

Cynthia Ellis Collection
ca. 1988-1992

CYNTHIA ELLIS

Collection: NAC 245-246
Size: 2 cubic feet
Accession number:
Location: NCCROW, NAC 245-246

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION:

Donation by Cynthia Ellis.

RESTRICTIONS:

Permission from author may be necessary to cite some manuscripts.

PROCESSOR:

Jennifer Brunig, Newcomb '94
Sarah J. Griffin, Newcomb '93

ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT:

Materials have been arranged in two boxes with folders labeled by subject.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Cynthia Ellis's work focuses on rural women in developing countries, especially her home country, Belize. She received a B. A. degree from the University of the West Indies and continued her academic study at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, in the Independent Study Program on Rural Development at the University of California, Davis, and Antioch University. Ms. Ellis also served as a Fellow of the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University, in 1991-1992. Also the mother of five children, Ms. Ellis is now working as director of the Belizean Rural Women's Association.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The Cynthia Ellis Collection spans the years 1988-1992. Of her research on Belizean women, the collection includes photocopied articles, theses, bibliographies. Files on the Belize Rural Women's Association (BRWA) include various materials from fliers and newsletters to budgetary statements, yearly reports, and proposals. The collection includes several files of photographs of Belizean women and their handicrafts, as well as working chapters of her thesis on handicrafts as an income-generating activity. Also included are materials from Ms. Ellis's time as a fellow at Newcomb College Center for Research on Women and materials from her Oral History Projects. This collection offers insight into the conditions of women in a rural and developing country as well as the effect of a women's organization on the quality of their lives.

Carton 1 of 2

NAC-244

- Articles
- Belize Maps
- Belize Rural Women's Association (BRWA)
- Bibliography
- Collected Poetry
- Correspondence
- Correspondence and Handwritten Notes
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2 "Problem Background"
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5 "Economic Standing of Target Group"
- Chapter 6 "The Handicraft Alternative"

Carton 2 of 2

NAC-245

- Library Publicity
- Manuscripts
- Miscellaneous Written Drafts
- Miscellany
- Notes
- Oral History Project
- Photographs
- Presentation Materials
- Resource Materials
- Tulane / Newcomb

Curriculum Vitae

3rd February, 1992

Name: Cynthia Ellis Topsey
Date of Birth: January 16th, 1953
Place of Birth: Belize, Central America
Mailing Address: 4401 Palmyra St.
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119
Telephone Number: 504-484-7388

Education:

- 1989 Pursuing Program of Study with the Rural Development Leadership Network Program, Master of Arts Degree, Antioch University and the University of Davis California, Independent Study Program.
- 1981 Successfully completed academic requirements for Master of Arts Program, Development Studies, Women's Studies, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands
- 1976 Bachelor of Social Sciences Degree, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica.

Academic interests:

Women and Culture, Belizean Anthropology, Organizational Theory & Development, Social History of Women in Belize.

Languages:

Belizean Creole - Speaking, reading and writing ability.
English - Speaking, reading and writing ability
Spanish - Speaking and reading ability
Garifuna - Understanding ability.

Field and Research Experience:

- 1990 Research on Female Sexuality as related to Menstruation, Menopause and Childbearing.
- Research on the potential of Handicraft as a means of developing self sufficiency among women of major ethnic

groups in Belize.

Research on the images of women as portrayed in folklore, and to explore ways in which women use folk tradition to their advantage in Belize.

- 1988-89 Research on Street Girls in Belize City (With Harriot Topsey and Allan Moore)
- Preliminary Research on Women Agriculture and Rural Development in Belize.
- 1987 Research on Women and Culture in Belize (With Harriot Topsey)
- 1986 Research on Women and National Development in the Belizean Context.
- 1985 Research on the Role of Non-Government Organizations in Belizean National Development
- 1984 An Assessment of Rural Development Agencies in the Cayo District of Belize.
- 1983 Studied traditional healing practices of Garifuna Women in Dangriga, Stann Creek District, Belize.
- 1980 Research on the impact of Women and Development Strategies on Women in Belize and Jamaica.
- 1976 Research on Social Conditions of people in Central Kingston, in preparation for Urban Upgrading Program.
- 1977 Research on the impact of tubal ligations on Women in Kingston, Jamaica
- 1975 Research on people's opinion of Michael Manley's Democratic Socialism, in Kingston, Jamaica.

Employment History:

- 1985 - present Founder, Director of the Belize Rural Women's Association.
- 1984-1985 Projects Officer, Counterpart to United Nations Mission Team Developing National Five Year Plan with National Planning Agency, Belize
- 1982-1984 Teacher of English Language and Literature at Ecumenical High School, Stann Creek

- 1981-1982 Consultant in Program Development at the Council of Voluntary Social Services, Belize.
- 1982 Consultant to the University of the West Indies, Women & Development Unit, Barbadoes in Program Development and Evaluation of Integrated Rural Development Projects and their impact on women in the Caribbean.
- 1979 Consultant to Grenada Women's Desk, in doing preparatory work on program development for women in Grenada.
- 1978 Consultant to Belizean Government Ministry of Social Services, in the establishment of a Women's Desk and a national women's program.
- 1977 Consultant to Belizean Government in the assessment of community development strategies along with leadership of government and non-government organizations.
- 1977-1979 Projects Officer, Host National Volunteer of CUSO, Canadian University Services Overseas, attached to the Women's Bureau, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1976 Projects Officer, Development Finance Corporation, Belize
- 1971-1972 Student Nurse, University Hospital of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.

