



# Maya In Exile: Guatemalans in Florida

*Allan Burns*

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The Maya are the single largest group of indigenous people living in North and Central America. Beginning in the early 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Maya fled the terror of Guatemalan civil strife to safety in Mexico and the U.S. This ethnography of Mayan immigrants who settled in Indiatown, a small agricultural community in south central Florida, presents the experiences of these traditional people, their adaptations to life in the U.S., and the ways they preserve their ancestral culture. For more than a decade, Allan F. Burns has been researching and doing advocacy work for these immigrant Maya, who speak Kanjobal, Quiche, Maman , and several other of the more than thirty distinct languages in southern Mexico and Guatemala. In this first book on the Guatemalan Maya in the U.S, he uses their many voices to communicate the experience of the Maya in Florida and describes the advantages and results of applied anthropology in refugee studies and cultural adaptation. Burns describes the political and social background of the Guatemalan immigrants to the U.S. and includes personal accounts of individual strategies for leaving Guatemala and traveling to Florida. Examining how they interact with the community and recreate a Maya society in the U.S., he considers how low-wage labor influences the social structure of Maya immigrant society and discusses the effects of U.S. immigration policy on these refugees. Author note: Allan F. Burns is Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. The author of "An Epoch of Miracles", he has produced four video programs on Maya refugees in Florida.

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