

Jean Dorothy Landeen Oral History Interview
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Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Jean Dorothy Landeen served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala from 1967 to 1970 on a rural community development project.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Jean Dorothy Landeen

April 7, 2004
Sacramento, California

By Robert Klein

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

KLEIN: [00:00:04] This is Bob Klein. Today is April 7, 2004. I'm interviewing Jean Landeen, who was a Peace Corps volunteer, 1967 to '70, in Guatemala in a rural community development project. So let's go back, well, maybe a year before you joined.

LANDEEN: [00:00:23] OK.

KLEIN: [00:00:23] And talk about what was going on. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:00:27] Well, I was in college a year before I joined. Actually I had thought about going into the Peace Corps as a senior in high school.

KLEIN: [00:00:35] Oh, really?

LANDEEN: [00:00:36] And the project, kind of doing some, uh, overseas activity.

KLEIN: [00:00:41] Uh huh.

LANDEEN: [00:00:42] Not necessarily when I graduated from high school, but I was thinking about it then.

KLEIN: [00:00:46] Where did you go to high school?

LANDEEN: [00:00:49] I went to Lincoln High School in Stockton.

KLEIN: [00:00:52] And during your high school years, did you do any volunteer work, any travel?

LANDEEN: [00:00:57] I did some volunteer work and then I also traveled. I was a Girl Scout, and I had a chance to travel to the senior roundup in Colorado Springs when I was a freshman. And then when I graduated, I went on a trip to Canada and the Northwest with two patrols.

KLEIN: [00:01:21] Yeah, yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:01:23] And so I had some experience that way.

KLEIN: [00:01:25] And do you remember how you, in what context you first heard about the Peace Corps?

LANDEEN: [00:01:30] Well, I was a freshman in 1959, so I was listening to some of that coming about. But I also had read about Tom Dooley.

KLEIN: [00:01:46] Ah, yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:01:46] And I had read *The Ugly American* during that, in high school also, and looked at some of the possibilities of what an American might be able to do overseas. So I was just really probably open to those kinds of activities.

KLEIN: [00:02:04] And where did you go to college?

LANDEEN: [00:02:06] I went to the University of California Davis.

KLEIN: [00:02:08] And what was your degree program?

LANDEEN: [00:02:11] Majored in landscape horticulture.

KLEIN: [00:02:13] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:02:14] And that was a choice because I, as a senior, had an opportunity to apply to for a couple of scholarships, and one of them was in horticulture. So I had to look it up and find out what it was about. I said, hey, I like that kind of stuff. And so.

KLEIN: [00:02:31] Did you get the scholarship?

LANDEEN: [00:02:33] Yes, I did. But I didn't take that. I didn't go to that school because it was to Temple University.

KLEIN: [00:02:38] Oh, OK. And during your college years, did you do any volunteer work, travel? You continue with the Scouts?

LANDEEN: [00:02:46] I did continue a little bit with the Scouts, but I did get involved in, um, I became a camp counselor for the YMCA. And so through the summer program, summer I was a full-fledged counselor at one of their summer camps. Even though you get paid, that's volunteer. No, that was a good experience. And I was involved in a couple of campus opportunities that related to horticulture, crop production, landscaping, and all of that. That gave me a chance to travel to San Francisco and meet older, some of the older folks that were involved in native plant society and those kinds of things.

KLEIN: [00:03:37] Mm hmm. Did you study foreign language during your college?

LANDEEN: [00:03:39] Not in college. I had three years of high school Spanish.

KLEIN: [00:03:43] All right.

LANDEEN: [00:03:44] And we didn't need to have it in college.

KLEIN: [00:03:47] So you weren't bilingual at all?

LANDEEN: [00:03:49] Not at that time.

KLEIN: [00:03:50] OK. OK. So as you're going into your senior year, do you then seriously think about Peace Corps?

LANDEEN: [00:04:00] In college, I had, in fact I, before that, I was talking to recruiters and we were looking at different possibilities.

KLEIN: [00:04:08] Oh, OK.

LANDEEN: [00:04:08] And then I did apply in my, um, in the senior year and I had to go to, um. In the application process I had, I mentioned that I'd had a heart murmur as a child, and so I had to go to Travis Air Force Base for a medical exam to see if they recognized it was still there and they needed. So that held me up about six months from being accepted.

KLEIN: [00:04:40] Oh, OK. But you were still in school at that time?

LANDEEN: [00:04:43] I was.

KLEIN: [00:04:43] Yeah. When you fill out the application, I think one of the things is you indicate a preference for a country or an area.

LANDEEN: [00:04:53] Sure.

KLEIN: [00:04:53] And even a project. Do you recall what you?

LANDEEN: [00:04:57] Um. Uh, I'm very open about the fact that I had horticulture background and in fruit production, vegetable production, those kinds of things would be of interest to me. Actually, I was kind of interested in going maybe to Afghanistan, Nepal, or maybe South America. So, um, I got the invitation to go to Guatemala.

KLEIN: [00:05:24] Yeah. Did you know anyone who had been in the Peace Corps up to this point?

LANDEEN: [00:05:31] I don't recall whether I did or not.

KLEIN: [00:05:32] OK. And how did your family and friends react to this?

LANDEEN: [00:05:41] My mother was very, very supportive. A bit, this is a good adventure. College was a good adventure. This is a good opportunity to know things. And I have some very close friends that actually applied at the same time, and they were accepted in different programs.

KLEIN: [00:06:00] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [00:06:03] I, when I got the invitation, I went to pick up my dad at work and let him know where and what it was. And fortunately, I had looked at the maps so I could tell him exactly where Guatemala was.

KLEIN: [00:06:18] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:06:19] And he was real quiet about it and he says, hmm, well, we haven't visited down there yet. So they were very, they were cautious, accepting, but accepting very much.

KLEIN: [00:06:33] And when you got the invitation, no hesitation. You were ready to go?

