

FRANCIS ALLEN (FRITZ) RIDDELL (1921-2002)

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Photo by Carol Howell [1988]

**HAVE MARRIED FRANCIS RIDDELL
ARCHAEOLOGIST WILL TRY TO DIVERT HIM
FROM AMERICAN NORTHWEST
ARCHAEOLOGY TO PERUVIAN AREA.
DOROTHY MENZEL RIDDELL**

*Telegram received by Victor W. von Hagen in
December, 1952 (von Hagen 1955:18)*

In 1952, Victor von Hagen began preparations for his now famous Inca Road survey. Von Hagen contacted his old friend, John Rowe, for advice and assistance (von Hagen 1955:13). Dorothy Menzel,

a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, was given the task of compiling all of the ethnographic information about the Inca road system. When the time came to put together a team of participants to go into the field, Menzel's name came up. Apparently, von Hagen, a married man, had a rule against taking more than one woman into the field (*ibid.*:17), but there was no one who knew the road system better than Menzel. In fact, it was von Hagen's spouse, Sylvia, who suggested that Menzel participate in the project (*ibid.*: 16). It was practically on the eve of the Inca Road

expedition's sailing in December 1952 that von Hagen received the telegram from Menzel quoted above. When she and Fritz were married, von Hagen agreed to take both of them to Peru to do on-site recording. This was the beginning of Francis "Fritz" Allen Riddell's Peruvian career.

Although Fritz was already a respected California archaeologist, Menzel successfully "diverted" him south in 1953. He remained committed to the study of Peru's past after his initial participation in von Hagen's Inca road project. He returned to the United States and began work as California's first governmental archaeologist, in the beginning as Curator of the California State Indian Museum and then with the state park service. After retiring from the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 1984, Fritz returned to Peru and the region he had studied three decades before. For the next eighteen years, he carried out almost continuous archaeological research in southern Peru. His dedication was sufficiently intense to establish Fritz as an important contributor to the archaeology of Peru's south coast.

Fritz Riddell died March 8, 2002, in Sacramento, after a period of declining vitality. He is survived by his son Jim from his marriage to Menzel, and by his second wife Carolyn and their three children, Catherine, Laura, and Mildred (Midge).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in 1921 in Redding, California, Fritz grew up in the rural farming environment of Susanville, along with his one-year-older brother Harry. At the age of 15, Fritz moved with his family to Sacramento (Riddell 2001:16). As six and seven year old boys, Fritz and Harry had already become "avid Indian artifact collectors" (*ibid.*). Fritz's passion for archaeology grew over the years, and he received a great deal of encouragement both from California professionals such as Frank Fanenga and from avocational archaeologists in Sacramento.

After serving in the Marine Corps in the South Pacific during WWII (what Fritz called "... a joyful, all-paid, island-to-island tour..." [Riddell 2002:20]),

Fritz and his brother Harry got jobs with the Bureau of Reclamation, just before they decided to enter the anthropology program at the University of California at Berkeley in 1948 as Juniors under the GI bill (*ibid.*). John Rowe and Robert Heizer were then new faculty members in the department, and Fritz decided to pursue his love of California archaeology by studying with Heizer. At the same time, Lila O'Neal was giving classes in textiles, followed by Anna Gayton when O'Neal died (*ibid.*). Fritz's fellow students included Don Lathrap, Robert Greengo, and Arnold Pilling, all of whom studied with Heizer although not always under the most enjoyable circumstances (*ibid.*: 21).

