

Quest For The Lost City of The Maya Indians

Compiled By Glen W. Chapman -May 2002

(From The Book Quest For The Lost City by Dana and Ginger Lamb, Tempo Books, 1964)

"What about this lost City?" It may be in the jungle down there maybe in Chipas, maybe in Guatemala somewhere North of the old Mayan capital of Tikal, and somewhere north of the Usamancinta River. Rumors are that the lost city house the long lost 'Golden Library'....The best story is about an American flyer forced down in the jungle between the Bay of Campeche and Salvador. He had climbed an overgrown mound or pyramid to get his bearings when the ground beneath suddenly gave way, and he plunged a down and centuries through time.

He landed in an underground vault where he saw an idol and a long stone trough, containing a number of metal staples, each bearing eleven engraved gold plates. Clearing the debris of centuries away he turned the "pages" upon their wrought gold spindles, but found he was unable to wrest any of them from their secure fastening . He got out oh the jungle and back to the coast but has never been able to retrace his steps to the 'Golden Library' . A. Hyatt Verrill had printed the story only after a thorough investigation. (*They found Gold* ,1936, Putman's & Sons, NY.)....

As we learned more of their language, Chan and I reached a new ground of understanding, and my admiration for his quiet wisdom grew with each day's passing. By careful questioning we learned that Chari and his tribe were familiar with a good share of the Mayan area. They knew the country from Palenque in northeastern Chiapas to Lake Petén in central Guatemala. Yearly they made pilgrimages to the fabulous ruins of Yaxchilán on the Usamacinta River. They spoke of other ruins, too, cities with names I never had heard. But adroitly they avoided any mention of our Lost City.

As well as I could I also tried to ask about the Golden Library, describing the subterranean chamber into which the American flyer had stumbled, the great *stone trough*, and the plaques of gold.

He called them the Sacred Books. That's as near as I can come to translating his words. And certainly the word "book" is my own, for these people apparently had lost the art of writing a long time ago.

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From Diary- The discovery

June 7, 1950. We are camped tonight near a beautiful little temple. All about us are the jungle-covered ruins of a once great civilization. It seems odd to be camped here alone where once hundreds of people worked and played and planned for a great future, and created unbelievable stone temples and palaces. This afternoon we peered into mysterious doorways and underground passages. This ends our years of search. We have blazed the trail to this isolated outpost of the Mayas. From here on it is up to the archeologists. Our job is done.

Again from the diary:

June 8. Finished another day exploring the ruins and taking pictures. Most of the buildings are partially destroyed. Great trees have grown upon them and in turn the storms have blown them down. When the trees fell, they carried parts of the buildings with them. In order to protect some of this beautifully carved, fallen stonework, we have covered it as best we can; first a layer of palm fronds, and then flat rocks. We may be wasting time doing all this hard work, but we just can't help doing what we can to preserve the work of the ancient Mayas.

There is no water in the entire area. At the north side of the city are a series of miniature "volcanoes" which we assume were artesian wells. We found some hewn stone aqueducts leading from these cones into the city itself. There must have been plenty of water here at one time, but now there is none. The artesian water must have eaten its way through the lime. stone and formed an underground river similar to those in Yucatan. We've been existing on *bejuco de agua*, but it does not quench our terrible thirst.

This heat is terrific. The air is so heavy and oppressive that you feel you can cut it in chunks

and toss it out of the way. Everything is damp and soggy and hot. All of our equipment is becoming moldy. The leather of our camera bags, sandals, and gun holsters sprout gray-green whiskers overnight. The sweat streams from our bodies and we have to go farther afield each time to find the *bejuco*. The bugs seem to get worse every day. Maybe this is a sign of rain. We pray that it is.

June 10. . I've been cleaning up and photographing the little temple near our camp. It is the most beautiful structure in the city. There are three small rooms, and the altar stone in the center chamber is the finest Maya carving we've ever seen. Probably, it's the finest carving in the world because we found it!

In cleaning the stone, some of the lime coating chipped off, exposing the color beneath. One figure is a dark, jade green. The central figure is red with a black background. I'm afraid my photographs won't turn out very well because of the lack of light.

This central edifice was located on top of a pyramid facing a large plaza, commanding a view of the surrounding country. A series of stone terraces led down to the valley below.

