

Highway Trip to Peru

When I made the Jeep trip to Peru there were no highway maps available. This highway information was given to me by a person who had recently been over the same route from the other direction. This form of highway information regarding the difficulties of making highway trips during these early years. I Think I Made this Trip in 1947 or 1948. This Jeep was the second one I bought due to having sold the other Jeep in Nicaragua. I did not attempt to take a house trailer on this trip.

As to roads: Bogota to Girardot to Ibagué; all right. ... Rule 1. Have the fuel pump cleaned out at least once a month. Rule 2. Tires at 28 pounds pressure. Rule 3. Get gas when you can, it may be some time before you'll see another place. Rule 4. Carry water and get water at every gas station for the car. Also have your radiator flushed out occasionally, a lot of water is not too clean.

Ibagué to Armenia to Cali. Very pleasant and the pass near Armenia (about 12,000 feet) isn't too bad to negotiate.

Cali to Popayan. Very nice, quite easy drive.

Popayan to Pasto. There was a very short stretch one way, quite near Pasto. You probably won't have to wait long for your turn. Pasto, we had the front and rear springs reinforced.

Incidentally, when you want good information about the roads, go to the bus companies, they know as much as anyone, which isn't saying too much.

Pasto to Ipiales. Four hours, towards the end very straight. Roads are always kept up for smugglers.

Ipiales to Tulcan to Otavalo (Ibarra just before Otavalo, if you prefer to stay there.) This trip isn't bad. The Ecuadorian roads are cobblestoned- a little hard on the tires. Watch out for the holes, they may be deep.

Otavalo to Quito. Quite easy. Near Quito there is a steep grade, carry water for the car.

Quito to Ambato. Easy five hour drive.

Ambato to Riobamba. Only two or three hours, good road.

Riobamba to Babahoyo. You'll have fun here - we did. From Riobamba to Guaranda you have to go up about to 12,500 or 13,000 feet. (Riobamba, 9,500) Junior almost didn't make it. I'd suggest having the spark advanced, we didn't do that, but should have. After Guaranda the road goes down and down, round and round, and is a pleasant mixture of mud and cobblestones. However, it may not have rained when you do it. We did part in the rain. Great fun. Near Balzapamba we found a bridge that wasn't present, but since we're such exalted creatures as periodistas, they built the bridge for us. At Babahoyo, a mud hole, we took a boat to Guayaquil. Cost 300 sucres for Junior, 8 apiece for Kamy and me. There is a road which is passable in the dry season, from Babahoyo to Vinces to Duale, to Guayaquil, which they say isn't too bad, but ask in Quito. Boats leave every night from Babahoyo for Guayaquil at eight o'clock so you don't have to stay in Babahoyo, fortunately.

From boat you arrive at Guayaquil about 2.30 a.m., but you can find a hotel at that hour. From Guayaquil to Santa Rosas, by boat, cost 350 to 400 sucres, but maybe you can get them down. From Santa Rosas by car to Tumbes and head south for Lima. When we arrived in Guayaquil we discovered that the road south of Santa Rosas to Tumbes was impassable because of the rainy season, so went to Talara, Peru, by boat, but you will be doing it in the dry season and an American told me today that it is a very pleasant trip at that time.

We enquired about the possibilities of driving from Riobamba to Cuenca to Loja thence to Santa Rosas, thus missing the boat trips altogether, but discovered there is no road from Quito or Riobamba to Cuenca, you have to take a train part of the way. As far as I can see, you can't avoid the water, but you might look up in some of the old issues of Inter-American to see if and how that girl did it. I can't see that it's possible.

In Tumbes, there is, I hear, a State Tourist Hotel, and if it is like the others, it will be marvellous. The road is paved all the way to Lima from Chiclayo on, about 400 to 500 miles, and not bad at all before that. All desert, though, carry water for car, don't go too fast, as car will heat up.

As to hotels, etc. At Girardot, there are some good cafés, Café Chamco is a possibility, to have lunch in, just ask, they're right on the road that goes to Ibagué.

Ibagué. Hotel Lusitania, has a place in back for the car. When we were there they had no electricity, but possible that will be rectified.

Armenia; Hotel Atlantico for lunch, very nice.