In 1948, Fritz began to participate in surveys throughout the state of California using standardized site forms, something that had not been done previously (*ibid.*:21-22). This now obviously necessary first step in site recording and protection was to carry over to his work in Peru in the Acarí, Yauca, and Chala Valleys and the Atiquipa region. There, he used standardized forms for recording the sites that he and Dorothy Menzel Riddell initially visited in the 1950s and for sites discovered subsequently in those areas.¹

Fritz also drew on an interest he developed in California in Indian ethnography to supplement our understanding of the archaeological record. "I could not separate the past from the present," he wrote (*ibid.*: 22). When I accompanied him on our surveys of the Peruvian south coast, he would frequently stop to chat with residents to ask them what they were planting, how they were getting their crops to market (if they did), how the weather had been for planting, what they used to catch crayfish from the river, etc. At the end of the day, he would write up his notes from these conversations and later incorporate the data into his interpretations of past material

¹ The completed site forms are currently in the archive of the California Institute for Peruvian Studies (CIPS) at the California State University, St. Stanislaus. Fritz had the foresight to arrange for all of his notes and the records of CIPS to be archived at that institution just prior to his death.

culture, settlement patterns, climatic influences on the local economy, and so forth.²

Many of the sites Riddell and Menzel investigated were mapped using only hand-held tapes and a compass. Nevertheless, the resulting plans were usually of exceptional quality. For example, the maps that they made to supplement their recording and sub-surface investigations of Tambo Viejo (PV 74-1) and Quebrada de la Vaca (PV 77-1) are not only extremely accurate but also contain much architectural detail. In fact, in spite of the 50 years that have elapsed since these maps were made and the sophisticated equipment readily available to the archaeologists who have worked in the region since 1954, there are still no better maps of these sites.

Riddell and Menzel's work at Tambo Viejo and other sites in the Acarí and Yauca Valleys, and in the Chala and Atiquipa vicinities, provided the basis for one of the first occurrence (similiary) seriations of the ceramics of the south coast of Peru (Menzel and Riddell 1986). The two investigators determined that at Tambo Viejo, the Inca had built their settlement/administrative center in the same location as an earlier Nasca one (*ibid.*). The answer to why they had done so stimulated Menzel's thinking while she was working with Fritz, and she published her reflections on the problem in her frequently cited article on the Inca occupation of southern coastal Peru (Menzel 1959).

Menzel and Riddell also mapped the Nasca component at Tambo Viejo using surface ceramics as an indicator of which buildings and surrounding walls were of Nasca cultural origin and which were Inca. The combined map was produced in two colors: one for the Nasca occupation and walls and another for the Inca buildings, plazas, roads, and walls.³

The site maps, studies of architectural details and excavations at Tambo Viejo and Quebrada de la Vaca provided a wealth of data for comparing Inca male vs. female and upper class vs. middle to lower-class clothing types and decorations. Not only were these clothing items thoroughly cataloged, described, and systematically examined, they were also cleaned and stored with great care. Along with other materials from the Riddell/Menzel project, the textiles are still available for study at the Museo Regional de Ica (MRI).

However, Menzel and Riddell were interested in more than clothing and architecture. They obtained some excellent data on the regional Inca cultivars. In this coastal setting they documented an eclectic mix of terrestrial and marine subsistence items including a variety of root crops, different species of fish, a number of edible terrestrial animals, and many varieties of birds. They discovered and correctly interpreted the significance of *quipus* and coca bags as grave goods, noted variations in storage practices, saw evidence for trade with the jungle, and carried out physical anthropological studies of the adults and children, including demography, cranial deformations, and paleopathologies of the Inca period inhabitants (see von Hagen [1955] for some of their interpretations; also Menzel [1959] and Menzel and Riddell [1986] for many of the others).

Fritz returned to California to take up full time work there while Menzel continued with her Andean studies. It was almost thirty years later, following his retirement, that Fritz decided to travel to the same area to see first hand what had been done in the intervening period.

According to long-time friend William Olsen, himself a California archaeologist and a close colleague, Fritz's return was motivated by his feeling that Peru was a greater challenge than California or the Great Basin and by a passionate interest in mortuary analysis, a topic that was becoming difficult to pursue in the United States (personal communication, 2003).

I believe the most important reason is the lack of professional archaeological attention paid to a region

² These notes, too, are contained in the St. Stanislaus CIPS archives.

