



Ancient Alabama's monumental core--the heart of the town--features 20 building platforms built of granite and earth, the tallest being 7.5 meters high. These buildings surround 4 inviting plazas, dressed up with at least 14 plain granite stelae and a *sacbe*, which is a short ancient road that once connected the heart of the community to surrounding settlement. This central area stretches over 2.48 hectares. To give you some perspective, it's slightly larger than the monumental core of Nim Li Punit in Southern Belize. Alabama is considered a major ceremonial centre in the Stann Creek district and is one of only two sites currently known to have a ballcourt. We estimate around 1000 people lived at Alabama during its peak occupancy around AD 700-900, and you can see the remains of their 100+ house platforms throughout the Greene Groves orchards.

Maya Archaeology is a fascinating and vibrant field of research that reveals new ancient sites and intriguing artifacts every year! Archaeologists are particularly interested in how the Ancestral Mayas adapted to their landscapes, organized their communities, economies, and politics.

The Ancestral Mayas of the lowlands employed impressive methods of resource extraction, manipulation, and trade that date back over 3500 years. In parallel to these activities, vibrant villages, bustling towns, and thriving cities emerged in key locations on landscapes, reflecting the increasing complexity of urban life and political organization. Maya Peoples today are the descendants of these resilient Ancestors.



SCRAP is a group of archaeologists & Maya Mopan villagers who work together to uncover the deep histories of the Stann Creek District. Currently our focus is on the local Ancestral Maya town of Alabama; it's ancient name is currently unknown. SCRAP seeks to make a significant contribution to much-needed heritage exploration in the district, which has received relatively little archaeological attention so far.

Archaeology is a social science studying past human societies and behaviours through their belongings, buildings, and landscapes. All archaeological research in Belize is permitted by the Institute of Archaeology, NICH, with additional permissions from property owners and various community leaders.

History and Archaeology at Maya Mopan Village & Alabama Townsite

First Occupants?
(ca. 250-500 AD)

Earliest residents of the area represented by a deeply buried platform and distinctive pottery. Possibly abandoned the area due to significant flooding from a hurricane.



Citrus & the PPAP
(1980s-1990s)
The area became home to various missionaries, farmers, and citrus growers, including today's Greene Groves property. The Point Placencia Archaeology Project investigated the ancient townsite, including the ballcourt.



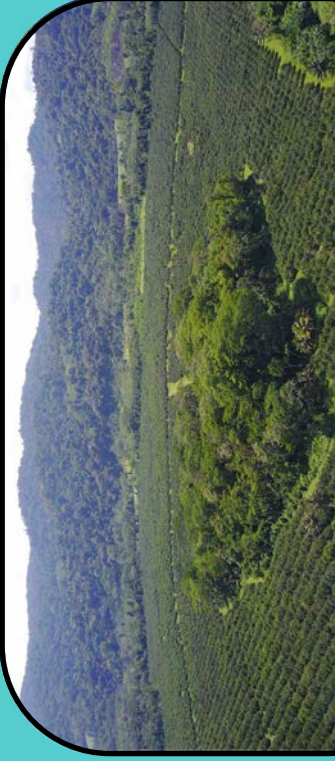
Reoccupation
(ca. 1200s-1500s AD)

New people or returning descendants took up residence at the abandoned townsite. They reused old houses, made new pottery forms in traditional ways, and fished or hunted with nets and net weights.



Townsie Boom
(ca. 650-1000 AD)

Approx. 1000 people lived at the townsie, building, farming, making pottery and grinding corn, hunting, trading, and possibly engaging in warfare. A significant drought may have eventually forced them to leave.



2014-15: Surveyed and mapped ancient Alabama Town's monumental core and surrounding settlement within the Greene Groves property boundaries.



Maya Mopan Village
(Est. 1974/75)

Maya Mopan Village, established by families from Toledo, continues the legacy of Maya presence in the area. Echoes of the ancient past surround everyday village life.



Alabama & the Waha Leaf Banan Co.
(1950s-1960s)

Greene & Atkins of Mobile, Alabama, USA, established a banana plantation in the area, naming their associated village "Alabama." The property was later sold to other foreign investors.



2016-18: Tested the townsie's houses and monumental structures to better understand their age and how they were constructed and used by townspeople. Also toured and tested surrounding foothills to better understand the landscapes navigated and used by past peoples, and villagers today.



2019-23: Conducted extensive excavations to further understand townsie buildings and their occupants, the large patios, plazas, and garden spaces between them, and surrounding foothills landscape used for fields.