

A wide-angle photograph of a long, straight dirt road stretching into the distance. The road is flanked by lush green vegetation, including palm trees on the left and various other trees on the right. A person is walking away from the camera down the center of the road, and a small dog is running alongside them. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a hazy, overcast sky. The text 'c.1950' is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

c.1950

Jake Michaels

c.1950



c.1950 documents the Mennonites of Belize. Initially in search of a place to practice their traditions freely, the community have made the country their home for the last 70 years.

The sun was high, and the jungle was in flames when we turned down a gravel road. As we approached the fire, a few of the men were burning the forest, clearing land for future families. Amidst this blaze was the first time I saw them.

In the distance, homesteads dotted the lush green hills; in each of these a family had their slice of paradise. The landscape recalled the simple agricultural

society of the American midwest in the 1950s: a placid utopia frozen in time, sprung from the seeds past generations had planted.

As dusk approached, the pastor of the first village gave me permission to photograph the community's families. I was struck by the near-silence of the land, only interrupted by the sound of horses' hooves and wooden wheels. These buggies were often driven by young children with surprising authority. The young here are given responsibility at an early age, not only in the home but in society as a whole...

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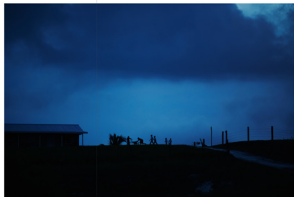
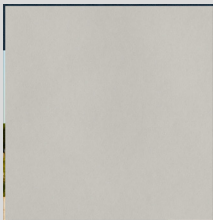
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