Cali. Pension Parisiense. The only place in town where there was a patio de automoviles. Pension run by a young German, very nice, good food, try not to get a room in back.

Popayan. Hotel Victoria. No place for the car, but there is a garage about three blocks away. The hotel is in a beautiful old colonial house, run by some very nice Germans, excellent food, Popayan is charming.

Pasto, Hotel Pacifico. Quite pleasant, run by Germans. Also an excellent garage here run by Mr. Sichel (German) If your car needs anything, he'll fix it and not charge much.

Ipiales. Gran Hotel. O.K. A garage nearby for the car. They'll show you where.

Tulcan, Ecuador. Hotel Granada. Lunch, fair, but it is the only decent place in town.

Ibarra. Hotel Imperial, run by a North American, Mr. Mesmer. Very pleasant. He'll find a place for your car.

Otovalo. Hotel Roma. Not too hot, but again the only place in town, and you ought not to miss the Saturday fair. No place for the car at hotel, but they can find you a garage or sorts. Incidentally, really quite necessary to have your car stabled at night. ~~###~~ People down here have taking ways, and there are a lot of things that are ~~had~~ to replace. If you can't find a garage, ask about night watchman, and give him a little something for keeping an eye on your car.

Quito. We stayed at the pensión San Luis, 18 of Set. and Avenida Campos Eliseos, which is good, but we don't like the manager. Anyhow, they may not have rooms. However, other possibilities. Le Gourment, the best restaurant in town, also a pensión on Avenida Campos Eliseos, too. Another, Hotel Windsor, near Le Gourmet. ~~###~~ Pensión Gremlin, run by a Mrs. Campbell, north American. Lots of Americans stay there, if you want that kind of thing. Pensión Roosevelt, of course, very nice. Also, Hotels "etropolitano and Majestic, ~~#####~~ Incidentally, don't fail to have sevice at the "ajestic, on Fridays Saturday or Sunday, marvellous! Garages, ask and you'll find one. There is a Ford Service station in Quito, good if your car needs anything.

Latacunga. Lunch at ~~station~~ restaurant. Fair.

Ambato. Villa Belgica. The manager is tricky, but hotel is all right. Also Villa Hilda, supposed to be the best but usually crowded. There is a fair Monday, here.

Riobamba. Hotel Metropolitano, right next to railroad station, but it is the only decent place in town. Place in back for car. There is a good mechanic down the street, if your car needs attention. Fair on Saturday.

Guayaquil. Grand Hotel, second best hotel in town, much less expensive than the Metropolitano there, which is expensive, even on American standards. There are garages for car, just ask at hotel.

Tumbes, ~~#####~~. As I said, there is a State Tourist Hotel. (Peru)

Talara. Hotel Royal, if you want to go out of your way, it's O.K.

Piura. State Tourist hotel. We had just lunch there, but undoubtedly the rooms are good, too.

Chiclayo. Hotel Royal, food is good, accommodations not so hot. There is also a Hotel Europa which may be better.

Trujillo. State Tourist Hotel. Place for car. Wonderful hotel.

Lima. Hotel Colmena, Avenida Nicolas de Pierola, Izquierda. No restaurant, but hotel is good, and there is a place behind for the car. Marvellous restaurants in Lima, Chez Victor, the Hotel Maury, Trocader, Cabana Club, and Crem-Ricas, a Peruvian version of Howard Johnson, founded by two young North Americans.

Places suggested are not expensive and are about the best.

(Extract of letter from Joan Rothwell)



Passing the statue of San Martín on the way out of Caracas, Venezuela.



Another expedition I met near Caracas, Venezuela. They weren't driving through but mainly taking pictures.



A section of the highway in Venezuela.



