



Neg. No. 10313, Courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico.

Morley's Diary, 1932

Editor's note

A leading archaeologist of his time, Sylvanus Griswold Morley was an Associate of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the foremost organization excavating archaeological sites in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras in the early part of the twentieth century. This diary continues his account of the Carnegie Institution's expedition to Calakmul begun on April 3, 1932. Morley's professional companions were his wife Frances, Karl Ruppert, John Bolles, and Gustav Strömsvik.

April 27 - Wednesday (cont)

I had wondered at giving such an exalted name as La Gloria to such a God-forsaken dump as we were now coming to, when we had gone through here more than a fortnight ago. But now I know. After 70 miles on White trucks on those shocking forest thoroughfares, in comparison this place could well be called "La Gloria". It is no less.

We got here at six even before Don Refugio Campos and his amiable family were up.

His fat assistant was about, however, and my first inquiry was whether any plataformas were in.

He replied they were just coming in at the moment, which was true. Several platforms each drawn by two mules could be seen coming up the track. I recognized our own plataforma, Roman. He is the head plataforma of the Montaña Co. which had brought us out from San Dimas.

Meanwhile Don Refugio was up and I had asked him what chance there would be of getting off at once for Kanasayab and he replied "very little". The platforms leave San Dimas coming this way about midnight, getting in about six or seven. They start back from here at 4 loaded with chicle, reaching San Dimas again between eleven and twelve. The purpose of this night travel is twofold first to avoid the great heat of the day and second to avoid the horse flies which almost eat the

mules alive at this time of year. Don Refugio thought however, that if Roman, the head plataforma, would agree to start back in an hour's time, the others would also. We needed 3 platforms in all. Each would carry 4 boxes, 3 kayaks and some miscellaneous equipment. Frances and I would ride on one, Gustav, Karl and John on another, Tarsisio, Arturo and Demetrio on the third.

Roman hesitated at first but when I offered him an extra tip of \$5. pesos apiece for each plataforma he said he would ask his companions and let me know after their breakfast. They ate in a nearby hut and after breakfast I saw him again and he said they had decided to go.

It was then 6:30 and I asked him when he would be ready and he said at eight, which was fair enough. Frances had breakfast prepared in the Campos kitchen and we thought we would be on our way again at 8:00 but this was not to be.

Eight, eight fifteen, and eight thirty came and no sign of the platforms.

At 8:30 I sent a youth – who turned out to be Roman's brother – down to Juarez, 1 kilometer distant and the punto de rieles (rail head) to find out what was wrong, and presently Roman himself came back with this boy saying the Estacionario at Juarez would not let the mules go because of the heat and flies. He suggested I go back to Juarez with him and see the Estacionario.

We walked back along the road which parallels the tramvia and presently reached a collection of a few huts, Juarez – the end of the 76 kilometer line from here to Kanasayab on the Champoton River, i.e. a shade under 50 miles.

Roman introduced me to the Estacionario who began to make the same excuses of heat and flies etc. The other two plataformas were there and joined this dismal chorus, but I too put up a strong talk. Finally I overcame the Estacionario's objections and he put the responsibility of the decision fairly up to Roman. And the latter began to wiggle. It became evident to me at once that all three plataformas had decided that propino or not they did not want to start back until later in the day and I saw I was beaten.

Four o'clock was the hour they usually started back and four o'clock was the hour they were going to start back today. Finally as a great concession Roman said they would start back at three. I asked him if he really meant it and he pulled out his watch to see that our times should agree, an empty gesture. It is now three as I write these lines and no mules, platforms or plataformas are anywhere in sight. Nor am I convinced there was any intention of leaving before 4. Very well then No hay salida temprana, no hay propino extra.

When it became evident that we could not budge the plataformas I returned to La Gloria with my bad news. This almost certainly will prevent our getting to Campeche tomorrow in time to make the train to Merida tomorrow afternoon.