



The Marshall College Expeditions

Mexico/Central America 1954

Welcome to a New World...a world where tropical jungles hide secret realms; where young maidens are sacrificed to appease angry gods and where ball games are played for the ultimate prize: the right to live. This world is inhabited by great builders who raise magnificent cities out of the jungle, by peaceful, mathematical and astronomical geniuses who have predicted the end of time, by ruthless warriors that tear out the fingernails of their prisoners and by kings who must spill their own blood in order that their reign might be successful. This is a world quite different from your own. This is the world of the Maya.

The Maya left an incredible legacy that still amazes us today. From their awe-inspiring cities to their astounding intellectual achievements, these ancient people accomplished feats that were far ahead of their time. Although the evidence they left behind tells us much about the Maya, many questions remain unanswered. Will we ever have a complete picture of this remarkable civilization? Perhaps not. However, the mysteries that attract us the most are the ones that are the hardest to solve. And as long as there are people who care to ask questions, there is hope that we will one day find the answers to this enigmatic people of the jungle.

In 1954, Dr. Henry Jones led an expedition of Marshall College students to Mexico in an attempt to answer some of the perplexing questions surrounding the Maya. The following questions guided Dr. Jones' students on their expedition and like them, you are now charged with finding the answers.

1. Where was the Mayan civilization located and how far did their influence reach?
2. During what time period did their civilization flourish?
3. What was their physical geography like and how did they adapt to it?
4. What were the major centers of civilization (their major cities) and what were they like?
5. What were the major accomplishments of the Maya (in art, architecture, science, astronomy, etc...)?

6. What were the religious beliefs of the Maya?
7. What are the explanations for their sudden demise?

While conducting your research, make sure that you can identify the following and explain the significance of each:

1. Tikal
2. Chichen Itza
3. Palenque
4. Mayan calendar
5. Bonampak
6. sinote
7. Quetzalcoatl

You will find a great deal more information than that which is listed above. Use these items as a starting point for your investigation; yet be sure that you *at least* cover these topics. As you read, you may find that you have questions of your own; one area of their civilization may interest you more than another. Feel free to devote more coverage to those areas that you like best. Just remember, touch on all of the above. After completing your research, you will summarize your findings in a paper. Good luck! And remember, be creative and have fun with it!