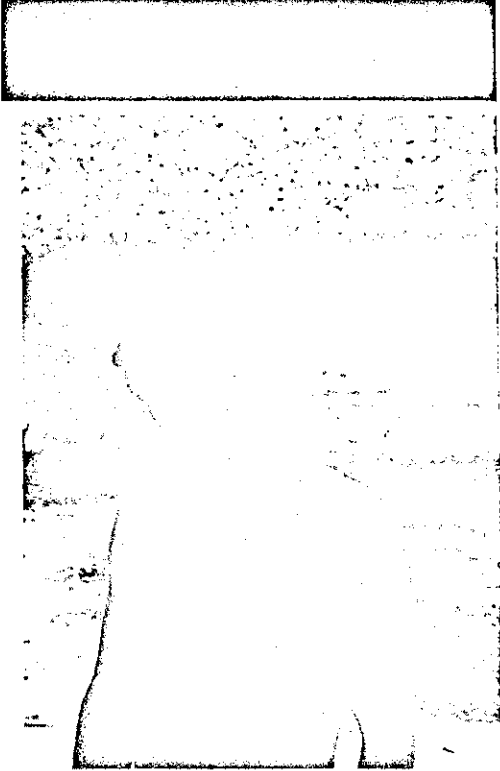


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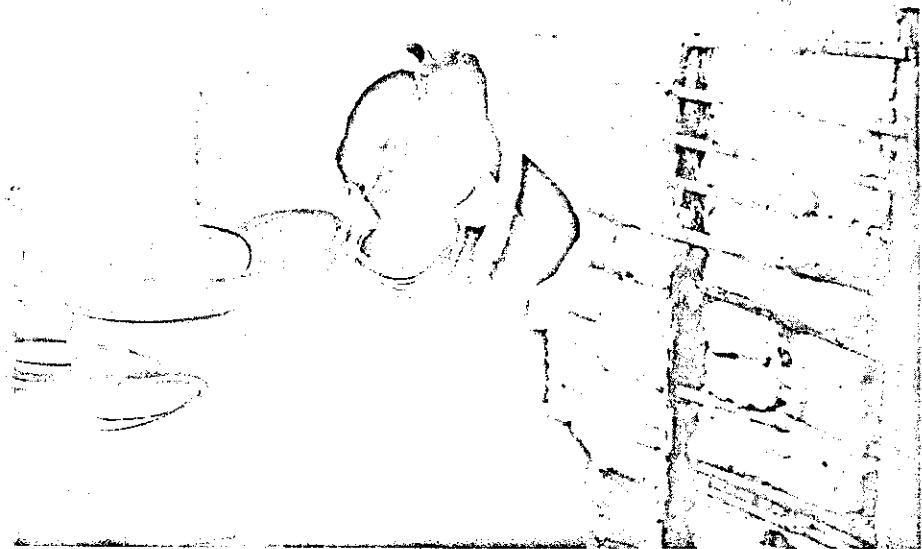


Children looking at some of Gloria's cotton—set out in a basket to dry.

THE HOUSE

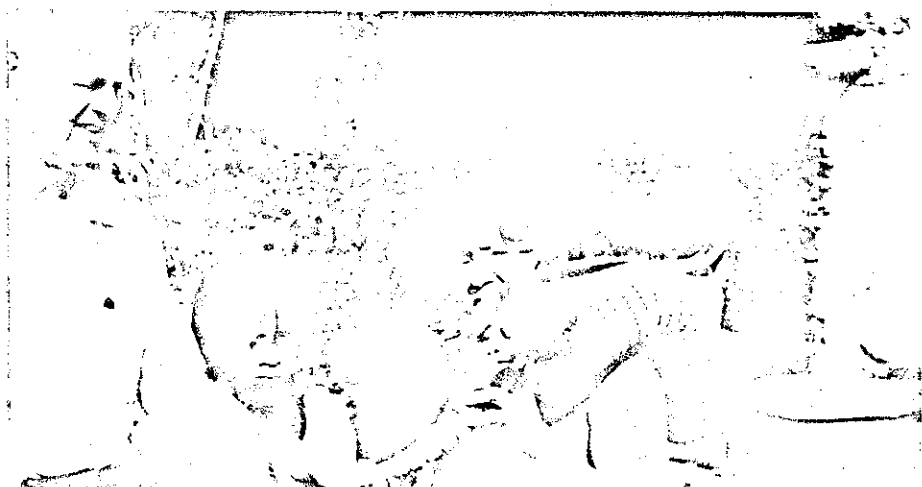


Juancito, the captain, whose wife, Gloria, died.



Gloria, Juancito's wife spinning cotton. She died from malaria in April 1977.

Armadillo Juancito killed. His daughter looking on.



Will and Mary Roundy, Venezuela
THE YANOMAMO usually live in very simple houses. They consist of a few poles tied up with vines and some jungle leaves woven together to form the roof. Under this they tie their hammocks, cook over a small fire, and spend their evenings.

Labateli people decided to be different. They built mud houses like their Maquiritare neighbors. It was a lot of work gathering stronger poles and making rolls of long vines to tie them. The poles were for pillars, to hold up the roof, which was made with thousands of individual leaves. They tied lots of small sticks between the pillars and plastered the walls with mud. What fun the children had as they helped—getting perhaps more mud on themselves than on the house. Being dirty was no problem to them. They could have fun swimming in the river. Such happy sounds they made; and when through, they were all so shiny and clean.

