

# □ The City of Machu Picchu, the Cradle of the Inca Empire



*Most people travel for vacations, but some people travel to explore and discover new places. In 1911, Hiram Bingham, an American archaeologist, traveled to Peru where he discovered Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas. Read his report of the discovery.*

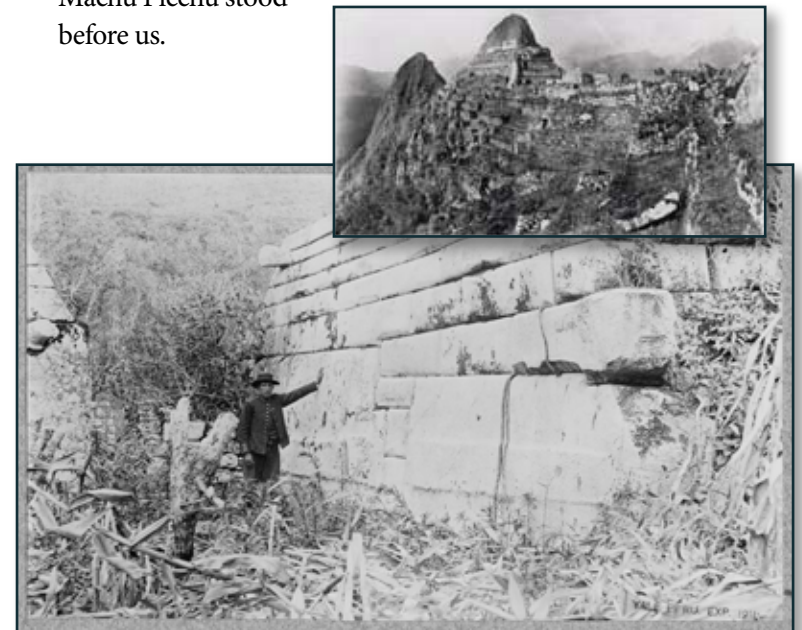
In 1911, I went to Cuzco in Peru looking for ancient Inca ruins. We left Cuzco and traveled to the modern city of Urubamba and then continued down the Urubamba River until we came to the beautiful little town of Ollantaytambo with its amazing Inca **fortress**. At this point we entered the Urubamba **gorge** and the journey became more difficult. However, we continued down the river and six days after we left Cuzco, we arrived at a place called Mandorpampa. A

man came and introduced himself as Arteaga and I asked him about ruins. He told us of some ruins called Machu Picchu, 2,000 or more feet above the valley floor. I offered to pay him 50 cents per day to take us to the ruins and he agreed.

The next day, we crossed the river on a bridge made from four tree **trunks** and began an exhausting climb. At noon we arrived at a little grass hut. The **occupants** were very friendly and gave us some boiled potatoes and a gourd of cool water. The view was magnificent, the water was delicious, and the shade of the hut was agreeable, but there were no ruins. However, we continued upwards, sometimes climbing **ladders**, until at last we arrived in a **tropical forest** on top of the mountain.

Immediately we found some ancient Inca walls made of white stone. I knew at once that this was a truly amazing discovery.

I returned to Machu Picchu in 1912 and we began to clear the forest. The ruins started to appear and they were outstanding. The walls are made from enormous stones and they **fit** together perfectly. As we continued to clear the forest, we discovered more and more ruins, until at last the lost city of Machu Picchu stood before us.



▲ The walls of the main temple are made from enormous stones. The Incas had no metal tools, and no one knows how they cut the stones. We started to dig up the floor of the temple but we didn't find anything of interest.