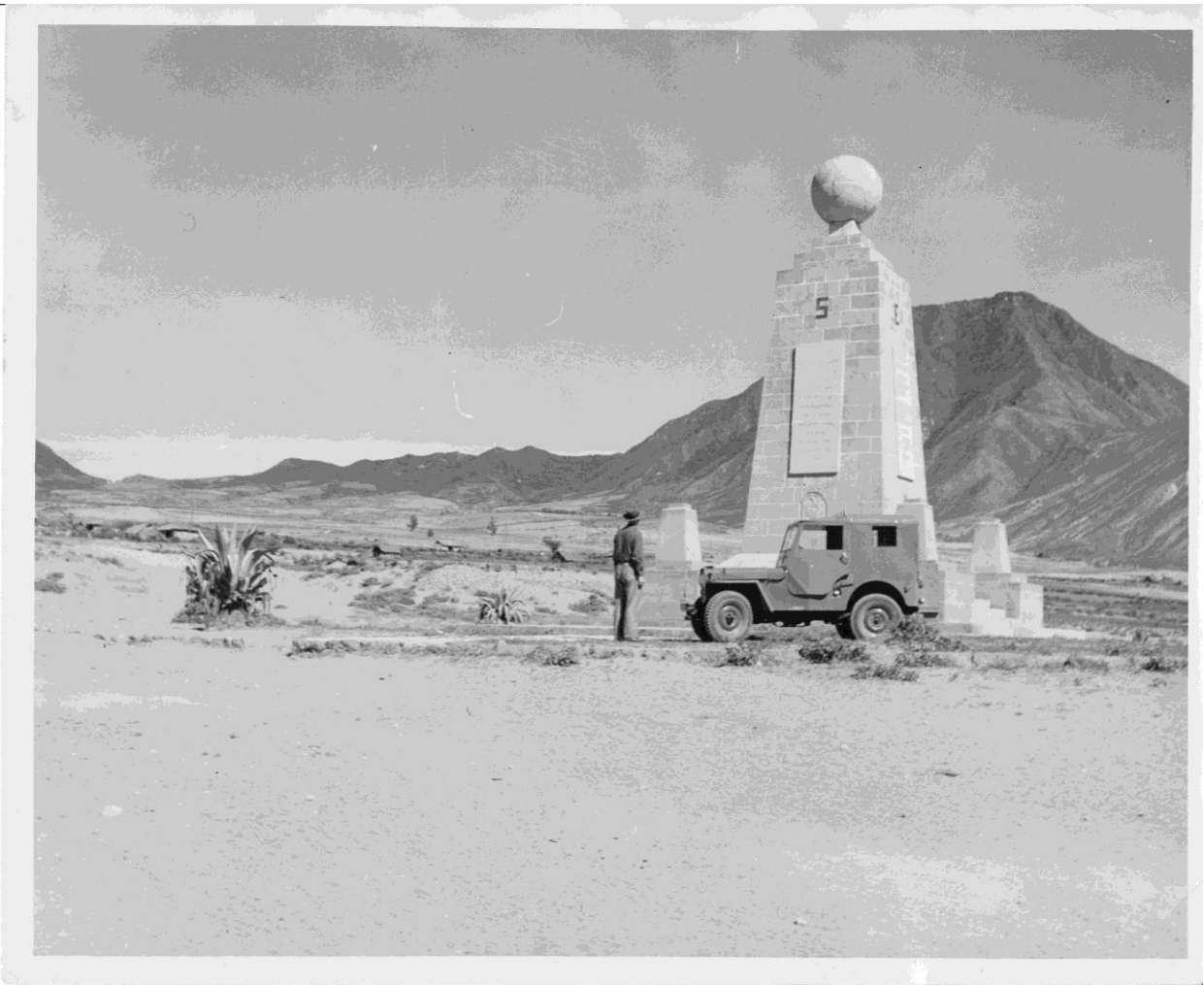
The Tequendama Falls (440 feet) along the Pan American Highway just a few miles south of Bogota, Columbia. During the rainy season the falls are said to be spectacular.



The monument (bronze condor) marking the place where Bolivar crossed the Andes with his troops in the successful war of independence with Spain. High on the Pan American Highway so far at 13,500'.



Monument to Bolivar (along the highway) marking the point wherer he crossed the Andes at 12,500' with his troops.



Taken at the monument standing at the Equator, along the highway near Quito.



