



# **Papers in the Wastebasket**

## **More Journeys in Latin America**

Warren Watson & Albie Fine

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# Dedication

To the aspiring roads<sup>1</sup> scholar, may your longest lasting affliction be the travel bug. Travel is a learning experience of its own. It is a simultaneous history, language, cultural and geography lesson. Not only that, with a backpack, it is also a good workout to significantly increase fitness.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a nod to the excellence of Rhodes scholars.

# Preface

This is the sequel to the *Patagonia Papers*. In that book, the main character, Albie Fine, flew into Santiago, went South around the bottom of South America and flew out of Buenos Aires in a thirty-day span over Christmas and New Year (1997 to 1998). In this story, *Papers in the Wastebasket*, he flew into and out of Santiago but went North to Peru and Bolivia<sup>2</sup> over a sixty-day span in September and October (1999).

The following text and photographs are from Albie's vision of that part of the world where a visitor may be asked "Por favor Señor, papers in the wastebasket, not down the toilet!" Albie first got the idea for the title of this book from a sign in a washroom in Ushuaia of the Argentinian part of Tierra del Fuego which said, "No tirar papel higiénico u otros elementos en el inodoro<sup>3</sup>." An English sign in Cuzco, Peru, explicitly said, "Papers in the Wastebasket."

This book, like *Patagonia Papers* is a guidebook and a storybook in one. The reader should not worry that it is a diatribe about toilets. There is no underlying toilet theme. However, it is Albie's wish that people do not flush the Earth down the toilet. It does not fit in the wastebasket, so it should be treated well. People should be able to enjoy clean air, water, cities, beaches and most of all, travel. There is so much of the Earth that is worth seeing and saving. Not only that, travel demonstrates just how lucky Canadians and Americans are.

Thoughts of the fleeting nature of the Earth accompanied Albie as he wondered whether good ole Coriolis would give a different spin to the culture in a remote part of the world. The differences fascinated him, but most importantly of all, summer was just around the corner. Perhaps, he could see the Southern Cross again. At the beginning of September, it was cloudy and rainy every day. Being rained on and

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<sup>2</sup> Google Maps, Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Peru/@-20.0417205,-71.0344899,6z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x9105c850c05914f5:0xf29e011279210648!8m2!3d-9.189967!4d-75.015152> and from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Peru/@-27.3192958,-70.1555837,6z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x9105c850c05914f5:0xf29e011279210648!8m2!3d-9.189967!4d-75.015152>  
Chile Location, Size and Extent, *Nations Encyclopedia*, Retrieved April 29, 2020 from <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Americas/Chile-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html> Chile is 221 miles wide just North of Antofagasta.

<sup>3</sup> Google translate was used throughout this book. The reader can find it at <https://translate.google.ca/>

misunderstood, he could have been in Vancouver, BC and saved the airfare. Because of this book, of course, the reader may be inclined to visit that part of the world to form a vision of his own.

Travel journals and documents accompanied Albie in plastic grocery bags which at home lined his wastebaskets. Reading his journals and looking at photographs to write this book made him relive his pleasant journeys. This book will allow the reader to do the same.







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# **1. ¿Santa Desdemona?**

**Within Sight of the Majestic Andes ... Sometimes**

## 1.1 The Arrival

Albie went down south from Trail, BC. His flight was from Calgary, Alberta to Dallas, Texas and then to Santiago, Chile. Road transportation got him the eight hours to Calgary with a stop in Fernie, BC to visit his sister and family. His sister had lived in Prince Rupert, and Albie hoped this would not give him bad luck with rain.

In Calgary, he stayed with a buddy, and they went to a baseball game between the Calgary Cannons and the Edmonton Trappers. The Calgary Cannons were a minor league baseball team from 1985 to 2002. They became the Albuquerque, New Mexico Isotopes<sup>4</sup>. He knew he was about to get an opportunity to contrast that game with fútbol.

Travel is not trivial to get to Santiago, but Albie had a strong attraction. Apparently gravity works because people are pulled toward the centre of the Earth. For Albie there seems to be a pull to a point on the surface of the Earth. This is fortunate because Earth's centre can hardly be reached in fourteen hours. There is a lot of digging through rock.

