly settlement (except for odd families) of the Black Carib, and is 4 ½ hours by motor-launch (no roads) ** of Belize. Other settlements in the colony are at Hopkins, Seine Bight, Punta Gorda (12 hours by launch from here) and Barranco, near the Guatemalan boundary. There is a settlement at Livingston in Guatemala, and numerous settlements *** from there coastward as far as Trujillo in the Republic of Honduras.

I intend to “go down the line”, at least as far as Livingston, before picking my headquarters.

I only got in here last night, and all the “Caribs” I have seen and spoken to so far are, as far as such superficial acquaintance shows, sophisticated negroes without any visible trace of Indian Blood! In fact, when shown photographs of Dominica Caribs, they exclaimed: “But those can’t be Caribes; they look like Indians!” They don’t consider themselves to be African or negro either, but have a weird idea that they are a race apart. In a letter to a local paper last November, one of them wrote something like this: “The Caribs are a primitive people and as such deserve special consideration on the part of the Government. When Columbus discovered the West Indian islands, he found them inhabited by a race of white people with curly hair (half-breeds) who had been in contact with Spanish Civilization for 200 years (sic!). They practiced the Mohammedan religion and spoke, presumably Arabic” (sic!). I shall try to get a copy of this document for my files!

However, their language is definitely a dialect of Island Carib, in which men and women still use different terms for many things. There is also promise of a rich folklore etc. – Please let me know which aspects of their culture are of special interest to you.

I have so far been unable to get copies of your books: *Rebel Destiny*, *Suriname Folklore*, *Dahomey*; and unfortunately do not know the name of the publishers. It occurs to me that it might be possible for you to obtain these books for me, and to send them on here (c/o Royal Bank of Canada, Belize, British Honduras). There is a boat from New Orleans which calls in about once every month. Would it be possible for you to deduct the cost from the balance of \$ 1.500 you are holding for me? If so, I should also like to have John Gillin: *The Barama River Caribs of British Guiana*, vol. XIX, n. 2 (1936); Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Mass, \$ 3.50. Another thing I should like to get is a portable typewriter: Underwood or Royal, with type adapted so as to be able to write nasalized ****. If this were sent together with the books, and arrived within 3 months, I could probably get it exempted from duty, and pass it as personal property.

When does Mr. Coelho expect to start? And where? I was unable to obtain any information from Barbados as to the African origin of slaves. Do you think that the large number of French (or Creole French) words in the local Carib dialect, or the name of one of their dances (gujui or kujai) said to exist also in Haiti, might help to establish their African background? French Creole is not spoken at all in St. Vicent whence these fellows came to Central America, although it is spoken in St. Lucia to the north and in Grenada to the south of that island. It seems possible that these deported Caribs, already mixed with Africans to some extent in St. Vicent, further intermingled with the Haitian colony which is said to have existed at Trujillo in the Republic of Honduras.

The basketry and canoes made by these Caribs are similar in construction (though the materials are different) to those of the Island Carib. Two species of *Desmoncus*, *Mart* are used for the former, instead of *Ischnosiphon arouma*, as used in Guiana and in the islands; while the dugouts here are made usually of mahogany instead of “gommier” (*Dacryodes excelsa*) as in the islands.

Hoping to hear from you soon
Very sincerely
Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
March 14, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor:
[...]

What you say about the Negroes is most interesting, but does not surprise me from what I have heard. I suspect that a great deal of their folklore will turn out to be African, and it will be interesting to see what linguistic elements of Carib are present.

As to problems, I should suggest that in biggining, after you have selected the place where you wish to work, it would be well just to gather as rounded a view as possible of all aspects of their life. Special problems should soon reveal themselves. Here are a few that occur to me. In economic life, the organization of agricultural, the organization of agricultural work in terms of sex division of labor, and particularly the presence or absence of cooperative labor in preparing the fields, or in such other large undertakings as housebuilding. It is important to know who may call on whom to help, and whether the group have any institutional organization. The economic position of women, particularly if there are markets and women sell in them, is another African trait that carries over everywhere, whereby the women have full say over the expenditure of the money they earn. In the field of social organization, any vestige of polygyny, whether in the form of plural marriage, or in the kind of temporary mating arrangements that are known as “keepers”, and which are essentially common-law marriages. The position of the woman, particularly of the grandmother in the family, and her relation to the children as against that between them and the father, is also of great importance. Political structure of the village, with particular reference to the selection, prerogatives and duties of the chief, can be noted with advantage. In the field of religion, which research has indicated to be the focal point of African religion, the material should be richest. The names of the deities, their correlation with Catholic saints, if these people are Catholics, the round of rituals, the mode of spirit possession, and particularly whether or not there is an intermediate stage between possession and the return to normal state – all these are, in broadest line, questions of great significance.

You will find many of them touched on in *Trinidad Village*, and indicated in *The Mith of the Negro Past*, which if I remember correctly, you already have. Needless to say I shall be most eager to hear about your findings in this regard, and will, as always, be glad to suggest leads that seem to be appearing in the data as you may care to indicate them to me.

What you say about the contact of the Negro Caribs with Haitians, is very interesting indeed. There would be signs of this contact indicated by a carry-over of elements of the Haitian Vodun cult, which derives from Dahomey, among this group. I wonder if by chance you are familiar with the book I published some years ago on Haiti. I wish I had a copy to send you, but unfortunately there is none available, and the edition that was printed are exhausted and it will be some time before there is a reprinting. However, it may be that names of deities you get will be indicative of carry-overs here.

Coelho will not be off until early summer, since he has his work to finish the rest of this academic year. He was, of course, greatly interested in your letter, and I will welcome your suggestions as to possible communities where he could profitably work. With his knowledge of the Brazilian Negro cults, and the training in African materials he has been getting this year, his background should supplement your great knowledge of the Carib elements in this culture beautifully, and I am confident that what has been a tantalizing blind spot in the anthropological field will become rather a stimulus for further research.

With kind regards all good wishes, I am
Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Stann Creek
British Honduras
April 1st, 1947

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

Many thanks for your letter of March 14, which I received in my return here 4 days ago. Besides Stan Creek, I have since last writing you visited Carib settlements of Seine Bight, Punta Gorda, Barranco and (in Guatemala) Livingston. In the latter township I learnt that the local buyei (shaman) had been called to Stan Creek to assist in the performance of a “dügü”. I hurried back (these events are comparatively rare) only to find that the celebration (which is to take place at Hopkins, a Carib village 12 south of here) has been postponed until after Easter since the hiúruha (spirit helpers) cannot be invoked during Holy Week! I hope to witness it next week, although it may again be put-off. I hear that a “dügü” is also in the offing at Seine Beight. As the priests do all they can to stop these celebrations, the people regard them as “bootleg” (tho they are not illegal), and are not too anxious to have strangers present.

From what I can learn second hand, Conzemius’ description of the “dügü” is essentially correct. Spiritual entities known to the people are: Bungiu (< Fr. Bon Dieu) God; máfia evil bush spirits, usually identified with the Devil; pantu evil spirit of the new dead (c.f. phantom?); ufe ghost of dead person; gubida ancestral spirits; hiúruha buyei’s Spirit helpers; úmeu sea-spirits; agáyuma (river spirit evil). When a person is very sick and the buyei is consulted, the latter may decree that the sickness is caused by that person’s gubida (ancestral spirits) who want food and/or dance.

On the other hand, I was treated to a more or less private demonstration of the local, Stann Creek buyei’s powers. The latter, Abram Dolmo, is apparently a shy quiet man of about 50. He has a pronounced stammer and is by trade a tailor. He showed me his rattles, wand, ceremonial flasks of rum, candles etc., and explained that for a dügü 2 buyei must perform – the head

officiant or sinabei, and the assistant, or úlin. The performance I witnessed was held in the house of and at the instigation of a “bush-lawyer” (Carib) by the name of Benguche. He provided candle, cup of water, ½ pint of rum. About 6 people were present. After sitting around talking for a while, Dolmo went into the adjoining bedroom with his paraphernalia including wand, but no rattle. This room was separated by a lattice-screen from the one where we sat. D. returned and ostentatiously remove his shoes. Then he retired to the backroom, requested that the light be lowered; and recited in a low voice and at a great speed what might have been a prayer or an invocation. It was in Carib with English words such as “and the seven sisters” thrown in here and there. This was followed by a few perfunctory taps (with the wand?) and immediately the first “spirit” was heard speaking in a loud voice without any stammer and in a fair imitation of a cockney accent. The “spirit” addressed the “medium” as “boss” the medium answering in a low natural voice with the usual stammer and addressing the “spirit” as “Sir”. The conversation was trivial and purported to convince us that through the body died the *** must be everlasting, and that the invocation of spirits was by no means contrary to the will of God as the presents would have it. A Carib speaking spirit followed, then an old man who spoke in a sepulchral voice, then the cockney spirit returned, and addressing “Mr. Taylor” endeavored to give me a lesson on the history of the Carib and “Ararak” (sic!) Indians! It was all very involved and on a level somewhere between slapstick comedy and a salvation army pep-talk. The chief aim seemed to be the conversion of the skeptical Benguche. One spirit “explained” that they could not be invoked during Holly Week nor, since God is 3 persons, till 3 days after Good Friday. The visiting spirit then asked for refreshment, and to the “medium’s” respectful inquiry as to the satisfactory quality of the rum replied “Oh! Not too bad! Tell Benguche not too bad!” When Dolmo, after repeating the prayer, reappeared he was in a profuse sweat. He told me that some spirits speak French and other languages of which he is ignorant, but of this he did not offer proof. He also said in his low shy way “I don’t kn-kn-know, Sir. I must ask them” when I inquired why pre-Conquest spirits worried over Christian religious celebrations. I imagine Mr. Kenneth Pike of Oklahoma Summer School of Linguistics would have enjoyed the ventriloquism and put on a rival show of his own!!!

However, Doimo is an interesting character – very inhibited, I’d say, in everyday commerce, the “séances” undoubtedly provide him with an emotional outlet; and it may well be that he at least believes himself to be the mouthpiece of the spirits he has “acquired”.

While Dolmo’s spirits seemed to be disembodied *** (one spoke of being born in 1808), he himself (and Sule, the Livingston “specialist” confirmed this) says that the *hiyúruxa* are independent spiritual entities, their chief being known as *mányors* (Breton gives *manáyola* as a Carib man’s name). Vicente Bonilla, better known as Sule, is supposed to have been called from Livingston for the coming “*dügü*”. However, he deprecates his own powers. Says he does not practice regularly anymore; and that anyway, professional etiquette would not allow him to take precedence over Dolmo in the latter’s district. A famous *buyei* is said to have as many as 250 or even 500 spirits (= ? roles). A *buyei*, says Sule, is born and not made, although he has to acquire the technique. Sickness (epilepsy?), dreams, unruly behavior on the part of a boy indicate that he will become a *buyei*. The priests and most of the younger [...]

“Department of Anthropology
April 16, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Your letter of April 1st came on in good time. It looks like you are really getting into the work. I am sorry that living conditions are so difficult, but I hope that the problem will have been solved for you the time this reaches you.

The ceremony you describe having visited sounds to me as though spiritualism has taken on among this people as it seems to have in most Negro groups who are under Catholic influence. There are, of course, very good reasons, both in Indian and African belief, why this should be the case, and it will be worthwhile pursuing the matter further as a part of the general acculturation problem. I know how anxious you are to see these ceremonies, and I am sure that there will be plenty of them before you finish your stay.

As to actual places to work, I have found this a good principle and so have my students who have gone into the field: to selected one center, work there about one quarter of the time; then go to a second locality and work there for about the same period; then one returns to the first locality, coming back with all the enhanced affects of an “old-timer” and with the little irritations that pile up with a long stay of a stranger in a small community all forgotten. By the time those start to pile up again, it is time to move back to the second place, where the same process repeats itself. Since one is working in the same culture, this tends to compound background; by the same token it gives a sense of the variation that is present in the customs of the people. When you do get settled, I shall be most interested in some of the answers to the points I raised in my last letter. I have the feeling in these mixed cultures that the process of reinterpretation goes so far that correspondences tend to come out rather late in a field trip, after one has amassed quite a bit of data.

I shall not attempt to comment on any of the specific points you raised in your letter, except to express my interest in them. I am keeping your letter carefully filed, and you may, on your return, want to regain from them impressions that might not be in a notebook. Coming just now when I am starting my course on the Negro in the New World, they will be of interest

to the students in the class, who will get a fresh view of how material is taken out. Coelho is finding them most helpful, and will certainly take all your suggestions. Poor fellow, he is at the moment in the throes of getting ready for the long and plenty stiff written and oral preliminary examinations for the doctorate, which he will want to have off before he goes into the field. I expect him to be fully recovered from this attack by the end of May!

[...]

