

How the Cayo District got its name

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LET US KNOW OUR COUNTRY.

THE CAYO DISTRICT WAS FORMERLY KNOWN AS, THE WESTERN DISTRICT -

COROZAL AND ORANGE WALK DISTRICTS, WERE KNOWN AS THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS, and

STANN CREEK AND TOLEDO DISTRICTS WERE KNOWN AS THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

BELIZE DISTRICT WAS KNOWN AS, THE CENTRAL DISTRICT.

Let it be known how the Cayo District got its name, and the confusion created, surrounding this name.

IN THE BEGINNING, there was a logging camp on that site, where the present Town Market is located. The work force built their homes on the foot hills nearby.

In 1868, a Roman Catholic priest, by name Andrew Bavastro S.J visited the little settlement, in the majority Catholics, and it was agreed to build a Chapel, and to name the settlement of some 150 persons "SAN IGNACIO VILLAGE.*

A Statue of Sr. Ignatius of Loyola, Patron Saint of the Jesuits, was brought from Peten and placed in the little Chapel.

This Statue of St Ignatius is now in Santa Elena Church for over 100 years, when people of other Faiths, dumped it by the river side.

The owner of Santa Elena, Mr. Agapito Requena crossed over in his dorey, and took the Statue to his small Chapel, and there it remains for over a Century. -

The priest that blessed the Statue in Santa Elena, was Father Manuel Lloyd S.J., who by the way died in San Ignacio and is buried somewhere here - - Maybe under the now being Old demolished Hospital

NOW BACK TO THE NAME CAYO.

On November 23,1878, Mr.Henry Fowler, then Colonial Secretary for British Honduras, left Belize City on a Pit Pan (there were no roads nor River Boats then) and they paddled up the River.

When asked where he was going he replied, "I am going to the CAYE" (in Spanish cayo and island).

WHY THE CAYE, or CAYO?

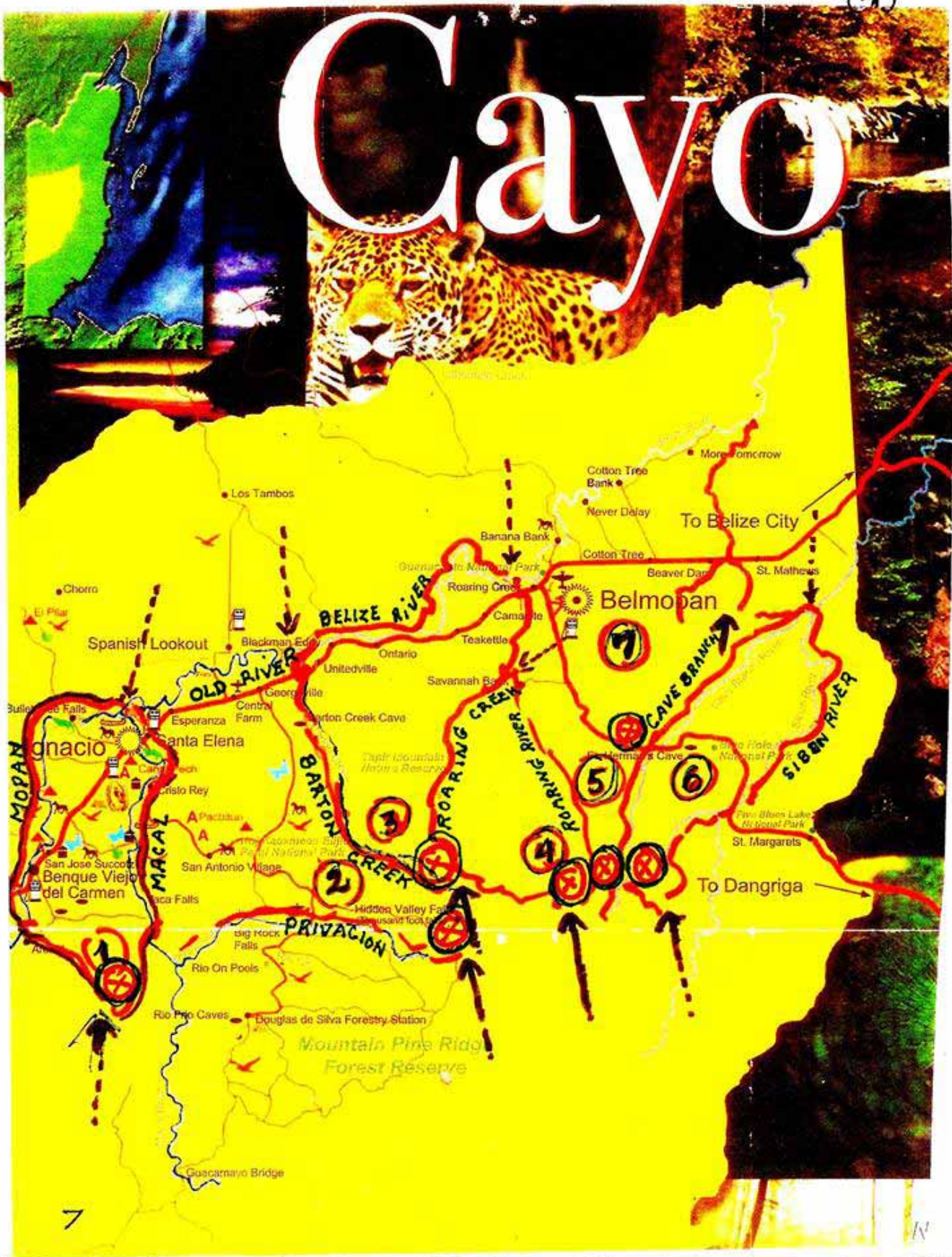
Because according to Mr Francois Sebastian Blancaneaux, who had traversed and mapped this District, he reported that the Macal and Mopan Rivers created an ISLAND or CAYO at two points - Branch Mouth and Chiquibul

This CAYO included, San Ignacio - Benque Viejo - San Jose Succotz, Arenal, Clarrisa and TIPU (Negroman).

In 1960, the San Ignacio Town Board re-confirmed the original name of the Town and Officially named THE TWIN TOWNS OF SAN IGNACIO and SANTA ELENA. This was approved by the Central Government.

It was also found that the CAYO DISTRICT has many such Islands or CAYOS.(seven of them as indicated in the Map below)

Cayo



Hector Silva

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