Albie still felt a little like Jules Verne as he got off the plane 33.5 degrees south of the equator in Santiago, Chile, the San Diego of the South in latitude anyways. Albie chose Santiago the first time to access Patagonia, the southernmost reaches of the South American continent. At that time, Albie flew in and stayed only long enough to see the Mary statue hill (Cerro San Cristobal), to touch base with the Navimag ferry office and to visit Valparaiso before heading south to Curico. He only spent two days, but this time it was longer.

Albie loved the fact that there was a huge Mary statue. Christianity and Jesus are the best things that happened to the world. It is not even close. Cheap fossil fuels take a distant second place to the religion which espoused "Love thy neighbour and forgive thine enemy." This was better than "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." The world would be a better place if countries followed Matthew 5:43-44.

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<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia, The Calgary Cannons, Retrieved April 6, 2020 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calgary\\_Cannons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calgary_Cannons)

John 3:16, the basis of Christianity, is also a good biblical quote which states, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life<sup>5</sup>.”

William Blake, the British poet, engraver and painter, said, “The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness<sup>6</sup>.” Blake lived from 1757 to 1827 which were tumultuous times because of the American and French revolutions and perhaps his sympathy for democracy. Did the British monarchy forgive him or not understand poetry? However, his views likely did not help his career<sup>7</sup>.

The fact, that free-market capitalism with no regulations, in third place, can be beaten out, shows just how good Christianity and fossil fuels really are. The religions which are okay with death to thine enemy or even explicitly espouse that sentiment do not even crack the top ten.

What else is on the list? Electricity (4), fire (5), the green revolution of Norman Borlaug<sup>8</sup> (6), antibiotics such as penicillin discovered by Alexander Fleming<sup>9</sup> (7), the airplane invented by the Wright brothers (8), nuclear power (9), and vaccinations (10), developed by Louis Pasteur and Edward Jenner<sup>10</sup>. The green revolution should not be confused with the green movement, the green new steal, and anything else which believes carbon dioxide is a poison. However, the world should not panic over overpopulation. Discoveries like Borlaug’s high-yield, disease-resistant wheat varieties reduce world hunger.

From the airport, the \$5 USD minivan took Albie to where he had stayed at the beginning of the Patagonia trip. Hotel Paris was on a cobblestone street with a European feel, and it was a short walk to the hills in the city. It was a nice-looking place with an inner courtyard and tables at which to eat. A bell rings when people

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<sup>5</sup> John 3:16, New International Version, The Bible Gateway, Retrieved June 12, 2025 from <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A16&version=NIV>

<sup>6</sup> Elinzano, Mo, The 34 greatest poets of all time, Deseret.com, Published: March 20, 2015, 12:00 a.m. MDT, Retrieved June 10, 2025 from <https://www.deseret.com/2015/3/20/20479016/poets-famous-quotes-birthplace-writers-edgar-allen-poe-maya-angelou-emily-dickinson/>

<sup>7</sup> William Blake, The Poetry Foundation, Retrieved June 20, 2025 from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/william-blake>

<sup>8</sup> Norman Borlaug, Wikipedia, Retrieved June 12, 2025 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman\\_Borlaug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Borlaug)

<sup>9</sup> Discovery and Development of Penicillin, American Chemical Society, Retrieved June 12, 2025 from <https://www.acs.org/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/flemingpenicillin.html>

<sup>10</sup> Edward Jenner invented vaccination, Louis Pasteur invented vaccines, Pasteur Institute, Retrieved June 12, 2025 from <https://www.pasteur.fr/en/institut-pasteur/history/troisieme-epoque-1877-1887>

enter, and late at night, guests must knock. Upstairs rooms were very quiet. The place was bright and clean.

However, it felt like Albie had stayed there 1,000 nights. Was it because the place had an exotic feel without being in Arabia? Partially. However, it was 1,000 nights because according to the *Lonely Planet*, it rented rooms by the hour. In spite of the warning, it was still a nice place. Albie stayed around a total of three weeks which was about 720 hours.