“Stann Creek, B.H.
24-4-1947

Dear Dr. Herskovits,

I received *Rebel Destiny* and enjoyed reading it. Very many thanks! So far I have not found any parallels here – unless it be the belief, common to Indians and Africans alike, in the spirit or spirits of the Ceiba or cotton tree. One of these is here called *duendu* by the Caribs and *dwendy* by the Creoles, and may be met “by appointment” as a small (2’ – 2 ½’) man with a wide hat. Africa is called, by the Caribs *Agine* (à Guinée). Other points of ancestral spirits (*gubida*) to bring sickness to their descendants; the word *pindá* for “peanuts”; the use of the Carib word for “my skin” in the sense of “my health” or “my body”. The good-luck-charm worn round the neck and called in Dominica “garde-corps” is here known as *lúyawa nura* “its guardian my skin”; while a Carib phrase meaning “there may be no cure for me” has a literal translation “there is no charm (or: cure) perhaps my skin for me”. Linguistic changes – apparently phonetic and syntactic for the most part – I am at present not in position to judge [...].

As regards to social organization these Caribs appear to be completely acculturated to that of the local whites. What remains of material culture (indigenous) dugouts; cassava-sifters-squeezers-graters-***baskets and shoulder-baskets is *very* similar to that of the Islands (except for the grater which is here – contrary to Dominica and Guiana – still of the old stone – chip type). Is it ** while working out details of construction for all these? By far the most interesting aspects of the present culture are: language, religious beliefs and practices, and ethno-psychology, which, I trust, Mr. Coelho will elucidate. The lexical phonemic, and grammatical changes in the language are such that what little previous knowledge I had of it counts for little or nothing. French, Spanish, English (and almost certainly Africa – although here I am unprepared) words abound (at least ¼ of the total vocabulary) but are so integrated with the general pattern of the language as to be hardly recognizable. [...]

With very much thanks for your help and interest, and helping hear from you again soon,

Sincerely
Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
May 8, 1947

Dear, Mr. Taylor

[...]

Your work seems to be going very well, and it is interesting for me to read about it. There is only one point of method about which I think I might comment. Of course this may come out in your letters to me more than in your actual work, so you can tell me if I am wrong. My experience, however, has been not to worry too much about African or other sources of the cultures I study, but to try to describe them as they are. Thus, for example, about the elements of material culture, I would describe them as fully as possible. Where the people make their own implements and objects, processes can be analyzed; where they buy them, this fact ought to be set down together with something of the economics of how they get the money to this. What we are after in the ethnological aspects of your work, is like what you are doing on the linguistic side. That is, what is needed is a full picture of the life of the people. There is plenty of time after one’s return home to dissect out the traits and indicate their provenience. One of the reasons I felt you might find *Trinidad Village* useful was because this is an example of how in a community, which seems on the surface to be European, the acceptance of the problem as a description of life as it is lived led ultimately to insights that were as important as they were unexpected.

[...]

Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Stan Creek
May 10, 1947

Many thanks for your letter of April 16, to which I have delayed replying until after witnessing a “dügü” ceremony. It is curious how, in all work of this nature, more material may be crowded into 3 days than was found in the previous, (or subse-

quent) 3 weeks. Lean periods are very discouraging, and the others somewhat overwhelmed. I certainly hope you may prove to be right about there being many opportunities for witnessing the Carib ceremonies, but I understand that they take place, as a rule, only at this, the dry season; and that, as far as British Honduras is concerned, they rarely held elsewhere than in the villages of Hopkins and Seine Bight (on account of persecution by the priests). The *dügü* I have just come from took place in Hopkins – a fishing village situated on a sandbar about 2 or 4 hours (according to the wind) south of here by dugout. It began last Sunday night, and continued with but an hour or two's rest here and there until 7 a.m. Thursday morning, so that I am still feeling somewhat exhausted.

At least 3 dozen and perhaps more songs were sung during the dancing, and although most of them were repeated several times, I was unable to make out more than a word or phrase here and there. The airs are very interesting (I was reminded of the old Highland Gaelic lullabies and dirges with something of Russian gipsy music thrown in) and I feel sure that the words would be revealing. I am told that most of the “*dügü* songs are traditional, and it is certain that they contain a number of words and phrases whose meaning is unknown to most of the singers. Those who are supposed to understand these (the shaman and the old folk) give evasive answers when questioned. It is impossible for me to say at this point whether this comes from suspicion or from a desire to hide their own ignorance. However, one young man said to me. “Frankly, I do not know; but it is not surprising if the old folk are suspicious. During the war we learnt that Fifth Columnists are everywhere; and while that is perhaps no long true, it is well know that the Creoles dislike us Caribs, and that the priests condemn our festivities”. This same young man, when I questioned him about a song containing the word: *alliágwaru*, mama she has copulated, mamma; started by saying that I must have “misheard”, only to confess, when pressed, that I was right! It is to be hoped that Coelho or another can make phonograph recordings of all the songs. It would be well worth while! It is said here that in the Republic of Honduras, these ceremonies are much bigger – but as the forbears of all the Carib here came from around Trujillo, this may be only the same kind of sentiment which causes them to speak of Yurumain (St. Vicent) with what almost amounts to reverence.

I arrived at Hopkins about 5 pm last Sunday, and was directed to the house of the shopkeeper (Miguel) where I slung my hammock. The real festivities began (as they always do) on Monday morning, but going to the *gayunari* (house specially erected for these festivals) at about 8 p.m. I found an *abaimahani* in progress, and remained watching it till about midnight.

[...] and monotonous, while the words have to do with the everyday life of the women; such as bearing children, washing and starching (!) clothes etc. The women sway to right and left in time with the sung, as this gets more lively, advance their clasped hands which they pumps rhythmically up and down, leaning their bodies slightly forward the while. From Breton's remarks (1645), I take it that this is a purely Carib survival.

Monday morning I awoke about 5 a.m. and went to the beach for the “entry of the *dügü*-makers” (*hebélua hani adígihatiya*): that is to say those who since Friday or Saturday went out to the bays to get fish and crabs for the feast. In this case there was only one boat, but “there should be 3 boats, each with a Captain, a sailor (men) and 3 women”. Actually the boats (or boat) return Sunday night, but they land and sleep at a point (a headland) about 1 mile south of the village. Two boats put out from the village to the ***, and returned escorting that of the “*dügü*-makers” between them. They passed the landing place by about 200 yards (going north), turned east, then south, then west and landed. As the boats entered the drums beat, and the *buyei* shack his rattles the “*dügü*-makers” were dressed up in palm leaf hats, necklaces etc. The Captain was lifted out of his dugout and seated on the *** of another dugout lying on the beach, while the *buyei* inspected the catch and gave directions for its removal to the *gayunare*. The *buyei* was in ordinary attire (large straw hat, red kerchief round neck, dark blue smock or shirt *** outside pants) and pants. He carried his *sísira* (rattles, a *buyei* has 2 *sísira* and 1 *maraga*, the latter being larger and used only in certain parts of the ceremony), 1 in each hand and had a wand (of plain peeled *** wood) strapped to his side (*muréwa*). The Captain (*larine*) was dressed as a woman and bedecked with shell necklace and bracelets and palm leaf crown. Preceded by one drum a *buyei* with rattles, Captain is carried to the front of the *gayunari*, in the arms of another man. Here 2 other drummers are waiting the 3 drummers line up facing the crowd led by the *buyei* and by the man *** holding the Captain. The center drum is somewhat larger than the others and is called *anigi* (the heart). The ordinary word for drum is *gárawon* (Breton: *kaláwao*), but there is another, ceremonial term: *bugabuga* (<?). The drums beat and the crown sings: “Shake your rattles, O *buyei*! We have arrived, shake your rattles, we are waiting”. The Captain is now placed in a new hammock all ***, and the *buyei* starts the first “*malí*” (*hamáliha* Breton's *amálika* to appease, to flatter). The drummers dance 4 times anticlockwise around the *gayunari*, facing inwards, while the crowd face the drums and keep behind the *buyei* who shakes his rattles over the drums. As he raises or lowers the rattles, so the drummers raise or lower the drums to earth, while the crowd *** down without ceasing to shuffle and sing. The drummers move with a kind of slow prancing, side *** (or “crab step!”), stopping and bending over and rattling in *** tempo. The crowd does the ordinary *dügü* (see below) – the weight of the body resting on one foot while the other scrapes (or paws) rapidly backward and forward the matter of a couple of inches, then, knees flexed, weight is shifted to the other foot, and so on, alternately and rhythmically, so that while the feet and knees are in continuous rapid fluttery movement the actual progress is very slow.

Occasionally a man or woman will turn around, do a sort of “*pas seul*”, or dance opposite a partner “*d'ocassion*” for the space of 2 or 3 minutes. After 4 rounds of the *Gayunari* have been completed thus, the drums and drummers return to their corner, and there is an interval for coffee (about 7 a.m.). The baskets containing the fish, crabs, conches, etc. are removed from

the center (and how they smelt!!) where they had been placed, and taken to the kitchen. During this and all subsequent “malí” (for in the day and four in the night) everybody produces a little strip of *** cloth (auraragile fan) which they hang over the middle finger of the right hand, and similar strips were tied to the drums. Those carried by the immediate family by and for whom the diğī is given are coloured red with anatto, and are called galatu it has contents, it is charged (with magical power?). These are put away during the ordinary diğī dances and taken out and used only during the malí (appeasement).

The dügü festival is not mentioned by Breton and is probably African in the main, though the terminology employed and some of the ceremony’s components are undoubtedly Carib. The whole ceremony is referred to as an adügürahaní (a treading) and the dance itself is called dügü wayharu (or wayharu dügü) the old tread. According to Breton the root “tiki” means (French) fouler, piler, or cueillir. The concept evidently covers the idea of pressing or trampling down, or collecting or squeezing together.

My own information does not agree entirely with that given by Conzemius. According to my informants, a dügü is given when the buyei decrees that his patient’s sickness is due to neglect of the gubida. The gubida, say my informants is a collective term (like fire, water, ***, army) designating the entire number of one’s members family who are dead (whether this refers to collaterals as well as to forbears I am not sure). The diğī by offering dance, food and drink is a sort of atonement (cf. “malí” above). However the giving of an adügürahaní is a costly business, and as often as not (more often some day), it is only “promised” by the sick person who seeks recovery, when the buyei who is treating him (or her), attributes the affliction to the family’s gubida. Fulfillment is sometimes postponed as long as 2 years, but from the time the promise is given certain quakes (uguagai) and calabashes are hung up, and it is in those that are placed the offerings which, as the final rite of the dügü, are taken out to sea and sunk (see below).

There was no sign of the red-painted child described by Conzemius, not of the heap of earth in the center which he calls “the heart of the dügü”. After the end of the festival I asked the buyei about these things. He said that the child was probably some favorite of a grandparent who had recently died, and that the red (anatto) signified as in the case of the “galatu” that this was the last diğī to be given for that particular “race” (branch of the family). The heap of earth, he said, should have been there, and its absence was due to neglect in the part of his assistant, but it was unimportant and served merely to mislead with the food thrown in the sea (actually the food was spilled on the ground and scraped up again together with a certain amount of *** - or rather sand. See below).

After about an hour’s pause, dancing was resumed by an ordinary dügü. The drummers seated before their drums, begin to beat. One after another women (it was noteworthy that women outnumbered men, at least in the dancing, 4 to 1) went up and stood before the drums, swaying slightly and singing in a low voice, as if to “get the feel” of the dance. Gradually the rhythm quickens and *** louder, and the singing becomes louder and more assured, while the dügü step replaces the swaying. The crowd gathers in front of the drums, doing the dügü step “sur place”. Then they begin to move off, one behind the other in single file, holbbing, shuffling and paving around the room, round and round, then volte-face and round and round the other way, each dance lasting about ½ an hour. I tried it and was exhausted after 10 minutes! Each phrase of the song is repeated 3 or 4 times, the next one 3 or 4 times and so on. Usually ½ dozen “aficionados” or “fans” remain in front of the drums, sometimes bending over one after another drum, and performing more lively steps, invented according to their inspiration. The only case of possession, if you can call it that, occurred that morning about 10 a.m. A young woman of about 25 dancing among the “fans” grew more and more excited and furious in her steps, bending *** over the drum as if she was going to bite it! *** her arms and kicking her legs. Then she bent her knees, went gradually down and continued dancing on her knees on the ground. Up again and down again and ever more furious until exhausted, she raised her arms above her head then fell forward head on knees and arms outstretched in a sort of “Dying Swan” act. Sule (the buyei) who had retired to his “vestry” came out and shook his maraga (big rattle). Then as the girl picked up and placed apparently unconscious in a nearly hammock, went a sat down beside her in a bench. The dancing never ceased. In about twenty minutes she “came to” and wrang the sweat out of her head kerchief while 2 other women dusted off her dress. Sule spoke to her quietly and patted her arm. In about another 15 minutes she got up and went away. I did not notice her again. There was one arumahani while the drummers rested, then dügü again. The last dance before lunch interval was a malí. The people collect in front of the drums and start singing for the buyei, who after about 5 minutes comes in and takes his place in front of the big drum over which he shakes his sisira, now at elbow level, now raised high above his head, and again with *** arms, now in slow measure, now furiously. At a signal, the drums rise slowly (the drums strapped around their shoulders) and advance in their dancing gait as Sule retreats back and forth back and forth the length of the room, the crown dancing behind Sule who advances or gives backwards facing the drummers who retreat or advance with him. Then the drummers sidle around the room beating the while and lowering the drums to earth as Sule directs, while the people waft their strips of clothes and bow down with the drums never ceasing their song and step. Enquiry from an elder only elicited the information that the strips of clothe were wafted “to give the drummers air”, but one girl, doubtless less discreet, told me that they were wafted to make or to entreat the gubida to depart and not molest the family. That evening I moved my hammock to the gayunari *** I got no chance to use it!

