
IN MEMORIAM

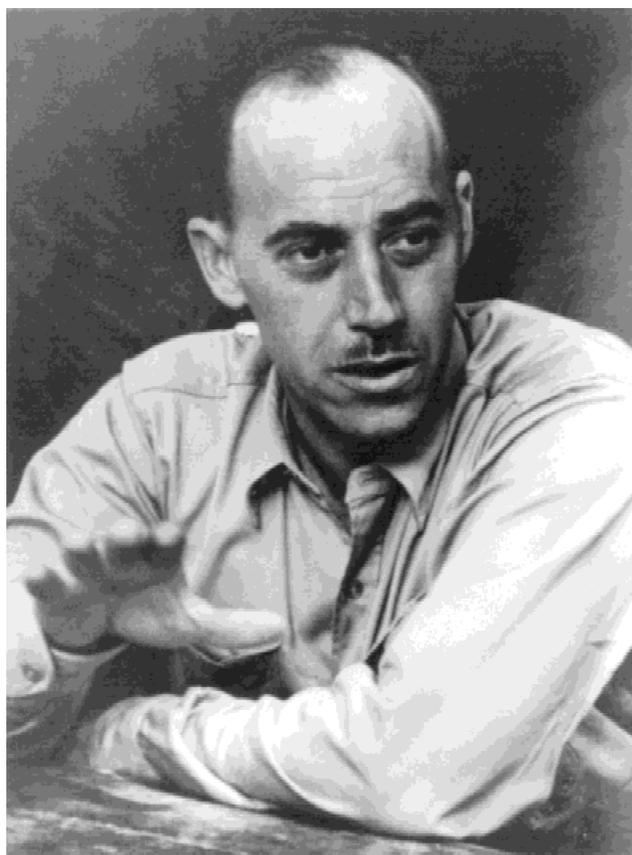
EDWIN M. SHOOK

1911–2000

Michael Love

Department of Anthropology, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8244, USA

A legendary figure in Maya archaeology, Edwin M. Shook, passed away at his home in Antigua, Guatemala, on March 9, 2000. Ed was one of the most prodigiously active figures in Mesoamerican archaeology during the twentieth century and may well have worked at more archaeological sites than any other Mesoamerican scholar.



Edwin M. Shook.

His career spanned more than 60 years and included associations with luminaries such as Alfred V. Kidder, Sylvanus Morley, Tatiana Proskouriakoff, Ledyard Smith, and Gustavo Stromsvik, to name just a few. In addition to his many outstanding contributions as a scholar, Ed will be remembered for his generosity and friendship. He was a friend and mentor to many generations of Mesoamerican field workers in archaeology, ethnography, and the natural sciences. No one fortunate enough to have spent an evening in his company will forget his enthralling stories of adventure, exploration, and discovery.

Ed was born on November 22, 1911, in Newton, North Carolina. He spent most of his formative years in Virginia and Philadelphia. After a construction-site accident ended his dreams of becoming a professional baseball player, Ed planned a career in engineering. He indeed embarked on college studies in that field, first in New York and then in Washington, D.C. On a fateful evening in 1932, however, Rogers Johnson of the Carnegie Institute of Washington (CIW) mistakenly entered the class on the stresses of structural steel, seeking a draftsman. Ed turned serendipity to advantage and the next day had a job drafting in the legendary Division of Historical Research of the CIW. Ed began drafting plans for Oliver Ricketson's Uaxactun project and subsequently drew maps for Sylvanus Morley's *Inscriptions of the Peten* (Morley 1938). Ed's responsibilities soon expanded, and he became a field archaeologist, making his first trip to Central America in 1934 to work at Uaxactun with Ledyard Smith. Ed continued with the CIW until the Division of Historical Research was disbanded formally in 1958. During those years, Ed worked at scores of sites in the Yucatan, Guatemala, and lower Central America.

The breadth of Ed's fieldwork in the Maya region is unlikely ever to be matched. From Yucatan to the southern coast of Guatemala, Ed worked in an unparalleled number of Preclassic to Postclassic sites. Shook was a pioneer in research on the Guatemalan highlands and the Pacific Coast, and his work there remains vital today. Ed's labors at Kaminaljuyu were essential in documenting that major Maya city and preserving its legacy before it was swamped by the expansion of Guatemala City. Two major volumes on Kaminaljuyu came out of this work: *Excavations at Kaminaljuyu* (Kidder et al. 1946) and *Mound E-III-3, Kaminaljuyu*,

Guatemala (Shook and Kidder 1952). Many smaller reports on Kaminaljuyu, the Guatemalan highlands, and the Pacific Coast appeared in the *CIW Year Book* series (Shook 1947, 1948, 1949a, 1950). Ed's trailblazing survey of the Pacific Coast laid the groundwork for all work that has followed (Shook 1965). The early studies that Ed conducted at Pacific coast sites such as Monte Alto, Sin Cabezas, and Finca Arizona were vital in establishing temporal and cultural relationships within the coast and with other regions of Mesoamerica (Shook 1945, 1949b, 1965; Shook and Hatch 1978).