³ To my knowledge, this map remains unpublished.

that Fritz felt deserved more, especially in view of his fierce devotion to preserving the past. He had seen that in the 30 years since the Inca Road survey, little additional archaeological work had occurred in the area. Discussing the team's initial work at Tambo Viejo in 1954, von Hagen (1955:232) wrote:

They [the Riddells] would have to work with speed, for even as they established themselves, men were pulling down the ruins to obtain the adobe. Amazing as it may seem, after five hundred years the rectangular sun-dried bricks were still in such perfect condition that townspeople found it easier to take them from the ruins than to make new adobe blocks.

This turned out to be tragically accurate. When Fritz returned to the field in 1984, he observed the continuing destruction of many of the sites in the valley that he and Menzel had recorded. Indeed, several had either been totally destroyed by construction of houses and the plowing of land or were partly destroyed by the building of public facilities such as an enclosed soccer field ("coliseo municipal"). A school had been raised right in the heart of the archaeological site of Tambo Viejo, and looting of building materials from the site was proceeding at an accelerated pace.

The main reason for this destruction was that arable land in the middle Acarí Valley has always been scarce, but the twentieth century population was increasing ever more quickly as new capital was invested in mining and olive export operations in the region. To alleviate pressure on the land, the municipal government of Acarí, as well as the provincial and departmental governments, had caved in to political exigencies and had allowed squatters to build their initially ephemeral huts on the site. Ever looking to establish a permanent claim to these lands, the residents, of course, soon transformed their houses made of straw mats (*esteras*) into stone and adobe walls and foundations. After all, a ready supply of building materials was at hand. This story is familiar to Peruvianists.

Fritz, however, decided to confront the problem head-on, as he tended to confront all problems. He

realized that he had to get the local, regional, and national authorities on his side to help save these sites, or at least what was left of Tambo Viejo. After his initial trip back in 1984, Fritz attempted to interest professionals in carrying out research on the southern Peruvian coast and at the same time to raise money for preservation efforts.

To achieve these goals, Fritz founded the California Institute for Peruvian Studies (CIPS) as a non-profit organization in the State of California. His idea was to set up a facility in the south coast region (preferably in the Acarí Valley) that could serve as an operations center for visiting scholars. His dream was that it would include living and eating quarters, research space, work areas, storage facilities, and small museum exhibits to inform local residents. The grant money obtained by visiting researchers would keep it all going. The entity, CIPS, would also facilitate such investigations by assisting foreign researchers in obtaining permits and dealing with any related governmental regulations. Peruvian professionals and students would become involved, as collaborative projects resulted in joint publications and field training opportunities.

Over the next years, Fritz's Andean archaeological activities and those of CIPS were one and the same. The following excerpts from the by-laws of CIPS summarize Fritz's objectives for the organization and the main thrust of his own actions:

. . . to facilitate . . . , in consonance with Peruvian law and custom, the scientific study of past and present Peruvian lifestyles and associated environments; . . . to provide a legal vehicle . . . to involve students, professional scientists and educational institutions, both Peruvian and non-Peruvian, in cooperative studies of Peruvian history and pre-history and allied disciplines . . . to provide logistical support and direction to . . . cooperating individuals and institutions, both in and out of the field . . .

Between 1985 and 1992, Fritz and a growing number of individuals sharing his vision for such an organization made good progress toward a number of these goals. First, several North American college

and university faculty were conducting field training of students in the region. Second, several advanced students were coming to the region to obtain data for their M.A. theses, and the number of inquiries along these lines was growing. Third, a top notch facility had been created in the Acarí Valley for housing and research. Fourth, a formal collaborative arrangement had been set up between CIPS and the Universidad Católica Santa María (UCSM) in Arequipa. Students and faculty from that institution were incorporated into CIPS's research projects, and UCSM field schools ("prácticas del campo") were also carried out every semester.