One song which had as refrain “idenderu, idenderu, idenderu tugurabuga!” (tugurabuga is an ordinary word said to mean the time has past, or past-time cf. Breton tukurabuka the day before yesterday) and another ‘dende, dende, dende wamania

(wamania we have, we've got) made me curious as to the meaning of “i-dende-ru”. Most said they didn't know. One that the phrase meant “we'll eat cock tomorrow” and that dende was a name for the sacrificial cocks. Another said dende, or idenderu was the big drum, while the buyei said the word signified “something like saluting the flag in school” and accepted my suggestion that patria was the translation in Spanish (he comes from Livingston *** in Guatemala whither he returns next week). Breton gives no word like this.

There were 12 sacrificial cocks 3 tied in each corner of the room. Cassava beer, known as hiyú (the “old” name is know to have been wīgu; cf. Breton weku), was passed around in a large basin upon which *** a ½ calabash cup from time to time, and occasionally one was called into the buyei's sanctuary and given a shot of rum. No food was served on Monday except to the drummers, tho people ate what they themselves had brought. Dancing continued thus with occasional pauses until near midnight. After a preliminary malí, several cocks were killed. Sule called out in Carib: “I need a cock. Bring me a cock!” A cock was brought and handed to a man who held in between its head and wing tip with arms stretched straight above his head. The drums began to beat slowly, the man made a *** turns and dance steps before the drums, then dashed the cock with all his *** on the ground, presumably breaking its neck, while the people took up a sort of facetious dirge “O walagayu, *** O there crew (li. called out) a cock yesterday!” It was midnight. Several cocks were killed in this way, and then the dīgī was resumed with a song which said something about “we are after our killing”. Several pigs were killed without ceremony in the yard and kitchen behind Mrs. Blanco's (the giver of the dūgū) house where a number of fires were lit. After being cleaned the pigs were brought in and hung around the room for a while as were the sacrificed cocks. Bits of each animal were cut off under the directions of Sule (I think the cock's feet and the pigs eyes), presumably to be set aside for the cuguwa (*** cast into the sea), and the animals were removed to the kitchen. The dancing continued until day breaks when food (cassava bread, cock soup, pork with rice and raisins etc.) was served to the people. Preceding this, a dūgū had been danced to the words “I am burning, buyei, in the middle I am parched ...my not drinking in the carbet”.

Apart from a few abaimahani, little was done on Tuesday morning, but eating, drinking, and resting, until 3 in the afternoon when dancing was resumed. Previous to this however, the abáyuhani (pillaging) took place. Three lots of fan-palms were placed clockwise on the floor of the hall and these were spread with little heaps of food (pigs ***, yams, crab, fish, etc.) The assistant buyei told the children to enter and placed them around each ‘cloth’ but told them not to *** until the signal was given. This was given by beating of one drum and one woman starting to sing. When these broke off, which they did in 3 seconds, they children beat it with what booty they had been able to grab. The remaining food was tipped onto the floor, scraped up again with the sand, and placed together with one or two palm leaves in a quake which was then set on the boards covering the tie-beams, as part of the cuguwa (asukura to nourish) “feeding” (see below). Followed a song about “mother of the deep” and “she copulated” at night food was brought in (cassava bread and hiyú beer and placed on a table at one end of the hall, but I and some other favored guests were fed fish. Dancing went on all night. Early next mourning the table was cleared and wiped clean, rum was *** over it and set fire to. This is called abuhahani (servicing) or águdahani (burning). The buyei takes then a large half calabash, places it on the table and in it puts some crushed orange-leaves and fells it up with rum. He sets fire to this, lets it burn a while then *** out the flames. Little calabash cups (about 10 of them 2013 inches across) are put on the table and the buyei ladles out the “fusu” (< punch) for the adagīragīdini offering, sacrifice which now followed. One after another we took the *** calabashes of rum, went into the buyei's back room, placed the calabash for a few minutes on the ground before the “guli” then took it up and drank it. Some *** a few drops on the ground as libation before drinking. Then we returned the calabash – rinsing it in a basin of water placed by the mixing-table for that purpose (since of course there were not enough calabash cups to go around), before handing it on to another.

I forget to say that before the burning ceremony (which took place just at dawn Wednesday) a malí was performed in which the drums were not lowered, but the drummers were led out into the hammock shed (for the first time since the arrival of the crab catchers and their captain) where they stood facing the people who themselves faced east, while they sang: ira wagaba wau here is the forked-post-over us!

Then followed the águdahani (burning) and the adágīragīdini guli (offering to the guli (= ? sanctuary). The malí were performed anticlockwise Monday, clockwise (after midnight) Tuesday, anticlockwise Wednesday. I saw only 3 or 4 cocks killed Monday night, only 2 Tuesday night, but as all 12 disappeared, I presume the others were dispatched in kitchen without ceremony.

To get back to the aágīragīdini guli: There were, you will notice, 2 madudu (altar tables) and each had a guli beneath it.

This was because two branches of the family gubida were being “appeased”. Therefor two drinks were made, the first as stated, the second containing beaten up eggs, sugar, and water as well as rum and orange leaves. I made *** first offering to gubida A, and the egg punch to gubida B, but some people, did both each time – waiting their calabash over the spot, putting it down, then going over and repeating this on the other side. Although I looked hard (it was somewhat dim) all I could make out under the tables were some basketry quakes and calabashes and some nondescript bundles. I thought maybe some bones of the deceased might be included, but this was denied and of course I could not *** around. These are not, so I was told, the quakes, calabashes and bundles later thrown into the sea, but exactly what was their inventory and origin I could not elicit [...].

A final malí was now performed the words (or some of them) being as I could hear “aw waune bule, uma/aw waune buidemétiva/u bule, u bula, u mama (? “I called upon the branch of tree), the path/I called we are happy/O branch, O ***, O mamma! another song had reference to St. Vincent (Yurumain) and the paddling of a garayba (explained as small type of dugout) and a third was typical malí song calling upon the buye to do his stuff. It was now about 7 a.m. Wednesday and many of the guests returned to Stann Creek. That day people just sat around, talked or slept. That evening the ará[r]iraguni descent (i.e. of the spirits or hiúruha to say if the gubida here satisfied) was supposed to take place. But either because I was there, or because (as the Stann Creek buyei whose legitimate job Sule had taken, said) Sule was scared the Hopkins buyei and young man would peep in at him while invoking the spirits, or because, as Sule said “it was unnecessary” and the spirits informed him in private, the arayraguni did not take place. What the ceremony that did take place at about 8 p.m. Wednesday is called I do not know, but everyone sat-around the hall while 5 old women started abaimaha, or rather a farcical imitation of one, deliberately cracking their voices to sound more decrepit. Three young men dressed as girls (dresses and headkerchiefs) come up and sat-in a corner. They are all called the idena. Then one of the abaimaha women pretended to get-cross and went away, her place been taken by one of the idena. Soon the other 2 idena join the line so that there are 2 women, 3 idena, 2 women.

The song of the homeland island of Yurumain and of mégeru (negroes) ****. But in the main all the abaimahani and dügü songs are started, only to be cut short by some silly, farcical or obscene joke or comment which sets everybody rearing. The line changes its position to [dibujo de Douglas Taylor] then to [dibujo de Douglas Taylor] and a bottle of rum is placed between the dancers (if they can be so called) who address their songs to it. A sort of slapstick comedy with interpolation songs, jokes etc. ensues. Rum is passed around to all the guests in a small calabash for the last time then nearly all rise and form a ring. Hands are clasped as for the abaimahani, but instead of two lines of women facing each other, the ring extends around the entire hall. Slow shuffle anticlockwise around hall, bodies bent-slightly forward, clasped hands beating the measure with downward pumping motion from elbow “halliabiñaru, hallia bay...wherever...(?)

For the last 2 or three lines of this song hands are unclasped, and hand clapping in time to measure takes the place of arm pumping. As the song stopped and the circle broke up, I saw one old dame surreptitious *** her eyes. Immediately the idena recommence their jokes. Imitating French Creole ***. The jokes are partly Carib, partly (especially the obscene words) Spanish or English – coño! Shit! They fuck right here on the beach! etc. However, when one idena said something about *** in Carib (I haven't yet fucked her) one old woman turned to him reproving and said *** we're going! People now just sat around the idena ***. The procedure seemed to be this: an idena would start up a well know dügü song, sing a few verses to get all to join in, then break off suddenly at an appropriate verse, with some comment, farcical or obscene or both. Member of the family kept things going by interpolating the idena un the same farcical vein, calling them nitu (my sister). Sule had come to watch, but went away early and was not seen again, although drum beats were heard in the distance. About 1 a.m. dormitory by the slinging of hammocks and everybody went to sleep. Sule did not reappear till 6 a.m. Thursday, when the final act, the cuguwa feeding, nowrrishing (of the gubida?) took place. A small dugout was laden with calabashes containing the solid matter (cassava) from which all the hiyú beer had been made, the remains of the abáyuhani (pillaging) food and what else I do not know. I have reason to believe that a platter of *** (is a special cake baked there from was includes). There were several bundles and calabashes in the quakes, weighted with sand and *** up. Two men, one in the *****Sule and I followed in a larger dugout. A man and 3 women paddled to port, 1 man and 1 woman to starboard, on man steered, Sule, myself and 2 others were passengers. Sule chose the exact moment when the sun rose to push off and directed the cuguwa boat, which preceded us to steer toward the rising sun. We followed closely. Sule told us to sing, and himself started a weird song. When we were about 800 or 100 yards out from the land Sule called a halt, drew close to the cuguwa boat whose paddlers handed us their paddles, and gave the order “garababy! (Breton would have: kalábabany!) overturn it! (it feminine meaning the guriara dugout). Simultaneously the 2 men dived, upsetting the boat, which they proceeded to roll over and over 2 or 3 times to make sure everything had come out. We watched the things ****, then turned to the shore. Sule passed around rum to the paddlers in both boats and started another song. The adügürahani was over.

If there is another chance to see one, it will be within the next few weeks, so please reply at once if there are any points you wish me to attempt to solve.

Sincerely,
Douglas Taylor

“Stan Creek
16-V-1947

Dear Mr. Herskovits,

Herewith a few “addenda and corrigenda” on the adügürahani festival. It appears that this is essentially a family celebration; and although most of the expense is usually borne by one person or conjugal family, members of the extended family help or contribute in some way; and it is they who come from far and near and take part in the celebration. Others, that is those not of the family, may come to look on but only as spectators.

The important parts of the ceremony are apparently: 1) the *malí* (< *amalixa* to *appease*) or *hámalixani*, of which there are supposed to be 4 in the day and 4 at night. (as each of the 3 drummers gets 1 pint of rum for every *malí*, the number is sometime reduced “in these hard times”). Each *malí* song must be “called” (sung 3 times on each of the 4 sides of the dancehall, *gayunari* or *dabuyaba*). The parts of the *malí* when the drums are rested on the ground and the people bend low to wave the “fanners” (*auragile*) is heralded by the word *maniguati* “quiet”, and the people stop singing for an instant while the drums *** beat on. Here are some of the *malí* song words as I have so far leaned them:

[...]

The *adagaragüdüni* “sacrifice, offering”. I am told that the upturned calabash on the altar tables had food and drink offerings for the *gubida*. After these *** have absorbed the “spirit” of the food, it is put with the other things *** in the sea. The quakes, calabashes, etc. under the *guli* contained, I am told food and drink and other presents for the officiating *buyei*. Some families may eat all or part off the food offering placed for the *gubida*, but, said Mrs. Telefora Blanco, she had had all thrown into the sea for fear they (the *gubida*) might return should she have eaten any of it. The calabash used for the offering should have been *** with anatto (*hamamáruha lau* ***), but this was not done as the anatto was not in season and little was to be had (this little was used for the *gálatu* *** by the family.).

The *awehatiyyu*, i.e. those possessed during the dancing, are “compelled to behave as they do” by the spirit possessing them, and their behavior will vary accordingly. The spirits however, are the those of dead forbears, not necessarily remote. I am told that “women are fonder of that sort of thing” but that men also are occasionally possessed.