Juancito, the captain, built his house very special. It was the nicest one in the village. The outside was painted with sap from a tree mixed with white clay making

it a beautiful white house. There were three separate rooms. Juancito and his wife, Gloria, and their young children lived in one end of the house. Two daughters and their families shared the room at the other end. The middle room was a happy gathering place. It contained a window and a split pole table with benches. After dark, neighbors gathered there to eat, visit, and laugh. On Sundays, the worship service was held there. Sunday evenings they meet to sing hymns. When we started literacy classes, it also became the classroom. The benches were filled with those who were eager to learn.

Then the family moved to the jungle to plant a new garden. They had already cut away the dense jungle and burned the area. Now it was rainy season and time to plant. We continued classes in the house even though they were gone.

One day Juancito came to tell us his wife was sick with malaria. We only had a little medicine which we sent with him. A couple weeks later Gloria felt better, and they came back to the house. After she bathed at the river, Juancito helped her along as she slowly walked up the hill to the house.

Later in the afternoon they asked us to go to the house. "Gloria is dying," they said. As we entered the house, we noticed the room was full of people crying.

"Shall we pray for her?" we asked. Right away the crying stopped, and they sent for the other Christians to pray, too. When we were through praying, Juancito said he'd been praying so much for her, and now she wasn't any better. "I'm going to ask the spirit of the cows to heal her," he told us. The man in the little house was turning from God, his only help and comfort in time of sorrow. Soon after midnight he woke us up. Will got up from his hammock, and they prayed again, but before morning, Gloria had left her earthly body. Relatives gathered, wailing and screaming in loud voices to show their anger because she had died. The little white house had turned into a house of mourning.

In the morning, the Maquiritares from upriver came to comfort and to offer help in digging a grave. "I'm not going to bury her," said Juancito as he twisted Gloria's foot to try to straighten it. "I'm going to hang her out in the jungle."

Soon they were carrying the

body out of the little house, and the people in the house screeched and banged to drive the lady's spirit outside. The body was laid on some poles. Then the poles were wrapped around the body and tied at each end to keep the vultures from eating it. The men carried the bundle out into the jungle to hang it in a tree. Since Juancito really liked his wife, he planned to save her bones in a basket and tie it up in the little house.

Juancito was afraid of Gloria's spirit, so he moved out of his room. He had said he was saved; but when his wife died, he blamed God. "I'm not going to attend meetings for a long, long time," he said. "Don't even call me to come." And so he turned away from the God of all comfort again.

Not long after Gloria's death, the young people also moved out of their room in the house. They couldn't sleep because of fear of her spirit, which, they said, made noises at night.

Sunday a meeting was held, but it was not a happy one as usual. A nephew of the deceased talked. "I still want God," he said; "but it is bad to gather in this room." So he would not go there any more for meetings.

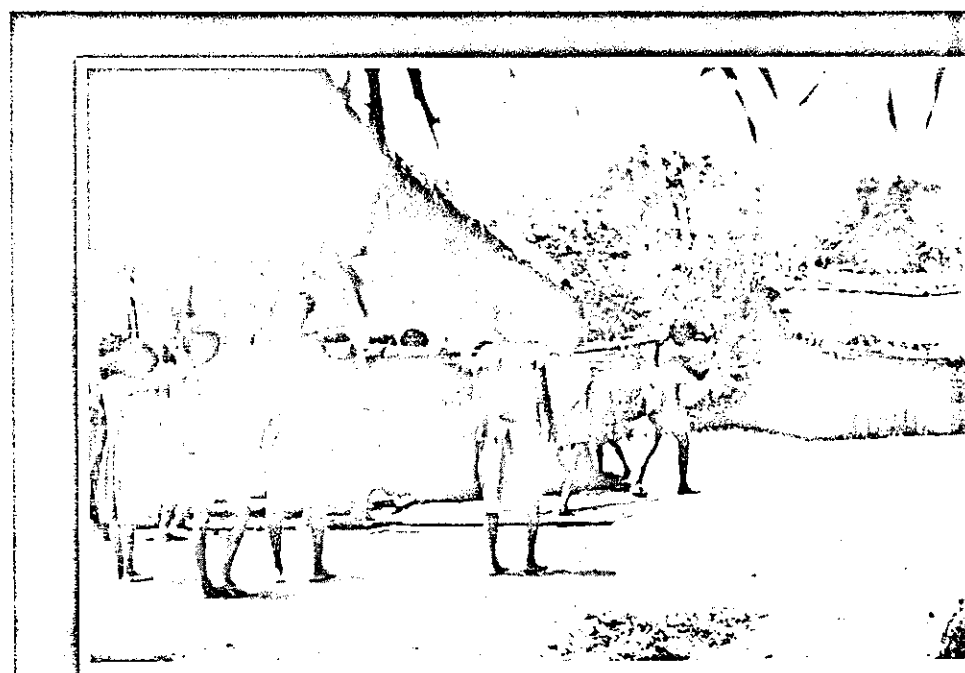
A couple of months later when we returned from a break, vines

were already climbing over the house. They'd thrown it away — the nicest house in the village!

I needed a place for my literacy classes, so we had the grass and vines cleaned from around the house. My students helped clean the room which, besides the trash on the floor, had lots of sand fleas. But if no one else wanted the little house, we still needed it for classes. The students didn't mind as long as they didn't have to sleep there. Their desire to learn to read was greater than their fear of the spirits in the house.

Now a year and a half later, a widow and her three small children are living in one room of the house. The center room has two young couples living in it. The other end room where Gloria died, is used for a cooking room. The families who originally lived in the pretty white house moved across the river and built shabby pole and leaf houses.

Juancito, who was once the village captain, does not have the joy he had before. We have God's Word, so we can comfort one another, and we need not sorrow as others who have no hope. Pray for the Yanomamo at Labateli, that they might learn about God's promises and claim them in times of difficulty and sorrow.



The men carrying Gloria's body out to the jungle. It was wrapped up in sticks.