

Artwork from my journal.

In July of 1986 I was 29 years old. I was working as an instructor for Pacific Crest Outward Bound School leading 3 week course in the mountain of Oregon and California. In 1982 I had gone to Peru with my friend Kord Smith and climbed three of the big peaks including Huascarán, the highest mountain in Peru.

Christoph Schork and I taught skiing together in Park City in the winter. We spent a couple months climbing together in India and another month climbing in Europe in 1984. We spent the winter of 1986 planning a climbing trip to Greenland but for reason I can't remember it all fell through. We had both been to Peru before and knew our way around so we quickly adjusted our plans and headed south.

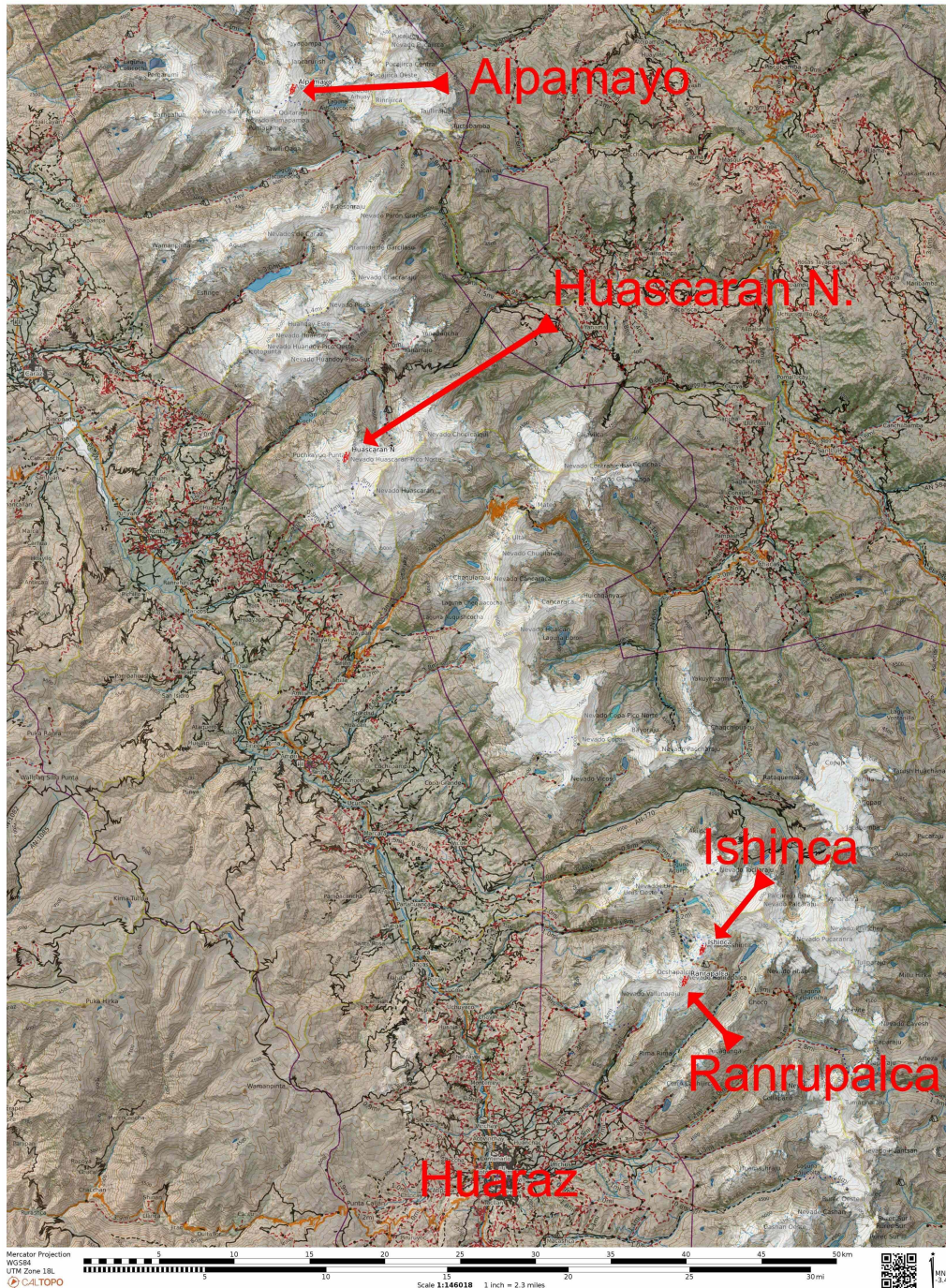
It is now 2024 and I am coping this from a paper copy of my journal. I have added a few sentences here and there to make things more understandable but mostly it's what I wrote in my journal on the trip.

In 1986 we used film and cameras to take pictures. Film was expensive and having it developed was even more expensive. We shot Kodachrome or Ektachrome film. It came in either 24 or 36 picture rolls. I'm guessing I took 5 rolls of 36 picture film. Each roll cost maybe \$4 to purchase and developing each roll was around \$8 so \$220 for 180 pictures. That was a lot of money back then. We didn't take 20 shots of the same thing. Also the cameras were big and heavy. You had to really want to take pictures.

Another interesting thing is that when I looked up the peaks today on Google the elevations are different than what I wrote down at the time. I'm guessing they have gotten more accurate at measuring the elevation of these big peaks and adjusted their summit elevations.

The Cordillera Blanca is the highest of the 20 glaciated cordilleras (mountain ranges) in the Peruvian Andes. Nevado (Mt) Huascarán at 22,205 ft/6,768 m is also the world's highest mountain in the tropical zone and the 4th highest in the Americas. Only Aconcagua at 22,825 ft and three other volcanoes along the Argentine-Chilean boarder are higher.

The Cordillera Blanca is located in the department of Ancash in north central Peru 200-350 km north of Lima. The Rio Santa Valley lies between the Cordilleras Blanca and Negra. The river runs from south to north with the city of Huaraz at the upper end of the valley at about 10,000 feet above sea level.

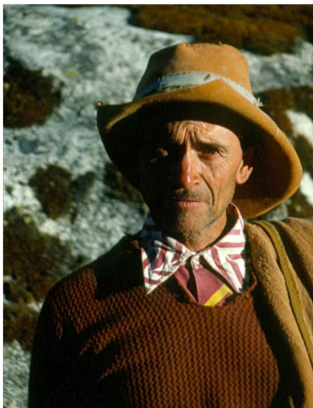


It's **Wednesday, July 16, 1986** and we are here in Huaraz, Peru to do some serious climbing in the Cordilleras Blanca. My friend Christoph Schork and I spent most of the winter planning a trip to Greenland that due to money issues, people and time never materialized. After giving up on Greenland we decided to do a quick trip to Peru and Ecuador. Both Christoph and I have been here before. We know the area and how to get around so we figure we can get a lot of climbing done during our short one month stay.

We have added a third member to our party, Kent Jamison, from Ogden, Utah. I never met him before this trip but Christoph has climbed with him a time or two before this. He hasn't done much big mountain climbing and has no third world experience. Just from the little bit I have seen I think he is going to have some trouble being in a place like this. He doesn't seem very comfortable with all the unknowns here in a place like this; beggars, taxi hustlers, hard, lumpy beds and possible dangerous food. It seems what makes a place third world. Because of him I can see I'm really pretty comfortable with it.

It has been five years since I was in Peru the last time. I remember a lot more than I thought I would; the town, the people, the shops. Edwards Inn, the hotel Kord and I stay in before, has changed some but not that much. I still remembered Edwards family. The price is about \$1.80 per person per night, a little expensive but we're feeling like we are worth it. The place is pretty clean but like I said, the beds are stuffed with horse hair so they are hard and lumpy.

Anyway, here we are. It's raining here in Huaraz this evening but not hard. Because of the clouds we can't see the mountains. It's somewhat sobering to think we have traveled so far and spent so much money (\$961.00 round trip from LA) and we could be stopped dead here in Huaraz by water vapor in the air. The little glimpse of the mountains we did see showed lots of new snow even at lower elevations. We could be looking for other things to do besides climbing if this weather doesn't improve.



