

From the U-T-San Diego reporting staff

SCIENCE: GARY ROBBINS

Expedition to follow Roosevelt's Amazon route

UC San Diego materials engineer Marc Meyers plans to leave Monday for Brazil, where he will lead an expedition aimed at retracing the path that Theodore Roosevelt took during his famous River of Doubt journey in 1913-14.

Meyers will be accompanied by Jeffrey Lehmann of Del Mar, an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker whose work has been featured by National Geographic and PBS.

Meyers, Lehmann and two other men will use kayaks and canoes to make their way along the Roosevelt River, a largely uncharted, 400-mile long Amazonian waterway that passes through some of the most remote territory in the world.

The waterway, formerly known as the River of Doubt, features waterfalls and rapids and is home to piranhas, an omnivorous freshwater fish.

The river is part of a roughly 1,500-mile South American journey that Roosevelt made a century ago with renowned Brazilian explorer Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon. Roos-

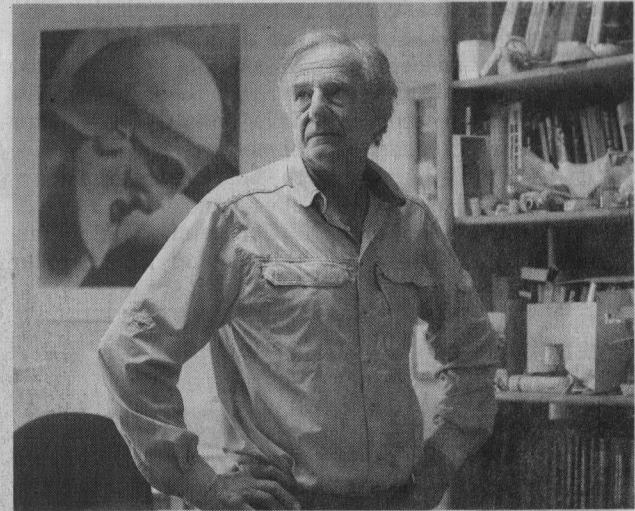
evelt nearly died during the expedition, which was devoted to science, mapping and hunting. His party was plagued by heavy rains that made travel very difficult.

Meyers, 68, said he's beginning his expedition now to avoid the same type of seasonal rains that hampered Roosevelt. He plans to cover the entire route that Roosevelt followed.

Meyers intends to enter the Roosevelt River near Baliza, Brazil, and proceed north to where the waterway merges with the Aripuana River. The trek is expected to take about three weeks.

"This will be a homage to the people who were on the Roosevelt-Rondon expedition," said Meyers, who is Brazilian.

Lehmann said: "I have a lot of experience in extreme settings in the wilderness, and I've been to the Amazon. But I'm anxious about this trip. I have zero experience with this kind of river. We're doing a lot of planning so that this comes to a happy conclusion."



Dr. Marc Meyers of UC San Diego expects his 400-mile voyage to retrace Teddy Roosevelt's route will take three weeks. He leaves Monday. U-T FILE PHOTO