EDITOR’S NOTE

Daniel Blair’s *Notes of an Expedition from Georgetown to the Gold Diggings on the Borders of Venezuela* (1857) in two manuscript note books (17.5 cm x 11.5 cm; 217 pp.) was originally deposited in the library of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society, Georgetown, which became defunct with political independence in Guyana. With other material, it was subsequently transferred to the Caribbean Research Library, University of Guyana. It is published for the first time in this issue of the *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* because in our opinion it richly deserves a permanent place in the legacy of the Colonial Period. Particularly, it provides valuable glimpses of contemporary Carib, Arawak and Warrau life in North West Guyana; it records petroglyph and habitation sites in an area of this country which is archaeologically unknown; and, most interestingly, describes the geology and mining activities of what at the time appears to have been no man’s land of speculators and adventurers from both the Old and New Worlds, located to the immediate east of the Orinoco–Essequibo watershed: Spaniards, English, Germans, Italians, a Norwegian, Demerarans and West Indians, and of course Amerindians everywhere. Dr. Pollak-Elitz of the Universidad Catolica Andres Bello writes in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* of the carnival festival of El Callao, a village in the area founded by Trinidadian immigrants around 1850. Blair had located a new village of similar immigrants at Los Tablas, on the Caroni basin.

The village of Tupuken (Tupuken) described by him is better known to archaeologists today as the site of a preceramic lithic complex (Cruxtent 1971) which with the meso-Indian site at Canaima may prove of eventual interest in the archaeology of the Guianas, particularly with regard to a type of projectile point well distributed in western Guyana and into the Suriname Sipaliwini savannas (map, frontispiece: Boomer, *in press*). A similar interest is indicated by the distribution of petroglyph motifs of the Ashalton complex (Williams: this journal 1979). Three distinctive stone axes from the Cuyuni and Barima rivers are unknown elsewhere in the archaeology of the Guianas (Boomer 1979) indicating a route probably utilized by the inhabitants of the North West long before Blair’s time.

As noted in our annotations to Schomburgk’s map of 1875, (pg. 56), Blair’s route up the Waini and Barama rivers and down the Akarans to the Cuyuni followed very closely Schomburgk’s explorations of 1835-1839, which gives point and poignancy to his observations concerning populations that had vanished completely in the single intervening generation.

All inconsistencies in spelling and grammar occur in the original manuscript. Words omitted in the original are indicated by a row of three asterisks in the printed text.

References Cited