The hotel was close to the hills of Santiago, and it was also close to shopping which was a different experience. In many stores, the goods were not accessible to the public. The customer had to find the item behind a counter, pay for it at the cashier and then go to the retrieval desk to get it. A customer could not ask the cashier where something was, even if that person was the only clerk currently available because that was not his job. The cashier had only one function, namely, to take payment. Those were the rules.



## 1.2 Spring Time in Santiago

Albie left the Northern Hemisphere when the first day of school tells people that summer is gone, and winter is on its way. In Santiago, it was the end of August, and winter was leaving. However, it still lingered because a cold crispness was present in the air and on rainy days, it was uncomfortably cold, sometimes eight degrees Celsius at night. This was somewhat reminiscent of Vancouver winters in British Columbia.

The mountains were covered in snow at the top, leaving a picturesque scene whenever the haze of Santiago allowed it. The blossoms and the buds had started shedding their winter coats, and the beauty could not escape notice.

Albie's favourite spot in the city was the lookout at the top of Cerro Santa Lucia. He enjoyed sitting at the lookout watching the city below and the Andes in the distance. The lookout opened after sunrise and closed at sunset.

The guards had to chase Albie out at sunset because the haze which almost obscured the Andes in the afternoon relented, and with the reds and oranges of the sunset, it was hard to put his camera away. This was the best time to take photographs, but this hardly concerned the guards who were preoccupied with public safety. To make a city park safe, the gates were locked, and when the gates were open, there was a sign-in sheet. Albie scanned the sign-in list each time he went in, making sure there was no Jack D. Ripper.

## **1.3 Fútbol Matches**

Fútbolistas are revered in Chile. Perhaps, the reverence is a little stronger than in Canada because the poor in Chile have little else. While in Chile, Albie saw two fútbol partidos which should not be confused with (grid iron) football. He, in actual fact, did watch American Football in Chile. The Chileans and Argentineans call themselves Americans. Albie had a Canadian boss who was so good at his job that he talked soccer all the time. He would have been at home in South America.

### 1.3.1 Colo Colo

Soccer games can actually get rained out. Albie thought that was odd. He went to see Colo Colo (of Santiago) in a downpour. This team had been the champions for the previous three years. Were they supposed to be playing Pepsi Pepsi? Albie forgot whom, but asking for Cola Cola games got no satisfactory answer. Nobody understood him as usual. Just one letter made a huge difference to being understood or not.

When he got to the stadium, the rain was quite heavy, and the field had a lake at one end. Where were the kids sailing model yachts? It started to make sense why the game had been cancelled.

Albie copied the Colo Colo hymn<sup>11</sup> from an inside wall. It was composed by Carlos Ulloa Díaz in 1943. It had words like champion, glory, valor and heart (corazón) He looked around, and the place had a familiar feel. He was in the soccer equivalent of the Maple Leaf Gardens or the Montréal Forum.

Colo Colo was actually not going to win the title this year. They could not catch the first-place team. Universidad de Chile was hot. Soccer may not be as tough as North American football which is held in ice, snow or rain, and it does not have as much scoring, but nevertheless, it is exciting.

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<sup>11</sup> Himno de Colo Colo, Retrieved April 29, 2020 from <http://www.csdcolocolo.cl/sites/default/files/noticias/field-archivos/Himno%20de%20Colo-Colo.pdf>

### 1.3.2 Universidad Catolica

Albie's first soccer match in Chile was at the Universidad Catolica (also a team of Santiago). He was told to catch the city bus with the name of the stadium on the front. O'Higgins Boulevard had parallel bus stops, so there was not much time to find the correct bus. A bus did not stop if there was only one person at the stop, and he did not wave. That was the Chilean wave which is not to be confused with the Mexican wave which occurred in North American sports stadiums.

In the front window of every bus there was a sign with six or seven lines of names. There was no time to read all the names. He panicked with about six buses charging down on his stop, and he settled on bus 342. At least it went east. When it stopped going East, Albie got off and started walking. He stopped to ask for directions which also served to practise his pidgin Spanish. Though, he was not sure what language pigeons really speak. Is it pigeon pidgin or pidgin pigeon?

