

4-29-2020

Introductory Note

Alan LeBaron
Kennesaw State University

James Loucky
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica>



Part of the [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Indigenous Studies Commons](#), and the [Latina/o Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

LeBaron, Alan and Loucky, James (2020) "Introductory Note," *Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica/vol2/iss1/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis* by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

Introductory Note

Alan LeBaron

Kennesaw State University

James Loucky

Western Washington University

Maya America

Names can encourage dynamic discussion as well as designate purpose and potentialities. “Maya America” refers to the historic and the present-day geographic regions where people of Maya descent live, while “Maya America” also reflects a term of self-identification used by many in the new generations born or raised beyond traditional homelands. The journal features essays and commentary about contemporary and emerging experiences and challenges, rather than endeavoring to establish a new category of “studies” alongside American, Latino, Indigenous, or Central American studies.

Current Issue

This second issue of *Maya America* includes essays from new generation Maya Americans; retrospectives of advocacy for Maya communities in the United States; and ethnographic perspectives based both in Guatemala and the United States.

The first three essays are personal commentaries and reflections by Maya American authors. Maya Figueroa Ferreira recounts being adopted from Guatemala and raised “white” while not knowing her Maya heritage. Dina Hernandez tells her story about growing up “Latina Maya” in Morgantown NC and being on the road to “discovering her Mayan voice”. Gaspar Tomas and Lorenza Tomas, brother and sister in South Carolina, write about their Maya community youth organization and their methods for maintaining culture and spiritualities in contemporary spaces.

Long-term advocacy for immigration justice becomes a common theme for the next two essays. Ultimately, refugees, displaced persons, and survival migrants from the Maya homelands become entangled in the debate and conflict over immigration policy and enforcement. Allan Burns gives an in-depth analysis of what he learned while giving expert testimony in immigration courts, and Aileen Josephs draws upon her 25 years of experience in Palm Beach County, Florida, to propose comprehensive ideas on immigration policy.

Separations from home and community are highlighted in the three ethnographic essays. Joyce Bennett and Ambrocía Cuma Chávez discuss the significance of being “Maya” during and after migration to the United States from the Kaqchikel regions of Guatemala, and the vicissitudes of becoming or acting as “maya americano”. Inbal Mazer’s interviews with mothers and midwives from San Miguel Acatán reveal resilience strategies that women, through collective networking and transnational knowledge, create and employ as they navigate medical systems. James Loucky and Katie Goger discuss strategies among Maya parents and children for maintaining or re-creating social and family cohesion amid disruptions of migration and resettlement.

The concluding essay, by Pablo Marcos Martín, summarizes the immigrant experience in six steps, and reveals the multiple circumstances and the multiple outcomes of the immigration experience. Originally published in 2006, this essay remains profoundly pertinent to the study of survival migration, including family separation, the journey to the border, consequences of choice and circumstances, and the possibilities for failure as well as for success.

Invitation to Submit Essays

The journal welcomes essays, commentary and analysis on topics that include social justice, public policy, personal reflection, ethnography, history, and creative literary works that carry a message. Academic essays are double-blind peer reviewed. Maya America also welcomes suggestions as well as collaborative editorial participation. For further information, please see the journal home pages <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica/> or send to jamesloucky@gmail.com or alebaron@kennesaw.edu.