[...]

It is possible that the word *gayunari* (*digí*-house) may be cognate (compare Breton: *iona* foundation stem, *kaiónari* it has a stem/foundation). This building had no central post, and the wall plates were supported on either side by 4 posts (4 posts on either side also supporting the wall plates on the peristyle). The dawn song sung at the end of the *digí* dancing should be *ira wagira wau here are our hammocks* (not *wagaba post*, as I first wrote) above us. This is called the ***.

A light is kept burning on the shrine (*guli*) until wed. morning (the 10th day) of the week following the *digí*. On this day, everything was removed, and the *buyei* came to break down the *dabuiaba* (which must on no account be used for another ceremony). However he has persuaded to pull down only the peristyle, and to allow the main building to remain for 6 months – I believe because I had expressed a desire to use this building of sleeping etc. when in Hopkins.

I seem to have written a lot to you this week and last, but I am convinced that there is a great deal of esoteric *** at which I can only guess. The words of *dügü* songs are sometimes changed or deformed, intentionally and otherwise to maintain the younger people in ignorance of their purport, so I am ***. Children (14, 15 years) tell me that they are kept out of the more serious rites – especially from the *arairaguni* “descent” (of the spirits).

The *abaimahani* of the women (song and rhythmic swaying in line with clasped hands) is matched by the *arumâhani* of the men. The songs of the latter have usually to do with the sea, canoes, travel, etc. and the men on either extremity of the line usually lean with their free hand upon a paddle.

The Black Carib seem “to have a chip on their shoulder” The hate the “Creole” negro or mulatto, principally, it appears to me, because the latter regard the Carib as inferior themselves, but they rationalize their attitude by saying that the Creole are ungrateful and treacherous. The Creole’s dislike for the Carib appears to be based on fear resulting from incomprehension of latter’s language and culture, but the Creoles rationalize by saying that the Caribs are thieves and liars and clannish and let their womenfolk do all their work. The result of all this is that while the Caribs are very anxious to “learn about their past history, and to improve their race’s lot” (as they say), they are suspicious and evasive when it comes to allowing an outsider to learn their beliefs, customs, songs and even to some extent their language, in case he should prove to be friendly “only to say on them”. It is not easy giving!

One young man of 28 who has spent 5 years in Panama, working as a mechanic told me that he personally believes that I intend only *** towards them, but that many think otherwise. As everywhere else of course, it is extremely hard to make people believe that one may come to live among them and put up with the discomforts of their life only to get to know them and without any ulterior motive of “making money on their heads”, converting them or otherwise interfering with their habits; spying on and betraying them etc. etc. This young man has a 2 week old child, and as a consequence is momentarily idle (he tried giving fishing last week, but the baby’s stomach immediately got swollen up as a result of his activity). He is not legally married, since he believes that a man should be free to rid himself of a woman who misbehaves. He tried 2 girls while in Panama, but tho’ he beat them up for it once or twice, he could not wean them from “a mean dirty trick” they had of rushing to a ***-bag the minute he was through with them. He says there are many Caribs in New York City and that these have a Carib Society. Perhaps someone there might make some recordings? Until next time.

Sincerely,

Douglas Taylor

“Department of Anthropology

May 24, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor:

[...]

I shall file your letter with its meticulous description of the Dìgì rite, so that it can be available to you should you wish to check it with your other notes. Naturally it will be excellent to see another one of these ceremonies, if only to get a sense of the variation that obtains in it. Most of the questions your account raises in my mind, are “why” questions, that I think you can resolve best over the time of your stay by more or less intermittent discussion of the rite with the priest that directed it, if you are in contact with him, with the family that gave it, and with people at large. If there are any other kinds of ceremonies, I suppose that you will be after those, too; in any event, the materials of the humbler and less dramatic daily round, such as economic life and family structure, to say nothing of the belief system, will keep you amply busy.

My impression, like yours, is that this ceremony is basically African. That is why I should prefer the term “priest” to the one “shaman” that you use for the buyei. The drums, both as to their type and position in the ceremony, seem African. So do the facts that the Dügü is given when a person is sick; that it propitiates the spirits of the ancestors; that it given as the result of a promise, but, however, is often postponed; that more women than men dance in it. The possession you describe is African; the use of sacrificial animals also; likewise the fact that a few drops of the drink are poured on the ground as a libation before consuming the liquor. I should be interested in the reasons given for doing this, since elsewhere it is a very characteristic offering to the gods and dead. The incident of the children being fed, though somewhat different in detail, resembles strongly a similar part of a rite we observed in Brazil. As much explanation in native terms of why this is done, would be useful. The same holds for the whole pattern of obscenity toward the end of the rite. The fact that old women dance with young men is very striking, and reminiscent of practices and beliefs we have encountered elsewhere. The offerings in the lagoon might very well involve the powerful water-spirits, and reasons for giving such offerings, for overturning the boat, why the particular people who went to witness this part of the rite were included, and the like, would seem to be indicated. The fact that the dancing changed from clockwise to counterclockwise is definitely not African. I have never seen in Africa or among New World Negroes a ceremony where this happens. The prevalent direction of African and African-derived dances, without exception, is counter-clockwise. Similarly, I have never seen sacrificial cocks killed as you describe the killing. I suspect this, too, is a non-African pattern.

I hope these suggestions will be useful to you, and I shall await with interest further word from you. We are nearing the end of the academic year, and sometime during the summer Coelho will be off. It seems indicated from what you say that he concentrates his work in the Republic of Honduras. Have you any suggestions as to what is the best locality for him to begin work, and concerning practical matters such as equipment he should take, arrangements for receiving money, and the like? They would be most welcome to him, and appreciated, and I should be glad to pass them on to him.

With best wishes for continued success in your work, I am

Sincerely yours,

Melville J. Herskovits

P.S. to letter of May 24th.

Your supplementary letter of the 16th brings up a few more points.

I am interested in your comment about who bears the cost of the Dügü rite, particularly that you speak of an “extend family”. I take it you are planning to get institutionalized forms of social structures. The definition of an extend family would be very important, and would seem to indicate unilineal descent. If so, we have found it to be an increasingly significant point in the study of the Negro cultures, to determine the relationship of an individual to the parent to whom he is not, so to speak, “officially related”, That only family members can take part in the ceremonies is significant, since this resembles findings in Haiti and elsewhere.

2) The fact that malí songs are sung three times on each of four sides is interesting.

Do people get possessed by other spirits than ancestors? If so, where and when, and, of course, by what spirits?

I understand perfectly well the reactions among the Negroes which you are encountering. They are a common experience with us, but we find that as we settle down quietly in a village, and let ourselves be known, people decide we are really doing what we say we are, and the materials begin to get more abundant. Are you planning, by any chance, to try getting around this by doing what I suggested in an earlier letter namely, to leave the center where your area working, break ground in another, then come back to the first and the second? I think that would help you.

One final thing concerns the nature of sanctioned mating relationships. Legal marriage, of course, is only one form of socially sanctioned mating in New World Negro communities. It would be interesting to know if there is a Carib name for the kind of permanent relationship in which your young frier is living. It is called “keepers” in Trinidad, “plaçage” in Haiti, and “amaziado relationship” in Brazil. The verb in the United States is to common law. You will find a full statement of the approach to that phenomenon in Trinidad Village, which I hope will reach you shortly.

Again with best regards and all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Melville J. Herskovits”

“Punta Gorda
British Honduras

July 1st, 1947

Dear Dr. Herskovits:

[...]

I fully appreciate what you say about getting a picture of the people's life, and not bothering *** this stage with origins. However one cannot help wondering and comparing, and quite a number of cultural traits which you describe as African retentions (in T.V.) have been recorded among American peoples having had little or no contact with Africans, and from localities as far apart as Mexico and the Amazon basin (e.g. crossing or being passed across the corpse to immunize against baleful influence of the spirit of the dead). The throwing away of food for the dead is practiced by the local Mayas, who hold an 8th day ceremony (as in Dominica, and not 9th day as in Trinidad) after which only the spirit of the dead is believed to depart. While boiling wax or oil the Maya and the Dominican must not defecate or the product would be inferior on quantity or quality. Of course a great many similar beliefs, stories, rites may arise independently among people living the same sort of life, but the concurrence of a mass of minor traits apparently common to W. Africa and wide tracts of Central and South America seems to be such as warrants a demand for some further explanation.

It is kind of you to say that my work appears to be giving well. However, personally, I am far from satisfied and find that owing to all sorts of physical - difficulties progress is very slow. The “Black Caribs” have, moreover, a reputation in the Colony for keeping others out of their affairs, and while I have proved this to be grossly exaggerated, there remains a certain element of truth in it. However they have a surprising curiosity coupled with an unbelieving ignorance (vide enclosed cutting which please keep for me) about their own origins and history, and are forever pestering me to attend meetings and give lectures to tell them about their “family in Yurumain” (St. Vicent). Such knowledge as I have (or can plausibly pretend to have) of the customs beliefs and rites of the Island Carib is about the only currency useful in obtaining information about their own institutions!

As to the latest *dügü* ceremony, I arrived too late to establish the necessary friendly relations prior to the beginning of the rite, and was prevented from witnessing the more interesting ceremonies by the hostility of the *buyei* (another and a younger man, called “Bando”, who of course did not know me, and refused to meet me). Whether in order to *** me or for other reasons the order of the various ceremonies described in my previous letter was not the same at all, although they were, I gather, all performed. I may, however, mention a few supplementary details: Red kerchiefs were worn by all the women of the family while the men had red strips attached to their lapels or shirt collars. These “should have been” (but were not) cloth reddened with anatto. The strips of cloth used by the same people as “*galátu*” in the “*malí*” were also red as at Hopkins. I have not yet gone into kinship, but “family” as used above was defined as all living direct descendants of the *gubida* being propitiated. Those who had brought sacrificial cocks, carried them around during the *dügü* dancing, and prodded and shock the birds in order to make them “bawl”. A new explanation of the word *idénduru* was given me as “this crowing of the cocks during the dance”. The drums (3) were single-headed (deer-skin) hallow log type, and said to be of one piece of “dog-wood (as they were *** and I had no opportunity of examining them I cannot confirm this). The *malí* dances were as in Hopkins. I was told that besides the rum each drummer is given a candle which he must take home and burn before he can consume the first small bottle of rum given him for the first *malí* (apparently no restrictions attach to rum given for subsequent “*malí*”). During the “*abaimahani*” of the women, i.e., while the drummers were resting, a candle was lit upon the head of each of the 2 *** drums, but whether this has any ritual significance and if so what was, I could not learn. Besides rum and candles, each drummer receives his food and one dollar for each night. As before women far *** the men. There must have been at least 15 women in each of the 2 *** facing each other for the *abaimahani* songs, while only 2 men (with paddles in one hand) stood up for the *arumáhani* of men's songs. Finally, an interesting detail which I could not witness because of the (deliberate?) change in the schedule, I give it as told me by 3 separate individuals. When the “promise” is made, beside the *uguágai* (“quakes”, see previous letter), there are hung up 3 model dugouts (*guriara*) complete with sails etc. These are released and sent out to sea when the 3 boats of the *adigi hatiu* (those who go out to the “bays” for crabs and fish) return and make their ceremonial entry with their catch for the rite (This did not take place at the Hopkins rite).

I will, in the future endeavor to get more information of the “everyday” aspect of these people's lives. However, in this colony and in Guatemala, a majority of the men take more or less regular jobs at home (salesmen in shops and bars, truck-drivers, small shop-keepers, mechanics, mail-men, clerks etc.) or away (in lumber-camps, saw-mills, as school-masters and in Guatemala railroad workers dockers etc.). In between, jobs they fish, help in the plantations and loaf. Only older men make baskets, sifters, etc., and then only in the *villages*! As for family institutions, our own *** has overlaid the native concepts in the minds of all, but the oldest, so that today even strangers of the same approximate age groups are called “brother” and “sister”, those of an older generation “uncle” and “aunt” those of a younger “child”, while both maternal and paternal aunts and uncles are usually called “mother” and “father”. The older men, when questioned make the same distinctions as characterize the typical Carib x-cousin set up, but this is now non functional, and merely a memory, The terms now used for “husband” and

“wife” – legal or otherwise are identical: númarí “my companion” (n-úma “with me”). Everybody laughs delightedly, and say I sound like their grandparents when I employ the terms “biani” “your wife” or biraiti “your husband”, at the same time telling me that these are the “true Carib” terms.