In 1955, following the final CIW field project at Mayapan, Shook accepted a position with the University of Pennsylvania as director of the Tikal Project. For nine years Ed led what was, to that time, the largest archaeological project in the New World. The Tikal project was a landmark in Mesoamerica studies and in many respects began the modern era of Maya field studies. In addition to the fantastic discoveries made at Tikal, Ed helped to train a generation of Maya archaeologists.

Following Tikal, Ed went on to work in Costa Rica before eventually returning to Guatemala in 1968 to direct the Monte Alto Project on the Pacific Coast. In the 1970s and 1980s, Ed continued his work on the Pacific Coast and Guatemalan highlands, producing important works on Formative-period sites such as La Blanca and Salinas la Blanca on the coast and Semetabaj in the highlands (Shook and Hatch 1979; Shook et al. 1979). Ed was

still writing in 1999 when he was stricken with pneumonia. Among his final publications was an article on Kaminaljuyu and the Guatemalan highlands, written with Marion Popenoe de Hatch, in the *Historia General de Guatemala* (Shook and Hatch 1999).

In addition to his scholarly activities, Ed was justifiably proud of the contributions he made to his adopted country, Guatemala. He was instrumental in the establishment of Guatemala's first national park, at Tikal. Ed was also a principal in the founding of the American School in Guatemala. In acknowledgment of his many accomplishments and contributions, he was awarded the Order of the Quetzal by the Guatemalan government in 1963. In 1964, he was named Professor Emeritissium by the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, and in 1989 he was made Doctor Honoris Causa by the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

Ed's wife of 54 years, Virginia Barr Shook, died in 1990. He is survived by three sons: Edwin M. Shook, Jr., of Worcester, Massachusetts; Stephen H. Shook of Antigua, Guatemala; and John A. Shook of Chocowinity, North Carolina, along with six grandchildren.

Before his death, Ed Shook requested that anyone wishing to make a memorial donation do so to the Virginia B. Shook Library of the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, c/o the U.S. Foundation of the Valley of Guatemala, Kirby and Hornbuckle, CPA, PC, 214 College Avenue, Elmira, NY 14901, USA.

REFERENCES

- Kidder, Alfred V., Jesse D. Jennings, and Edwin M. Shook
1946 *Excavations at Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 561. Washington, DC.
- Morley, Sylvanus G.
1938 *The Inscriptions of the Peten*. Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication 437. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
- Shook, Edwin M.
1945 *Archaeological discovery at Finca Arizona, Guatemala*. Notes on Middle American Archaeology and Ethnology, No. 57. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
1947 Guatemala Highlands. In *Year Book 46*, pp. 179–184. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
1948 Guatemala Highlands. In *Year Book 47*, pp. 214–218. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
1949a Guatemala Highlands. In *Year Book 48*, pp. 219–224. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
1949b Historia Arqueológica de Puerto de San Jose, Guatemala. *Antropología y Historia, Guatemala* 1(2):3–22.
1950 Guatemala. In *Year Book 49*, pp. 197–198. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
1951 Guatemala. In *Year Book 50*, pp. 240–241. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.
- 1965 Archaeological Survey of the Pacific Coast of Guatemala. In *Archaeology of Southern Mesoamerica*, edited by Gordon R. Willey, pp. 180–194. Handbook of Middle American Indians, vol. 2, no 1. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Shook, Edwin M., and Alfred V. Kidder
1952 *Mound E-III-3, Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala*. Publication No. 596, Carnegie Institution of Washington. Washington, DC.
- Shook, Edwin M., and Marion Popenoe de Hatch
1978 The Ruins of El Balsamo. *Journal of New World Archaeology* 3(1):1–38.
1979 The Early Preclassic Sequence in the Ocos-Salinas La Blanca Area, South Coast of Guatemala. In *Studies in Ancient Mesoamerica*, vol. IV, edited by John A. Graham, pp. 143–195. Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility, No. 41. University of California, Berkeley.
- 1999 Las Tierras Altas Centrales: Períodos Preclásico y Clásico. *Historia General de Guatemala*, vol. 1, edited by Marion Popenoe de Hatch and Jorge Luján, pp. 289–318. Fondo Para la Cultura y el Desarrollo, Guatemala.
- Shook, Edwin M., Marion Popenoe de Hatch, and Jamie K. Donaldson
1979 *The Ruins of Semetabaj*. Archaeological Research Facility Contribution No. 41. Department of Sololá, Guatemala, and University of California, Berkeley.