

Dr. W. B. Reid of Rome to Join South American Exploration Expedition Next Year



1.—La Guayra, Venezuelan seaport, where the expedition will land. 2.—Caracas, capital of Venezuela, where the expedition will assemble its equipment and supplies. 3.—Motor road, 400 miles thru the Sierra Nevada de Merida mountains, a northern extension of the Andes mountains. 4.—San Cristobal, which will be the headquarters of the expedition. 5.—Maracaibo basin, second largest producing oil center in the world. 6.—Land of the Chibcha, pre-Columbian semi-civilized Indians whose center of culture lay at Bogota. 7.—The Llanos, flat plains and vast grassy areas with forest belts along the streams and rivers. Dotted area shows the cordilleras of the Andes mountains extending into Colombia and Venezuela. The circle, representing a diameter of 350 miles, indicates the area it is hoped to explore and study.

On Saturday the Sentinel published an item from Syracuse telling of an expedition which Syracuse University will send to South America to explore sections of the Andes and contiguous territory. Among those who will accompany this expedition is Dr. William B. Reid of Rome, who will serve as physician and surgeon of the party. They will start early in January of 1931 and the region to be covered is mostly in Venezuela. Five

University professors will comprise the party besides Dr. Reid. The five University professors are Dr. Parke H. Struthers, zoologist; Dr. Ernest Reed, botanist; Dr. Earl T. Apfel, oil geologist; Major Sidman Poole, geographer, and Ellis Thompson, business manager.

The party will sail from New York and land first at La Guayra (sometimes spelled La Guayra), which is a Venezuelan port on the north coast of South America and on the Caribbean Sea. From La

Guayra a fine automobile road leads up by steep grades and sharp turns to Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, about 25 miles away. Caracas is a large city and modern as South American cities go. Caracas will be the place where the expedition assembles its personnel and equipment. Thence it will proceed by motor truck over a dirt road 400 miles into the interior to San Cristobal, a city of 16,000, in the state of Tachira. San Cristobal is in the Sierra Nevada

de Merida mountains. Financial backing is provided for the expedition by a Syracuse University alumnus who withholds his name. The expedition has been under consideration for three years. At first it was thought it would be to Africa, but investigation showed that this region of South America is a more virgin field for scientists than Africa, which has been more extensively explored. From San Cristobal the surround-

ing country will be explored on mule back and with other means of transportation. The accompanying map is published by courtesy of the Syracuse Post Standard.

All of the food except fruit will be taken from New York as it is cheaper to transport it to this part of Venezuela than to buy it there. The expedition will carry scientific equipment, cameras, radio receiving and transmitting sets, collapsible boats, etc. Practically all of its equipment has been contributed by various firms throughout the country.

Exploration down the Apure river, a tributary of the Orinoco river, probably will be made. It is planned to break the party up into at least two groups at headquarters in order to cover more territory and permit the men to work in regions especially favorable to their particular objective.

Once a month, if not before, the parties will return to San Cristobal for reorganization and a period of co-ordination of data. Contact with headquarters will be maintained at all times, if possible, by native runners.

Dr. Struthers, professor of zoology, will head the expedition which will penetrate territory in Colombia and Venezuela. In preparation for such a trip as this he has lived two years in tropical America and has led four expeditions to various islands of the Caribbean Sea, including Porto Rico, Mona Island, Haiti, Martinique and Trinidad, besides having conducted field investigations for the New York state conservation department each summer since 1927.

Only six members of the party have been chosen. A few others probably will be selected in the near future, including a staff artist, chauffeur, historian and cameraman. Native guides and interpreters will be engaged at La Guayra.

Experts of a company manufacturing gas gun paraphernalia are now trying to perfect a gas bomb gun which will be used to capture animals and reptiles for the Syracuse University zoo. A motor truck will be placed aboard the steamer at New York for transportation upon arrival at La Guayra. Small boats, including canoes and outboard motors will be part of the equipment.

Negotiations are being carried on with concerns manufacturing talking picture apparatus and it is hoped that arrangements can be made whereby a man can be sent to film the scenery and activities of the country and record the natural auditions of animals, birds, inhabitants and other objects of interest in the territory. This matter probably will be taken care of as soon as a dispute over 35 and 70 millimeter projection apparatus is settled.

carried on trade with natives of the lowlands and lived under a complicated religious system, with the priesthood as the ruling class.

The descendants of the early glory of this people now inhabit in less pretentious villages, the vantage points in the upland country. Major Poole hopes to show, through tracings of their religious beliefs, a connection between the Chibchas and the natives of Central America and Mexico.

The Chibcha, alone of the Colombian tribes, have left a history. Meager as its details are, they are nevertheless of great interest as they show the first steps in the creation of what might, but for the arrival of the Spaniards, have become an empire.

Something of this culture, whose high chieftains, exacted tributes of gold and textiles and around whose people myths of the El Dorado were written, the Syracuse expedition will seek to uncover for science. The Chibchas today are not a distinct group like their ancestors. They have intermarried with other tribes and the history of the original Chibchas is more or less of an archaeological enigma.

Throughout the mountainous regions there are believed to be many small mammals and birds of which little is known. Foxgloves as small as squirrels and others as large as small black bears are expected to be found. Rabbits the size of a large dog have been reported. There is also the llama, which in pre-historic times is believed to have wandered over the American continents. Several breeds of new world tigers also are said to be roaming in the country.

It is planned to take special care to discover the haunts of the descendant of an ancient reptile, which is thought to have originated in this general region and is related to the Iguana, seen farther to the North.

The territory within a 100-mile radius of San Cristobal is a land of orchids. For years florists have been prohibited from importing

these flowers into the United States because of a so-called fungus disease. It is claimed that certain New York florists, who grow their own orchids, are responsible for the ban and that no disease actually exists. Dr. Reid, a world authority on fungi, will investigate this subject thoroughly.

Major Poole will gather measurements, materials and data for the construction of miniature Indian habitations, ranch houses and lowland dwellings built upon wooden columns. Specimens of all unusual animals and reptiles, both living and preserved, and articles of archaeological value will be collected and brought back.

Each of the men in the expedition will sign papers releasing the University from liability in case of death from contagious diseases or in case of injury for the duration of the trip.

Lee

Lee, April 14.—The Deacon's Honeymoon, a three-act comedy, will be presented by the Ladies' Aid Society of New London at the Lee M. E. Church on Thursday evening, April 17. The play will be given under the auspices of the Willing Workers class of this church.



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