LANDEEN: [00:06:39] Yeah. Yes.

KLEIN: [00:06:42] What was the, uh, and where were you invited to, I mean?

LANDEEN: [00:06:47] It was, I was invited to the rural community development program in Guatemala.

KLEIN: [00:06:53] To train where?

LANDEEN: [00:06:55] At Las Cruces, New Mexico.

KLEIN: [00:06:57] Oh, OK. OK. So it was, it wasn't in-country training, it was.

LANDEEN: [00:07:02] No.

KLEIN: [00:07:02] Yeah. So I guess you flew down to Las Cruces or?

LANDEEN: [00:07:08] We flew to El Paso and took a bus from El Paso to Las Cruces.

KLEIN: [00:07:13] Oh, yeah. OK. Do you recall initially reporting into the training site and looking at the other people who were there? And, you know, now you're in the midst of other volunteers.

LANDEEN: [00:07:24] Oh, yeah. And you're sitting around looking at them and you say, I don't look like that.

KLEIN: [00:07:32] Ah.

LANDEEN: [00:07:34] I was probably pretty open, but pretty fresh as an individual.

KLEIN: [00:07:40] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:07:41] And in our group there were, it was mixed singles and couples.

KLEIN: [00:07:45] Right.

LANDEEN: [00:07:46] And you could pick up on how some couples were, these guys don't know what they're doing. We're more sophisticated. We're from New York.

KLEIN: [00:07:56] Uh huh. And this was also the height, I think, of the time when for some young men coming into the Peace Corps was alternative to the possibility of going to Vietnam.

LANDEEN: [00:08:10] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:08:10] And I don't know how obvious that was. I mean, whether it was expressed, articulated by people.

LANDEEN: [00:08:17] It was.

KLEIN: [00:08:18] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:08:18] It was articulated. It wasn't. It was interesting, I would think, out of. Out of half the, half the fellows in our group were in that kind of situation. And it didn't matter whether they were single or married.

KLEIN: [00:08:39] Tell me about how the training was structured.

LANDEEN: [00:08:48] We went into training in February and we had PT at 6:30 in the morning outside on the frost.

KLEIN: [00:09:00] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:09:00] We had, then we had two hour, I believe it was 2 hours every day of language training. And then, of course, some time we were expected to speak, try and speak on our own. We had a cross cultural training or classes. We had, we had a pair of returned volunteers from Guatemala who had actually gone and scoped out our sites, those that are on the south coast of Guatemala, and I guess some of the highland sites also. And so they were familiar with the sites and what was going on in the area. They had actually lived in this, on the south coast in a group before us.

KLEIN: [00:09:49] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:09:49] And so they told us about some of the customs of the various areas and we worked with, um, with them on how, talking about housing or the kinds of people and things like that.

KLEIN: [00:10:06] And that was in informal settings or strictly classroom or both?

LANDEEN: [00:10:11] Both on that, because they were part of the. I think that they actually were those that gave us some of the background and history of Guatemala, and we were going into areas that had been in the land reform movement. So we got briefed on how that all developed. And of course, hardly any of us had ever heard of Arbenz or any of the other guys that had been the dictators or the rulers and presidents in there before. So it was, it was all new to us.

KLEIN: [00:10:55] Do you recall if you also had a segment on American Studies where you sort of learned about communism and world, you know, the world, politics?

LANDEEN: [00:11:07] You know, I don't remember. I don't remember that.

KLEIN: [00:11:10] Or do you remember any discussions of that Central America was a very politically sensitive area?

LANDEEN: [00:11:19] It wasn't really, um, it really wasn't thrown in of how politically sensitive it was.

KLEIN: [00:11:27] Oh, OK.

LANDEEN: [00:11:29] We just knew that there was trouble there, but we didn't I don't recall them making the connection about how. We were very concerned what was going on there.

KLEIN: [00:11:44] So no cautions about, you know, what you say, what you're not to say.

LANDEEN: [00:11:51] Well, the most of, the main cautions were of just about not being a braggart. And also, it must, we must have had something of some training about how to handle if you got challenged about the fact that you're an American and you're an ugly American or something like that, because I used that when I was in the field. I had an instance where I had to sit back and just let somebody vent and go on.

KLEIN: [00:12:29] Was the entire group at Las Cruces going into rural community development?

LANDEEN: [00:12:35] Uh, yes. However, we're not all on the south coast, where some of them are in the highlands. So we had two different cultures, two different cultural venues.

KLEIN: [00:12:45] And you split when you. So from the beginning you knew you were going to the south coast?

LANDEEN: [00:12:49] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:12:50] OK. About how many were in the group, do you recall?

LANDEEN: [00:12:54] Uh, there were about 46 altogether when we started out, and 36 went into country.

KLEIN: [00:12:58] And it was the fourth, fifth, six program into Guatemala?

LANDEEN: [00:13:05] Guatemala IX.

KLEIN: [00:13:05] Nine. OK. Was, did, was anyone indicate during training that your ability to learn Spanish would affect whether you would be finally selected or not?

LANDEEN: [00:13:21] Um. There was an indication of that, but probably more. But, uh, it didn't pan out because those that deselected at that time, Spanish wasn't any worse for them than it was for anybody else.

KLEIN: [00:13:46] So there were other issues with that.

LANDEEN: [00:13:47] And there were, in fact, there was a native, there was a Puerto Rican, and she wasn't accepted, even though her Spanish was great. So that was not a.

KLEIN: [00:13:57] Right. And how were you doing with Spanish as you began?

LANDEEN: [00:14:01] Poking along.

KLEIN: [00:14:05] I'm surprised it was only 2 hours a day. That's less than intensive.

LANDEEN: [00:14:09] Well, I could be wrong on how much. I mean, we did have language lab at night, and we would go in at night and get on the earphones and practice.

KLEIN: [00:14:21] And were you tested at different points during the training?