July 17, Thursday

Leaving Huaraz!

It's 6:30 am and we're having tea and pancakes at Edwards Inn. The rain has let up and we have plenty of blue sky showing between the clouds. Today we are on our way to Caraz, then Cashapampa and finally on to Nevado Alpamayo. The plan had been to take the 7:00 am bus but it's obvious we aren't going to make it in time. Oh, well.

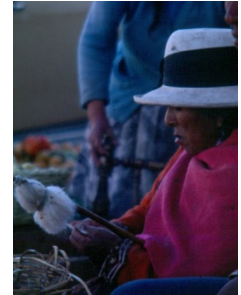
Yesterday we took care of business here in Huaraz; buying food, eating and taking pictures. It's a very nice town. We met a young man named Oscar. He lives here in Huaraz and we hired him to be our guide. He is 16 years old but is a real business man.

4:45 pm We are now in Cashapampa.

We didn't get the bus until 8:00 this morning. It seems it's going to be hard getting all three of us moving in the mornings. Christoph and Kent are both slow getting out of bed and Kent is slow even after he is up. The four of us, counting Oscar, got on the bus and headed for Caraz. The bus was in pretty poor condition. It had been stuck back together so many times it was hard to tell what it looked like originally. We banged and rattle along for an hour and a half, stopping every kilometer or so to let passengers off or take on more. Having done our training in India, Christoph and I are pretty good at this kind of bus riding and it's always interesting watching the locals go about their business.

When we reached Caraz we had 45 minutes to waste before catching a colectivo to take us up the valley to Cashapampa. *A colectivo is usually a pickup truck with a cattle rack on the back that operates like a bus. The truck has a route and everyone piles in the back.* We wandered through the bazaar watching people and taking pictures. It's very helpful that Christoph speaks Spanish. He can have real conversation with people we meet on the streets. It's good to be able to joke and laugh with people. My Spanish is not very good but I can usually follow what Christoph is talking about. Often in Peru people don't want to have their pictures taken, something about taking their sole? But once we are talking and joking even the ladies let us take their pictures.

I stopped to talk to two old ladies who were spinning wool. First they were unsure about me but when they saw I was interested in their spinning they became very friendly. Christoph came over and talked with them and they showed us how to do it. I asked if I could take a photo of them spinning and they were happy to let me.



Cashapampa is really just a wide spot in the very bumpy dirt road. It has no stores or services. But it does have a little hotel, or what they call a hotel, so that is where we will be staying tonight. It looks like they sell beer and a few grocery items out of a house. Christoph and I were out wandering around this afternoon and got word that there were some hot springs nearby so we went and soaked for a while. It has been a fun stop over so far.

July 18, Friday

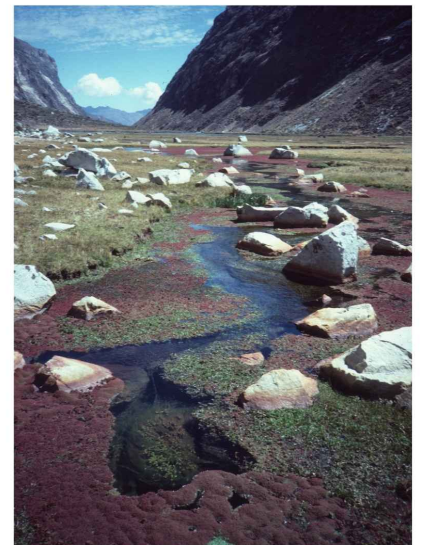
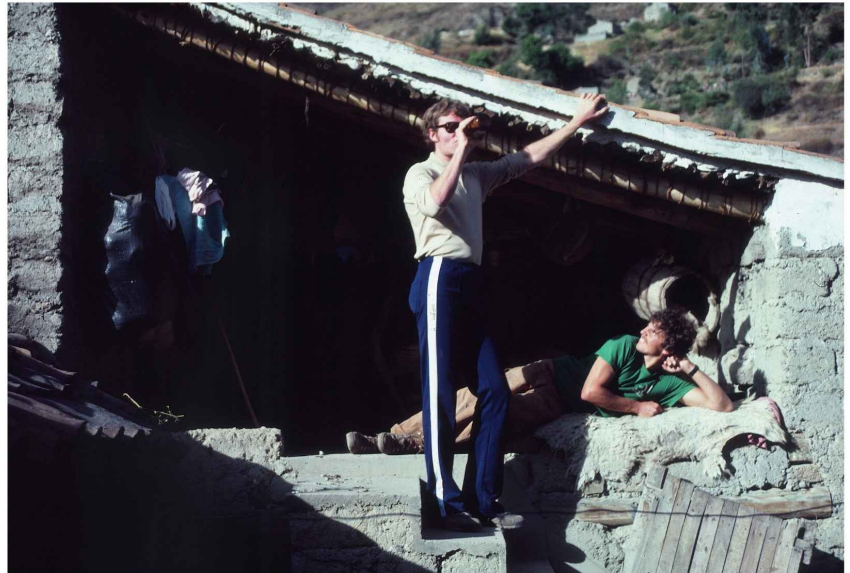
Into the mountains at last – 13,100 ft

We had dinner last night at the home of the owner of the "hotel". Cashapampa has no electricity so we sat around the table eating by candle light. The little room had a dirt floor and adobe walls with pictures their little girls had drawn. It was just barely big enough for all four of us to sit. It was a great meal of eggs with rice and potatoes and chicken and noodle soup, all for 17,500

sole each, that's \$1.10. The Peruvian currency is the Sole. There was so much food we couldn't eat it all.

We had some unfortunate problems with our guide Oscar. No one would rent him burros. Apparently he was too young. But he did a very good job of lining up burros and an arriero (burro driver) for us anyway. This morning we went up the valley and he went back to Huaraz. Now we have Juraldo, not the quick, friendly character Oscar was but he got us here. We have three burros to carry our three backpacks.

It's now 7:30 pm. It has been dark for almost an hour now. Kent says the temperature is 35 degrees. The sky is clear, the moon is bright and Christoph say he is asleep. Tomorrow we start the climb.



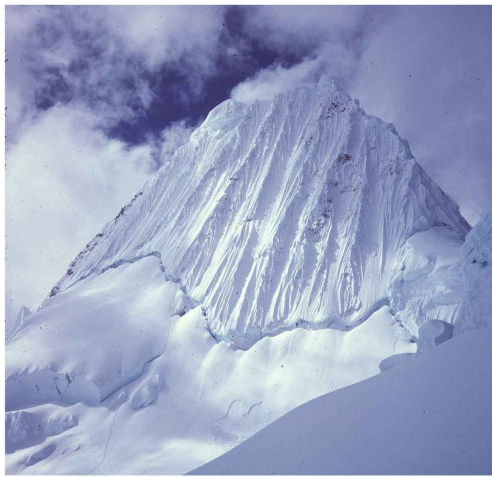
July 19, Saturday 16,000 ft Up, up and away!

The top gets closer and I seem to be doing pretty well. My knees are showing signs of wear and tear but not too bad. The grinding sound they are making is the most annoying part about them.

Before I left home I thought I had licked a cold I had for over week but now with the altitude it's back. Altitude seems to do that. It's a fun cold, mostly swollen glands and stuffed up head but I don't feel all that bad. It does make it harder to sleep at night. Other than that I'm feeling pretty strong and we're all in good spirits.

The weather is doing very well also, clear until about noon, then afternoon clouds start to build over the peaks. By 6:00 pm it's clear again. It was pretty cold last night for 13,000 feet, well below freezing. The frost was real heavy.

This morning the burros carried our packs up to the moraine. It was so easy walking with just a daypack; it makes life much more enjoyable. It was well worth the \$3.00 a day it cost each of us to have our packs carried up to 14,500 feet. It would not have been nearly as enjoyable getting here if we had to carry our monster backpacks. They are weighing in around 95 lbs.