I hope I shall have the opportunity to of meeting Mr. Coelho. From the point of view of “morale” at least, we should be very helpful to one another. Perhaps I shall go to Honduras also. Local report says that the Caribs there are numerous, more powerful, have more and better dügü, and adhere generally to the old style more than is the case here. This may be no more than the charm of distance, wishful thinking and the fact that the ancestors of these Carib passed thro’ there, but the distance is not far and many Caribs from here have worked in Tela, Cortes, etc. By all accounts, Santa Fe (near Trujillo or Punto Castillo?) is a Carib stronghold. Coelho should have a good hammocks and mosquito net, and plenty “Skat” or other insect repellent also Paludrine, Mepacrine or some other efficient antimalarial drug. The United Fruit Co. are all powerful in Honduras and Guatemala as far as the Atlantic coast region (where the Caribs live) is concerned and any letter of introduction to somebody holding a high position with them would be of inestimable value for the obtention of tolerable living-quarters, privilege of buying food from their Commissarial, etc. Money could *** be sent through their hands. If Coelho could bring a recording machine, that would be swell for getting the songs both sacred and profane. With many thanks for your advice and help.

Sincerely yours
Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
July 16, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor:
[...]

I also note what you say about Indian as against African origin. Naturally, there will be a similarity on both sides, particularly where there is a coalescence of outer resemblances in Indian and African culture-traits. However, even where things in Guatemala, Mexico, and other parts of Central and South America seem to be Indian, we have to be careful about unrecorded African borrowing. I don’t know whether you have seen the work by one of the Mexican students who studied here, Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, entitled *La Población Negra de Mexico*. If you have an opportunity to read that work, I think you will find it indicates a much greater possibility of Negro influence in Indian customs that had hitherto seemed likely.

But these are difficult questions, and I suspect, in many cases, the answer to them will depend on the findings of much more historical and ethnographic research than has thus far been done. I think you will obtain most of your materials of non-European or non-Carib culture by working with the women. This is for reasons that Mrs. Herskovits and I have tried to make apparent in the first chapter of *Trinidad Village*. The relationship system you sketch seems to me to be one of these reinterpretations that is to be expected as a result of culture-contact and not much different from what we found in Trinidad and Brazil and is to be found in any New World Negro culture.

With best wishes for continued good luck in your work, I am
Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Belize; 11-viii-1947
Dear Dr. Herskovits:

I got the typewriter three days ago. Altho it has been here since July 18, the Air Express Company here told me when I was last in Belize, July 25, that it had not yet arrived! Had I trusted to their promise to let me know as soon as it arrived, I should still be waiting.

Also, I got a letter from Mr. Coelho. Naturally, there is little I can tell him about Honduras, not yet having been there, except what I hear, and that is that conditions there are very little if any from here as far as the Carib communities are concerned, to somewhat better in the towns (so called).

For the first time since 1943, I got an attack of fever last Thursday and again on Sunday – this in spite of the fact that I have been taking Paludrine regularly since I arrived in this country. I certainly hope I can get rid of it soon. For the moment I am concentrating on the language, as I feel sure that many obscurities will be cleared up more quickly since I get a good hold on this. One peculiarity of the kinship system (according to 2 informants) is that the term yau, used by men of mo.br. only (apart from non-kinship use, as a term of address to older strangers), is employed by women for both mo.br. and for mo.br.son. As far as I know, this usage is not recorded from the islands, the Gillin reports it for the Barama River Caribs, B.G., and see in it a proof of former marriage with sister’s daughters.

I should be glad to receive the remainder of the grant money as soon as you have cleared up the bills;
Sincerely
Douglas Taylor”

“Department of Anthropology
September 4, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor,
[...]

Coelho is now in Honduras, and I am sure you will be hearing from him as soon as he gets settled and to work. I will be very interesting to me to learn how your findings check with each other, and as I have said, the results of the dual approach to this culture from the Indian and African Side.

With kind regards and best wishes, I am
Sincerely your,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Government Rest House,
Stann Creek,
British Honduras,

9/9/1947

Dear Mr. Herskovits,

I am taking advantage of the relative comfort of this room (which the District Commissioner has allowed to occupy of not more than two or three days, provided no Government Servant comes to require the accommodation, as a favor) to write and let you know how I am getting on. I have heard from Mr. Coelho in Tegucigalpa, and am awaiting news of living conditions in the Carib settlements of Honduras, when he gets there.

I have just returned from another 10-day visit to Hopkins, where I witnessed another *dügü*, and also a “*Nine Night*”. Although there remain a few obscure points, I can now offer quite a few additions and corrections to my earlier description of the former rite. Apart from a few details, the emerging pattern comes more and more to resemble that which your book describes for Haiti, Trinidad, and W. Africa.

To begin with the *Nine Night* (although, of course, this had no connection with the *dügü*, and was held subsequently). An old woman named Vicenta died on Monday August 25, was buried the following day, the first night of prayer began Friday 29, and the *Nine-night* was held deceased, which had been arranged as a sort of chapel, and were attended by about 25 to 30 individuals, mostly old women. The *arisera* (bush-priest) sat with his back to the people before an improvised altar, recited the rosary and other prayers in Spanish, read from a Spanish missal of devotion in Spanish with one or two prayers in Latin. The congregation joined in the recitation of the second halves of the Hail Mary, the Lord’s Prayer the Credo, and the Kyrie Eleison. The whole thing lasted about an hour, from 5 to 6 p.m. and ended by everybody making the sign of the cross first in the dust of the mud floor before them and then on their forehead. The *Nine Night* began about 8 P.M and lasted until 6 a.m. the following day. There were always a few old people inside the house where the *arisera* sat and recited the rosary every hour on the hour throughout the night, but the majority (from 150 to 200 must have been present at the height from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.) remained outside and divided their attentions between the *punta* dancing, the *úraga* (story telling by men with mostly a male audience), the card and dice table (all men), the refreshment house, and a group of young men and girls who strummed guitars and sang Spanish love songs.

[...] The *punta* began to the accompaniment of handclapping, sustained by the beating of an empty box and empty can. Drums had been brought, but the master of the *Nine-Night* (the Caribs use the word *beluria* from Spanish *veloria* for both wake and night night) objected to this as an innovation. However, as things got more ‘hot’, both a drum and a rattle were introduced. Men dance with arms outstretched and raised, sometimes lowering the upper arm so that only the forearms are raised with hands level with shoulders. Women usually let their arms hang, or place their hands on their hips. As far as the feet are concerned, the dance consists of quick tiny sideways shuffle, the men occasionally performing wider antics or pirouetting, and the whole pattern being that of wooing (advancing to and retreating from partner). However the art of the dance is in the control of the muscles of the buttocks, and the wiggle of the hips). The songs sung by the hand-clapping ring are topical and make allusions to current scandal in the typical W.I. manner (except that they are in Carib and that the music is different from anything West Indian). About 2 a.m., the *punta* got really ‘hot’ (i.e. lascivious) and the singing could be heard a mile away. Most of the *úraga* are long drawn-out versions of W.I. folklore (Juancito for Petit Jean, Anansi, etc. but no *Compère Lapin*), but a few introduced such Carib elements as *uanú* the gossip and advice-giver, *bagámu*, *ebédimu*, *sirígí*, and *uráu*, which are the local forms of Carib names of constellations and of mythical brothers identified with them. As far as I could find out, no food is thrown away at the wake or at the *Nine-Night*, while the 40-day ceremony is unknown. As in Dominica, it is believed here that the spirit of the dead may follow anybody who leaves such a gathering early and alone. Although I have not witnessed the actual death rites and funeral, I gather from what I am told that these greatly resemble what you learned in Trinidad (including the closing of the body-openings with soft (tallow candle).

It now appears that the *dügü* is not primarily a curing ceremony, but rather a delayed death rite. “They would not give a

dügü sooner than 2 years after death, tho some begin to get ready for it 14 months after; while others may not hold one for four or five years. It all depends on whether they (the dead, the gubida) seek it or no". Theoretically, tho never, I gather, in practice, a dügü for the family dead need never be given unless sought. But it always is sought, sooner or later; and 'there is a woman in Stann Creek whom they (the gubida) turned mad, because she would not hearken or believe when she learned of their request. These requests come in the form of dreams, either to one of the descendants, or to the buyei, when asked to investigate the cause of an illness. For example: 'if you dream that the dead come and ask you to dip a calabash for them, that means they want to bathe, and you must give an agauni 'bathing' (cassava-bread is half-baked then mixed with water and the resultant gruel poured ceremoniously into a hole in the corner of the house). 'If you dream they come and ask for food, then you must prepare a chugú, at which the favorite food of the dead is cooked (without salt) and subsequently buried (chugú means feeding). 'But if you dream they come and take you or somebody else living, i.e. if you see yourself or another living people in the company of the dead, then they want a dügü, and if you do not give it, you will be taken (die), or turned mad'. Mafia, 'devils or bush-spirits' do cause some kinds of sickness, but only the hiúruha (buyei's spirit-helpers) can assist in curing this, the gubida could do nothing. Moreover, one who gives a dügü unsought (by the dead) is only feeding the devil. When a sick person gives and is cured by a dügü that is because he or she delayed giving or fulfilling the promise to hold the ceremony requested by the dead. Descendants, siblings and their descendants of the spirit to whom the dügü is offered must attend with appropriate offerings. The presence of certain members of the family is verified by the spirit at the arairaguní, and when the querulous and high-pitched nasal voice calls out a name, its owner answers: inna, náruguti! Present, grandfather" etc. It appears that food is always buried, and (except for the coarse cassava-bread from which the beer is made) only sometimes thrown is the sea also. However, on the first occasion I was kept in ignorance of this part of the ceremony, while last week I was not told when it would take place, and learned of it only when it was over. A great deal of food (rice, split peas, corncakes, and about three quarters of 2 big pigs and 3 dozen fowls) was buried on this occasion, much to the disgust of all but the immediate family. One part of the ceremony (abaimahani, which is the only dancing accompanying an agauni or a chugú) had to be done over again because, as dead grandfather put it at the arairaguní 'some crooked mouthed child of a ***had dared to dance abaimahani while she had her menstrual period, thus causing one of the buyei to become temporarily mad. Actually this buyei, a member of the family, had got drunk, stripped to his under-pants, and pranced more sumptuous affair than the first I witnessed (there must have been at least 150 guests all of whom were brought from Stann Creek, to which place the giver of the ceremony and his family belong, as well as 2 buyei, a guléegi or 'assistant', and lots of food) was somewhat irregular according to the general consensus of opinion. To start with no quakes (uguágai) could be obtained for the food-offerings; then the abáyuhani (plundering) by the children was omitted, while the arairaguní (descent of the gubida) was put off 24 hours owing to the drunkenness of the buyei, I witnessed this last ceremony, and of course the gubida accepted the dügü (otherwise it would have had to be done over again) with the exception of the abáimahani, as related. A given spirit usually requires 2 dügü to be given before it is completely appeased. Mr. Isilerio Liño (the giver) had already held the first some 2 or 3 years back and this was the final effort. The women of the immediate family all wore shifts (originally white) that had been soaked in a solution of arnatto (guséue, or surúguli which made them a bright orange-pink. Their kerchiefs were red as was that of Mr. Isilerio and that of his cousin Peter, one of the buye. All the aúragile (strips of cloth for wafting appeasement) were also stained with arnatto; and at the arúmahani of the men (5 only as opposed to 35 women for the abaimahani) Iselerio had his face arms, hands, legs and feet smeared with the same material (as had his sister in the abaimahani) and 2 crossed bandoliers one of which was also so stained. Possessions were frequent and must have totaled 36 or more. Mostly confined to young women, although there were a few old women (full possession) and one or two men (sort of half possession – by which I mean that it was my impression that alcohol and a desire to pep things up had something to do with it). Possession (agiburihani 'be-ancestoring') by non-family guests is restrained, as is also that by family members when it becomes violent (áuehani 'dead-coming', a word also applied to epileptic fits) since such possesses often go outside and attempt to rush into the sea. Restraining takes several forms: bringing before the drums, holding down, rubbing face with rum, and giving rum to drink in which some 'medicine' has been put, wafting with the reddened aúragile, blowing smoke (by buyei) of Búe (Cedrela odorata bark, from hibúeri red cedar tree) cigar in back of patient's head, are some. Iselerio Liño's sister (about 60 years old) got so rambunctious that she had to be put forcibly into her hammock, while a woman buyei who was one of the guests removed her arnatto stained shift, sash, head-kerchief, and aúragile, and dressed her patient in her everyday black garments. A girl of 19 who became possessed told me that she had seen herself surrounded by small people on all sides, and that it was they who had seized her and made her dance as she did, apart from that she had been aware only of the drum. The second buyei (Peter, cousin of the host, who although about 45 was making his debut as a buyei) told me that he had long considered it to be 'all bull', as he still considered the water-spirits to be, and resisted the suggestions of his dreams. One of these he related to me had taken place about 15 years ago: he thought he was out hunting in woodland, when he perceived some dead members of his family coming after him. He ran and hid in the hollow of a huge palm; but a coral, which took them out to sea. Here the boat sank, and Peter found himself in a nice country at the bottom of the sea, inhabited by his dead ancestors. He woke and feeling restless, went outside the house. He remembers nothing more until the following night when his family found him unconscious lying head foremost inside the fowl-coop. He was in a logging camp in Scotland during the war, but was troubled with his eyes and bad dreams.