"Taxi, you have to take a taxi, it is too far." A local confirmed that he was on the right track, and he continued walking. Locals always recommend the expensive route because tourists always have money even if they have a stylish hole in their jeans. It was just above the knee like a rock star of course, but that was where the similarity ended.

"They flew, so they have money" goes through the minds of locals helping tourists. At least they want to help. He walked for about an hour, and then he finally crossed the bus route as he got closer to the stadium. Now, he had time to read the front of the bus. Bus 327 was the bus he wanted, and Estado UC was the name he needed. He wanted the walk, but time was becoming short, so he flagged the bus down.

He got to the stadium in time and bought his ticket at the first booth he saw. It makes a difference from which booth a ticket is bought. That decides the section. At least it was the cheap section. Albie sat beside a cordoned-off area of seats he assumed were for the band. A drummer was already there. Would the other instruments arrive later? Albie could see that the end zone section was fenced off from the field and from the other sections.

Before the game started, Albie watched two kids playing with a soccer ball. One was older in his teens, and the other was younger. The older one could keep the ball to

himself for a long string of hits, and they were both quite adept at passing the ball to each other. The ball never hit the ground because fútbol was in their blood. There were not many other sports taking up their interest.

Just before the game got underway, the band was in place. No other instruments showed up. This was a one instrument band. The drum beat away the whole time while the fans chanted and cheered. The atmosphere was like the NCAA football championship game in January but a little more frenzied. The spectators of the Calgary baseball game were very subdued in comparison.

Albie was never able to count the number of chants or songs the Chileans knew. It was either one that lasted ninety minutes with a break at the half or it was two, one in the first half and one in the second half. It was probably more, but variety was not as important as what was going on the field. Catolica won four goals to one.

### 1.3.3 Italiano

The second match Albie watched in Chile was between Cobreloa (Calama) and Italiano (La Florida part of Santiago). This match was at a different stadium in metropolitan Santiago. Albie could see from the colours of everybody's shirts that the stands were like a garden of spectators. Where Albie was sitting was equally divided between the fans for each team involved. He sat down near centre field not far from the orange shirts.

He noticed that the field had the required barbed-wire fence, but it was still deemed necessary for the officials to be escorted on and off of the field by fully equipped riot police. They had their sidearm, a truncheon or a night stick, helmet and full body shield. There were seven of them. So, if a referee made a bad call, he was living dangerously. With an escort, a referee is free to call the game as he sees fit. What about the fans? Who protects them from each other? People did not seem to worry about sitting amongst a caged group of excited people. Most proudly wore their team's colours.

Would a nil-nil draw mean a game was boring? No, of course not. However, a lack of scoring is often the argument against soccer. It should not be. The game was exciting.

In addition to fútbol, the only other game Albie watched in South America was chess. He watched a chess game in the covered entrance of the Museo Chileno de Arte Pre-Colombino. At one point, everybody started getting excited, and yet fútbol was not involved. Not only that, nothing exciting had happened in the chess game. What, did Elvis pass by again? Albie could not even see one Elvis impersonator, but everybody was still excited and exuberant. Was there a coup d'état? No, Albie saw no armed men. He had to ask, "¿Que pasa?"

"Nieve." was the answer. There was snow, but Albie had to look twice. Any skier knew fresh snow was a cause for excitement, but it melted as it hit the ground. Nothing stayed on the ground where he was, but he found out later from his art instructor that this was the first snowfall in forty years in the city itself.

It was time to break out the skis, but nobody had skis. Did snow signal the end of the world? Albie felt safe. He had waited for the end of the world on 9 9 99 but it

never happened. It never did for Y2K either. Does a person who cannot spell Y2K really exist? Yes, they believe snow signals the end of the world. There always seemed to be the end of the world due to something believed by simpletons.



## 1.4 Poesía

In addition to futbolistas, poets are revered in Chile. Two Chilean poets have received the Nobel Prize in literature, Pablo Neruda and school teacher, Gabriela Mistral. An entire area of Santiago was named for Mistral's award, Suecia. That's Sweden, the country where Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) was awarded her prize.