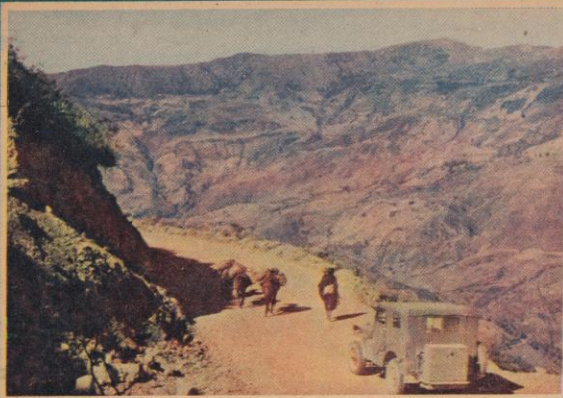
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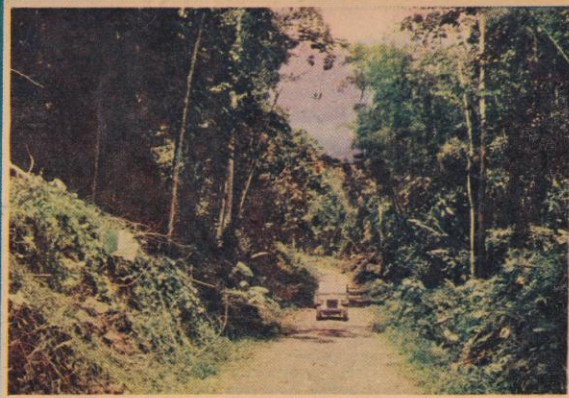
Insignias for Jeep used for identification on trip to Peru.



Bought this second trailer to make trip from Caracas down Pan American highway but made trip only by jeep in 1947.



Wherever Baggerman went, whether it was sea level or along a mountain highway, such as this 9000-foot high road in Columbia, he found burros. Some mountains here are nearly 19,000 feet high.



This view is characteristic of many sections he saw along the Pan American highway in Venezuela, Columbia and Ecuador. Tall slender trees are bamboo. Road is impassable during rainy seasons.

Jeeping Gringo

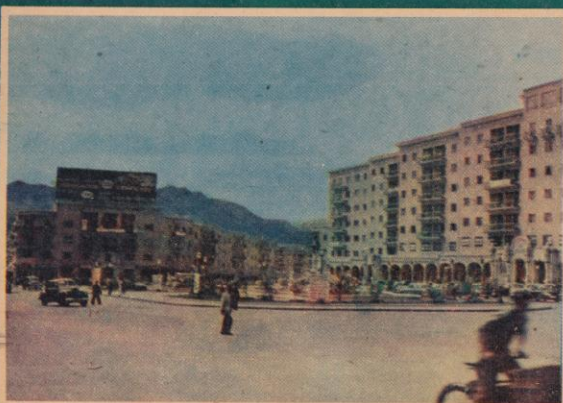
ADVENTUROUS Americans have picked up many nicknames for their exploits in various parts of the world, but it took a St. Louisan to get one of the most unusual sobriquets in a decade. In the countries below the Rio Grande they call William F. Baggerman, 731 Radcliffe, "the jeeping gringo."

To date the former Army glider pilot has traveled 7500 miles along the Pan American highway. His first trip (shown in the June 30, 1946 Gravure Pictorial) was from Laredo, Texas, to Managua, Nicaragua, where the road dwindled into a foot path after he had driven 3000 miles. This year he tacked 4500 miles on to his record with a trip from Caracas, Venezuela, to Lima, Peru—again in a jeep.

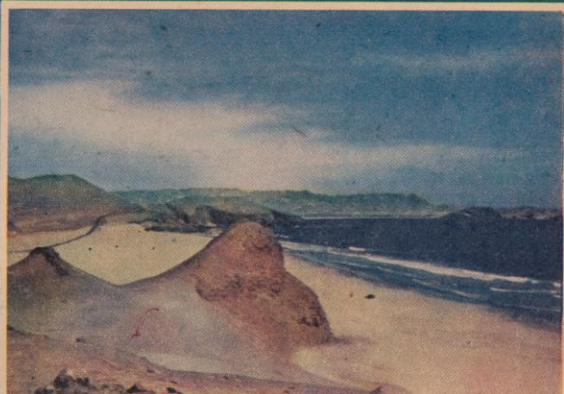
His trip actually started at La Guaira, port of Caracas, where he picked up the jeep he shipped from New Orleans. In some of the isolated sections along the highway Baggerman was able to reach out from either side of the jeep and touch the edges of the jungle. Often wild puma and jaguars darted from the dark woods onto the road. In some places the road was impassable due to heavy rains. In Ecuador he ran into a landslide. He shoveled his way through the worst section, then let the four-wheel drive jeep do the rest.



