

Colombian Says He's 167, Gets Hospital Study Here

By Edwin Holden

Javier Pereira, a native of Colombia, who claims he was born in 1789, the year George Washington was inaugurated President, arrived at Idlewild Airport yesterday and, believe it or not, was taken immediately to New York Hospital.

As flash bulbs sputtered and press agents stuttered, Mr. Pereira put on a good show for a man his age—whatever it may be—as he prepared to spend ten days in the hospital while doctors study him.

Apparently in good health, much more so than the swarm of reporters who made the long early morning trip to the airport, Mr. Pereira bussed a line of air-line stewardesses for photographers.

"He doesn't speak a word of English," Douglas Storer, president of Ripley's Believe It or Not, Inc., told newsmen.

Mr. Storer discovered the double-octogenarian had taken the precaution of having an interpreter on hand. Through the interpreter, Mr. Pereira made it clear that he was in search of his sixth wife.

"He says he wants a very fat one," the interpreter explained, "one who can support him."

The visitor sustained a knowing grin throughout most of the interview, especially when the reporters persisted on putting questions to him that he obviously was reluctant to answer.

Mr. Pereira, who is toothless, did not answer questions on why he had decided to make his surprise visit to New York. It was learned reliably, however, that it might have been prompted by an offer for an appearance on a television show.

For the record, Mr. Pereira's friends explained that he was born in a small Colombian town in the Andes Mountains near Monteria. Mr. Storer told reporters, he attracted little attention there.

"Great age is common and women and men in their nineties are frequently encountered and some ages of 110 years have been documented," he added.

At New York Hospital last night officials were reluctant to discuss just what Mr. Pereira's status as a patient would be.



Herald Tribune photo by Nat Fain

CLAIMS HE'S 167 YEARS OLD—Javier Pereira, of Bogota, Colombia, as he arrived on National Airlines plane at Idlewild Airport yesterday en route to New York Hospital for a scientific study of his reputed age.