LANDEEN: [00:14:25] Yes. And when I tested, when I finished, I was a zero plus.

KLEIN: [00:14:32] OK. Did that concern you, were you worried about that?

LANDEEN: [00:14:37] Not, well, not particularly. I mean, I could make myself understood.

KLEIN: [00:14:42] Uh huh.

LANDEEN: [00:14:42] And when I, as it turned out, my problem was fluency and being a problem of trying to be right before I said something and everybody putting words in my mouth. Whereas when I went actually was in country, nobody tried to put words in my mouth. They corrected me as if you, as you would correct anybody learning the language, a child or whatever, that get in the right order. And so they allowed me to develop the fluency in the ear. And in a month, I was a one.

KLEIN: [00:15:19] Oh, great.

LANDEEN: [00:15:20] So it. I mean, an FS-1.

KLEIN: [00:15:26] Did, um, what the. Oh, did you have opportunities during training to speak Spanish? I mean, in Las Cruces, were there, did you go into areas and?

LANDEEN: [00:15:37] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:15:38] Try to shop or anything?

LANDEEN: [00:15:39] Well, they gave us a visit in, to families in New Mexico. And I think we did a weekend visit with a family there. And then we had a ten day excursion into Guadalajara, Mexico.

KLEIN: [00:16:00] Oh.

LANDEEN: [00:16:00] And so we lived with a family in a *hilo*, which is a small village in the area. And, uh, that was good because there were some English speakers in town, only because they had been in California for a period of time. But yeah, we got our fluency better.

KLEIN: [00:16:28] What was your agenda during the ten days, were you just alone with the family, or did you still have training in a group?

LANDEEN: [00:16:37] Um, we were placed two volunteers to a town, and were, two volunteers actually were housed at the same house. It was a real surprise to the family we moved in with, that Bob and I were not married, and they very graciously made some arrangements. And so we didn't have, we weren't sleeping together so. Um. We were, we were to get to know the town. And that was, that was our main agenda. Pick out the major things like, uh, who are the leaders of the town, where the school was, the number of teachers and students, what the events that might be going on in school.

LANDEEN: [00:17:31] What the economy of the town was if they happen to be, in our case there are a lot of goats and they raised, they were milk goats for the candy industry. They have a really good, um, goat milk candy. So we would work with, go to work with the farmers or with the, with one of the members of the family and shadow them basically the day. Go for a walk with the grandmother and listen to her chatter to you.

KLEIN: [00:18:15] How did it feel to? I mean, you're now in another totally different environment. And, you know, so I think sort of one of the things you wanted in joining the Peace Corps.

LANDEEN: [00:18:26] Yes. And I was very curious, very interested in what was going on. I was very comfortable with everything except that somebody, a neighbor or somebody else in town, wanted to see what I looked like. So they climbed up on the window and looked in the window at night.

KLEIN: [00:18:46] Oh. That would be a little disconcerting.

LANDEEN: [00:18:51] And then we got, this is, we had a place that had a latrine in the back of the property. That was better than what I ended up with in Guatemala.

KLEIN: [00:19:02] Yeah. And did you find that in the evening you'd try to sit and talk with Bob just to have a chance to speak English? Or did you consciously avoid that or?

LANDEEN: [00:19:15] We really didn't.

KLEIN: [00:19:17] Or vice versa?

LANDEEN: [00:19:18] Yeah, we really didn't try to, um. I, you know, I'm not real clear what we actually did. We did make a conscious effort to sort out what we did during the day without, uh, other family members present.

KLEIN: [00:19:43] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [00:19:44] So when we would have family members and us, we were there, what we would listen to what was going on. And if I felt that he didn't catch what they were talking about, then I'd do a translation and vice versa.

KLEIN: [00:20:01] Uh huh.

LANDEEN: [00:20:01] But that was the closest that we came.

KLEIN: [00:20:05] Yeah. Were there any technical studies in training?

LANDEEN: [00:20:10] Oh, yeah, we did a lot with, um, with farming, gardening, raising chickens, raising. I don't think we did hogs.

KLEIN: [00:20:21] And where was that done?

LANDEEN: [00:20:24] At Las Cruces.

KLEIN: [00:20:25] Is there an agricultural center or?

LANDEEN: [00:20:28] Well, it's. Um. It's. They're a land grant college.

KLEIN: [00:20:35] Oh, OK, yeah. And during the training, was it, did you get fairly specific indications of what it was you were going to be doing when you went to Guatemala? Setting aside however it worked out, but during the training time.

LANDEEN: [00:20:57] What we got was techniques on getting to know the community and figuring, helping a community to figure out what it wanted to do.

KLEIN: [00:21:10] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:21:11] And then to, uh, we talked about agencies and we understood the agency that we were working for and understood about cooperative extension and other kinds and the health services and things like that of the community, of the area.

KLEIN: [00:21:30] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:21:32] Um, we really didn't have things like how to get a group of people together and get them motivated or directed in particular.

KLEIN: [00:21:46] And Peace Corps had been doing this for a couple of years before you went.

LANDEEN: [00:21:51] You mean in?

KLEIN: [00:21:53] In Guatemala.

LANDEEN: [00:21:53] Yes. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:21:54] So there was a store of information about it.

LANDEEN: [00:21:57] Right.

KLEIN: [00:21:58] Was the story coming out of, say, the returned volunteers and training and others that this project worked, that it was having, achieving something?

LANDEEN: [00:22:12] Well, they made it very clear that every site was different. So you couldn't say everybody's going to have a milk program or everybody's going to have a latrine program or anything like that. And it was a matter of knowing where. They made it very clear that, um, there was help for what you wanted to do. You just, it was tough to decide what it was that was going to happen.

KLEIN: [00:22:43] One other aspect of training is the selection process. Usually there's a mid board and then a final board and often there are psychiatric interviews, psychological testing. Do you recall that?

LANDEEN: [00:22:57] Yeah, they were horrible.