In the 1980s and 1990s, several articles and monographs (including some field reports) were produced under CIPS auspices (Belan F. and Kent 1989; Belan F. and Riddell 1987; Katterman 1994; Katterman and Riddell 1994; Kent and Kowta 1994; Kowta 1987; Riddell 1985, 1986b, 1987b, 1989; Riddell and Valdéz C. 1987-1988, 1988; Ritter 1994; Robinson 1994; Schaller 1988; Valdéz C. 1989, 1990). Fritz, unlike most of his Andean archaeological colleagues, decided to publish his Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) field reports immediately and to make them available to anyone who wanted them. What he did not do, and what some of the professional community eventually came to criticize, was to polish up the reports for professional quality publications. Fritz believed in the value of getting information out to colleagues quickly rather than waiting. Also, he didn't want to miss opportunities to go into the field, because the rate of destruction was so rapid and he believed that his presence and his activities were playing a role in preserving the past.

It was not that Fritz failed to publish his CIPS work, for he certainly did do so. His first task, he felt, was to edit and publish the report on Tambo Viejo, jointly authored (and updated) with Menzel (Menzel and Riddell 1986). Articles began appearing in professional journals such as *Andean Past* and the *Gaceta Arqueológica Andina* (see list in previous paragraph). It was largely Fritz who directed or facilitated the field work described and ensured that

these articles came to light.⁴ Fritz also presented his results to the professional community of archaeologists and Andean scholars (Riddell 1986a, 1987a; Riddell and Robinson 1986). CIPS's activities were regularly described in the "Current Research" portion of, first, *American Antiquity* and then the Society for American Archaeology's Current Research website (now defunct), as well as in the now-discontinued *Willay*. Fritz was the main author of these contributions.

However, there were some problems – as Fritz would say, "Every silver lining has a cloud in front of it." One, of course, was well beyond Fritz's control. The *Sendero Luminoso* insurgents had infiltrated most coastal cities by the early 1990s, and research there was becoming increasingly difficult. In 1990, the winner of Acarí's municipal elections was a mayor who was pro-preservation. He even found a building on the main plaza to serve as a permanent museum. One night in November, the terrorists entered his home and that of one of the principal officials of the local Agrarian bank. The two were dragged into the plaza and were dynamited to death in front of their families and neighbors.

Fritz was not a strong Spanish speaker. When dealing with Peruvian officials, he had to rely on members of his North American team who were fluent. When such persons were not available, he depended on Peruvian allies who, although they were sufficiently patient with him to understand his attempts at communication, were sometimes inclined to put their own spin on what Fritz had said, or on what they thought he had said. Fritz's message could sometimes be altered according to the personal agendas of those translating. Peruvians embroiled in local disputes could manipulate their affiliation with Francis Riddell and/or CIPS to their own advantage.

It also became clear, after several initial years (i.e., by 1988), that grant money and professional interest in the Acarí-Chala region were not increas-

⁴ Many of the articles in *Andean Past* 4, for example, were published by CIPS investigators working directly or indirectly with Fritz on the field work and follow-up studies.

ing as Fritz had hoped. Keeping the preservation efforts going cost money. One solution that Fritz tried was to set up an archaeo-tourism enterprise (à la EarthWatch). Participants would join Fritz and pay for the privilege. Part of the money covered the individuals' costs (plane fare, ground transportation, room and board, and field supplies) and part went to CIPS to cover research costs (radiocarbon dates, specialized analyses, printing of reports, mailings, etc.). Soon, Fritz and a small group of CIPS professionals had adopted this method to fund the work in the region. Many in both Peru and North America saw this as a great idea, way ahead of its time. However, there were (and still are) some in both hemispheres who viewed it as a cheapening of the profession. Although this created a controversy that hovered over Fritz's head from the late 1980s, he kept the program afloat without depending on any U.S. government funding. Some regard this independence positively.

Fritz considered most of what he did in the field, and what he encouraged other members of his teams to do, as emergency preservation. His program had several components. He would survey intensively parts of the Acarí and Yauca valleys and the Chala and Atiquipa regions that had not been well covered, to record new sites. Old sites were revisited and their condition reassessed. Collections were made at heavily looted sites, mostly cemeteries, with an attempt made to preserve the associations among grave goods scattered around sun-bleached human bones. The collected materials were cleaned, described, cataloged, and prepared for storage. Fritz hoped that a ceramics expert or textile specialist would some day study the collections. The materials, meanwhile, would be preserved and not left to rot on the pampa. Some objects were even used in talks and demonstrations given to local schoolchildren by both Peruvian and North American researchers.

