

## I. Editorial

There have been a number of questions concerning the e-mail addresses for the editorial offices of the BHA. Here are the addresses once again: [documents@brick.net](mailto:documents@brick.net) (short transmissions); [docres@brick.net](mailto:docres@brick.net) (longer contributions).

Douglas R. Givens, Editor

## II. Discourse on the History of Archaeology

### *The Allison V. Armour/William Henry Holmes 1895 Expedition to Mexico*

by

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The foundation of the Field Museum's reputation as a place where serious science is practiced was laid by Allison V. Armour and William Henry Holmes in 1895, a little more than a year after the Museum was established. Looking back after a career of almost 60 years as an anthropologist, and having twice been honored as the outstanding practitioner in the field, Holmes described the trip to Mexico (the only expedition he led during his brief tenure as the Museum's first Curator of Anthropology) as "one of the most gratifying and important events of my life." It was also one of the most important events in the history of anthropology at the Museum.

The expedition was the brainchild of Allison V. Armour, who conceived the idea of an expedition that would carry out research for several departments of the Museum — anthropology, botany, geology and zoology. Armour (no relation to Philip D. Armour, the founder of the meatpacking empire) was a wealthy socialite, yachtsman and manabout-town with an interest in the natural sciences. In the event, Holmes and Charles Millspaugh, Curator of Botany, were the two Field Museum scientists who made the trip with Armour (Millspaugh was forced to abandon the expedition in its early stages because of an injury suffered in an accident).

Headquarters for the expedition was Armour's auxiliary steam sailing yacht, the *Ituna*, which departed from New York in mid-December 1894. Holmes joined the party in Jacksonville, Florida, and by year-end the yacht was anchored off Progreso on the Yucatan peninsula. During the next two-and-half months, Holmes and Armour conducted an extraordinary series of explorations, visiting the remains of ancient Mesoamerican civilizations that are legendary in the field of anthropology.

The party spent the first two weeks exploring the islands — Mujeres, Cancun and Cozumel -to the east of the Yucatan peninsula. There followed a month-long visit to the interior during which the party, guided and assisted by E. H. Thompson, explored Uxmal, Izamal and Chichen-Itza, using the city of Merida as a base of operations. The highlight of this phase of the trip was the five-day