KLEIN: [00:22:58] Why? I mean, tell me about it.

LANDEEN: [00:23:01] Well, we had a team of about, I think there were six.

KLEIN: [00:23:05] Six.

LANDEEN: [00:23:06] Six. And there were some that were, that you got the impression they were out to challenge you, why you're going to go, give you all these kinds of things, troubles, and see how you reacted to it somehow. And there was, there were a couple, I mean, like the head, the head guy actually was. Um. You felt like he was more pro the fact that you might be going or not.

KLEIN: [00:23:43] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [00:23:43] And sometimes their questions. Well, I was pretty, uh, 23 years old, but very naive in a lot of things. And they would ask some, what if this should happen? Well, what if this, if you were approached by a Latin guy and propositioned or whatever, what would you do? Well, I had never even been propositioned by any of my classmates so. Well, I guess I'll figure it out when I get there. I don't know. Um, and I, what I recall is that after the interviews, people were pretty closed mouth about how they went. And in some of the cases, some of the situations, you don't know what they were faced with. But a number of those individuals that were really closed mouth were deselected.

KLEIN: [00:24:57] I mean, for yourself, I mean, did you, did you think that possibly you would be deselected or did you feel confident that you were going to make it through?

LANDEEN: [00:25:12] I felt pretty confident, as I recall. I didn't know. I never said I'm not going to make it.

KLEIN: [00:25:18] Yeah. And final selection comes and.

LANDEEN: [00:25:24] You're on board, ready to go.

KLEIN: [00:25:26] And the 46 is now 36.

LANDEEN: [00:25:30] Mm hmm.

KLEIN: [00:25:30] It was, did any kind of group spirit or feeling develop through the training program?

LANDEEN: [00:25:38] Oh, yeah. I mean, you got to, you got to know people differently than what you'd been used to getting to know people. I mean, you're forced to listen to their stories.

KLEIN: [00:25:51] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [00:25:53] I mean, that was the entertainment. I mean, you didn't have TV or you didn't do these other kinds of things, and it was a lot easier to get to know other people than to do any homework.

KLEIN: [00:26:03] What did you do with your free time during training, if there was any?

LANDEEN: [00:26:07] Well, we did have some like nights off when we went into Las Cruces and found Latin bars. And that was one of, that was cultural, you know?

KLEIN: [00:26:19] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:26:22] And we had events at the married student housing. They would organize a potluck or a dinner kind of thing, and we'd set up, do things that were. We had some pretty creative cooks amongst our married folks.

KLEIN: [00:26:37] Yeah, yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:26:39] And then, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:26:42] Did the group resist any of the deselections? I mean, did you, was there anyone who was deselected that your group said, no, no, no, that person should go?

LANDEEN: [00:26:53] Yeah. There's the gal from Puerto Rico. We didn't know why she got deselected.

KLEIN: [00:27:00] And did you say anything?

LANDEEN: [00:27:02] We asked them, but there wasn't. Um. I never really pursued it so.

KLEIN: [00:27:09] Oh, OK. Yeah. Was there any break between training and reporting to Guatemala?

LANDEEN: [00:27:16] Yes. Yes. We went home.

KLEIN: [00:27:19] For?

LANDEEN: [00:27:21] Three or four days.

KLEIN: [00:27:23] To pack and everything?

LANDEEN: [00:27:24] Pack and get everything together. And then we all met and flew to Houston.

KLEIN: [00:27:31] For the few days back home, did anyone try to discourage you from going or?

LANDEEN: [00:27:37] No. No. They were, what do you need?

KLEIN: [00:27:41] Oh, OK. Great. Great. Do you recall packing any security blanket kind of items?

LANDEEN: [00:27:50] Well, I had a birthday in training, and my roommate gave me an elf, I would say, I guess. And I made sure that that got in.

KLEIN: [00:28:02] Yeah. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:28:03] Um, I think if I had done it differently, I would have taken my picture album at the time.

KLEIN: [00:28:10] Yeah. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:28:12] Because people always want to know what your family looks like and stuff.

KLEIN: [00:28:15] Were people taking tape recorders at that time and tape players?

LANDEEN: [00:28:19] Yes, yes.

KLEIN: [00:28:20] Mostly cassette?

LANDEEN: [00:28:22] Um, reel to reel, small reel to reels. There weren't cassettes at the time. And I, I don't remember if I had one then, but I did get ahold of one down in Guatemala and I still have it. And I have the tapes.

KLEIN: [00:28:41] Did you, uh, did you take a camera?

LANDEEN: [00:28:46] Oh, yeah. I took a very good camera and, uh, left it at the Houston airport.

KLEIN: [00:28:54] So. OK.

LANDEEN: [00:28:56] And then I, uh, we were able to get. We had folks that were going into Panama and we were able to get ahold of some duty free cameras. I got one within about a month, two months.

KLEIN: [00:29:09] Were there any questions about using a camera?

LANDEEN: [00:29:13] No.

KLEIN: [00:29:14] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:29:15] No. And I'm not sure just why there wouldn't have been, or would have been or it wouldn't have been, either way, but we didn't have any problems with that. The biggest caution about the camera is, where are you going to get the film developed?

KLEIN: [00:29:32] Yeah. Sometimes it's, uh, for the appearance it gives it makes you, you know, puts you in the category of tourists. Sometimes it's culturally insensitive. Sometimes there are political hazards, and it varies from country to country.

LANDEEN: [00:29:47] There were some concerns probably for those who were going up into the highlands with the more indigenous groups. But quite frankly, a camera was an asset where I lived because, oh, they didn't

have pictures of their children. And if you could get some and give them a picture, then they were more than pleased.

KLEIN: [00:30:10] Yeah. So you reported to Houston and was it a charter flight or?

LANDEEN: [00:30:18] No. It was a regular flight, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:30:22] Uh, tell me about your arrival in, uh, where did you arrive?

LANDEEN: [00:30:26] We arrived in Guatemala City.

