



The Man Who Found The Maya: John Lloyd Stephens

Steven Frimmer

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"Starting as a typical tourist, John Lloyd Stephens developed into an adventurous traveler and popular author, hailed as our greatest travel writer. Then he blossomed into an intrepid explorer who found over forty sites of the virtually forgotten Maya, pioneering archaeology in the Americas and rescuing from obscurity a lost civilization. His incredible travels, first in Europe, the Near East and the Holy Land, and then in the jungles of Central America and Mexico, mark him as a kind of nineteenth-century Indiana Jones. How he transformed from the wandering tourist who scrawled his name on ancient monuments to the dedicated discoverer whose theories about the Maya were often years ahead of the scholars is as fascinating as the exploits he chronicled in his books.

Based largely on Stephens' own writings, this biography presents the man in the widely different settings that marked his colorful career – the society of his beloved nineteenth-century New York, the forbidding desert of Arabia, plague-ridden Constantinople, and the uncharted mountains and steaming jungles where the hidden Maya temples and cities lay under centuries of almost impenetrable vegetation. Readers will see through Stephens' eyes the hieroglyphic covered temples of ancient Luxor, the hidden city of Petra, carved out of living rock, and the moment he comes upon the walls of Copan, one of the great moments in archaeology. From his childhood in a booming young New York City, to his years as a lawyer dabbling in politics, to his travels and his four successful books about those travels, to his subsequent career as a businessman, Stephens was a fascinating figure and an interesting one to read about.

STEVEN FRIMMER is a retired editor, with more than thirty years experience in book publishing, and is the author of three previously published books on archaeology."

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