Baggerman left the main highway to visit the Colorado (red) Indians, a fast-diminishing tribe. They refused money, cigarettes, posed only after he gave them a ride in the jeep. The "headdress," which resembles a bowl, is hair made red and stiff with achiote juice.



Venezuela has its housing shortages, too. Baggerman photographed this public housing project in Caracas. Only 25 miles from coast, the city, in a valley 3000 feet above sea level, has an ideal climate.



Stretching hundreds of miles, the highway in northern Peru lies between the Pacific and a vast desert. Here seasonal hot winds and ocean breezes cause fogs and heavy clouds to hide the sun for weeks.

Jeeping Gringo

BAGGERMAN'S trip was mostly down the very back of the Andes, one 1100-mile stretch being almost entirely mountainous. Once his jeep's altimeter showed 14,000 feet and a few miles later he was down to 3000 feet.

He had no trouble crossing the various borders, nor did he have any serious difficulties with his car, still very much a novelty among the natives. Two of them made several of the photos on this page while Baggerman shot the color pictures on the preceding page.

His greatest trouble was negotiating the rough sections of the highway. Three times he found the road so bad that even the rugged jeep was unable to go through the mire, so he detoured by way of river boats. Gasoline was comparatively easy to obtain. Cost ranged from 9 to 20 cents per gallon.

Illness in his family ended the six-week trip at Lima. He left South America the way he entered—by airplane. A customs broker there has his jeep advertised for sale.



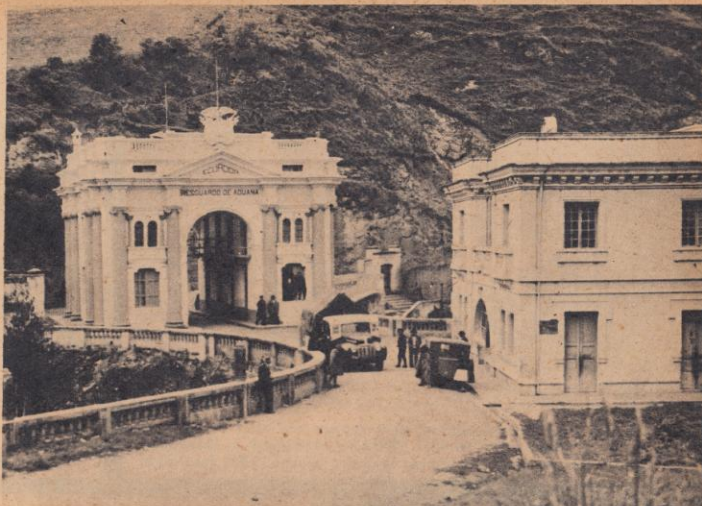
Baggerman stopped at this hotel on one of his side trips and learned that living is cheap here for the adaptable traveler. Lodging and three meals cost \$1.



Standing at the equatorial monument just off the international highway in Ecuador, Baggerman found it cool enough for a jacket. The altitude is 8000 feet.



In Colombia highway travelers slow down passing the Mauseleo del Motorista. Baggerman passed hundreds of crosses on the highway, marks of fatal accidents.



When Baggerman arrived at the Colombia-Ecuador border on a Saturday afternoon he found the customs office closed until Monday. He finally located an official who obligingly rounded up necessary executives to allow an immediate inspection.



Even in the dry season the St. Louisan stopped frequently to inquire about road conditions ahead. These Indians, wearing serapes which serve as a coat or blanket were friendly. They explained altitude (near 13,000-foot peaks) kills vegetation here.



Running into an impassable section of the road Baggerman made a detour on this river boat near Peruvian border. The jeep hung out on both sides of the boat and was gotten aboard by letting air out of tires and mashing metal top for clearance.