KLEIN: [00:30:28] All right.

LANDEEN: [00:30:29] And we went into town. We were all housed at a pension near the, uh, near the Peace Corps office.

KLEIN: [00:30:42] Was there any reception at the airport? You were the ninth group.

LANDEEN: [00:30:51] I don't remember that. I do know that we were invited, at two different points, to the ambassador's house for a reception. And I don't recall now whether it was right there. It must have been one in the beginning. And because I was, went to the house at least twice.

KLEIN: [00:31:14] Who was the ambassador, do you recall?

LANDEEN: [00:31:18] No, I'm sorry.

KLEIN: [00:31:20] That's OK.

LANDEEN: [00:31:21] Um, we have. [tape break]

KLEIN: [00:31:26] Tell me about your days in Guatemala City. By now was your assignment completely firm? And are you being assigned alone? And at any point in training, did you fill out a form indicating who you would like to be assigned with and not assigned with?

LANDEEN: [00:31:43] We didn't have a, I don't recall having an opportunity to choose like that. And I was assigned alone.

KLEIN: [00:31:56] All right.

LANDEEN: [00:31:57] In a village that was five, six, maybe, maybe ten miles from the, well, no. About eight miles from a couple of guys that were assigned on the same road.

KLEIN: [00:32:12] Name of the village?

LANDEEN: [00:32:15] Los Bracitos. Little arms.

KLEIN: [00:32:17] And how long were you in Guatemala City?

LANDEEN: [00:32:22] We couldn't have been in there any more than a week.

KLEIN: [00:32:27] Any special activities at that point?

LANDEEN: [00:32:30] Just to see the city, get familiar with the city and how it worked because that was like the main touchstone place.

KLEIN: [00:32:37] Did, uh, where. So you met the staff at that point?

LANDEEN: [00:32:43] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:32:45] And who was, who were on the staff? I mean, by position, not necessarily by name.

LANDEEN: [00:32:52] Um, well, there was a director and an assistant director. There was a regional supervisor for our area and a regional supervisor for the highland areas.

KLEIN: [00:33:04] All American?

LANDEEN: [00:33:06] Yes. And there was a doctor. And. An American doctor. In the staff. When I got down on the coast, the regional director was also moved down to, was on the coast. So it was easier to get back and forth to his house or for him to get out to see us. And then we had a Guatemalan doctor.

KLEIN: [00:33:39] How far were you from Guatemala City?

LANDEEN: [00:33:42] Oh, about, depending on where the floods were. Um. It was about 2 hours. No, it was an hour out of my village to the highway. And then it was about 2 hours from Mazatenango into the city.

KLEIN: [00:34:05] Can you describe your first going out to the village?

LANDEEN: [00:34:10] Well. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:34:12] The group now is breaking up, I mean. Had the group split into southern and highlands, socially I mean?

LANDEEN: [00:34:25] Um. Pretty, well, no. I guess, I guess I have to say yes. Although there were some of the couples that went into the highlands, at least one of them was still part of the overall social group. One of the things that happened is that the highland groups had some pretty specific responsibilities that were not solely community development, because they were going to be working with cooperatives, basic craft cooperatives in the highlands area.

KLEIN: [00:35:03] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:35:04] And so they, they had, they got their head into, to what they needed to do for those kinds of things.

KLEIN: [00:35:13] Do you remember if it was sort of a wrench leaving the group? I mean, you've gone through a fairly intense period and.

LANDEEN: [00:35:19] Sure.

KLEIN: [00:35:19] Now you're there and you're going off alone.

LANDEEN: [00:35:26] Um. I am. I've noticed that being alone does not bother me or being set off to myself. There were four of us that went down this road from Mazatenango, and we dropped off the first gal who has excellent high level of Spanish ability, very, very comfortable. And she was in a small indigenous community on the coast. But it was. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:36:04] And then. Then we dropped off the two guys, Gordon and Kevin, in Monterrey, and they had, got to explore what they did, where they were, their digs. And they had a center made with several buildings made out of cinderblock. And their facility, their housing, was in one of those buildings. So they had a, they had a toilet and a shower there and of course, a sink. They had a concrete floor. They walked upstairs. They had a, they had a corrugated roof, not steel, but an asbestos concrete roof, *tejelita* kind of roof. So that was good. OK, we'll see you guys. Then they took me down to my place and introduced to the family I was going to be staying with.

KLEIN: [00:37:07] Who had arranged that?

LANDEEN: [00:37:08] The volunteers that had been in country before. They had gone down and made the contacts with.

KLEIN: [00:37:16] Had anyone been in the village before?

LANDEEN: [00:37:17] No.

KLEIN: [00:37:18] OK, you were the first.

LANDEEN: [00:37:19] Yes. And there had been. There had been volunteers across the river from our village. And the village knew about volunteers across the river. And so, yeah, I was shown where my bed was and it was a two room house without connecting doors. I mean, it's a door to this room and a door to that room from the outside, and thatched roof. And there was my bed. And I had my mosquito netting and sat down, got started to get acquainted with folks, and that was just about as much reception at

the moment. But then they, the *padres de familia*, the head of the groups. I mean, the civic leaders actually came and we had a little bit of a reception and welcome and all that kind of stuff.

KLEIN: [00:38:31] Was it a family compound you were in, with a series of houses or?

LANDEEN: [00:38:36] No.

KLEIN: [00:38:36] Or little chambers?

LANDEEN: [00:38:38] No, it was a village and, oh, the family. The family compound that I was in, it had this two room structure. Then it had a kitchen structure, kitchen dining room structure, and then it had a more formalized house with a concrete floor, the thatched roof in it also. And that was the teacher's, the actual teacher's house. And her husband was a truck owner. And so they were able to build this facility that had some walls and stuff like that in there.

KLEIN: [00:39:16] But where did the family live that you were staying with?

