

# The Ass's Jawbone: A Topical Collection of One

By Lesa Morgan

Few things are as exciting in the Morgan household as completing a topical collection of one, so you can imagine my sheer delight in finding just that while admiring my accordion stamp collection one morning!



Figure 1. Belize, Scott # 1017 <sup>1</sup>

A stamp from Belize, Scott #1017 issued November 19, 1993 (Figures 1 and 2) <sup>1</sup>, features an accordion player in the center, surrounded by other musicians playing maracas, drums, a guitar, and an unfamiliar instrument, the quijada (key-YAH-dah) or ass's jawbone. The quijada is an idiophone percussion instrument made from the jawbone of a



Figure 3. Quijada: a jawbone used as a musical instrument <sup>2</sup>

donkey or ass, producing a powerful buzzing sound (Figure 3). To create the quijada, the "jawbone is cleaned of tissue and dried to make the teeth loose" <sup>2</sup>. It is then played by being held in one hand while the other hand strikes the bone with a stick, or drags the stick along the teeth, creating a scratching sound, Figure 4. <sup>3</sup>



Figure 2. Left side of Belize stamp enlarged to show the quijada <sup>1</sup>

The stamp taken in its entirety celebrates Christmas and the Wilfred Peters' "Boom and Chime" Band. Boom and Chime music is reminiscent of "zydeco with a tropical flavor" and is also called "brukdown" (slang for "broken down calypso"), in reference to the drummer beating the side of his drum with a mallet, and the metal rim with a hollow metal stick. <sup>4</sup>

While the jawbones of other animals are sometimes featured in philately, they most often represent paleontology such as this Ethiopian



Figure 5. Ethiopian Stamp Scott # 826 <sup>5</sup>



Figure 6. Solvenian Stamp Scott # 1213 <sup>6</sup>

stamp (Scott # 826) from 1978 showing a Hominid skull and jawbone <sup>5</sup>, or the Cave Lion jawbone shown on Slovenia's 2017 stamp (Scott # 1213) <sup>6</sup>. To date, no other postage stamp featuring an ass's jawbone, or a jawbone used as a musical instrument, has been published. As a result, my collection of one is complete!

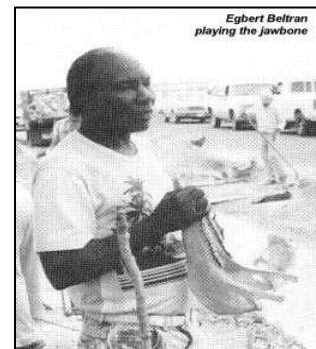


Figure 4. Jawbone Player <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://colnect.com/en/stamps/stamp/179318-Boom\\_and\\_Chime\\_Band-Christmas\\_1993\\_-\\_Local\\_Customs-Belize](https://colnect.com/en/stamps/stamp/179318-Boom_and_Chime_Band-Christmas_1993_-_Local_Customs-Belize)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawbone\\_\(instrument\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawbone_(instrument))

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/peters.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/belize-remembering-mr-peters-boom-and-chime-band\\_b\\_5951a6cce4b0326c0a8d0acf](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/belize-remembering-mr-peters-boom-and-chime-band_b_5951a6cce4b0326c0a8d0acf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.paleophilatelie.eu/country/ethiopia.html>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.paleophilatelie.eu/description/stamps/slovenia\\_2017.html](https://www.paleophilatelie.eu/description/stamps/slovenia_2017.html)