July 23, Wednesday

Alpamayo and Back The Santa Cruz Valley

We have been very busy so it has been a long time since I last wrote. I will try to pick up where I left off back in Cashapampa.

Juraldo and his burros took us to the end of the trail, around 14,500 feet, and dropped us off with all our gear. We had enough food for a week, stoves and pots, enough white gas to cook all our food and melt all the water we would need while above snow line. We had all the ropes, ice screws, carabineers, ice axes, hammers and crampons we would need to climb a serious ice wall. Plus we had lots of warm clothes to keep us comfortable in sub-zero temperatures.

We didn't have porters to carry it up from here. In hind sight we would have been better off to have spend an extra day and hauled it all up and two trips but we didn't. The objective was to make to the top of the moraine that afternoon. It was going to be a grueling task. It was only about 2,000 vertical feet to the top but we but we weren't acclimatized for 16,000 feet above sea level. A moraine is the pile of debris gouged out when a glacier creeps down the side of a mountain. It's all the rock, gravel and dirt it scrapes up as it moves along. When all the ice melts away what is left is a big pile of rocks. All we had to do was climb 2,000 feet up that pile.

There was no trail to follow. It had snowed a little that night, just enough to make it hard to see where you were putting your feet. This is all to say it was pretty hard on us all.

Christoph and I fell into a pace together moving slow and methodically up the hill. The huge loads and the thin air require moving at a snail's pace. The rocks and slippery terrain require total concentration. The key is keep the pace slow and steady; no rushing, no stopping. It's a mental game, just keep moving.

For whatever reason, Kent wasn't keeping up. He was falling farther and farther behind. We waited for him a few times but that isn't slow and steady. Christoph and I were worried.

When we nearing the top of the moraine Christoph decided to go back and see what he could do to help Kent. He left his pack with me and headed back down the rock pile. When he got to Kent he took Kent's backpack and carried it up to where I was waiting. That was impressive.

Christoph was surprised to find that Kent's pack weight more than his and he questioned what Kent was carrying. Sitting there on the rocks we went through Kent's pack. He had all the usual stuff but he seemed to have more of everything than Christoph or I. We were all carrying fuel but he was carrying a lot more than us. It was the one thing that seemed easy to reduce. Christoph decided it would be fun to have a campfire right there on the rocks. He poured half of Kent's fuel onto the rock and lit it on fire. We laugh and pretended to warm our hands around the fire but it wasn't really that fun.

Was Kent going to make it or was he just going to keep us from making it to the top? He was talking about which pitches of the climb he wanted to lead but he wasn't showing us he could even get there. With the mental weakness he was showing us it looked like he was going to quit on us. We confronted him with this and the fact that we didn't want to fail because of him. We wanted him to make a commitment to going all the way or turn back now where we wouldn't have to turn around with him. He more or less said he was committed. So we continued upward.

We were at 16,000 feet. We manage to scrape out a place among the rocks that was flat enough to lay out our sleeping bags for the night, no tent. I don't remember much about that night. It seems like a long time ago now. I don't think we slept all that well because of the altitude. I remember there was a lot of frost in the morning.

In the morning Christoph and I each took some of Kent's stuff to lighten his load. We were moving onto the glacier so we geared up with ropes, harnesses, ice axes and crampons. It lightened the load on our backs but didn't speed us up any. We picked our way around crevasses and ceracs (ice walls). It's like a very steep maze made of frozen piles of glass. You don't go anywhere fast. Even so, it only took us about 5 hours to make it up the 2,000 vertical feet to the col and our next camp.

We were at 18,000 feet above sea level. We had come up quite fast and weren't acclimatized to this altitude. It makes my head hurt and I feel noshes at times. It's hard to think clearly and the body is unable to make new cells.

That may account for our stove problems.

Christoph tried to fire up his stove to melt snow for water but it wouldn't burn right. It was an old MSR-G and it would light but it had a smoky yellow flame and wouldn't burn hot. He didn't have a repair kit for it either. So I got out my stove, a Peak 1, but I couldn't get it to burn hot either. I decide Christoph's was the easier to fix so I took it apart to clean it and see if I could get it to go. I messed with it for over an hour before giving up on it. At 18,000 feet no stove means no water and without water we wouldn't last long in this high dry atmosphere. We had to get a stove going.



The temperature was well below freezing and it seemed that might be causing the problem. The fuel in the stove has to get hot enough to turn to vapor to burn hot and it seemed like that wasn't happening. I took my Peak 1 into the tent and put it on an insulate pad and put fire starter paste all over it and lit it. (Was I thinking straight?) With the whole stove on fire it got hot enough to vaporize the fuel and finally burned hot. I moved it back outside to melt snow and cook. We were saved!

That night we could all feel the elevation. No one slept all that well. I had, and still do have, a very stuffed up head. It makes it hard to breath in the thin air. Up at that altitude you can never get over a sickness. It was quite cold out but inside the cramped tent I was too warm in my sleeping bag and too could out of it. I didn't sleep much at all.

Kent had been talking about what pitches he was going to lead on the final summit attempt. I don't even know how he knew anything about the different pitches. It was 1,500 feet of steep ice up a narrow ice flute to the summit. There would be 8 or 10 technical pitches. I had no idea which were the difficult ones or which were more impressive but it made me mad that he thought he got to pick which pitches he got to lead even though he wasn't really caring his weight with the task of getting there. It was more like we were his guides and it was our job to give him bragging rights. I shouldn't have let it bother me but it did.

We had decided we should get up at 3:00 am to start the climb but when the alarms went off we were all hurting too much to jump up. It was probably close to 0° under clear skies and a full moon. It was a really beautiful night to start a climb.

We made it out of camp at 4:20, roped together and crossed the snowfield to bottom of the steep face of Alpamayo. Kent was moving very slowly as usual. When we stopped to put on our crampons christoph was having trouble getting his on without a light. Kent was the only one who had his light out but he wasn't offering it to Christoph even when he said, "I wish I had a flashlight", Kent just sat there. I couldn't help it, I got mad. I had to tell him off. I told him he had to add something to the climb not just suck energy from Christoph and I. Until then we would tell him what he was going to do and when he was going to lead. I don't know that he even knew what I was talking about.

We climbed some steep snow, most of which had avalanched recently, up to the start of the technical climb. The first move was one of the most difficult of the climb. We had to cross the mote at the bottom of the wall. A mote is where the glacier pulls away from the rock face and leaves a gapping whole between the ice of the lower glacier and the rock wall. In this case we had a 10 feet vertical hanging ice wall about mote. There was a large piece of ice wedged in the crack that allowed me to step out over the mote below the ice wall. From this precarious perch I attempted to drive an ice screw into the ice over my head. I had the piece in about half way when I felt the block of ice I was standing on move. My heart jumped right out of my chest. Even though it only dropped maybe an inch it was enough for me. I tied off the piece, clipped my rope into the carabineer and drove my ice axe into the wall and scramble up. I figure it was better to fall 20 feet on a marginal piece than to fall into this mote with a 1000 pound chunk of ice.

It was very beautiful up there on the mountain. The ice crystals sparkled in the blue iridescent light of the moon. The whole mountain was lit with the strange glow. We were at about 18,500 ft when it started to get light. First it was just a bit lighter than the moon. Then the sky to the east turned bright white and then orange. The highest peaks were catching the orange light giving everything an orange glow instead of the blue of the moon. As the sun struck the top of Alpamayo the western sky turned golden. The moon was a silver disk in the middle of the world of gold. It was really a beautiful sight. I'm really glad I was able to be there to see it.



