Script

Voice 1

A young boy leads a man up a mountain path.  They are high in the mountains of Peru. They walk through the thick trees and plants.  The man is searching for something.  When they reach the top of the mountain, he sees what he has been looking for.  Ancient stone walls cover the mountain side.  Large plants grow over these walls.  There are many stone steps and terraces. Long ago, people made these level areas of earth that look like large steps.  On the terraces are many connected rooms.  Trees grow in the middle of some of the rooms.  And many of the walls are falling down. The man and boy are looking over the ancient remains of a city. Today’s Spotlight is on this ancient city called Machu Picchu.

Voice 2

The man searching for this city was Hiram Bingham.  He was a history teacher from Yale University in the United States.  In the early 1900’s, he heard stories about a great city in the mountains of Peru.  Many people called this city the “Lost city of the Incas”.

Voice 1

The Inca were the people who lived in the mountains of Peru long ago.  The Inca Empire was large and powerful.  They built many cities, temples and roads. In the 1500s, Spanish forces from Europe arrived in Peru.  They attacked and defeated the Inca Empire.  They took most of the land, gold, and cities of the Incas.

Voice 2

However, local people told Bingham about this ‘Lost city of the Incas’ - a city that the Spanish never found. Bingham was excited by the stories. He believed that if he found this city, it would be in its original condition.  Bingham devoted himself to finding this ancient city.

Voice 1

In 1911, Bingham began searching for the ‘Lost city.’  He spoke with native farmers in the mountains of Peru.  He asked them if they knew where the lost city was.  The farmers sent Bingham with a young guide.  The young boy was native to these mountains and knew how to find the city.

Voice 2

When Bingham arrived at Machu Picchu, he was amazed.  There was so much to study.  There are a total of 140 structures in the city. The Incas cut their building stones to be flat on the sides.  Each stone fit perfectly against the next one. The Incas built Machu Picchu to be very strong.  They made the walls wider at the bottom than at the top.  They also made the tops of doors rounded instead of square.

Voice 1

Bingham returned to Machu Picchu many times. He and other experts from Yale discovered many ancient objects - like pottery containers, gold, and human bodies. They took these things back to Yale to study them. In the United States Bingham was a hero.  People said he discovered Machu Picchu.

Voice 2

But many people believe Machu Picchu was never lost!  In fact, native Peruvians have lived in and around Machu Picchu for many years.  When Bingham first came to Machu Picchu, there were a few Peruvian families living on the mountain top.  Some families were even growing vegetables on the terraces.

Voice 1

However, not many people outside that area knew about Machu Picchu.  Machu Picchu is in the Urubamba Valley in central Peru.  This valley is in a hidden area of the jungle. The Incas built the city on top of a very high mountain.  Machu Picchu is 2,430 meters above sea level. At the edge of the city, the edge of the mountains drops quickly.  At the bottom, the Urubamba River flows through the valley. Machu Picchu is also far from present day roads and cities.  All these things make Machu Picchu difficult to get to.