

OUR HISTORY

IN 1949, Father Bernard C. Zimmerman, S.J. introduced the Credit Union idea to San Ignacio.

The people of San Ignacio knew very little about the Credit Union movement. Father Zimmerman got together a small group to whom he gave credit union classes every Sunday afternoon. These potential members, a mere handful, started bringing a few cents to save. Consequently, Manuel Aragon was appointed temporary treasurer.

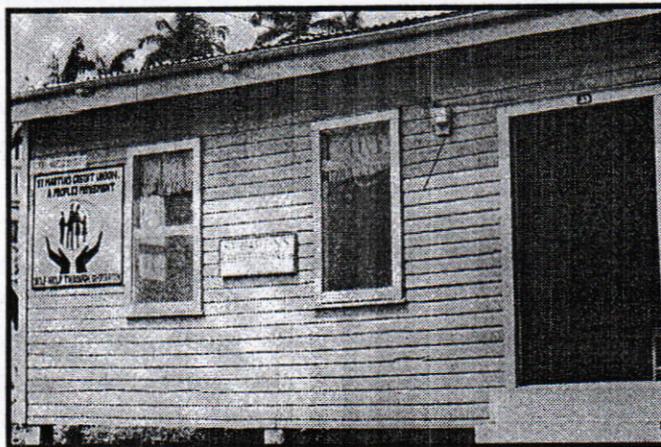
Saint Martin's Credit Union received its Certificate of Incorporation. Its license to operate as a Credit Union on May 20th, 1949. The first Board of Directors consisted of President-Alfredo Zaiden, Vice-President-Wilfredo Zetina, Treasurer-Manuel Aragon, Secretary - Elena Awe and Education Director-Carolina Burns.



Photograph of Mrs. Elena Awe, only surviving director from 1949 receiving outstanding membership award from Mr. Armando Cowo.

At the beginning, collections were done every Wednesday night in the lower flat of the priest's residence in San Ignacio. Officers Meeting were held monthly and membership every two or three months.

Loan protection and Life Savings Insurance were gotten in 1957 from Cuna in the United States of America through the Belize Credit Union League. In 1959, Saint Martin's purchased its own house and lot. With this new development, collection days were increased to three times a week, at night for the convenience of members, and so it went until 1975.



Former St. Andrew's School Wooden Building.

In June 1975, Saint Martin's opened its door full time to make services more accessible to all, especially those living in the rural communities. Mrs. Isabel Ochaeta was the Manager and Mrs. Rita Teck the Assistant Manager. In 1976, the traditional semi-annual meetings began; the Saint Martin's news bulletin made its first appearance; the premium payments to Cuna was increased so as to cover our members in case of accidental death or total permanent disability.

In 1977, Saint Martin's led the campaign to have the existing Credit Union Ordinance revised and updated. In 1978, the Credit Union Started a collection branch at Sacred Heart College.