

Edgeworth David and the 1906 IGC, Mexico City

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T.W. Edgeworth David (1858-1934), prominent Australian geologist, made the long journey from Australia, via India, Europe and USA to Mexico City to join some 400 other geologists at the 1906 IGC. His presentation on geological climates, including evidence of glaciation during the Precambrian and Permian periods in Australia, caused considerable interest. David's personality, and ability with languages, made him a favourite with the Congress organisers, and he was spokesman for the visitors at numerous functions.

David recorded his impressions of the congress and conditions in Mexico at a critical time during the Presidency of Porfirio Diaz in a series of articles in the Australian press, including information about some hilarious escapades on congress excursions.

His reports, diaries and photos give a good account of this congress, the first to be held outside Europe or North America. They indicate that, in some ways, the congresses have not varied, but, in others, there have been many changes since 1906.

A feature of the congress was discussion of the San Francisco Earthquake which occurred only several months before the congress. David visited San Francisco when returning to Australia, and spent some time with Californian geologists examining the damage from and causes of the earthquake.