Fritz also wanted to be sure that all collected materials were well cared for in perpetuity and available for use by subsequent generations of students. He arranged for the staff at the Museo Regional de Ica (especially current director Susana Arce) to work with textile expert Grace Katterman

and student Frances Durocher. In the late 1980s through the late 1990s, they examined all of the boxes of material deposited there in the 1950s to replace or redo labels and re-pack the collections. Riddell's reputation among the staff at the museum, and indeed among many Peruvian archaeologists, was as a North American vitally concerned not only with the investigation of Peru's past, but its preservation as well. The degree of respect he earned in this arena is unrivaled.

In March 1987, at the same time as Fritz was attempting to interest local officials and archaeologists in the preservation efforts he was carrying out, a local farmer began leveling a field using heavy machinery on his plot of land due west of the main Acarí road and across from the southern portion of Tambo Viejo. Human remains began to appear everywhere in the hitherto unknown Tambo Viejo cemetery. The need to take immediate action to document and halt the looting led to the formation of an alliance between Fritz and Prof. Augusto Belan Franco of the UCSM in Arequipa. Their goal was to intervene and conduct rescue excavations. The Instituto Nacional de Cultura in Lima granted a permit and the excavations were carried out in 1987-1988 (see Belan F. and Riddell 1987; Kent and Kowta 1994). The farmer was compensated (after extended negotiations between him and Augusto Belan) for being unable to plant his crops in the field.

This was one of the few instances in which Fritz actively took part in excavations in Peru after his initial work during the 1950s. Survey and preservation, rather than digging, were his main foci. The passion for preserving the past for future generations that characterized Fritz's work in California also typified his activities in Peru. He shared his enthusiasm with anyone who would listen. Some became infected by his devotion and helped him achieve his goals. Others were offended by him or his direct approach. Fritz had little time for these latter people. Those who knew him well knew that Fritz would convey an attitude of warm congeniality with almost everyone he met. Dan Sandweiss (personal communication, 2002) once stated that a person had to be pretty bad if not even Fritz liked him. Fritz

said, "My natural tendency is to like everyone, or at least give them a chance to prove they are, or are not, nincompoops" (Riddell 2002:21).

In addition to the material culture collections he made or caused to be made, his publications and reports, and archaeological activism, Fritz's other notable contribution to Andean archaeology is the numerous students and professionals who received a career boost or helping hand from him. This aspect of Fritz's legacy provides another California connection. For example, he gave Ed Lanning his first opportunity to work in the field, in California. As noted above, he was working under Heizer when he and Don Lathrap carried out excavations and surveys. He provided the impetus and logistical support for the investigations and thesis research of numerous individuals. He also unselfishly shared *all* of his notes and site-related data with any serious investigator who needed them. This generosity and support has resulted in reports, theses, professional meeting presentations, and/or published articles on Andean Prehistory by the following individuals: Alina Aparicio de la Rivas, Georgia Britt, Patrick Carmichael, Frances Durocher, Cheryl Fairchild, Stacy Greenwood, Vern Hensler, Carol Howell, Grace Katterman, Jonathan Kent, Makoto Kowta, Kathy Niles-Hensler, E. Breck Parkman, Gonzalo Presbítero R., Eric W. Ritter, Roger Robinson, John Schaller, Lidio Valdéz C., Dwight Wallace, and Meichell Walsh.

In 1994 Fritz received the degree of Doctor *honoris causa* from the UCSM in Arequipa. It was one of the proudest moments in Fritz's professional career in Peru and perhaps in his overall life. Speaking as a member of the archaeology profession, and in light of what Fritz had done for Andean archaeology over a thirty year time span, I think it was the least we could do.

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Fritz Riddell and fellow CIPS members in Acari. Photo by Jonathan Kent [c. 1988].