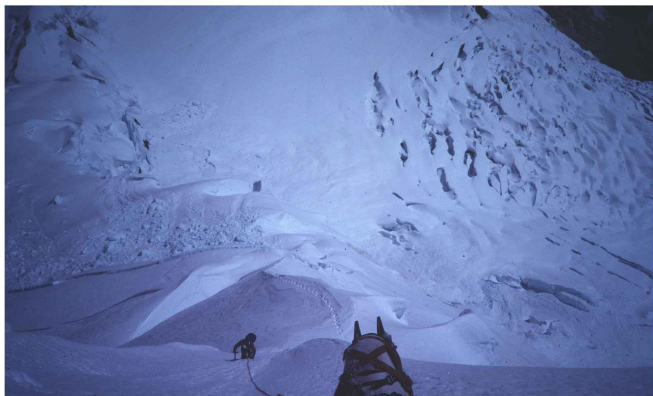
It was eight full pitches to the top. The first four were really no problem. Christoph and I switched leads for all of them. Christoph would lead one, then and belay me up then belay Kent up. Then I would lead the next and belay the two of them up simultaneously on a double rope. It was pretty fast and we were moving up quickly.

We had hear there had been a French party a summit only a few days before we got there and they had left a lot of protection along the way. So we had belay stances already set as we worked our way up. We were in an ice flute maybe 10 feet across. It was mostly hard snow with some clear ice now and then.

We had climbed about half way up the face with things started to get tough. I had made some mistakes. In our rush to get out of came after sleeping in I didn't have breakfast and now, on the wall, I was too busy and scared to eat much. It was starting to take its toll. I only had one and a half quarts of water and half of that was frozen in to sheets in my bottle. After 6 hours of climbing I was losing strength fast. Our pace was slowing significantly.

The wall had steepened and now the ice was very brittle. It shattered like glass when we placed our ice axe or hammer. We had to chip several times to find solid ice that would hold and every time the tool hit the ice it send a shower of ice shards down on those below. With only two more pitches top but I was so tired. I rallied all the strength I could and started up. It was really slow going. I was having trouble controlling my breathing. I made to the next belay anchor and managed to belay the others up.

The last pitch was christoph but he decided he was too tired and gave it to Kent to lead. He started up on his first lead. Perhaps because he was nervous or he had extra energy, I don't know why but he hammered away on the ice sending a show of it down on our heads. There was nowhere for us to go so we had to just hang there in our harnesses hoping the big chocks didn't hit up. I was so tired I could barely keep my eyes open anyway. It seemed like it took him hours to get to the top, actually it took one and a half hours. Then Christoph and I had to make the same climb. At 2:20 pm we were finally all on top but I was too tired to care. I couldn't look around or take pictures or celebrate. I just lay in the snow and hold my head to keep it from hurting.

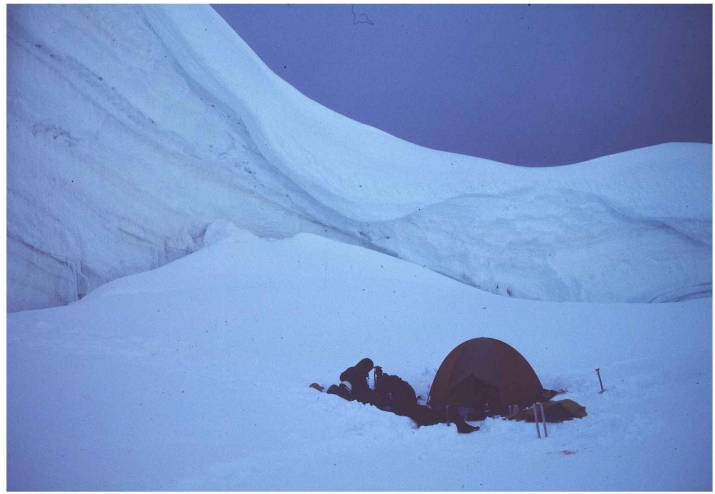


We had really made one other big mistake. We had gone up too fast. It is kind of a miracle that we did as well as we did. We went from sea level to 19,510 feet above sea level in just 7 days. That is way too fast to be able to acclimatize. It's kind of amazing that we actually made it up there. It's no wonder I had a headache. Christoph and I shared what water we had left and ate what we could before preparing for our decent. Kent didn't offer to share whatever he had.

The summit was nothing more than a small pile of snow barely big enough for the three of us. The French party that had been here a few days before had left their repel anchors so we ran our ropes through their summit anchor and started to hook in. Probably more from habit than actual thought I gave the anchor a big tug to test it before backing off. It popped right out of the snow. If one of us had backed off on it like would have done the same thing. It was a bit unnerving.

The snow was cold and granular and wouldn't pack together so it was really hard to get it to hold anything. We stomped around for quite a while before we were able to get it to stay. We finally started down. We had 8 repels to the snowfield below the mote. Christoph did a great job of holding his act together and getting us down. I think he set all 8 anchors. I was of little help and Kent was never a help. It's all quite fuzzy to me but Christoph kept pulling the ropes and dropping the again and we would all descend to the next anchor. It took us 3 more hours to get across the mote onto the snowfield.

We had to cross what seemed like an endless snowfield and then up a steep little uphill to our camp. I hurt so much and yet not from any one place in particular, all over pain and tired. I would lay down in the snow and put a piece of ice in my mouth and try to forget how much it all hurt but then the cold would start to creep through my layers of Gortex, pile and poly pro and force me up again. The part of my brain that still worked would push me on. I lay down at least 4 times in that three quarters of a mile to camp, the last time only 100 feet from the tent.



I thought about the people who died on Mount Hood this summer. Was this how it happened? Were they just so tired they couldn't move? How close to that am I? I was so tired but I was still able to move I wasn't going to die here. I could still think and reason. I lay down because I didn't want to hurt so much not because I couldn't move. But then what is the difference? If you give up you are through whether you can move or not. I was a long way from giving up.

We got to the tent and I got the stove out to melt some snow. We all needed water. It took forever to get the stove lit because I was too tired to keep at it. I kept having to rest. We got some snow melted but it was taking so long and we were all so tired we didn't get much. I tried to eat but couldn't get it down. Finally we just turned the stove off and went to sleep.

I was so tired I slept well for several hours but when I woke up around 3:00 am I couldn't get to sleep again. My head was splitting. I think I would have thrown up if there had been anything in my stomach. I lay there wonder if I had cerebral edema or pulmonary edema? I didn't feel like I was going to die right then but I also didn't feel like I could get me and my stuff down off this mountain. I thought about just getting up and walking down out of the snow without taking all my stuff. I wondered if I needed to wait for it to get light first. I wondered if Kent and Christoph would be able to walk down with me. But I didn't do anything but lay there wondering.

I lay there wondering and worrying until 9:30 when the sun hit the tent. It immediately became too hot for me to stay in the tent. I dragged my pad and the stove outside and manage to get some snow melting. I soon had some water to drink. I drank the first pint out of the pot and immediately felt better. Christoph and Kent came out and we worked at getting more snow melted. As we drank we felt better. It was like a miracle. We could finally eat and the more we ate and drank the better we felt. We filled all our water bottle before turning off the stove. I was still tired and hurting but it was within reason. I was going to be able to get me and my stuff off this mountain now.

We slept until 1:00 pm when we decided we had better make a move. We packed up all our stuff and headed down the glacier. We made it to the bottom of the moraine just as it was getting dark. We had dinner of animal crackers and peanut butter and honey and went back to bed.

Yesterday, July 23rd, we left our camp below the moraine and headed down the trail for Cashapampa. It was a long hike, almost 8 hours but we were able to get some burros to carry our backpacks part of the way. That saved my body from certain destruction. We are now in Cashapampa waiting for the colectivo (taxi) to come and take us down to Caraz. I feel okay. I still have a head cold but my appetite is coming back. I'm finally caught up with my journal writing.

July 25, Friday

Back in Huaraz

Traveling from Cashapampa to Huaraz yesterday was really fun and interesting. The colectivo didn't come until almost 2:00 pm so Christoph and I had a great time helping a shop keeper make bread. It's called "pan" and they cooked it in a wood fired oven called an "orno".

