

### THE MARSHALL FIELD ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION

AN expedition which will excavate ancient Maya sites and collect artifacts representing the highest of aboriginal American cultures, search an uninhabited and almost impenetrable forest region for hitherto uncovered Maya cities, and study the Indians of modern Maya tribes by living for a period among them, left Chicago on January 21 on behalf of Field Museum of Natural History. On January 23 the expedition sailed from New Orleans aboard the steamship *Coppename* for British Honduras and Guatemala, where operations are to be conducted, it was announced by Stephen C. Simms, director of the museum.

This is the third Marshall Field Archeological Expedition to British Honduras, and it is to be led by J. Eric Thompson, assistant curator in charge of Central and South American archeology at the museum. Mr. Thompson led two previous expeditions sponsored by Mr. Marshall Field, as well as other exploring parties in this territory, and has written several books on ancient and modern Maya culture. The present expedition has a wider scope of operations than those which preceded it.

After landing at Belize, the expedition will proceed by boat up the coast to the mouth of the New River, and thence inland on the river to the head of navigation. Thence by mule pack train and on foot for many miles the journey will continue to the ancient city of Kax Unuic (Maya name meaning "Man of the Woods") which is situated on the frontier between British Honduras and Guatemala. There, with a party of Maya diggers recruited from among the native inhabitants, certain ruins will be excavated which promise to yield a rich collection of Maya antiquities for the museum, probably dating back to a time approximately coincident with the beginning of the Christian era or earlier.

When this work has been completed, the expedition will transfer its activities to the southeast Peten district of Guatemala, where reconnaissance work will be carried on through an extremely dense tropical forest region, uninhabited for many years, in search of the sites of ancient Maya cities known to exist but hitherto never definitely located. Work here will be entirely on foot, as the trails are too poor to take mules. The assistance of natives living on the edge of the forest, who are believed to have knowledge of the approximate location of the ruins, will be solicited. It is hoped that a number of old monuments bearing dates in Maya hieroglyphics will be found on the surface in the locality of the buried ruins. The explorations in this territory are a part

of the expedition's work which is made possible by funds contributed by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C.

Finally the expedition will pitch camp in the highlands of Guatemala to conduct ethnological work among certain modern Maya tribes. By living among these people and observing their ways of life it is expected that much new information will be obtained, and that it will be possible to trace many of the present customs back to the culture of the early Mayas. The expedition will be in the field probably about six or seven months.

### THE AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

PREHISTORIC Indian ruins of the pueblo type have been added to the Aztec Ruins National Monument, New Mexico, by the recent proclamation of President Hoover adding over eight acres to the reservation. The total area of the monument is now approximately 26 acres.

Two tracts of land comprise the addition. One, embracing 1.8 acres, was owned by the American Museum of Natural History, and donated by it to the government. It was through the generosity of one of the museum trustees, Mr. Archer M. Huntington, that the original area of the monument, amounting to 4.6 acres, was presented to the United States for monument purposes.

Later, in 1928, the Museum of Natural History donated an additional area of 12.6 acres which was added to the monument. Long before the establishment of the monument, the American Museum had conducted extensive archeological explorations in the area under the direction of Dr. Earl H. Morris, who was instrumental in obtaining scientific recognition of the value of its prehistoric ruins.

The other tract of land, containing about seven acres, was purchased by the government through the cooperation of W. T. Grant, of New York City, who donated \$750, or half the purchase price, to the National Park Service for this purpose. The remainder of the cost was borne by the government appropriation, which provides for the acquisition of private lands in connection with national parks, provided half the cost is contributed from private sources.

The main feature of the Aztec Ruins National Monument is a large E-shaped pueblo structure containing approximately 500 rooms. The first floor of this structure is standing and in 24 of the rooms original ceilings are intact. In many places the walls of second-story rooms are standing, and in some cases also parts of third-story rooms. The ceilings, where in place, are supported by large beams, cut and dressed with stone tools. They are exhibits of work done in the Stone Age, while the sandstone walls, reasonably