

ARCHAEOLOGY

# Another Great Wall

## Ancient Wall in Peru Discovered by Aviator-Explorers Rivals Similar Structures in China and Europe

By EMILY C. DAVIS

**T**HE GREAT WALL of China, winding like a mighty, protecting serpent along the old northern boundary of the Celestial Kingdom—

Hadrian's Wall, the Great Wall of Britain, built and fortified to shut the barbarians of the north out of southern Britain in Roman days—

And now, added to this small, select list of Great Walls in the world is an American entry—the Great Wall of Peru, which has been discovered by explorers flying over the Andes.

The American Wall was built with hard labor by an Indian people called the Chimú who had an important civilization long ago on the Pacific coast of Peru, until finally they were swallowed up in a terrific struggle by the powerful empire of the Incas.

That a Great Wall, many miles long, should be hidden or lost or forgotten, seems incredible. A Great Wall would seem to be as conspicuous as the proverbial white elephant. But the Great Walls of China and Britain have had a way of fading out of sight for many centuries and coming to light again in modern times. And the new-found Wall of Peru is just like them.

How very, very inconspicuous a Great Wall can be was proved by the Chinese Wall, which was unknown outside of Asia for almost two thousand years. And this is a barricade 1,500 miles long—half the width of the United States. As late as fifty years ago, articles were actually written arguing that the Chinese Wall was a myth.

In England, archaeologists are still discovering Hadrian's Wall, which runs clear across the island, from east to west, for 73 miles. The course of this old Roman Wall, up and down hills and valleys, is pretty thoroughly traced now, but only last year a brand new fort along the wall was unearthed, with much excitement in England. And something new may be dug up along the route of Hadrian's Wall now and again for some years to come.

As for the Great Wall of Peru, it has just gained the world's attention for the

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first time. The long wall was sighted from the air unexpectedly as the recent Shippee-Johnson Peruvian Expedition flew over the foothills of the Andes.

Never having heard of any barricade of such size in Peru, the surprised explorers, Robert Shippee and George M. Johnson and their party, studied their air photographs and puzzled over them and finally decided to make another flight, to trace the length of this mysterious barricade. This time the flying explorers started from a point near the Pacific coast where ruins of a village lie buried. There the Great Wall springs up.

### Runs From Sea To Mountains

The whole Pacific coast of Peru is a desert strip of sand about fifty miles wide, cut across by a number of rivers which make the land habitable. East of that desert, the Andes begin.

The Great Wall crosses this sandy coast and rises into the foothills. It was apparently built to follow the Santa River from sea to mountain. In many places the barricade wanders more than a mile from the river. Occasionally it comes close, even crossing the river's path. Neither hills nor gullies stopped the progress of the Wall.

Like the Chinese Wall and the Wall of Hadrian, the Great Wall of Peru was strengthened by a series of forts. The discoverers sighted fourteen of these forts. They stood on both sides of the Wall and at a short distance from it. Some of the forts are circular, some are rectangular. Most of them were cleverly set in the tops of small hills, where they could be quite invisible from the valley floor.

As the fliers followed the wall up into the Andes, at an elevation of 10,000 feet in the mountains they lost the trail. Weather conditions were against them. The light was failing. But they had succeeded in following the trail for more than forty miles. They had seen enough to convince them that this construction project of ancient America ranks with remarkable feats of the past.

Viewed from an airplane over the Andes, the Great Wall of Peru is a seam, a long, fine scar on the face of the

mountains. After the fliers had surveyed it from the air, they set out in an automobile and on foot to examine it at close range.

They found a tall, crumbling rampart of mud-cemented boulders. Where it crosses gullies it rises as high as 20 or even 30 feet. The average height appears to have been 12 to 15 feet. At the base it was about 12 to 15 feet thick. Toward the top of the thickness tapered.

Undoubtedly, this stone barrier has been stumbled over for years by explorers who could not see what it was. To think of anything so large being invisible is a strain on the imagination. But the Great Wall of Peru was just that invisible.

The reason is that Peru is criss-crossed with walls. They run here and there for short distances, enclosing forts, bounding fields. Many of the old barricades are broken lines not easily followed. Peruvian walls in general have been called "mysterious." So, groundling explorers who saw broken portions of the Great Wall would have thought little of it. Not until explorers took wings could its long sweep be detected.

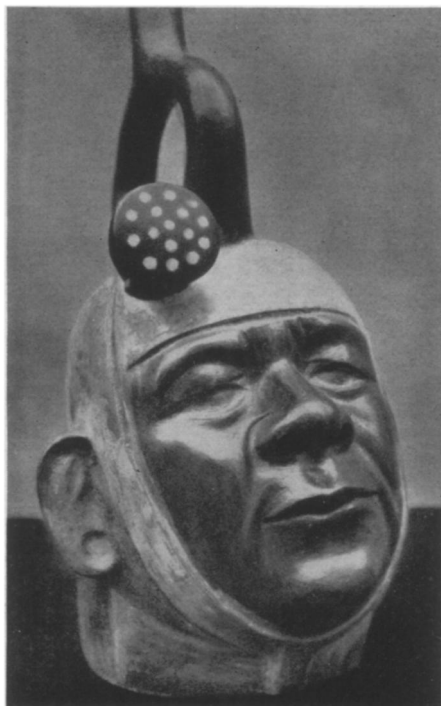
Now that the Great Wall has been revealed by aerial photography, there is real surprise that so big a monument was never mentioned in early historic writings about Peru. The Spanish conqueror Pizarro and his men, who were so curious about all the wonders of the Incan Empire in Peru, seem to have heard nothing about a Great Wall.