The bread maker built a big fire in the orno and kept it burning for more than 4 hours. The bread dough is pretty much like we would make it back home with flour, water, eggs, salt, baking soda or yeast and some butter. He pats it into little 4 inch diameter buns, then put them on cookie sheets to rise for a couple hours. They clean all the ash and charcoal out of the orno and put the cookie sheets of dough in. The orno will hold about 100 buns at a time. The first batches took about 10 minutes or less. Then as the orno cools they start taking longer. We made 600 buns yesterday. Our part of the job was pretty small, mostly running sheets of dough out to go in the oven and spreading out the cooked buns for cooling but we felt like we were helping. We had a great time and I think the locals had a good time laughing at us.

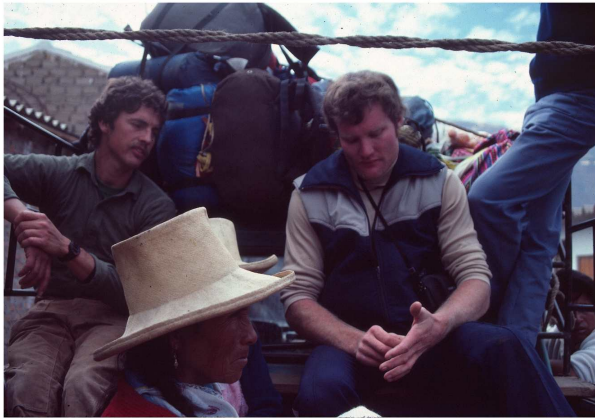


There were a lot of gringos in Cashapampa waiting for the colectivo. They were all sitting in front of the store where the colectivo stops. There were 2 French women, , one Italian, one German, one Swiss guy and 2 other Americans. We were all trying to speak Spanish with a Peruvian woman. They were joking with her that she was an international cook because she was cooking potatoes for us.

When the colectivo came and we all climbed in with all our gear and backpacks it was really crowded. It seemed too crowded to me. I jumped out at the first stop saying I would wait for the next colectivo. I watched as Christoph, Kent and the other gringos drove away. It gave me a bit of a lost feeling for a little while. Then the next taxi truck came along full of locals with their chickens and bags of potatoes. I felt like riding in with a bunch of locals was more fun anyway. It took a lot longer than the first ride would

have because we stopped in every little village along the way but I had a good time riding back to Huaraz with the Peruvians.

We went out and stuffed ourselves last night on brazed chicken and French fries.

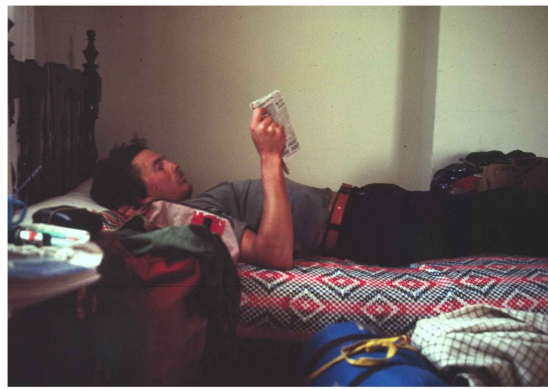


July 28, Monday 9:45 am

**Lake Ishinca
16,300 ft**

We have split ways with Kent. It was pretty apparent to all that his style and ours didn't work that well together. Kent may not have minded having us be his guide if we were more willing but I think we weren't all that nice about it. This week is the Peruvian Independence holidays and there are lots of Peruvian on vacation here this week so it's hard to get a hotel room. That made it easier to split ways with Kent because we had to split up to get rooms. In fact I had three different rooms in three nights.

Christoph and I have been working on our recovery from the Alpamayo expedition. We have to build our systems up so we eat and go shopping in the bazaar. Then we eat some more and then shop for more food, then eat again and look for another restaurant, then we go back to the hotel and take naps before going out to eat. After three days of this we are starting to feel pretty strong again. We did all the food shopping for another expedition.



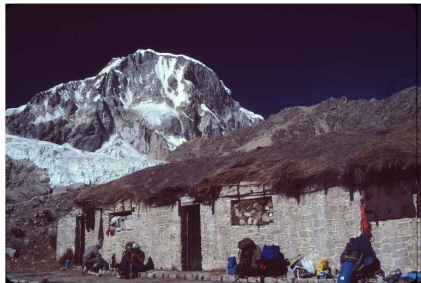
We brought quite a bit of food from the U.S.A. but it's not hard to find food here to supplement. We can buy Sublime chocolate bars, sardine, raisin, soup mixes of all kinds, drink mix, rice, and bread. They have great cheese but I worry about getting sick from it. We loaded our backpacks with plenty of food and now we are on our next adventure.

We got a taxi from Huaraz to a little village called Collon. It cost us 170,000 soles or about \$10. Then we hired a burro and an ariarro and started up the Ishinca Valley. I have to say it again; it is so much easier to let a burro carry the load and just walk along with a day packs. I think there would be a lot less climbing going on here if it wasn't for these burros.

It seems the Cordilleras Blanca is getting pretty crowded with gringos these days. There are a lot more climbers and trekkers than there was when I was here last just 4 years ago. I wonder how much more the area can handle.

We are sitting in front of a little stone hut beside a lake and it's a beautiful warm and sunny day. The lake is a glacial pond at the base of the glacier. From where I sit at the hut I can see the ice of the glacier extending several hundred feet below me. It is high, rugged country. I'm feeling pretty good about where I am right now.

We are on our way to climb Ranrapalca, 20,211 ft. We will move up to the col this afternoon and make our attempt tomorrow. Everything looks good so far. This time we are acclimatized for high altitude so it shouldn't be so painful.



July 30, Wednesday

Ishinca, Ranrapalca & back to the Hut

After our rest at the hut we loaded our backpacks on our backs and headed up to the col above us. It only took us two hours to get up there. We found a place we could put up the tent, leveled it out, put up the tent and nailed it down with plenty of rocks. You never know when the afternoon cloud build up will try to blow everything away. It was still pretty early so we grabbed a rope and wandered over to the top of Nevado Ishinca. It only took us an hour to summit since our camp was at 17,100 ft. and Ishinca is only 18,200 ft. Here in the Cordilleras Blancas 18,000 doesn't seem very high but in the U.S. or Europe it sure does.

Rice with some kind of sauce and maybe some tuna or canned chicken mix in is a real staple here in the mountain. It's easy to carry and can be cooked up fast and eaten with one bowl. But I'm having a hard time getting it down these days. I think maybe it's because I was eating it when I was so sick over on Alpamayo. I hope I get over it soon because we have a lot of it up here.



We woke up at 3:30 am, ate some cold food and drank as much water as we could. With the clean night the heat radiates right up into the sky and the temps down here on earth get so cold, around 0° F. Everything that isn't in our sleeping bag is so cold. I often sleep with my boot liners on so I don't have to put frozen boots on in the morning. Getting my boots, crampons and harnesses on without freezing my fingers off is so difficult. By 4:30 we had all that cold stuff done and we were headed up the mountain, headlamps showing the way.

There was a track from the previous climbers so it wasn't hard finding the way through the ceracs and crevasses. It took only 2 hours to get up to the steep face above the first glacier. We were already roped up crossing the glacier so we just started up the face. It wasn't difficult climbing so I didn't feel the need for placing protection so we just continued to move together. It's so much faster than placing pro and belaying. The face was maybe 55°, a mix of snow and ice. We weren't having any trouble so I just kept going all the way to the top of the face. It only took us 2 hours to get up to 19,700 ft. It's so nice to be acclimatized.

At this point we had a big flat snowfield to cross before the final pitch to the summit. It was challenging because of the altitude and the deep snow. We were high than the summit of Alpamayo and we were push snow over our knees. We had to deal with some ceracs (snow cliffs) and the steep summit pitch but still it only took us an hour to get to the summit. It was a beautiful sunny day with few clouds and we were on top of the world at 9:30 am. The summit was very small. There was barely enough room for the two of us to sit down so we didn't stay long on the top. Besides we still had to get down.

