**History of Corozal Central Park and inauguration**

-by Eliza granddaughter of Santiago Ricalde

I have checked my data and it was in 1965the park was officially inaugurated. The Central Park has a history and the most important fact that made history was the former fountain which was situated at the center of the park which was donated to the people of Corozal by the Mexican Government through the Governor of Quintana Roo, Lic. Aaron Merino Fernandez as a sign of amity and cordial relationship they had as neighboring countries. Likewise, Hurricane Hattie also contributed a lot to the history of the park. As many people can reminisce, in 1961 the catastrophic hurricane Hattie massively devastated Belize City. At that time my grandfather had good communication with the Mexican government and as a result, they decided to help our fellow Belizeans by sending doctors and nurses to render their services in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane. The Mexican doctors and nurses were from the Federal district and travelled via plane from Mexico City to Chetumal City. From Chetumal City, the small aircraft journeyed towards Belize City. Unfortunately, the aircraft crashed in the vicinity of the old Maskall Road due to the horrible weather conditions that still were present and all the passengers died. My grandfather would have died on that incident but who saved his life was my grandmother. This was because she was pregnant for my youngest uncle; and had contractions, so she pleaded my grandfather not to go. He thought that my grandmother was going to give birth at anytime so he called and excused himself for not being able to accompany the team due to a personal situation. When he heard the shocking news, he was terribly devastated by this tragedy. Somehow he set aside his grief, rallied his energies, and promptly organized relief supplies travelling daily back and forth from Corozal to Belize City by truck through the old Maskall road for more than two weeks with just a few hours of sleep in between. Thus, is the reason that a plaque was erected at the base of the fountain with the names of the Mexican doctors, nurses and pilots who died when they were on the mercy mission to Belize. Years later, only a few remains of the passengers and pieces of debris were found. My grandfather decided that the death of the Mexican doctors, nurses and Pilots should not be forgotten and so in memory of them; he decided that a plaque with their names should be placed in the base of the fountain that was donated by the Mexican Government. This plaque and the fountain remained at the park until 1994 when under a UDP Municipal Government was changed.

The Central Park is also historic because before my grandfather had decided with his town councilors to create a central park, it was used as a camp after hurricane Janet in 1955. As you are aware hurricane Janet hit Corozal in the year 1955 and about 98% of the population lost their homes. This camp where the park is now was used to give out goods and supplies to remedy the situation after the hurricane. This same camp was used as a football field where games used to be played. He decided that Corozal deserved a better park and decided to use that plot of land for it. Hence the reason we now have a very beautiful and large Park. If you take a look at all other parks the Corozal Central park is one of the biggest and has all the administrative offices around. As well we can notice that the Town Hall, the Library, Police Station, Magistrate's Court and the Fire station are all located either nearby or surrounding the Park.