Grants and Awards:

- 1990 University of the West Indies, Case Study on the Development of a Grassroots Women's Organization.
- 1989 UNESCO Cultural Retrieval Project
- 1988 Childhope International, Research Grant for Study on Street Girls in Belize City (With Allan Moore and Harriot Topsey)
- 1987 UNESCO Research Grant on Women and Culture in Belize (With Harriot Topsey)
- 1985 United Nations Fellowship to be attached to the United Nations Development Forum Newspaper for one month and to have access to other United Nations Agencies.

- 1979 Ford Foundation Fellow to attend the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, Netherlands.

Exhibitions:

- 1980 Celebration for International Women's Day, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague Netherlands.
- 1982 Cultural Market Day and International Women's Day Celebrations in Belize.
- 1983 Cultural Market Day and International Women's Day Celebrations in Belize.
- 1984 Women's Health Fair in Dangriga, Belize.
- 1986 Women's Health Fair and Conference, Belize
- 1987 Exhibit at National Agricultural and Trade Show
- 1988 Exhibit at National Agricultural and Trade Show in Belize.
- Exhibit at First Caribbean Women's Writers Conference at Wellesley, Mass.
- Exhibit at Feminist BookFair in Montreal, Canada
- Exhibit at Oral History Conference in Barbados.
- Exhibit at Conference on Women in Agriculture in the Caribbean, held in Barbados.
- 1989 Exhibit at National Agricultural and Trade Show in Belize.
- Women's handicraft exhibit in Belize City.
- Exhibit at Oral History Center , Boston, Mass.
- Exhibit at conference in Tulsa , Oklahoma featuring the earth's leading women.
- 1990 Exhibit at the National Agriculture and Trade Show in Belize on Women's Handicrafts.
- Exhibit in Belmopan , Belize on Women's Work and Women's Lives: Theme "Blossoms and Echoes through time".

Articles:

- 1979 Published in Dutch, the Hague, Netherlands article "The Impact of Development Strategies on Women in Belize".
- 1980 Institute of Development Studies/CEREP publication on proceedings of 5 weeks conference held in Puerto Rico on issues related to women in the Caribbean. Presentation given on Development and Women in Belize.
- 1981 Edited newspaper dealing with current issues in Belize
- 1983-85 Co-authored feature women's article for Belizean newspaper, DISWEEK.

Reports:

- 1990 Funding strategies and approaches with women in rural communities in Belize.
- Annual Report on the Belize Rural Women's Association.
- Report on program of the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development in Belize.
- Several other reports related to projects and programs of working with community development activities in Belize.

Conferences, Meetings & Workshops:

Those attended:

- National Planning Agency Workshops on Women and Development programs in Belize. In preparation for the National 5 year plan.
- 1990 Association of National Development Agencies planning workshops on rural development strategies in preparing for the national 5 year plan for Belize.
- 1990 Meetings, Workshops and Conferences organized.
- Two workshops with various women's organizations in Belize, on methods of networking.
- Several workshops and meetings on the situation rural women in Belize, in order to prepare documentary and other media material.

Workshops on the involvement of women and handicraft in Belize

Funding strategies and approaches workshops

Major conference, outlining the programs and strategies of the Belize Rural Women's Association with its membership.

1989 Meetings, Workshops, and Conferences attended:

Conference reporting on the Women and Agriculture in the Caribbean research findings, held in Barbados.

Conference of the Earth's Leading Women, held in Tulsa Oklahoma.

Black Women's Health Project Conference, held in Atlanta, Georgia.

Oral History Conference, held by the Boston Oral History Centre.

Commonwealth Committee Workshop, held in London in preparation for Conference to be held in New Zealand.

Rural Development Leadership Network Institute held at Davis California.

Conferences, meetings and workshops organized.

Retreats and meetings with rural women of the Belize Rural Women's Association, on various issues such as, women's health, self help strategies for interfacing with the economy and assertiveness training.

Conference on Women and the Handicraft development in Belize.

Workshop on traditional healing methods by women, as a basis of strength for organizing.

Organized National Consultation on Rural Development in Belize. Sponsored by the Caribbean Network of Integrated Rural Development.

Organized Oral History Conference in Belize.

1988 Conferences, meetings and workshops organized.

Women's Self Help Health Conference in Belize

Women and Handicraft in Belize

Women and Agriculture Research in Belize in preparation for major research project.

Women and Oral History Conference held in Belize.

Conferences and Workshops attended

Conference of leadership of the British Commonwealth Non Government Organizations, to share experiences in community and rural development. Held in Goa India.

Conference of Caribbean Rural Development Agencies on Rural Development issues in the region.

Since 1978 attended several meetings and conferences related to Women's and Youth concerns ranging from health, income earning activities.

Professional Societies:

The Associated Countrywomen of the World

The Business and Professional Women's Association

The Caribbean Feminist Research Association

The Caribbean Network of Integrated Rural Development

Society for the Promotion of Education and Research in Belize

Association of National Development Agencies (Belize

Boards and Organizations

President of the Parent Teachers Association, Belmopan Belize.

Advisory committee member of the National Garifuna Council Belize.

Management Committee of the Belmopan Schools in Belmopan

References:

Dr. Judy Maxwell, Department of Anthropology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118, U. S. A.

Dr. Munro Edmonson, Department of Anthropology, Tulane
University, New Orleans, LA 70118, U. S. A.