

1/15/13 - Day 10 – Callao and Lima Peru: We decided that today we would hire a taxi to take the two of us on a private tour of the Old City of Lima. We weren't interested in actually going into the churches, cathedrals and museums. We just wanted to spend a few hours taking a look to see the historical buildings and general layout of Old Lima. We left the ship about 9am and consulted a taxi stand that was set up near the Amsterdam gangway. They had some official sanction so we felt relatively safe in negotiating with them. We finally agreed on a tour of Old Lima with an English speaking driver for \$20USD per hour. With that done we were taken to the entrance to the port facility where we met our driver, Justo, and started our tour.

Using our tourist map of Lima we showed Justo where we wanted to go. He was interested in personally taking us through all the museums and churches but we finally made our point that we just wanted a drive-by tour and then a short walk about to get a feel for Old Lima. His taxi was comfortable as we made the 45 minute ride over the 6 to 8 miles into Lima. We knew we had arrived in when Justo announced that we were looking at Plaza de Armas, the main square.



We proceeded to cruise by a succession of large ornate buildings that housed museums and government offices.



Yesterday we had heard a fellow passenger complain that Old Lima was just not as beautiful as it used to be. To our untrained eye today it was still a beautiful sight as we took it all in.

One building, as shown on the right, appeared to be constructed of adobe plastered over vertical lathes. Justo said that this structure was built in 1535 and was being refurbished.



The President's Palace shown below was spectacular.



In spite of frequent earthquakes in this region, the buildings appeared to be in good condition.

Justo parked the car and we got out and took a walking tour. We came to a park on the banks of the Rimac River that flows through Lima. Looking beyond the river we saw a large hill with a cross at the summit. We were struck by the sight of what appeared to be a densely packed community of brightly painted shacks covering about half the hillside near the base, as shown in the picture on the right.



A busy highway was located on the bank of the river which was the focus of an extensive project to contain it within concrete walls where it flowed through the city.



We walked across a bridge over the river and came to a pedestrian mall as shown in the picture below. The many styles of balconies on the sedate old buildings were a feature that we enjoyed seeing.



We never saw anyone on a balcony but they are clearly a favorite architectural feature in these Latin cities.



In what almost seemed like the result of zoning rules, along a portion of one street the shops were all selling eye glasses and optical services like the store shown on the left.

Below are shown two economical options for taxi and delivery service through the streets of Lima.



These small vehicles and whole communities of shacks on the outskirts of Lima seem like artifacts of a third world country. However, one modern feature on the streets of Lima and the surrounding suburbs was the presence of LED lighted timers that clearly showed pedestrians how many seconds they had to cross a street controlled by a traffic light. We liked this innovation and took a picture of one, as shown on the right. We have seen them before but not in the thorough coverage of every controlled intersection like we observed in Lima.



We had been searching ever since arriving in port for a suitable background that would register the visit of Barbara's library card to the Lima region. Finally, along the busy streets of Old Lima we found the perfect backdrop in the form of a prominent sign on the entrance to one of the Lima municipal buildings.



Walking back toward the taxi we took a picture of policemen armed with riot shields. There never was any obvious



evidence that a riot was likely. We concluded that this presence was just a normal precautionary practice for Lima in the vicinity of the President's Palace.

We got back into the taxi with Justo and he drove us about half way back to the ship to a community known as Pueblo Libre. On the way we passed numerous stately museums and open public squares.

We were surprised when Justo pointed to a low hill behind a concrete fence and said that it was an Inca Indian ruin. He stopped the taxi and we took the picture shown on the left. A few blocks further we came across another hill that was also an Incan ruin, as shown below.



Later, we asked the Amsterdam Tour Guide, Barbara Haenni, why these ruins weren't more prominently publicized by the tourist industry of Lima. She said the ruins were called "Pucllana" and "Huaca Huallamarca" and that active archeology was still taking place on those sites. The local officials don't want tourist traffic to interfere with the work so they do not widely advertise their existence.



It was in the community of Pueblo Libre that we passed by a gathering of young people in an extremely long line wrapped around the block. The signs on the building suggest that these people were waiting to buy tickets to a popular movie or musical concert. Such a display

supports our superficial conclusion that the residents of Lima are reasonably prosperous and the general population is doing well economically.

Back at the pier with the Amsterdam in sight we bid farewell to our trusty tour guide, Justo. It had been a nearly 4 hour tour and we were happy with our chance to roam around and see Lima on our own. With regard to the experience on the streets of Lima we agreed that a quick way to describe it was "Heavy Traffic". We boarded the Amsterdam where preparation was underway for leaving Lima this evening. We would be sailing to the port of General San Martin further south along the coast of Peru.