

THE NIPPUR EXPEDITION

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Between seasons at Nippur very little moves but the sand, quietly covering again what we have noisily exposed. The Babylonian Expedition of 1889–90 had topographically surveyed the two central mounds of the site in a day when it still lay relatively free of dunes and excavation, but only fragments of their mapping survive. Nippur today represents one of the larger clusters of ancient mounds in Mesopotamia, and a base map becomes essential not only to our field work, but also to the presentation of that work and for the sake of the record. With nine seasons under our belt we felt it high time we had a map of our own. In the fall of 1965 the writer had the opportunity to return to the scene with this small project in his pocket and did his best to track up the sand in furtherance of our continuing program at the site. An Armenian, an Assyrian, an Englishman and several Arabs assisted.

We found Nippur to be something over three miles in circumference with a suburbia of half a dozen smaller mounds beyond. At the same time, more finishing touches were added to the new expedition house. It now boasts tiled floors, light bulbs, and some paint; it is nearly ready for the coming season of 1966-67, which should be a big one.

Ziggurat from the west mound of Nippur