LANDEEN: [00:39:19] Well, the family consisted of the teacher and her husband and her baby and then the teacher's wife, uh, teacher's. Teacher's mother and sister. And that was the extent of the family.

KLEIN: [00:39:37] Ah, OK.

LANDEEN: [00:39:38] And so the mother actually helped out as a teacher in the school, and the sister helped keep things together. And she was about 14. No, she was about 16, 17 year old. So what happened is, what it had been is, that Martha was in, had this room and Velma had this room. And when I came, they gave me Velma's room and then Velma slept with Martha.

KLEIN: [00:40:10] So all you really had was the room, and then all the rest of the facilities were common to the group.

LANDEEN: [00:40:15] Right. Right.

KLEIN: [00:40:17] OK. And that must have been an adjustment. I mean, washing, latrine, the whole works.

LANDEEN: [00:40:22] Latrine?

KLEIN: [00:40:23] Sorry. OK.

LANDEEN: [00:40:29] There were two latrines in town.

KLEIN: [00:40:31] Oh, yes.

LANDEEN: [00:40:33] And it was interesting because the. One of the families that had the latrine was a merchant and a trucker, and they had a little cantina, real good food. It was a good place to eat. That's where one of the latrines was. And that family was always at odds with the teachers. So the teachers didn't go and use their latrine. But if I were over there for dinner or something, then I could use the latrine.

KLEIN: [00:41:16] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:41:17] Um, the other family that had a latrine was the next door neighbors to the cantina. Fairly well-educated individuals for the town. And when my parents came to visit, they, um, they invited us to use their latrine, which was easier to reach than Dona Elicia's.

KLEIN: [00:41:41] Did anyone have indoor plumbing?

LANDEEN: [00:41:43] No, no indoor plumbing.

KLEIN: [00:41:46] On the compound, did you have running water to wash with?

LANDEEN: [00:41:49] No, we used, uh, we got water out of the well that was in the square in front of the school. Our compound was right next to the school. On the square.

KLEIN: [00:42:03] So, well, let's talk about your adjustment to the living conditions over the first couple of weeks.

LANDEEN: [00:42:09] It must have been pretty traumatic because, well, we went down in June and that's the beginning of the rainy season. Um. And if you wanted to go take, you know, to leave the town, you had to get up at 2:00 in the morning in order to get a bus that could get across the river before the water rate raised. So, um, that was, that was pretty. So the first time I went in like that, I, um. I was tired, I was worn out, I was hungry. I hadn't had a whole lot to eat. I stopped off at a little, at a shop, picked up a couple of rolls, two cans of Kern's juice, went over to the Peace Corps office, and sat down on the step to eat my breakfast until the guardian of the Peace Corps office came. And our Peace Corps office was right across the street from the police station.

LANDEEN: [00:43:24] I'm sitting there just minding my own business, trying to take care of things and keep myself going. And along comes this very good-looking policeman. But he thought an awful lot of himself and wanted to get in conversation with me. And I wasn't going to sit down and talk. So I got up and talked with, stood up to talk with him. And he was an unusual Guatemalan because he was a little taller than I am and not many of them are. So. And we got to talking and pretty soon. He was just thrilled to be talking and trying to get information or to get me to talk back and forth, so that was cool. And then the bells rang and his shift was over. So he said goodbye. I sat down and ants had gotten into my, all over my bread and into the juices, so I had nothing.

KLEIN: [00:44:27] This was early on?

LANDEEN: [00:44:29] Yeah. This was about a month.

KLEIN: [00:44:31] Then the road flooding must have really heightened your sense of isolation.

LANDEEN: [00:44:36] Well, it does. It does. Yeah. The thing is, you realize that you're not the only one that's isolated down here. All these folks have to figure out how to make their lives better.

KLEIN: [00:44:46] How was your health through the first couple of weeks?

LANDEEN: [00:44:50] Um, it was good, except that I hadn't eaten very much. Or if I had, I had to. I didn't have diarrhea right then in particular, but I mean, everything was different, so.

KLEIN: [00:45:10] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [00:45:12] And it pointed out to me, probably it was the first indication that for me to be successful, I really need to eat. Get some protein.

KLEIN: [00:45:27] Yeah. And it was not readily available in the village or?

LANDEEN: [00:45:32] Not particularly, no. I mean, they'd kill, they'd slaughter maybe once in two weeks. And there, so there was meat to buy. Families had chickens and eggs and a family would have chicken and maybe chicken for Sunday dinner or something like that. But it was mostly eggs and beans and rice.

KLEIN: [00:45:56] And where you were living in the village, did you do your own cooking?

LANDEEN: [00:46:02] Not then.

KLEIN: [00:46:03] OK. Well, what was the arrangement initially?

LANDEEN: [00:46:06] I ate with the family there. I'd go in for.

KLEIN: [00:46:08] The teacher?

LANDEEN: [00:46:08] The teacher's family there.

KLEIN: [00:46:10] And what was the financial arrangement?

LANDEEN: [00:46:16] There was, um. I don't remember how much, we gave him an amount, but um, because I was living with a family, I wasn't paying them

rent, I was paying for food. Later on, we finally, they, I had facility to get a hold of money that would have been my rent allowance all up front. And the community then built me a house.

KLEIN: [00:46:51] Oh, OK. Well, let's move over now and talk about how you spent your time over the first couple of weeks, months establishing yourself in the village.

LANDEEN: [00:47:07] Yeah. Went around talking to people, exploring on my own, then out to visit various folks.

KLEIN: [00:47:13] Any given day, how would you decide who you were going to go see, what you were going to do?

LANDEEN: [00:47:24] Well. The *padres de familia*, I mean, when we got together and they would get together say on a Sunday afternoon and I was invited to be part of that, or listen in, and then they'd say, oh, come out and see my family or something like that. And so I'd make arrangements to go visit one or another to see what was going on. But I did, for a while, I mean. Just the chores of living. Finding the bush. Getting yourself together to go down to the river to take a bath. To get things organized. To get things washed. Make arrangements to have somebody wash your clothes or take care of them yourself. Those just, those were more like everyday things.