The doctor told him he would not get right until he returned to his own people. And this Peter interpreted to mean that he must serve his gubida, a piece of advice he has begun to follow. A friend of his told me how he had dreamt that his dead uncle had come to him and told him to go to a certain Cay, catch a turtle he would find there, and offer it to him. On hearing of this strange dream, his wife advised him to comply, but being an unbeliever at that time he ignored the behest. A day or two later he had to go to Hopkins to assist in building a house (H was only settled in 1938 after a hurricane has destroyed the old settlement known as Yucatan). As he was approaching the house, something hit him on the head, and when his father came and asked him why he was crying, he could give no reason. Some 15 minutes later, while mounting a ladder, he was suddenly thrown prostrate across a beam, and while lying thus his dead grandfather came and started talking and playing with him. Then a man dressed in red cap, red crossed bandoliers, and red wáigu (loincloth), carrying a thick cane in his hand came and told his grandfather 'Don't play with him, he's bad!' strikes him, and ties him up. (Before this, I should have said, his live father had called to him come down; you and whoever you are talking to up there; and he and the others invisible spirit had descended and were sitting in a bench). Only his grandmother's (also dead) intercession had persuaded the man to release him. At that time he was 28. Since he believes. An 18 years old boy, now working with me, tells me that the following happened to his mother some 10 years ago. She was living in Honduras at the time, near San Juan. Returning home along the beach one day she saw a bundle rolling along before her without anyone touching it. She felt strange and light-headed. When she reached the turning to her house, the bundle burst, and she found herself surrounded by gubida who demanded rum. She asked her family for it, and they gave her a lot (thinking it was for her), but she drunk none and gave all to the gubida. When she got better (for she was subsequently ill for some days) her brother told her that he had seen her coming along the beach, or rather over the beach in the air, her feet about two and a half feet off the ground, and had been frightened. He thought it a sigh that she was soon to die. He had not seen the bundle.

I have been so far able to elucidate the two forms of acágauani (scattering, throwing away). The women who gave the first dügü in Hopkins says that the food and coarse cassava thrown out to sea is an offering in thanks for the protection of the adúgahatiu (name given to those who go out to the Cays to collect and bring back fish and crabs for the feast. In this last dügü, there were 3 boats each with a captain, a sailor, and three women crab-catchers. The word itself is said to mean: 'those who come down-wind'), but that this offering is, like that buried made to the gubida. Inquiries made by me and by my 18 years old Carib boy servant, this time, of various knowledgeable old women, could elicit no more satisfactory explanation. One old woman said that the only right way was to bury the food near the edge of the sea, and that offerings cast out to sea were nonsense and no longer made by sensible people. Nevertheless, the life gai (coarse cassava-bread made in order to make cassava-beer) was thrown out to sea yesterday afternoon (one full week after the beginning of the rite and four days after its completion) the food-burying having taken place last Wednesday. Moreover, at the dügü of Telefora Blanco (the first one I saw) I went out in the buyei's boat and saw the quakes of food and drink capsized into the sea more than a half mile from shore. Furthermore I have been told by more than one old Carib as well as by an American Catholic priest in Punta Gorda that occasionally three model corials, fully rigged and containing food offerings, are released after one of these dügü rites and allowed to carry their burdens out to sea and whither they will.

A light is kept burning in the guli (place apart, altar-room), and the immediate family giving the dügü remain and sleep in the dabuyaba for a week following the end of the dancing: i.e, they arrived on Thursday (together with the buyei) August 28, and will leave Hopkins tomorrow September 10. The buyei having left, together with the other guests last Friday.

A crucifix and religious chromo, as well as the calabashes of food and drink offering, adorned each of the two altars. Peter, the new buyei, wore a rosary while performing with the sísira and maraga (two smaller and one larger rattles). He also showed me a chip of a (Catholic) altar-stone, which he used in his maraga when curing; and a triangular (about 2' long) 'stone' of some shiny, dark grey-green substance, light of weight and the consistency of very hard wax. He told me that the wearing of this stone cured epileptic fits, fits resulting from possession, and that little scraped from the surface and mixed in a drink would cure many sicknesses caused by spirits. Few Caribs here today appear to believe seriously in any spirits other than the gubida of ancestral dead, the hiúruha or buyei's spirit-helper, and the mafia or (evil) bush-spirits. The agayuma, or river spirit, the úmeu or sea spirits, are rather regarded, with others of their ilk, as convenient bogeys with which to scare children and simpletons. The gubida have no parallel in Carib Indian language or belief, but the hiúruha (Breton's iuluka) and the mafia (Breton mapoya, modern Dominica Carib máfuia) are Indian at least in name.

Please excuse the somewhat disorderly account as given in the letter. I got here only today, and have had no time to sort out my notes; hence the above is from memory.

[...]

P. S. Possession by ancestral spirits, near and known or far back and unknown, is the only form recognized; the behavior of the possessed varying with the character of the possessing spirit. One girl danced a sort of Russian trepak (or kopak) in a squatting posture, at the same time rapidly lifting up and lowering her skirt, first toward the drums, then in each of the three other directions. After this, whenever a young woman showed signs of approaching possession, a long (old woman's) skirt was brought and tied onto her, and her head tied with a kerchief. In one case, where the girl was shod, her shoes were removed. I heard plenty about but did not see possessed women who jumped up and dance in the crossbeams under the roof on positions

which, it was said, would have been impossible for them to maintain in a normal condition.

Some of the dance tunes and songs sung are undoubtedly traditional, but many others are recent. On this occasion there was a song which had been recently received (in a dream) by an old woman for this dügü: “magáidabati Ferumini-uí! Magáidabati bani lira! Badáiguba ibári-uí! (O Fermina, do not be angry! Do not be angry with that which is your own! O grandchild thou! It thy skiff [...] Such words as: iriragua to be carried up and along on a wave [...] constantly reoccur in the dügü songs with transferred meanings applied to the feet, body, etc. in the dance; and are very hard to translate adequately. There are other verses to the above song, but I have not got them here [...].

“Department of Anthropology
October, 9, 1947

Dear Mr. Taylor:
[...]

Your description of the Nine-Night certainly follows the pattern of African, West Indian and South American mourning customs with which I am familiar, and I am glad that the pattern is recognizable from my descriptions of them. I am also not surprised that you are finding the dügü is turning out to be related to the dead cult. I think the next move night well be to try to work out the relationship between the dead, the saints of the church, and the gods the worship. I think you will find this a rich vein to mine.

[...]
Sincerely,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Hopkins
7 October 1947

Dear Mr. Herskovits,

I have not heard from you for some little time, and wonder if you received my last letter, in which I mentioned a number of striking African retentions – notably with regard to the beliefs concerning the spirit-double (áfurugu), and the ancestor-cult.

There is another point which, I hope, * point to the African provenience of these people; and I would like your opinion about it. Breton, (as well as other sources), tells us that the Island Carib, while possessing male and female pronominal elements in their language, classified all nouns into female-neuter, and male – this latter class including, beside males and male ‘officer and dignities’ such as captain, merchant, a few reputedly male objects such as the sun and the moon (that were said to have been Caribs). Here today, the language may be said to have grammatical gender. Such words as dúna water, barara sea, ubau island, which Breton explicitly places in the female-neuter category, are today referred to by male determinants and pronominal affixes. All body parts, with the exception of the words for heart, tongue, uvula, liver, eggs (testes), container (uterus), are masculine! The word for fruit, and the names of the majority of fruits cultivated here, are feminine (tho many wild species are masculine). The words for spoon, fork, cup, plate, glass, lamp, table, seat, door, window, broom, fire, water, cassava-grater, squeezer, sifter; for rudder, paddle, sail; for sea, earth, sky, rain, mountain, rock, are masculine; those for towel, comb, mirror, house, mosquito-net, hammock, cassava-trough, calabash, boat, canoe, box, basket (one kind), knife, axe, hoe, machete, cast-net are feminine. Hat, is masculine, while shoes, pants, shirt, jacket, socks, kerchief, are feminine. Cord, sand, tobacco, flour, starch, meal, cigarette, cigar, meat, fish, maize, ochra, pineapple, seaside-grape, cashew, are masculine; manioc, plantains, banana, peanuts, cotton are feminine. Pigeon-peas and beans (Phaseolis) are masculine. Although the instruction of grammatical gender would appear to be comparatively recent and confined to Central America Carib, it has nothing to do with gender in the language from which words were borrowed (as e.g. Spanish or French); nor has word-form anything to do with it (for this reason I spare you the Crib words themselves). Since masculine words appear to out-number feminine ones in most spheres (tho not in all) – bird, snake, the names of the birds, snakes, and insects as well as for most cultivated plants, being put in the feminine class); while there is one type of noun (if they may be so called) expressing time, such as the words for today, yesterday, tomorrow, in days past, in days to come, which the men consistently make feminine, and the women masculine, I would suggest that some sort of symbolism is at the back of such attribution. Could this point to a Bantu origin? And if so can you lend me any book or manuscript which might help to clarify this problem?

I have heard again from Mr. Coelho, and may go to Trujillo to see him. As regards the everyday social and economic life of the people, it much resembles that described by you for Trinidad. However, markets play no role in these people’s live, and can hardly be said to exist in this country. Manioc is the staple food, and also furnishes a beer for festive occasions. The men supply (rather irregularly) fish, crabs, and/or game. On the whole, the men are a lazy lot, especially the young ones, a fact which appears to come from frustrations of various sorts. In spite of continuous work, the women find time for inventing or learning innumerable songs, the themes and melodies of which would make an interesting study for one who is qualified in such matters. Besides the ‘serious’ songs for the malí (placation in the dügü rite) and abaimahani (gestured songs by groups of

women holding while paddling the canoes in which they go up the lagoons for firewood or their provision-grounds. Curiously, there appear to be no cradlesongs (lullabies). All these (including the work-songs) are about their troubles, fears, and hopes – definitely on the sad side. The buyei (priest or shaman) have songs (supposed to have gestured-songs (arumahaní) corresponding to those of the women. These deal almost exclusively, as far as I have heard, with adventures at sea; but only a few of the elderly men know them, or can be prevailed upon to sing them, and when they do sing, they are somewhat ponderous and unmusical compared with the songs of the women. The young folk of both sexes prefer twanging a guitar to Spanish or American modern dance airs, tho, as the girls stay more with the old people, they mostly know the old songs too. Old style of song, I should have said, for many are quite new, and are made up about some recently deceased grandparent, or about some event or mishap. The West Indian type of song of allusion – the malicious song, is not lacking, but is confined, as far as I have found to the Punta (or Kulíhau) dances performed at wakes. Probably there will be other types at Christmas celebrations, which include crekanári, wáriní, wanaragawa (mascaraed) songs and/or dances, and a performance called píamanádi. However, these are all ‘secular’ shows, put on for the amusement of the Creoles and for their own financial gain, and therefore I do not expect much from them.

The study of this language is no easy task, and I am having a terrible time with it, but still I find it worthwhile, and it certainly reveals many traits which otherwise would go unnoticed.

Sincerely,
Douglas Taylor”

“January 5, 1947
Department of Anthropology

Dear Mr. Taylor:

It has been good to learn from Ruy that you and he are finding it so pleasant and profitable being together, and it has occurred to me that it might be worthwhile for both of you to continue this association while working up your materials.

To this end, I have taken the liberty of suggesting to the Viking Fund the possibility of a grant which would enable you to spend some time here at Northwestern during the next academic year, when you would have the resources of this Department to call on in writing your report. I am glad to tell you that Dr. Feijos expressed much interest in the project, and asked that I submit a request to him so that it could be presented to the next meeting of his Board of Directors. If, therefore, you will let me know at your early convenience how much time you would care to spend here, and an estimate of costs, I shall be glad to transmit your proposal. I believe there is a good chance of such a grant being made.

Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits”

“Magua, Dominica, B.W.I.,
21st. January, 1958

Dear Mr. Herskovits,

Thank you very much for your letter and kind offer of January 5. I have just got back to this Island, and expect to be busy for some time trying to arrange my linguistic notes. The last 140 miles of the return voyage (from St. Kitts, where I left the plane, to Dominica) had to be made by sailing sloop, and took 48 hours; and in looking back on the field trip as a whole, I cannot help seeing in it certain analogies to this last lap. There were head winds, there here calms, and there was fair sailing; but I fear that the results are meagre in comparison with the money, time, and energy expended. In the two towns (Stann Creek and Punta Gorda) and three villages (Hopkins, Seine, Bight, Barranco) which constitute the Carib settlements of British Honduras, and in Livingston, Guatemala there is not such a house to be found as Coelho has been lucky enough to get in Trujillo; and while there are, I believe, certain advantages to be gained from the ethnographer’s point of view in sharing the primitive life of the villages, this entails periodic visits to the town for provisions, or merely “to come up for air”, so to speak, after a period during which one is without any sort of privacy 24 hours a day. All of which is unsettling, tiring, and expensive.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Coelho, and it was, naturally, a real relief to be able to talk again with somebody of similar education and interests as myself. Moreover, I believe that I am right in saying that we agree about the general aspects of the culture.

