The Modern Maya

*Incidents of Travel and Friendship in Yucatán*

**MACDUFF EVERTON**

With contributions, investigations, and explorations conducted for nearly forty years by Charles Demangeat and Hilario Hiler

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN**

(2012)
Contents

Foreword: Macduff Everton’s Yucatán by Carter Wilson vii
Acknowledgments xi

A Short History and the Legacy of the Maya Forest 1
An account of the ancient Maya and the collapse, or perhaps the slow crumble; in the field with archaeologists Anabel Ford and Scott Fedick, who find evidence that there wasn’t an environmental catastrophe, and the legacy of the Maya Forest, a feral forest garden

Introduction 37
An account of the modern Maya: incidents of travel and friendship in Yucatán and how I met Charles Demangeat and Hilario Hiler; this book project now extends over four decades and includes important chapters in the lives of the Maya

I. The Milpa 57
An account of Dario Tuz Caamal, a Maya farmer, and his wife, Herculana Chi Pech; the Maya practice of growing vegetables, herbs, fruits, and hardwoods at their farm and home garden and agricultural traditions and ceremonies thousands of years old

II. The Milpa and Cancún 97
The continuing account of Dario Tuz Caamal and Herculana Chi Pech: his release from prison and finding work in Cancún; the immediate effects of NAFTA on the subsistence farmer in Mexico and the rising rate of depression and suicide in Yucatán

III. Chicleros: A Season in the Jungle 129
An account of Diego Jiménez Chi and Cornelio Castro Salazar, chicleros, who lived in the jungle along with their wives and children during the rainy season to bleed the chicozapote tree for the resin used to make chewing gum, and what happened when gum manufacturers supplanted the resin with petroleum products

IV. Doña Veva and Alicia: Two Generations of Women 163
An account of Genoveva Martín Kumul and her daughter Alicia and how Alicia grew from a girl in a jungle chiclero camp to becoming a bilingual teacher, as well as her marriage and children, and the effects of the Evangelical movement in Maya towns

V. Xocen: The Saintly Cross of the Center of the Earth 189
An account of the miraculous Saintly Cross of the Center of the Earth, the Caste War of Yucatán, and the Santa Cruz Maya; we attend religious celebrations in Xocen, talk with a Maya priest, and visit our friend Celso Dzib Ay and his wife, María Equilia May Tún
VI. The Santa Cruz Maya 221
An account of how Pablo Canche Balam and Marcelino Poot Ek introduced us to the sacred villages, talking crosses, fiestas, and celebrations of the Santa Cruz Maya; we witness the onslaught of development and tourism in their traditional lands and find a Talking Cross.

VII. Cowboys: Corn to Cattle to Corn 287
An account of Eleuterio Noh Ceh, a corn farmer who became a cowboy and then returned to corn farming, whose children abandoned farming to find work in maquiladoras, making Maidenform bras and Jordache jeans, until the manufacturers found cheaper labor elsewhere.

VIII. Henequen: The Dangers of a Monoculture 307
An account of Jesús López Martinez, a henequen worker, and the henequen industry, which failed to remain competitive in a world economy, and the consequences of a monocrop.

Epilogue 337
Glossary 345
Suggested Reading 347