KLEIN: [00:48:31] Yeah. Took a lot of time.

LANDEEN: [00:48:32] It did, yeah. Although because of my background, I wanted to know more about what their, um, agricultural practices were. And probably unusually, I would go to the fields with a passel of kids and a couple of farmers to maybe help with a planting project or something of that sort. But I also worked with one farmer in particular, actually a couple of. FAO had some trial, uh, fertilizer trial projects. And so we worked with a couple of the farmers to lay out the test plots and do the fertilizing and then collect the ears afterwards.

KLEIN: [00:49:37] So from even early on, you, your Spanish was adequate to? I mean, the people wouldn't simply sit and laugh at you?

LANDEEN: [00:49:48] No.

KLEIN: [00:49:49] So you were encouraged, you were encouraged about your use of language.

LANDEEN: [00:49:52] Oh, yeah. Yes.

KLEIN: [00:49:56] Related question. Why were you in that village and what was the padre's sense of who you are? I mean, had they requested you or?

LANDEEN: [00:50:10] The little aldea, I guess, must have been a little aldea at the, long, long time ago, but very small, just a little central area. When the land reform movement took place, there were these, the majority of the people that lived in this town worked for the big landowners before the land was divided up. And part of the process was to move them to this aldea and that they would become a cooperative and that they would farm cooperatively without any guidance or even history to do so. But that's what they were sent there to do. So it had administration by the, by INTA, uh, Instituto Nacional de Transformación Agraria. And so they knew that this was somebody coming down on the part of INTA, to help them get some of the things they needed to do.

LANDEEN: [00:51:12] Because they knew that they didn't have latrines, that they didn't have pumped water, they didn't have electricity. And they needed those things, but they didn't. And they would go to INTA to get that started supposedly. Well, that's why I was there, is to be the, help them organize to do what they need to do.

KLEIN: [00:51:37] And was that, I mean, had INTA actually sent you there? I mean, was Peace Corps working with them?

LANDEEN: [00:51:43] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:51:43] And saying, so all right. Then your role was to help the village take advantage of what INTA represented and begin to grow.

LANDEEN: [00:51:55] Right.

KLEIN: [00:51:57] Was there, did you have any kind of counterpart?

LANDEEN: [00:52:01] Not in the village, no. No.

KLEIN: [00:52:05] So in the early months, what goals did you set for yourself in relation to what you were doing there? One was survival, clearly.

LANDEEN: [00:52:15] Sure. Also, I knew that I could get a hold of, um. Not a caipirinha, but CMP. Corn milk. CMS, corn milk soy product that can be made into the drink or. It's a more like a, more. We could also get straight milk, powdered milk, and do a distribution program with the kids, with the families. And I tried to do some classes on how to incorporate this. And actually I practiced myself with some of those kinds of things.

KLEIN: [00:53:01] How do you get the supplies?

LANDEEN: [00:53:04] Have them brought down on the bus.

KLEIN: [00:53:06] That you could, could you call in, write in, or do you have to go in and set up an order?

LANDEEN: [00:53:10] I had to go in and set up an order.

KLEIN: [00:53:12] Was there, did you have any kind of communication out to the outside world?

LANDEEN: [00:53:18] No. No.

KLEIN: [00:53:18] Other than by going.

LANDEEN: [00:53:20] No, we didn't have any phone or that was too, that was before cell phones.

KLEIN: [00:53:24] How did you get mail?

LANDEEN: [00:53:26] It was brought down on the bus.

KLEIN: [00:53:28] By?

LANDEEN: [00:53:30] By, that was the mail system. They bring you down a bag and give it to the alcalde in the town, and then they would distribute it.

KLEIN: [00:53:39] Mm hmm. So early on, you decided that it was a priority, or it was a way of getting yourself into the community, to do the CMS?

LANDEEN: [00:53:51] Right.

KLEIN: [00:53:52] Project?

LANDEEN: [00:53:53] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:53:54] How many? What was the population of the village approximately?

LANDEEN: [00:53:58] About 600.

KLEIN: [00:53:58] Oh, OK. And how did you, how did you know how to organize the distribution? I mean, did people want this or were they suspicious of it, I mean?

LANDEEN: [00:54:11] Well, we discussed it. We brought it up in a town meeting and said, this is what we have but, um, and I can make arrangements to bring this down. This is how it can be distributed. And I knew the, I shared it with them, what they needed to know. And that was the names of the family and the names of all the kids and their ages on a card. And then when they came in, we found the card and checked them off and gave them their two pounds or three pounds or whatever it was, the allotment for the size of the family was.

KLEIN: [00:54:48] Who was working alongside you doing this?

LANDEEN: [00:54:52] There was, there were a couple of older girls that would come in and work with me on volunteer for those days.

KLEIN: [00:55:01] And they were just from village families?

LANDEEN: [00:55:03] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:55:03] Or had the family sent them?

LANDEEN: [00:55:10] Um. It was very interesting that the, um. Some cadre of 12, 13, 14, 16 year old girls that played basketball, were growing up, and they were interested in doing things and doing and being around me.

KLEIN: [00:55:39] OK.

LANDEEN: [00:55:40] And so we didn't have, we didn't have anything formalized like a club or anything. We got doing going on. I have to say that early on in my service, though, you asked why we went to this site. It was of interest. And it must have been of interest politically for other reasons too, because we had a civic development group that came out who was trained at, I believe, out of LaSalle University, and they came in, talked with the folks, with the, all the men or the directors, the fathers, fathers of the families, *padres de familia*. And said, hey, wouldn't you like to know more about your government? Let's use them more, how you can be better, how we can be better citizens, how we can get more out of what these folks are doing. And they actually ran a week long civic training program.

KLEIN: [00:56:46] Where was this in the sequence of your being there?