### Unknown To Spaniards

The Spaniards exclaimed over the long, smooth highways built by the Incas for their armies to march over. They marveled to see Incan temples built of stone and shining in gold and jeweled ornaments. They took the keenest interest in the intricate communist system of the Incan government. And chroniclers who accompanied Pizarro busily wrote down impressions about these things.

Was the Great Wall already a ruin, forgotten, when the Spaniards conquered the Incas in the sixteenth century? That might account for the silence of history on the subject.

A number of archaeologists have been asked their opinions on the Great Wall by the American Geographical Society, and there is virtual agreement on one point. That is that the builders of the



WALL BUILDER

*A likeness of one of the prehistoric Indians who built the Great Wall of America—a Chimu Indian, as portrayed on a carving on a Chimu vase.*

Great Wall of Peru were the Chimu Indians.

All the circumstantial evidence points to the Chimu. The Great Wall lies within their 400-mile strip of kingdom. They were living in the region when the Great Wall must have been built, for they occupied the coast from very early centuries of the Christian era. If further argument is needed, the Chimu were skillful at construction—they built steep pyramids of sun-dried brick, some taller than modern ten-story buildings. And the Chimu were fierce and aggressive fighters.

There is a famous Chimu vase painting which shows a whole row of hand to hand combats between Chimu warriors and some opponents. Such a scene gives a pretty good idea of what Indian fighting must have been like along the Great Wall of Peru.

In the series of duels painted on this vase, the best dressed contestant, the Chimu warrior, is winning every time. And that is no wonder. For the winners are protected about the head by pointed helmets of wood and cotton with chin straps and ear plates and a flap down the back of the neck. These warriors wear armor jackets, probably made of slats of wood laced together. And they are loaded down with shields, battle

axes, wicked-looking maces, and other accessories for close combat. War paint on faces and legs completes the fighting outfits.

Some of the enemy in this fight have helmets to wear. But most of them have only tasseled caps to save their heads from bludgeon blows, and those bobbing tassels are proving bad war psychology. A winning Chimu may simply grab an enemy by the tassel of his cap and drag the captive off, helpless. These enemy soldiers have little or no body protection. And while their shields and maces look like good equipment, still the armored opponents have the best of every contest. By use of dotted lines, the artist shows how blood spouted from the wounded.

The hard question for science to answer about the Great Wall of Peru is: How old is the wall? If archaeologists can dig along the foot of the wall and inside of its forts, they may find tools or pottery lunch dishes and drinking cups belonging to the workmen who built the Great Wall. Or they may dig up some of the war clubs and battle axes of the soldiers who defended and attacked it. Studying the types of such articles would greatly aid in discovering the age of the wall.

From what is known of the Chimu Indians, a Great Wall would have come in handy at almost any period of their busy career. When the Chimu were a young and rising tribe in north coast Peru, they were engaged in fighting civil wars among their own neighbors and as the stronger groups dominated, a kingdom came to be welded into shape, and the borders of the kingdom were pushed out to new limits along the Pacific coast.

#### Chimu Put Up Big Fight

Later, the Chimu had to defend themselves against Indians from the highland of Peru. And then, somewhere between 1000 A. D. and 1300 A. D., the Chimu had to put up the fight of their lives for their kingdom and its ruler, the Grand Chimu. For the conquering Incas, or "nobles," came marching across the mountains, determined to add Chimu-land to their great Indian empire.

Experts on Peruvian archaeology differ in their views as to which age of Chimu fighting brought the Great Wall into existence. Dr. R. L. Olson of the University of California suggests that the Great Wall may have been a defense structure built by the early Chimu, as they extended their territory to north and south.

Prof. Marshall Saville of the Museum

of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, theorizes that the wall was built by the Chimu to prevent neighboring Indian tribes from gaining access to the Santa River.

The Santa Valley was densely peopled, he points out. If nearby tribes succeeded in diverting the stream, the Chimu people of the valley would have been in a desperate plight.

One Spanish historian states that the Incas finally conquered the Chimu by cutting off the water supply. And another historian says that it was in the Santa Valley that the Chimu ruler finally surrendered to the Incas. Prof. Saville points out these two historic references, and suggests that possibly the Great Wall was built in the last stand of the Chimu against the victorious Incan siege.

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#### ARCHAEOLOGY

### Tomb Wall Built on Dead Man's Chest

A SECOND tomb of Monte Alban, eclipsed when it was discovered by the sensational find of treasure in another, is described as of great scientific importance in an official report being prepared by archaeologists of the Mexican National Museum.

A buried underground chamber lined with stone, entered through a passageway, first revealed remains of two pairs of leg bones. A transverse wall had cut the skeletons at the ribs. When it was removed, it disclosed a second room with the skulls on the other side of the wall, as if the partition had been built upon their chests.

The skulls rested on a pair of large pottery incense burners with long handles like dippers. Between them sat an idol-urn of a god thought to be Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, painted red with cinnabar, the Mexican funeral color. His headdress is of plumes, his tongue bifurcated like a serpent's and his upper jaw is like a tiger's. His ornaments are seashell symbols appropriate to Quetzalcoatl.

One door jamb of the tomb has unreadable Zapotecan glyphs, and a great quantity of pottery and other objects was contained in the tomb. A curious thing was a big pottery pipe two feet long and five inches in diameter. Similar tubes were found in other graves. In five out of the six intact tombs explored, plural burials had been made by the ancient people.

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