Suecia was the night club area of Santiago (Providencia). There were bar names like Mr. Ed, Green Bull, Woodstock Pub, Havana Club, Viva Mejico, Old Boston and the Zeppel-Inn Pub. Albie saw the Gypsy Kings play Chilean music (Spanish) at the Zeppel-Inn. It was good but there was no black dog<sup>12</sup>. According to Wikipedia, Suecia was nicknamed Sucia (dirty) and the nightclubs have disappeared<sup>13</sup>.

Were there any signs of poetry? Yes. The Cerro Santa Lucia was locked up, but that did not prevent people begging for money on the way into the park. The square below the entrance at Sta Lucia (Santa Loo see ah) and the Alameda (Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins) was a favourite hangout for students and poets.

Being someone who could afford airfare, Albie was a target. The beggars would strike up a conversation to break the ice, or what it really did was to allow them to ascertain which poem to offer. They had a poem in several different languages for which the recipient would give a donation. Albie saw several such poems.

Hearing the word, "Lee-vee-yet<sup>14</sup>, nyet," (Привет, нет translated hi, no) they would give a poem in Russian, or the phrase "Non, merci j'en ai un" would solicit a French poem. "Guten tag" got a poem in German. These beggars were certainly high IQ students of life. Albie never did check Indonesian. He also knew a few words in that language which were just enough to get a beer or a taxi. In Italian, he decided to be cooperative. Ciao, come stai, Adoro la poesia. They would never believe an Italian did not like poetry. Albie got a poem in Italian.

Cerro Santa Lucia did not by any means have the monopoly on great views. Cerro San Cristobal was an alternate spot with better hours and a funicular (a cable train on tracks) to the top. Albie also tried the easy hike up the back of the mountain. The

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<sup>12</sup> A hit song on Led Zeppelin's fourth studio album.

<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia, Barrio Suecia, Retrieved April 5, 2020 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrio\\_Suecia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrio_Suecia)

<sup>14</sup> Language was checked or looked up on <https://translate.google.com/>

funicular did not require personal sunscreen and water like the hike did. The bonus with this alternate hill was it was open for the sunset.

The hill of San Cristobal and the city are dominated by the statue of Mary. That statue alone indicates that Chile is a religious country. Albie did not really think Santiago was named for the Shakespearean villain of Othello, but perhaps, it should have been named Santa Maria. On the way down from San Cristobal, the sign counting the seconds to the new millennium, that had been present in 1997, was missing. It was still 1999.

Another difference from home, probably due to Coriolis, was that streets get named for dates of historical importance. September seemed to be the month for Chilean national holidays. September 6 was a celebrated holiday in place of September 11 which was the day Pinochet took over the country with a military coup in 1973<sup>15</sup>. The deposed Chilean communist president, Salvador Allende (pronounced A-yen-day) of the Unidad Popular socialist party, committed suicide on the same day. Albie wondered if Jack Kevorkian was present. Allende made the country destitute and poised for a dictator with his democratic socialism. He was South America's first elected Marxist<sup>16</sup>.

There were two famous Chileans named Isabel Allende. The author<sup>17</sup> who wrote *The House of the Spirits* (1982) and got the 2014 Presidential Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama was the daughter of Salvador Allende's cousin. The politician<sup>18</sup>, who was the first female president of the Senate in Chilean history, was Salvador Allende's youngest daughter.

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<sup>15</sup> Wikipedia, Augusto José Ramón Pinochet Ugarte, Retrieved April 9, 2020 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto\\_Pinochet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto_Pinochet)

<sup>16</sup> Wikipedia, Salvador Allende, Retrieved April 9, 2020 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvador\\_Allende](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvador_Allende)

<sup>17</sup> Isabel Allende, Wikipedia, Retrieved June 4, 2025 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel\\_Allende](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel_Allende)

<sup>18</sup> Isabel Allende (politician), Wikipedia, Retrieved June 4, 2025 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel\\_Allende\\_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel_Allende_(politician))