However, I do not think that either or both our efforts will exhaust the material to be gleaned from this very interesting culture. The Caribs living east of the Aguan river in Honduras (Kusuna, Irióna etc.) are reputed (both among other Caribs and among the few whites who know anything about them) to have ‘preserved the old ways, beliefs, and manner of speech’ much better than their more acculturated kinsmen to the west; and however this may be, it seems to me that certain aspects of any culture only become accessible to the outsider with his or her acquisition of a fluent speaking knowledge of the language. In the comparatively short time I was able to devote to purely linguistic matters, I learnt a good deal about the theory of the

language, got texts, and shall, I hope, be able to analyze it adequately; but phonetically at least, C.A. Carib is extraordinarily difficult, and though I can usually get the gist of a conversation, there is much that I miss, and I am quite lost when it comes to expressing anything but the simplest of requests, questions, replies, and remarks. I am also disappointed in having been unable to make mechanical recordings of the songs and rites, a great deal of the music being most peculiar and difficult to remember and quite fascinating in a melancholic sort of way. Perhaps at some future date Coelho and I might collaborate in getting a complete adügürähani recording, plus examples of all other, non-ritual types of singing and drumming. If previous arrangements were made so that we could arrive in time for a 'promised' rite, a month's absence should be able to get a really representative set of records. This is one job in which two could get better results than one, as it would require someone to manage and guard the recorder while the other 'stage-managed the performs or performers!'

Yurumain (St. Vincent) has become in the minds of these Black Caribs of Central America a sort of legendary earthly paradise from which their ancestors were evicted as the result of the betrayal of their Chief, Satuyê (?Chatoyer), by some Carib Eve called Hedda. When I go to Roseau, I will see what I can find in the Public Library's West Indiana section, but perhaps you can tell me something about this (? historical) incident?

As Coelho must have told you, something very like your Saramaka fió-fió is named udáhadu (a word which Breton interprets as "maux aux jointures, comme gouttes, donnés par sort. Ils croyent que ce sont les Boyez de terre ferme & leurs Dieux qui leur donnent ces maux») among the present-day Black Carib. Both this (unnamed as far as I can find out here) and the abúreme ubáu of the Black Carib, here called met latter (both terms meaning the same; Masters of the Earth) belong also to Dominica folk-beliefs – the latter being animal spirits, in the shape of, e.g., dogs; but comparatively harmless, and seemingly not connected with the Kárauá or spirit dogs of the Dominica Carib.

I appreciate your offer and good offices with Dr. Feijos very much. Of course I should like to come to Northwestern. Yet I find it impossible, without further information, to answer your questions as to how much time I would care to spend there, and an estimate of costs. As I told Mr. Voegelin the summer before last, the economic consequences of this war have been such for me personally, that I now find it necessary that I should earn my butter if not my bread. As I have only a master's degree, he advised that I should first of all get a doctorate, and was kind enough to arrange with his Dean to make this possible after only one year's residence. The trouble is money; and, you may know, the English currency restrictions have been made more severe than ever. Mr. Voegelin is what is called a bad correspondent, and I have been unable to elicit a reply to all sorts of questions on linguistic and other matters from him in the last four months. But, as you know, Indiana specializes in American languages, and if it were possible for me to do so, it seems only right and fair that I should go there. What do you think?

I intend to publish several articles, in the course of time, on my findings in British Honduras, and perhaps a semi-popular type of book on the Central America Caribs and/or in the Island Caribs in general. Do I have to make some special sort of report (and if so of what nature, length etc.?) or do you mean just a monograph dealing with my findings, and for which I shall have to find a publisher. Does Coelho have to do the same thing as I do as regard this report? If so, I guess it would be much better if we could get together over it. I gather that he expects to return to Brazil for a month when he leaves Honduras, but we rather hoped to be able to spend a few weeks together in St. Vincent before that. I was there on a very short visit some years ago, and could find little or nothing reminiscent of "my Caribs" here in Domenica; but in the light of what I have seen and learnt in Central America, I think that there may still be much that is typically 'Black Carib' to be found there, and that a short visit would be interesting and profitable to us both. It is a curious fact, and one which I noticed in St. Vincent, and again in British Honduras, that the Carib Negro has a much greater attachment to what he calls 'my race' than the Carib Indian to his. Only that the former does not refer to anything African, but rather to Caribs and Carib languages and culture in general. While I was in Seine Bight for the New Year celebrations, a young Carib school-master said to me – and his attitude is typical of most of the C.A.C. with whom I talked: - 'I would like to go and kill every Negro in Africa for having spoilt my race'. Needless to say, he is quite black with kinky hair and could pass as a native here or on the neighboring islands; while the very attitude he expressed is, as far as my own experience goes, most unlike that of an American Indian.

Please excuse my inability to answer your questions right away and, if time presses, make a decision on my behalf and as you think for the best.

Very sincerely yours,
Douglas Taylor"

"Department of Anthropology
February 3, 1948

Dear Mr. Taylor:

This will acknowledge your letter of January 21. I had heard from Ruy Coelho that you had concluded your field-work. I hope you will now be able to get a good rest.

When I wrote you about a 'report', I took it for granted that in accepting support for fieldwork, you would wish to write up your field materials. Coelho will be doing that next year as a thesis for his doctorate, and I merely assumed that it

would be advantageous to both of you in working through your materials to be in the same place and be able to work together. I cannot myself, of course, sponsor grants which would commit another university, and when I suggested that you come here, I had in mind essentially the problem of you working up your ethnographic materials, since I was under the impression that this was the major objective of your research.

Naturally in analyzing your linguistic materials, you would want the help of a linguist, and for this there is none better than Voegelin. That is an aspect of your work, however, which lies outside my field, and where I would not presume to intrude.

If you wish to figure expenses, I can indicate some figures that would help you. Our graduate fellowships, which cover tuition and money for living expenses, run to about \$ 1,200. The grant for Coelho's academic year has been written in at \$ 1,000, since he will be taking a minimum of courses. I would suggest that we could justify for you a grant of \$ 1,500, plus the cost of travel from and return to Dominica – how much that is I do not know, though the round trip to New York ordinarily involves about \$ 100,00.

If you plan to come here from a time, it would give you an opportunity to get some formal training in anthropology to supplement your linguistic interests. However, while I do not know what arrangements Voegelin made, it would be extremely difficult for us, under our present statutes, to award the largely on the formal academic background that was presented and the extent to which you could fulfill language and other requirements that are set up by the problem of getting the doctorate is to get your Black Carib materials published, and, since you have the M.A. from Cambridge, present this publication for the Sc.D. there. My impression is that it would involve much less experience than you have, to take a degree in an American university. Another possibility would be for you to take the year's work here, and then go to Indiana for a second year, taking your degree. Voegelin has not discussed the matter with me, so I cannot be of much help there.

However, as I told you, any request that is to be put through to the Viking Fund should be in the hands of Dr. Fejos as long as possible before the middle of March. If you wish me to ask for a grant for you, therefore, to come here and work on your materials, I shall be glad to do so, if you will give me the figures I require. I think it would be a good chance to get further into the technical anthropological field, and would help you in the business of finding an academic position.

There are, of course, more problems to be studied than one can possibly cover in a single field trip, and I am glad to learn about the Caribs east of the Aguan as a possible field of future study. As to the difficulties of living conditions, I am quite familiar with them, and Mrs. Herskovits and I, in all but the last of our field trips, experienced them. However, I think that there is no kind of scientific research that is comfortable, and while I know that it is possible to relax to that situation and that it is in the end very rewarding. My experience in the field is that it is by no means essential to master the language of the people with whom you are working. Except in Brazil and Trinidad, we have always used interpreters. As a matter of fact, I find that unless one is extremely good at learning languages, one loses so much of nuance in trying to get the natives on their own linguistic ground, so to speak, that it is good to have an interpreter to one side even though one feels his command of the language to be quite good. However, there is no single road to adequacy in fieldwork, and all points of view are good if they get results.

I will appreciate hearing from you about whether you wish the application for next year pressed. In the meantime, again my compliments on the successful conclusion of your research, and my best wishes,

Sincerely your,
Melville J. Herskovits"

"Magua, Dominica, B.W.I.,
February 22nd. 1948.

Dear Mr. Herskovits,

Thank you very much for your letter of February 3rd.

Of course I always intended to write up my field materials, but your using the word 'report' made me think that perhaps I was required to give the Viking Fund some official account of my doings.

The major object of my research was, as you suggested, to make a general survey; and although I probably paid more attention to the language than is ordinary included under this heading, I had already indicated my intention of so doing in my application to the agree that some knowledge of the language – even when it falls far short of mastery – is helpful in getting to know the people of any culture; and what texts I got will, I believe, prove rewarding both ethnologically and linguistically speaking. Likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, with Coelho's Rorschachs.

I shall be extremely grateful if you will make the application on my behalf to the Viking Found for a further grant to enable me to work on my materials at Northwestern next academic year. I note what you say about the amount, and I enclose a letter showing steamer fare from here to Boston (the boats do not call at New York). I hope you will understand my hesitancy, in view of the fact that since the summer of 1946, Mr. Voegelin had suggested that I go to Indiana to work on linguistics, and had obtained the offer of special facilities for my taking the doctorate there from the Dean. Moreover, I rather naturally felt that since probably the catted by that of Coelho, it would be better in every way to concentrate on the linguistic monograph

out of it, to serve as a Dissertation for the doctorate. However, Mr. Voegelin has apparently repented of his offer, since he does not even answer my letters. This is a pity, because there are some points I should like clarified before publishing any texts or analyses, and of course there is no one here who can help me. In spite of this, Mr. Voegelin's last communication was a sentence stating that he was going to publish (apparently without giving me a chance to revise them) the texts of some conversations I had sent him merely as samples and to get his criticism and advice about some obscure points.

Do you know Bryan Edwards' account of the revolutionary war in St. Vincent 1795-1796? Edwards had met the Carib leader, Chatoyé, who has become a legendary figure in B.H., and about whom I recorded a song in Roatan. Edward elsewhere says that Governor Young of St. Vincent 'who knew then well' stated that the Caribised Negroes has been Mocoos (Efik?). I should be interested to hear your opinion on this, and to learn what books have been written on this tribe.

Thank you for your suggestions about getting a doctorate at Cambridge. I don't know what the requirements there would be, but I will write and inquire.

Sincerely yours,
Douglas Taylor"

"Department of Anthropology
May 3, 1948

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I have just handed a letter from Dr. Fejos of the Viking Fund which contains the following paragraph:

Concerning your request for a stipend for Mr. Douglas Taylor, who had been awarded a Viking Fund Fellowship in 1946, I would suggest that a petition for a grant-in-aid on his behalf ought to emanate directly from your Department, since Fellowship are awarded on a non-renewable basis. In case you wish to follow this procedure, I enclose for your convenience a mimeograph list of information requested from petitioners.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my replay to him. I think the chances are good that this grant will come through, although one can never be sure. You can be sure, however, that I will notify you immediately by cable if I receive any definite word.

Sincerely yours,
Melville J. Herskovits"

"Department of Anthropology
July 1, 1948

Dear Taylor

[...]

His [Ruy Coelho] work has gone excellently, and between the two of you, I should say that the Black Caribs will no longer be a blank spot on the ethnographic and linguistic map.

[...]

With all good wishes, I am
Sincerely,
Melville J. Herskovits"

Africana Manuscript, Box 46, Douglas Taylor, Folder 31

Department of Anthropology
20 September 1948

Dear Taylor:

This will acknowledge the Preliminary Report you sent me. I am forwarding to Viking Fund and will let you know if they say anything.

Sincerely,
Melville J. Herskovits

Department of Anthropology
20 September, 1948

Dear Dr. Fejos

I am enclosing herewith the Preliminary Report which Douglas Taylor has made me concerning the research in Central America which he carried on under a Viking Fund grant during the last academic year [...].

I think you will agree that the field trip was a productive one. I am certainly hoping that the request for assistance to permit Taylor to come here and work over his materials will receive favorable consideration, since I think it would compound the results of the trip, and make his approach far more effective than would be the case if he were to work without direction.

With kind regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Melville J. Herskovits

Transcripción

Northwestern University Libraries, Evanston, Illinois, USA

Africana Manuscript 6, Box 46, Douglas Taylor, Folder 31

PRELIMINARY REPORT

on ethnographic fieldwork done among the Black Carib of Central America by Douglas Taylor, under the auspices of Dr. Melville J. Herskovits of the Department of Anthropology of Northwestern University, and with the help of a Grant in Aid from the Viking Fund.

