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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Center for Archaeological Research

June 29, 1976

Mr. Don E. Crabtree
Rt. 1, Box 39
Kimberly, Idaho - 83341

Dear Don:

Norman Hammond and I have prepared the attached summary of the Belize lithic conference. Copies of this have been sent to the Journal of Field Archaeology and to the AAA Anthropology Newsletter. Perhaps one or both will print it.

Norman has suggested that I send a copy of the summary to each participant so that it may be further disseminated in whatever newsletter, journal, or other local or university outlet, you might find appropriate.

Editing of the volume on the lithic conference is proceeding, and practically all of the papers are now in hand. Hopefully, the volume will appear this fall. Please let me know if you have any additions, corrections or changes to be made in your paper.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom".

Tom Hester
Director

TRH:jvs

MAYA LITHICS CONFERENCE IN BELIZE

A field symposium on Maya Lithic Technology and Production Processes was held over Easter weekend, April 16-20, in Orange Walk Town, Belize, Central America. The meeting was sponsored by the Center for Archaeological Research of The University of Texas at San Antonio, and organized by Norman Hammond, a Faculty Associate of the Center, who has been directing a British Museum-Cambridge University research project in northern Belize since 1973, in collaboration with Thomas R. Hester, Director of the Center. The prime reason for having the symposium in the field was to examine the vast lithic workshops of Colha, a Middle Preclassic to Late Postclassic site at which chert-working locations extend up to 2 km out from the ceremonial center, and at which a wide range of techniques and artifact types in all stages of manufacture can be observed.

Participants were Don Crabtree, Norman Hammond, Thomas Hester, Jay Johnson, Joseph Michels, Arlene Miller, Hattula Moholy-Nagy, Harry Shafer, Payson Sheets, and Richard Wilk; Irwin Rovner presented a paper *in absentia*. The meeting, the formal sessions of which were held at the Hotel Nuevo mi Amor in Orange Walk Town, was also attended by a number of archaeologists working in Belize, and was opened by His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Richard Posnett, on behalf of the Government of Belize. The papers included a discussion of the claimed preceramic lithic site at Richmond Hill in northern Belize, analyses of and the construction of sampling strategies for the Colha workshops, recent data on obsidian trade on both the eastern and western margins of the Maya lowlands, and also at the central sites of Tikal and Becan. The highland zone was discussed in papers on the sociological data extractable from obsidian recovered at Kaminaljuyu, and the lithic evidence

from El Salvador for Protoclassic migration into the lowlands.

Site visits included, apart from a day at Colha, the Richmond Hill site (about which the conference was collectively skeptical), the Classic major center of El Posito at which Mary B. Neivens (University of the Americas) had recently excavated an obsidian workshop, and the mainly Preclassic site of Cuello from which flint and chert artifacts dating to before 2000 B.C. (C-14 dates; 2600 B.C. calibrated) have been recovered this year in excavations directed by Norman Hammond. The symposium ended with discussion of a future unified approach and terminology for Maya lithic studies, identification of areas of knowledge and lacunae of ignorance in time, space, materials and technology, and agreement on avenues for future research on a broadly cooperative basis. Detailed research on the Colha workshops, which Crabtree described as "one of the most important lithic sites in the world" was agreed as an objective for immediate pursuit and proposals are being formulated.

A final social note was added on the last evening when the conference joined a number of local guests in consuming Belizean rum punch from a 1200-year-old Late Classic storage vessel recently excavated at the Cuello site. Papers from the symposium will be published late this summer by the Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio as Special Report No. 4, edited by Thomas R. Hester and Norman Hammond.

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