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<u>Ecuadorean diary</u>

On to the Avenue of the Volcanoes and the real home of Panama hats

Special writer

A E ARE on our way down the Avenue of the Volcanoes, with a map of Ecuador spread out on the seat of our minibus. The princip the next two days, we will drive 300 miles southward from Quito through the Andes Mountains to Riobamba and Cuenca, with stops at several colorful markets and at the only linear unine outside of Peru.

On a relief map, Ecuador is three vertical stripes on the northwest coast of South America between Columbia and Peru: coast, highlands and jungle.

Columbia and Peru: coast, highlands and jungle.

A columbia and Peru: coast, highlands and jungle.

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ALTHOUGH QUITO is only 20 miles from the

ALTHOUGH GUITO is only 20 miles from the equator, it has a perpetual spring-like climate because of the altitude. Temperatures in the city never rise above 75 degrees in the daytime or drop below 65 degrees at night.

Several volcanic peaks, mostly dormant, some snow-capped, can be seen on both sides of the valley as we travel south. Rence the name "Avenue of the Volcanoes." The soil is black and rich, and the crops are lush but not tropical. The farms stretch from horizon to horizon, forming a green patchwork quilt in the crystal-clear atmosphere.

In the past, wealthy patrons owned all the bottomland, and the Indians owned the high harsher

An Ecuadorean man (left) holds a Salasaca Indian weaving. Weaving has become a ma-jor industry for the South American coun-try.

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IRIS AND MICKY JONES

slopes. Ecuador's four-year-old, very fragile democracy may change this; but the Indians still
grow com' and potatoes high up the mountain sides,
in their colorful ponches and their dark fedora bats.
The story of the hast is incredible. Europeans
tought various kinds of hast to South America, and
Indian tribes eventually used them as a tribal identity. They are worn almost universally by men,
women and children. The most common is a felt
fedora, chosen because an Italian hatmaker founded a hat factory in Ecuador in the 1920s.
Now the fedoras are literally everywhere: on city
streets, in town markets, on high mountain fields,
beside the highway. As we drive south, we will see
other hats — the flatter white hats of Riobamba
and the straw hats around Cuenca, known to us as

and the straw hats around Cuenca, known to us as

and the straw hats around Cuenca, known to us as Panama hats.

There has been a great resurgence of Ecuadrogan crafts in recent years. One of our stops is in the village of Salasaca, where American Peace Corps volunteers have helped develop the native weaving into a secondary industry as a supplement to farming.

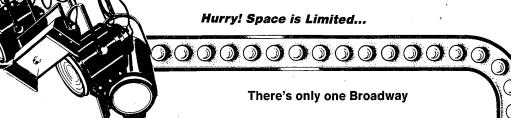
The wall hangings are spread over the walls and floors of the display room between huge hand floors. Outside, tiny children, who already look likeminiatures of their mothers, watch us curiously. The woolen wall hangings are good quality and in expensive, about \$11 for a four-by-six-foot piece.

expensive, about \$11 for a four-by-six-foot piece.

THE SUN IS setting on us when the conical spendro of Mount Chimberazo bursts skyward 21,000 feet through a cap of louds. The farmers heading home from the fields make picture postcard scenes with the control of the control o

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a. Manual I

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