

*The Piedras  
Negras Expedition*

**T**HE first reports from Mr. Linton Satterthwaite Jr., field director of the Eldridge R. Johnson Expedition which is now in its third season at Piedras Negras, Guatemala, contain much of interest. The main general objective this season has been to obtain as completely as may be a dated history of the evolution of buildings and ceramics, an objective more nearly possible of attainment at Piedras Negras than at any other Maya site because of the long series of readable dated monuments, spaced at regular intervals, from very early to latest Early 'Empire' times.

Excavation has exposed parts of three buildings, dismantled in aboriginal times, of which the masonry differs markedly from surface structures and of which the walls are painted red or, in some parts, in red and white design. Later than these are two periods of white plastered platforms in excellent state of preservation and differing from any before observed here in proportions—their terraces are very low and broad and one platform is extremely narrow. 'Imagine my delight,' writes Mr. Satterthwaite, 'to find a perfect post hole in one of them; then, making a right turn, to find the next, just about the estimated distance away. The floor had been resurfaced, the basic material being sandy earth with many pieces of burned wattle clay, with marks of the sticks, and white plaster surfacing. There can be no doubt that the Mayas at one time built very fine stone platforms to accommodate buildings built of posts and wattle work, clay-covered and finished with white plaster. The roof must have been of thatch. This is essentially the modern Yucatecan peasant house, [here found] on an early level in an Old 'Empire' City. Only excavation on a large scale can show its plan and whether it was merely a noble's dwelling or an early temple. The definite establishment of the type is, however, important in itself, and, I believe, has not been done elsewhere.'

The West Group ball court has been found to differ markedly from the court of the supposedly early South Group, and in the West Group court there has been recovered a sculptured fragment, fallen from its wall, bearing one of the latest dates in the city — indicating that this court was one of the last building operations at Piedras Negras. A second sculpture from the ball court shows twin figures facing each other, each holding what looks like a ping-pong bat, and each with right knee raised and bearing something tied around the back of the knee, presumably a knee-pad or guard. This is a detail of equipment not hitherto noted in connection with Maya representations of their ball games.

Low mounds and platforms found around the main Groups have yielded many metates (corn grinding stones); consideration of these finds, together with the size and lack of precise grouping of the mounds, and the quantities of surface sherds encountered, have led the expedition to regard them as foundations for dwelling houses of wood and thatch. Burned wattle-clay on one indicates that they were neatly plastered. Since this material only survives when burned by an accidental fire, we may assume that the city proper, apart from the ceremonial buildings, consisted of houses of this type. If these are, indeed, house sites, they are the first that have been found and may be considered a discovery of no little importance.

*Gold and Copper  
Ornaments  
from Peru*

**M**R. CHARLES L. CHANDLER has recently presented the Museum with three dainty metal objects from prehistoric Peru. These were excavated from ancient graves at Lambayeque on the low arid Pacific coast in northern Peru. This was the seat of the Chimu nation, one of the highest of the Peruvian cultures, although also one of the earliest. There is no method of dating this civilization and these objects, but the culture is believed to have flourished in the early centuries