We headed back down toward the steep face. Since we had climbed up it without pro and no trouble it seemed we should be able to climb down as well but sometimes going down is scarier than going up. For some reason Christoph was spooked and going super slow. We did that for one rope length but we had to go faster. We only had one rope so we would have to rappel only half a rope length to be able to retrieve our rope. We didn't have the pro for that and it would take too long. Instead we tied of to the anchor and Christoph rappelled to the end then I untied and down climb. It was still pretty slow, almost as slow as it had been going up. It took us four and a half hours to get down.

When we got to the tent we ate and drank and got some of our strength back. Then we packed everything up and hiked back down to the hut. It was a good climb. I enjoyed it so much more than our last climb. I felt pretty good the whole time. Only a bit of a headache now and then and at times I was pretty tired but all within reason. There is something really satisfying about making it to the summit and looking out over the miles of snowy peaks and the valley far below, and, of course, achieving the goal. Doing what you set out to do.



July 31, Thursday

Yesterday we lay around the little stone hut doing nothing but writing in this journal, reading and relaxing until 2:30. We would have done a lot of eating but we had very little food. We had some problems with our food planning. We had so much food on Alpamayo. It seemed like way too much. Then we got sick and came down a couple days early so we had a lot of food left that we had to care out. When we were preparing for this climb I wasn't feeling up to it so Christoph prepared most of the food. I just agreed with whatever he decided. I was planning to buy a lot of cookies, candy and bread but for whatever reason I only bought half as much as I had planned. Then we had to feed our burro driver on the way up here. In any case we have very little food left.

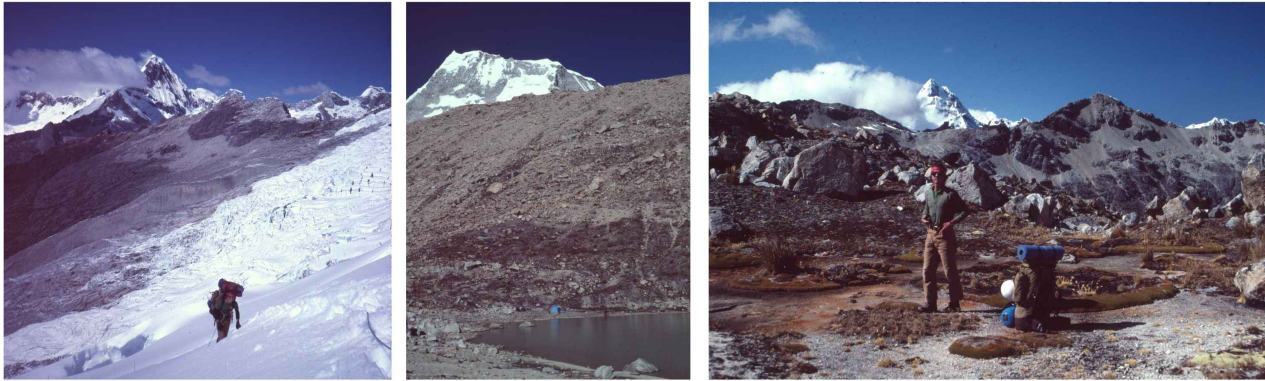
The planning was to climb Nevado Palcaraju, a 20,584 foot peak 3 miles to the northeast of the little hut we were hanging out at. We would move our camp up over a little pass and down to a little lake on the other side. The pass is a mile and a half away and a thousand feet above us. At 2:30 pm we hefted our backpacks and headed up across the glacier toward the pass between Ishinca and Palcaraju. It turned out that we were the first people to go that way so we had a lot of deep snow to push through. It took us 2 hours to get to the pass, 4:30 pm. It was getting late by the time we reached the little lake below the pass.

We setup the tent beside the lake in the last light of the day. We crawled in and started making dinner. We mixed the last of our bulgur and rice together and had a cup of hot lemon aid. It was a pretty good dinner but the only food we had left was Multo-meal and some powdered cheese. It was becoming clear that we didn't have enough food for another climb. It was barely enough to get us out of the mountains. Christoph was having a hard time facing the fact that we couldn't climb a 20,584 foot peak, covered with lots of deep snow, on this much food. Even if we managed to get to the top of Palcaraju we would still have to descend 10,000 vertical feet and almost 18 miles back

to town with no food at all. I wasn't willing to suffer that much. Once Christoph saw our meager rations in front of him he grudgingly agreed that we had to go down not up.

So in the morning rather than getting up early and heading up the mountain we got up late and headed down the canyon. Because we had crossed the little pass we were now in a different drainage that we had been the day before. On this side there were no people and there was no trail this far up. It was a beautiful area up under the glaciers with three 20,000 foot peaks towering above up. There were a number of little lakes and lots of grassy meadows.

We saw a deer like animal that we think was a "taruca". I walked right up on it, maybe just 25 feet away. He didn't know if he should run or not.



From the little lake where we had spent the night it was over 16 miles and around 6,300 feet down to Huaraz and even though we were out of food our packs still weight over 60 lbs. We were thinking two days to get all the way to town even though we had no food. It was just too far to make it in one day. We dropped down 2,000 ft from the little lake to the bottom of the Qebrada (canyon) Cojup without any problems. There we found the trail and it was in good shape. We were cruising along pretty well. Eventually the trail turned in to a dirt road and we thought we were almost there. We said, "We should me to town in another hour, let's keep going". We said that for another two and a half hours and we had to drag ourselves along. My legs and feet were killing me. They had been ready to stop hours ago. I'm sure the thought of spending the night with no food and a growling stomach was a strong motivator. If we could just make it back to town we could sleep in beds and have plenty to eat.



We made it back to Edwards Inn, showered and went out for Pollo Baraza and Papas Fritas, chicken and French fries. Then we topped it off with street food. You can buy all kinds of food in the bazaar and little stands along the streets. Some of it is probably not same but the stuff they cook right in front of you seems okay. There are lots of places go buy fried trout. Sopa de pascado is one of our favorites, its fish soup with potatoes and usually a hot pepper hiding in there somewhere. We fish that pepper out before eating the soup. There are lots of places to get cake and other sweets. There are some French restaurants that serve crapes that are really good.

We are done climbing here in Peru. Now we are going to go to Ecuador to climb Nevado Chimborazo. We have a few more days before our flight from Lima to Quito, Ecuador. In many ways I'm happy to be moving on. I'm missing home but it doesn't really matter, I'm always missing something. I think it's some kind of human trait built into us to keep us moving and making changes.

When we came down here I really wanted to do some climbs that would really challenge me, something hard. I wanted to find were my limits were. On Alpamayo I reached a limit but not my climbing limit. It was an endurance limit and mostly of my own making. We didn't have to go up so fast. I know if I went back to Alpamayo today it would be a breeze now that I'm acclimatized. I think I would be sure to have more water available too. I guess that is what I learned on that climb. There are a number of peaks I would really like to stay and climb but we have places to go. I don't think Chimborazo will be technically difficult and now that we are acclimatized to over 20,000 feet it shouldn't be too bad endurance wise either.

Peru is a beautiful place; beautiful people, beautiful scenery, beautiful mountain, beautiful climbing. It's a very colorful place, at least here in the Rio Santa Valley. The wool felt dresses the women wear are very colorful. I love the die shops and the yard seller colors and the green of the valley contrasted to the white of the high peaks.