Growing on the roof of the temple was a huge tree. Its strong, massive roots had grown down the walls of the building, penetrating and prying into the lines of the stonework.

Seeing these roots, like an immense, gnarled hand grasping a lovely jewel, I wished we were equipped to cut the tree down in sections so as not to damage this well-preserved little temple.

A touch of mystery was added to the incredible beauty of the temple in that its three chambers were unusually clean. No rubble of fallen stones and wood and mortar littered its even floors; and faint upon the walls themselves were evidences of colored murals.

The back wall of the central chamber consisted of a huge stone four feet across and six feet in height. In all our experience we had never seen such Maya sculpture work as this. The figures upon it were in deep relief, almost three dimensional, like Chinese work in ivory.

On the lower portion of this remarkable carving, two exotically costumed individuals held a platform above their heads. Between them, a silly little monkey elf squatted upon a skull and crossbones. Cross-legged on the platform above were two more human figures with plumed headdresses, each with a hand extended toward a series of glyphs.

Before the beautifully carved panel was a low dais. Because it covered a portion of the sculpture itself, we believed it must have been built there at a later date than the original wall-piece. Considering the construction work, we wondered whether or not it covered a concealed passage. In many ways, it was very much like the entrance to an underground vault we had seen on a visit to Palenque. If this was so, what secrets might it contain? I remembered Chan's standing upon the steps of another pyramid and pointing in the direction of the Lost City. Could this be where the Golden Library was hidden—here, and not beneath one of the mounds along the winding Candelaria?



From an Associated Press Article

"In 1950 The Lamb's made a trip to find the Lost city in the almost uncharted Guatemalan interior. They traveled more than a month by canoe . They think they have found the fabled 'Lost City' with its 'golden library' . They believe that the city antedate Christ. They did a little exploring but little digging . They say that only trained men should be allowed to go into those ruins. The city itself centers around a plaza. It is laid out in terraces one level upon another. The buildings were in fairly good condition. They are covered with dirt and debris of centuries, so thick that many large trees grow from the roofs. Inside the buildings it is surprisingly clean. They found abundance of pottery and household implements. They also found broken spear points. A baffling characteristic of the city is the system of underground vaults stretching like huge worm trails. They entered a small three room temple on the lower level of the city where they observed a partially collapsed passage leading downward. Carrying torches they found steps 24 inches thick. They descended to a depth of 20 feet they found the first of the vaults. Further investigations brought other vaults to light. The Lambs hope that they may contain the long sought golden books.

The Lamb's say they have confirmed existence of the golden Library from long study of old Mexican and Spanish documents. Legends tell how ancient tribal scholars inscribed the basic knowledge of their people's law, medicine and astronomy on solid gold pages. But none have yet been brought to light.

The Lamb's said they were puzzled to find every ceremonial urn broken.

They found the city deep in the jungle, a plateau of some 100 acres at an altitude of 200 feet in the uplands of the state of Tabasco. There are immense trees from which vines hang in loose coils. A sparkling stream of blue-white water fans out through the area. They found wild avocados, tomatoes, palm hearts and yams, and the fruits of the Ramon tree, the Cherimoya and the Zapotemamey. With bugs and worms as bait they hauled in 20 fish as fast as they could get their lines in." (From AP article by Franklin Arthur, Thursday Oct. 26, 1950, titled Shangri-La: Explorers find it in Guatamala Wilds)

From Book Mysteries of South America by Harold S, Wilkins, Citadel Press, N.Y. 1956

" In March 1942 a Mr. And Mrs. Dana Lamb from California were personal guests of President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House. The couple had reportedly discovered a tribe of uncivilized Indians in the Mexican state of Chiappas. These Indians, possibly members of the Lancandonos tribe, said they guarded an ancient, unknown Mayan city. The Lambs informed President Roosevelt that the old city included a temple with a subterranean vault. Inside the vault were gold plates inscribed with a record of man's history on earth. They said that the gold plates had predicted the outbreak of World War II.

"The Lambs told the President that the gold sheets recorded history back beyond the great flood,". "The Indian tribesmen seldom visited the secret city, except to worship. Then, they held ritualistic ceremonies in the Mayan temple and worshipped their ancient gods of the underworld."