(1947-1948)

Douglas Taylor

I arrived in Belize, British Honduras, on March 1st. 1947, and spent the next three days in making the acquaintance of various personalities who had dealings with the Caribs, and in sounding the attitudes of the various sections of the population toward this people. I left Belize on March 4th., and proceeding by stages, visited the Carib settlements of Stann Creek, Seine Bight, Punta Gorda, Barranco, and Livingston (Guatemala); spending a few days in each place, in order to get a general idea of the extent and distribution of the Carib population on that part of the coast. About a month later I returned to Stann Creek, the most populous and northerly of the above settlements. I remained here until the beginning of May, when the opportunity of witnessing an ancestor-cult rite took me to Hopkins, a purely Carib village of some 600 populations, at about two hours sailing by dugout canoe to the south. Hopkins is a new village, having been built some ten years ago by the former inhabitants of an earlier settlement, Commerce Bight, which was destroyed by hurricane. Because of its size, which is about a tenth that the Stann Creek, access to the lives of the people is more easily had here than in the larger settlements, while its situation is such as to make the procuring of provisions less of a problem than is the case in either of the other two Carib villages of the Colony, - Seine Bight, and Barranco. It was here, therefore, that I settled down for most of the remainder of my field-trip, living in a Carib household as one of the family, and assisted by a young Carib man, Ezekiel, whom I had brought from Stann Creek. In July, I made another trip of three weeks duration to Punta Gorda and Livingston; and in November, I left for Trujillo, Republic of Honduras, where Ruy Coelho, a graduate student of Northwestern, had recently arrived to carry out research similar to my own among the Caribs of that part of the country. In December, we together visited the Caribs living on the Island of Roatan, where the deportees from Saint Vincent, B.W.I., from whom the Central American Carib are descended, were landed in 1797. Thence, I returned to Hopkins for Christmas, and accompanied a number of Hopkins Caribs to Seine Bight, where we passed the New Year, and witnessed the "uanaragua" or mascaraed dancing that took place in this somewhat larger village at this time. I spent the last few days of my stay in the Colony in Stann Creek, which I left on January 11th in order to catch an aero plane from Belize to return to the Island of Dominica.

Information was obtained upon land tenure and cultivation, fishing, hunting, and the preparation of food. The techniques of housebuilding, dugout canoe making, other woodwork, and basketry, were also observed. A great deal of the latter has to do with the manufacture of cassava-bread from bitter manioc. Thus, for example: the carrying-basket, the sifters, and tubular manioc-troughs, and the stone-hip graters, still employed to the exclusion of any other sort. Hammocks are widely used but are made, nowadays, from store-bought cotton cloth or from old sacking. The growing and preparation of manioc for food and drink is exclusively the work of women, men helping with other types of horticulture, undertaken principally for sale, when occasion permits. Most of the younger men and many of the younger women leave the settlement for seasonal employment in the logging-camps, saw-mills the canning factory; or leave the Colony, sometimes for years at a stretch, to work as sailors, or in the ports of La Ceiba, Cortés, Tela, Barrios.

The basis of social organization is today the individual household, or at the most, the group of households comprising married offspring, their spouses, children, and parents. In British Honduras, at least, there is today little co-operative work done, except in the case of disaster by hurricane, or in connection with the rites of the ancestor-cult. And yet there is no doubt that the Black Carib of the entire littoral of the Bay of Honduras, from Stann Creek in British Honduras to the Black River on the northeast coast of the Honduran Republic, form a society apart, whose members rarely intermarry or have any social dealings with the other non-Carib communities with which they come in contact. One of the most remarkable traits of this almost purely Negro people is their attachment to anything which they hold to be Carib, and to have been part of Saint Vincent Carib culture. One constantly hears expressions of indignation against the Africans for having "spoiled our race", and of longing to return to "our old home" (Saint Vicente). Understandably enough, the Caribe has no terms for racial distinctions, the words: mégeru Negro, muladu mulatto, and uarau Warrau, denoting 'respectively his English, Spanish, and Mayance speaking neighbors. It would appear that the Carib's ill veiled hostility toward the first two groups is due almost entirely to the

social contempt in which the usually colored (English speaking) Creole holds him, and to the political persecution that he has suffered in the neighboring republics. It is at least true that, to many Creoles, the Carib is a sort of outcast or “untouchable”, whose very skin is “spotted”, whose morals are degraded (“a born thief”), and whose language and customs are barbaric; while most Caribs I met accuse the Creoles of treachery and vanity. Unlike the native Indian, the Black Carib lives along the coast in close proximity to the Creole settlements; and being ambitious to improve his lot, he often comes into economic competition with the poorer sections of the latter communities. For example: a large majority of the rural schoolteachers in the Colony are Caribs, while their numbers are steadily increasing on the Police Force.

The kinship terminology still in use differs but little from that of the early Island Carib; and reflects symmetrical cross-cousin marriage with matrilocal residence; father’s brothers and mother’s sisters and their offspring being equated with father, mother and siblings. It is, however, entirely non-functional today in as far as I could ascertain. Caribs address one another – and even strangers, once friendly relations are established – by age-relationship terms, when no actual kinship exists or is known. Thus, I was addressed as: nati brother, by my hostess, and as: iau mother’s brother, by all the children and most of the younger men and women of Hopkins. My young assistant, Ezekiel, called our hostess: *náofuri father’s sister*, and the latter’s mother: *nagoto grandmother*, and was called: *namí* (short for *namule*) younger brother, by both in return. Several beliefs and customs connected with the couvade are still active; and I was told that in recent times women have been known to cut their hair and remain indoors for eight months after the death of their husbands.

I was able to collect a host of beliefs and customs connected with animism, many but by no means all of which have close parallels in the Lesser Antilles, and particularly, as far as my own knowledge goes, in Dominica. By far the most characteristic feature of religious belief and custom among the Black Caribs is the ancestor-cult. The gubida family dead play an all-important part in determining the health and prosperity of their living descendants, and there are few Carib families who dare to neglect the proper appeasement rites, especially when these are “asked for” through dreams, or through the buyei *shaman*’s interpretation of the cause of sickness or misfortune. At least three rites are performed over a varying period of several years: the *amuñedahani*, or “bathing”; the *achuguhani* or “feeding”; and the *adügürahaní* or “treading”; the last being the most important and attracting all the family and their friends from far and near. Preceding, and again following the performance of the latter rite, the buyei holds and *aráraguni* a *descending*, in which he gets into communication with the ancestral spirits and with his own spirit-helpers (*hiúruha*) by means of song and tobacco smoke and alcohol. Should the rite or any part of it be rejected by the ancestral spirits concerned as unorthodox or inadequate, it must be repeated until “accepted”. During this consultation between the buyei and spirits, the former remains invisible to the other participants, in the *guli sanctuary*, although the spirits are audible and may ask or answer questions of anybody present in the cult-house. The various ceremonies performed, and the different types of songs sung during their performance, are among the most interesting aspects of Carib life. Many aspects of these rites, such as the ancestor-cult itself, the hollow-long type drums employed during the cult dancing, and the possession of (almost exclusively) women and girls by ancestral spirits, appear to be characteristically African; while others, such as the buyei’s technique and role, and the individual acquisition by dreams of curing songs are typically Indian. These latter are of two sorts: those of the men being known as *arumahaní*, and those of the women as *abaimahani*. Often, they are “given” by the spirits in view of a particular rite and are brought by their “owners” and taught to the other participants as a sort of contribution to the festival. These songs, which may also be used outside of cult rites, as for example when a group of women visit another who is sick, are sung without accompaniment and in unison by rows of from five to thirty women holding each other’s thumbs and swaying their bodies rhythmically. Polyrhythms, common enough upon other occasions, such as when “Punta” is danced at a nine-day wake or elsewhere, are not heard during the drumming for *dügü* rites. Nor way any trace of belief in or knowledge of African gods to be found.

It is a noteworthy fact that women participants in the cult rites far outnumber the men. While I have seen as many as fifty women facing each other, in two parallel rows, performing *abaimahani*, it was always difficult to get five old men together for *arumahaní*. Buyei’s spirit invoking songs, appeasement songs (*mali*), men’s and women’s curing songs, work songs (e.g. when grating manioc), and drinking songs, are highly characteristic of this culture, but they are by no means popular with or known to all members of the younger generation, particularly the males, who prefer songs in English or Spanish or Carib of the “I love you for sentimental” reasons type. It would be most desirable to get records for study and comparison of as many of the old type songs as possible before it becomes too late.

I was able to learn enough of the language to find it of great use in facilitating my ethnographic enquiries. There is no doubt whatever that this is the same language as was spoken by the Island Carib and recorded for mid-seventeenth century Dominica by Father Raymond Breton. Despite an ever-increasing mass of loan-words from Spanish, French, and English, (some of which were already in use in Breton’s time), and considerable phonemic variation, (much of which goes back at least as far as eighteenth-century Saint Vincent), the morphology and fundamental vocabulary of the language as spoken in Central America today differ very little from those recorded by Breton in Dominica three hundred years ago. Besides a considerable amount of paradigmatic material, technical vocabularies, and linguistic note of all sorts, I was able to record and phonemize some 52 typewritten pages of texts (not counting their translations), which include conversations, songs, tales, riddles, and proverbs. Differences between men’s and women’s speech are today minimal as far as vocabulary goes and are chiefly concer-

ned with the assignment of gender to various inanimate objects and to the impersonal “it” (of time, weather etc.), which the men tend to make feminine, while the women tend to make them masculine. I hope to be abler, by an exhaustive analysis of my materials, to publish a descriptive grammar of the language in the not-too-distant future.

The folklore of the Black Carib appears to be very similar to that of the Antilles. In only a very few tales do Carib Indian themes appear. These latter concern the loss of his leg by Ebedimu, who subsequently became a constellation (roughly: Orion’s Belt) and mention the names of three of his “brothers”: Sirígo (Pleiades), Uráu (unidentified, Breton’s ‘oulíao’), and Bagámu (roughly: Scorpio). These and other names I recorded were but are no longer used to designate the months of the year, which now are known by their numerical order, (as are also the days of the week from Tuesday “second” to Thursday “fourth”, the remainder having names borrowed from French). The same terms are employed for sun and day, Sunday and week, moon and month, Pleiades and year.

No physical anthropology was undertaken. Impressionistically, there appears to be very little difference between the Central American Caribs and the more Negroid population of one the “ex-French” islands such as St. Lucia of Dominica. The men may be slightly stockier and the women’s hair slightly longer than is the case in these islands, while the children appear in general to be sturdier and chubbier. However, the difference is nowhere so great as to excite comment were individuals of the one population to be seen among those of the other.

The persistence of a rich and distinctive culture among the Black Caribs of Central America appears to be due, largely, to the conservation of their language; and this in its turn is probably explainable by the historical fact that throughout the eighteenth century their ancestors could hope to retain their liberty only by becoming, and remaining, thoroughly Caribized. This also, among the inhabitants of Dominica’s Carib Reserve, some of the staunchest “traditionalists” are to be found among those who appear to have very little Indian blood.

Owing to difficulties of communications to and from Dominica, B.W.I., as well as shortage of accommodation on the airplanes, I took ten days on the outward trip to Belize, and five days on the homeward journey to Dominica. In all I had to take thirteen airplanes and made numerous short trips by motor launch and dugout canoe. From May to November 1947, my young Carib assistant always accompanied me on these shorter trips, and his fares are included in my own travel costs. Apart from this young man, who shared my meals and to whom I gave \$20 a month, informants were not remunerated in cash, but encouraged to pay me “social” calls, at which I entertained them with drinks, cigarettes, and sometimes food or candy for the children. Such expenses, as also my assistant’s board, are included in my own living costs. Private expenses, such as a holiday in Guatemala, came out of my own funds and are, of course, not included in the following list.

Travel costs -----\$800
Equipment -----\$200
Assistant ----- \$120
Living costs -----\$1980

\$3100

Plans for preparation and publication of field materials

My field materials fall into two main categories: ethnographic, and linguistic. Access to a good reference library, and facilities of consultation with such eminent scholars as Dr. Herskovits and Dr. Voegelin, would of course greatly facilitate the preparation for publication of both these classes of materials, as well as enhance the value of their presentation. As Dr. Herskovits wrote to me last January, expressing the hope that I might be enabled to spend the next academic year at Northwestern, and work together with Ruy Coelho (who approached his group of Black Caribs from somewhat different angle), I have left my ethnographic field notes quite untouched, and devoted myself, since my return here, to establishing and analyzing my linguistic texts, insofar as I have been able to do so unaided. As regards the linguistic material, I feel sure that, once it is prepared, Dr. Voegelin will have no hesitation in publishing it in a series of articles, constituting a complete grammar, in the *International Journal of American Linguistics*. I have, so far, no plans for the publication of the ethnographic material, but should imagine that it would not be unacceptable as a *Memoir of the American Anthropologist*, or perhaps, as a *Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology*.

I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks and appreciation to the Viking Fund for their Grant in Aid, without which this work could not have been undertaken.

Douglas Rae Taylor
Magua
Dominica, B.W.I.
7th. September 1948.