I went out early this morning to walk the streets of Huaraz. The morning sun was just coming over the snow capped peaks to the east. The mountains are always there towering silent above the city. My guess is the locals hardly pay any attention to them but they are some of the

most impressive mountain in the world. The people are just bustling around taking care of their little bits of business. And I'm just here taking it all in, the faces, the colors and the smells. I watch the men having tea on the corner, the steam from their cups circling their heads. They talk and laugh and pay no attention to the women stacking bread in a giant basket next to them. To them it's very normal but to me it's amazing she can stack the bread so high. I walked through the fruit market marveling at the kinds of fruit and the colors, fruits and veggies of every kind. Many I don't even recognize. People push past me, bump me. I'm just a gringo in the way of important business. There is bread to be baked, raisins to be dried, meals to be cooked. It's great to be here and experience it all.

August 2, Saturday

Heading to Huascarán

Yesterday we wandered the streets, ate and wrote in our journals. We had a couple of days to kill before heading to Ecuador. We would do some sightseeing and probably eat a lot and spend money. We were lying on our beds at Edwards Inn trying to think of something interesting to do when Christoph said, "Why don't we go for a speed ascent of Huascarán?" I said, "Okay". And now here we are on our way to climb the fourth highest mountain in the western hemisphere.

Most people take at least a week to climb Huascarán. I had climbed it back in 1982 when Kord and I were here. I actually climbed it twice, once solo while Kord was sick and again a few days later with Kord. It's 12,205 feet above Huaraz, 22,205 feet above sea level. We're acclimatized. Maybe we can do it. Maybe we can't but we are going to give it a try.



August 4, Monday

Huascarán and Back!

It was too late in the day when Christoph had his brilliant idea so we had to get ready the next morning. We ran out and bought food and lined up a taxi to take up to Mucho, the jumping off point for Huascarán. The taxi picked us up at noon on Saturday. It took two hours and \$14 to get to Musho. We started out of Musho at 2:15 pm and climbed 5,000 ft to the "Moraine Camp" just below the glacier at 15,500 ft. We rolled out our sleeping bags and went to sleep around 7:00 pm. Our alarms went off at 1:00 am. We had breakfast and put on full glacier travel gear. By 2:00 we were heading out of camp. The edge of the glacier, where rock and ice meet is a very jumbled place. Huge rocks pushed up by the glacier and huge chunks of ice that have fallen off the glacier are blocking the way. It can be tough finding a place to cross onto the glacier proper.

The glacier at this point is maybe 100 feet thick. It's being pushed over a rock roll bending the ice in a convex direction which means large cracks open from the upper side of the ice. It leaves

huge deep cracks in the ice. It makes for a three dimensional maze of ice that we had to get through. We had our little headlamps on our helmets but they didn't do much in this world of giant towers of ice. We couldn't see nearly far enough in to know where we were going. In the daylight it would have been challenging but in the dark it was almost impossible. For some reason we couldn't find any tracks leading through the maze. I don't know if we were in the wrong place or if no one had been there since the last snow but we were on our own.

We went into the maze and started wandering, first moving right, then left, then right again. We were blocked by towers of ice or huge gapping caverns that our light didn't begin to penetrate. We had no idea which way to go or how far we had gone. We didn't know where we were. Hours passed. It seems hopeless. It was 4:00 am and we didn't seem to be getting anywhere. We thought about sitting down and waiting for daylight but it was cold out. I was pretty sure I would get really cold in a no time if I sat still. I was getting mad and frustrated.

We started off again determined to get somewhere. I started going faster and taking bigger risks hoping that would get us somewhere. It didn't. We sat down again on the top of a two story tall block of ice and just sat there feeling helpless. But then there was a slight bit of color in the sky. We waited a few minutes and the jungle of ice started to come into focus. We looked around and all we could see was broken ice. But wait! Could that be a track up the side of that piece of ice over there? We worked our way over to it and sure enough it was the tracks of hundreds of pairs of crampons. We were back on track and it was light so we wouldn't have to worry about losing it.



We had covered only a few hundred yards and climbed less than 1,000 ft in four hours. If we had known we could have stayed in bed those four hours and been in the same place. It was very depressing to think of it. More depressing for Christoph than me it turned out.

Once out of the ice fall and onto the main glacier we moved a lot faster. We reached Camp 2 and it was still early morning. There were 8 people camped there, Americans, French and New Zealanders. We continued up into the steep area that leads to the Garganta. La Garganta is the name of the huge saddle that separates the north and south summits of Huascarán. To reach the La Garganta first you have to navigate a short 50 foot section of almost vertical ice with a mote at the bottom of it. This is the crux of the climb on the normal route to the summit. It requires some very strenuous climbing at almost 19,000 ft.

Just as we reached the bottom of it 11 climbers showed up at the top on their way down. We had to wait half an hour for them to rappel down before we could go up. This was more reason to be depressed.

Once past this obstacle we move up into the La Garganta, around 19,200 ft. It was 10:30 am. We had already been climbing for eight and a half hours. Christoph had lost a lot of strength and drive in the ice fall and even more waiting for the party to rappel. He decided he was done. It is difficult to keep your mental health with such depressing events as we had encountered that morning. He said if I wanted to go on he would start down and I could catch him.

We could see a faint track up the north peak of Huascarán. It seemed unlikely that I could make it but there was still a lot of day left and I was still feeling okay. I had been to the top of the south main summit twice but I hadn't been on the north summit it seemed like a good option.

We agreed that Christoph would leave the rope hanging at the steep crux section for me to rappel on and I would bring it on down with me. We said goodbye and he started down and I went up.



At 10:30 I started up Huascarán Norte. At the time I didn't realize that the top was over 2,500 feet above me. I started out with a good fast pace for 19,000 ft. I had already drunk over 2 liters of water and was working on a third. I was hoping to avoid a rerun of Alpamayo. But the altitude was starting to take its toll. I had to concentrate on breathing. If I breathed too hard I would get a stomach ache from the effort, my diaphragm getting too tired. Not breathing hard enough would leave me gasping for air. It needed to be steady and even. The closer to the top I got the slower I went. I was resting a lot. I told myself I had to count 100 steps then I could lie down for and take a bite of Lima bar. Then I would get up and count another 100 steps. I would concentrate on taking 3 breaths each step.

I had told Christoph I would turn around at 1:00 but I felt like I was too close to turn back as the time approached but I really couldn't tell if I was close to the top or not. One o'clock came and went and still I was going up. At 1:19 I looked around and couldn't find any higher ground I had dragged myself to the summit. It was a beautiful sunny day on top of a 21,825 foot mountain.

I would have taken some pictures but the camera was part of the weight loss program my pack had gone through. I lay in the snow and watched some guy ski down the side of Huascarán Sud. I drank and ate some chocolate and at 1:35 I started back down. I raced down. In less than an hour I was back down to where I had left Christoph but he had already headed down. Our rope was hanging down the steep headwall waiting for me to rappel. I slide down the rope and pull it down after me. After coiling it and stashing it in my pack I raced on down the glacier. By the time I reached the ice fall at the edge of the glacier my race pace had slowed a lot.

Once again getting through the ice fall wasn't easy but compared to doing it in the dark it was a piece of cake. I made it to the Moraine Camp in less than three hours from the summit but Christoph wasn't there. He had gone on down so I pick up my big backpack and headed down after him. I was still thinking I would be able to catch him at some point but the sun was already low in the sky. It would be dark soon and my muscles were starting to



seize up. Trying to find my way down in the dark in my worn out condition was looking impossible but I stumbled on to the Base Camp anyway. Once again, Christoph wasn't there.

It was pretty clear I had to rest. I couldn't go on in the dark. I pulled out my pad and sleeping bag and through them out on the ground and crawled in. I'm guessing it was close to 7:00 pm. I had been traveling for almost 18 hours. I had a little trouble sleeping even though I was so tired. There were cow wandering around and I was afraid they were going to step on me.

I was up again just before dawn. I felt pretty good considering the circumstances. I ran on down to Musho and finally he was there. He was coming up the trail looking for me. He had our taxi waiting. We had to make it to Lima that day to catch our flight the next morning to Ecuador.

I through my pack in the back of the taxi and jumped in. It took us down to the town of Moncos and from there we got a bus to Huaraz. We packed up all our stuff at Edwards Inn and headed for the bus station to get a bus to Lima but when we got there they told us there were no seats available. In fact there were no seats left for the next week. Needless to say we were a bit panicked. We dragged our piles of baggage out to the road and started hitch hiking but after an hour and a half it wasn't looking good.

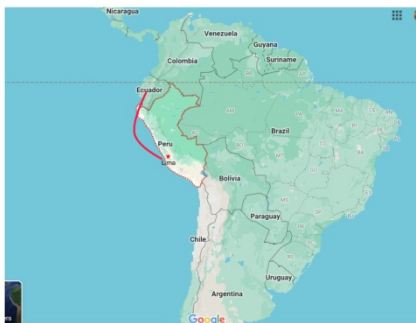
How could it be there were not tickets for a week? What were we missing? It's not unusual for us to miss something. So while I sat with our bags Christoph went back to the bus station to see what he could do. I don't know what happened but he came back with two tickets for Lima for 9:30 that night. We were going to make it.

The bus arrived in Lima at 6:00 am and we hired a taxi to take us straight to the airport. We got there at 7:00 with plenty of time to catch our flight to Quito. At 11:15 we were in the air. It makes me tired just thinking about move that fast.



August 5, Friday

Quito, Ecuador



Chimborazo is about 100 miles south of the equator. Despite not being the tallest mountain in the Andes or on Earth, its summit holds the distinction of being the farthest point on Earth's surface from the Earth's center, due to its location along the planet's equatorial bulge. It is 20,548 ft above sea level and is the highest mountain in Ecuador and ranks as the 39th highest peak in the entire Andes.

It must have been about 2:30 pm that we arrived in Quito. We found a hotel and went out to wander the streets. It's a big city, I think around one and a half million people. It seems pretty modern, more so than Huaraz and even Lima. It's as nice as the cities of Spain or France. It's more expensive here too but not too bad. We are leaving for Chimborazo in the morning

On the morning of the 6th we packed up our backpacks with just the stuff we would need for a fast ascent of a big volcano, no stove or pot, no ice pro, no tent. We took one ice tool each, a rope and a lot of warm clothes and our sleeping bags and pads. Everything else we put into storage at the hotel. Then we went out to find the bus to Ambato, the stepping off point for Chimborazo. There are different bus stations for different destinations so we had to find the right but station for buses to Ambato. You would think it wouldn't be difficult to find it. Christoph had to ask several different people where we could get a bus. Finally he got the right answer and we found the right place. Two hours later we were in Ambato. Now we have to find our way to the mountain.

I am so grateful for Christoph's ability to speak Spanish. It makes life so much easier. But I'm afraid I get lazy and rely on him to figure things out. I let him order dinners, and pay for things and ask all the questions. If I had to I could do a lot more of it but it would be much harder for me.

A friend of Christoph, John Ramher, had been to Chimborazo four years earlier. He gave us a description and drew a map showing us how to get to there. Per his instruction we needed to find a taxi that would take us to the hut below the mountain. Once again with Christoph asking around we found a guy who said he could get us there. Perhaps he wasn't as sure of himself as he let on because he got another guy to go with us. Maybe the second guy was just going along for the adventure. Either way it was going to cost us \$18.

It is only about 50 miles from Ambato to the hut on Chimborazo but it turned out to be an adventure. All was fine until we turned off the highway and up the dirt road. We drove up to around 15,000 ft. that is where we encountered sand. At that elevation on a volcano there isn't much growing. It's pretty much a wasteland.



The car became stuck in deep sand so we had to shovel out from under the tires with our hands and feet. Putting the floor mats under the tires and three of us pushing the driver was able to move forward maybe 4 feet. Then we would do it all over again. We spend over an hour digging and pushing the car to get it about a quarter of a mile up the road. The first drive was ready to turn back but the backup drive was enjoying the adventure and was able to convince the first guy to keep going. We did finally make it to the hut. I hope the taxi guys made it back to Ambato.

It is pretty high class here on Chimborazo. None of that cramming into a tiny tent and freezing your butt off. This is a European style climbing hut with beds and an outhouse and everything. The hut is at 16,000 feet. It's just one big day to the summit and back to the hut.

There are three British climbers and a Polish guy who are planning to climb the peak tomorrow. I think they are all with a guide. There is also a Canadian who is hoping to climb but he isn't a climber. His is just traveling around South America. He has talk Christoph and I into taking him up with us. We have given him some of our extra clothes because he doesn't have full climbing gear. His name is Robert.

We ate cheese, bread and crackers for dinner and went to bed around 7:30. There is just about equal hours of sunlight and dark here, and in Peru. It gets dark at 6:00 PM and light at 6:00 AM. We will be getting up very early in the morning.

The other climbers were off at 1:00 am but Robert, Christoph and I started around 3:45. We had only been climbing for an hour when we caught up with the other climbing party that had started almost 3 hours ahead of us. It seemed unlike they would make it to the top.

Even before it got light we could see the cloud cap on top of the mountain. As the skies lit up with the rising sun the cloud cap settled lower over the mountain and swallow the three of us up. It was looking like weather was going to be the main obstacle on this climb.

We climbed the steep Direct Whymper Route onto the summit ridge. The steep part was maybe 50 degrees but easy going. By then the wind was blowing a constant 30 mph and gusting to 60 or more. The cloud wasn't sitting on the mountain it was ripping across it. The wind was carrying lots of moisture of the Pacific Ocean and water droplets stuck and froze to whatever thing they hit turning us into human icicles. We were totally encrusted. Rime ice was forming right before our eyes. Rime ice forms when supercooled water droplets freeze onto surfaces. In fact I couldn't wear my glasses because it was forming on them. It was also forming on my coat, and my ice axe. We had to keep hitting our jackets to break the ice off. We had to chip it off our ice axes to keep them from getting too heavy.



It seemed to be a common state up on the top of this volcano. There were ice formations over 4 feet tall all over the summit ridge. It was like giant cauliflowers. Ice particles stuck to ice particles until they grew into strange rounded mounds covering everything. There was a track through the cauliflower where previous climbers had walk. If we stepped out of this track we would

sink up to our wastes into the strange stuff. At one point we got a few rays of sun through the clouds that lit the ice formation and it was amazingly beautiful.

We reached the summit at 8:30 am. It took us less than 5 hours to get there. Robert was pretty amazing considering he had never climbed this high and wasn't acclimatized. But he never complained and he stayed with us.

We didn't stay long on the summit, there was nothing to see because of the clouds and the wind made it pretty uncomfortable. We started back down our up track. About halfway down the steep section we met the other party. Amazingly they were still moving up. Going down is always so much faster than going up. We were back to the hut by 11:00 am. We had been to the summit and back in less than 7 hours.

The hut caretaker was driving down to Riobamba that afternoon so we caught a ride with him. He charged us \$6.00 for the ride. Once in Riobamba we found a bus that would take us back to Quito.

August 9th, Saturday

Quito and headed home

We had tickets to fly home on the 10th so we had three days to kill but we had done everything we had set out to do. Perhaps it would have been better to stay a day or two in Riobamba and try to find something to do but we didn't. Now we were in the big city of Quito and all we seem to be interested in doing was eating. After a day of restaurants and pastry shops we decided it might be best to see if we could move our flight up a few days. I was supposed to be going into the Sierras for an Outward Bound course on August 12th. Having a few more days to prepare for that would be nice. We headed to the airport and started bothering the ticket people. We had to do a lot of waiting but finally got tickets on Equatoriana Airlines to LAX that evening.

It has been a good trip and I had lots of fun. Aside from Alpamayo I felt really good the whole time, no real sickness which isn't that easy to do when traveling in a foreign country. And we go a lot of climbing done:

Alpamayo	19,510 ft
Ishinca	18,200 ft
Ranrapalca	20,211 ft
Huascarán N	21,825 ft
Chimborazo	20,700 ft

Now I'm off to the Sierra Mountain of California for 3 weeks!

THE END