LANDEEN: [00:56:48] Right in the first part, probably. Well, it was, it was during the rainy season still. So it had to have been September.

KLEIN: [00:57:05] OK. So that was during your initial period. Were they resident in the village?

LANDEEN: [00:57:14] For the time that we, for that week.

KLEIN: [00:57:18] Right.

LANDEEN: [00:57:18] They stayed in the village.

KLEIN: [00:57:19] And they were Americans also?

LANDEEN: [00:57:23] Actually, no. Firmin was not an American. He was, he was Guatemalan.

KLEIN: [00:57:30] Oh.

LANDEEN: [00:57:30] And he had other Guatemalans that were in that training process in the program.

KLEIN: [00:57:39] So were you the only?

LANDEEN: [00:57:40] I was the only gringa.

KLEIN: [00:57:41] Gringo and gringa in the village?

LANDEEN: [00:57:44] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:57:45] OK. But did you make contact with that group, that training group, when they came or they just, they were there and it had an influence?

LANDEEN: [00:57:53] Oh, no, they knew I was there. And that was part of the deal was I participated. And one of the things that they went through, that I had no vision or no knowledge of was, you know, the importance of being formal in the way you run a meeting. And making, keeping minutes and the importance of what they call *actas*, which are motions or movements or whatever, or a statement of what it is the problem is and how you're going to handle it and who's going to be responsible. Basically a formalized motion. And that was part of the training for the

individuals there. They actually, um. I'm not positive of this funding source for this project, but it was definitely tied in with AID.

KLEIN: [00:58:53] Oh, OK.

LANDEEN: [00:58:59] And so it was part of the, it wasn't done on their own. And because INTA was involved in it too, I mean, they had the administrator of the nearby *parcelamiento* was involved in it and a couple of the other *agrónomos* from the Ministry of Agriculture and from INTA were involved in it, because they did some, they did some classes and workshops in, um, improved practices. Farming or farming practices.

KLEIN: [00:59:38] And is this all during your first six months?

LANDEEN: [00:59:41] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:59:42] It almost sounds like they're doing your job, or that they were setting it up with the intent that you follow up on what they did.

LANDEEN: [00:59:51] Well, that's exactly what happened, because after that.

KLEIN: [00:59:54] Was that ever made explicit or?

LANDEEN: [01:00:00] Uh, not in the discussion we had when I first went into it, but when they started, when I learned about the process coming in, I was definitely a part of it and I was there to remind them of the procedures. So when they took off and decided on some of the projects. OK, now what are you going to do to work together? What are you going to do, that we really need to do? And they did have a problem and we put together a request and we actually, three of the guys and I went into Guatemala City, took the busses in and went to Guatemala City with our proposal to the head of INTA, to the *directiva* of INTA.

KLEIN: [01:00:44] Now, three guys from the village?

LANDEEN: [01:00:46] Village, yes.

KLEIN: [01:00:47] OK, OK.

LANDEEN: [01:00:49] Three of the men from the village and I went in and, and when we. They said, OK, we'll come out and they came out with a plan. But the problem was, we're talking about a piece of property that's this shape essentially, a little longer.

KLEIN: [01:01:04] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:01:04] And down here's a river and then there's a road and this is all highland up in here. And this land had never been divided into lots because they were expected to farm it cooperatively and everybody works together. Well, the problem was, is that a guy would go out and work his *tarea* with his family on Monday and come back on Wednesday and somebody had planted it.

KLEIN: [01:01:32] Uh huh.

LANDEEN: [01:01:33] So they really needed to have definite lots. They said it. We need to have the boundaries set up here that these are our lot so we can do something.

KLEIN: [01:01:43] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:01:43] Otherwise it was not worth it to them to take, after they clear cut the land or cut down all the brush. It wasn't really worth it to them yet to take out the trunks, the stumps out of the ground. And so they were planting around the stumps.

KLEIN: [01:02:04] And they were following traditional farming practices?

LANDEEN: [01:02:09] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:02:09] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:02:09] But they, but they knew that if they could take out the trunks, things would be a lot better. And the reason is, they'd go and plant this,

the corn, and it would get up, oh, say four feet high and all of a sudden the plants would turn totally brown. And if you dug in the roots, you'd find it was full of termites and it was from.

KLEIN: [01:02:32] The tree.

LANDEEN: [01:02:33] The trees that had been left in the ground. So nobody wanted to do that, because they didn't want the neighbor coming and planting what they just ripped up. So that was really urgent to divide the land.
[tape break]

KLEIN: [01:02:50] Distributing the lots.

LANDEEN: [01:02:52] They came in with a map laid out and said, yes, we've got it all divided out for you. We've got it set up for how it can be. And they looked at it. And we're, we're not talking about a lot of land, but it had essentially one 30 foot wide road running from the front to the back. And a second one, because this is a little bit spread out here, that branched off over here, another 30 foot road that went back to the very back of the plot. The concept is, yes, you need a 30 foot road for a truck, for a corn truck to get in there. But when you started to take out 30 foot widths, you ended up with no corn to go in the corn truck. I mean, this was their logic. He says, well, we can do something different about this.

KLEIN: [01:03:45] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:03:46] So the community said, well, what can we do? And we'll work out. We can measure it out, we'll just go down this thing and measure how much it's going to be. We kind of know how many *varas* each is from one to the end. And we'll, if we divide it off so many per and we'll make a list of the families and who gets plots. And they did that.

KLEIN: [01:04:12] And so they were working cooperatively in dividing the land.

LANDEEN: [01:04:15] Yes. Yes.

KLEIN: [01:04:17] What was your role?

LANDEEN: [01:04:18] So I was watching it and trying to help them with their technique, which. This is, it's very hard to recognize. I had. My dad was an engineer and I would go out with him to survey. And I also, before I went in the Peace Corps, I was on, uh, a survey crew for East Bay Regional Park District, and I knew about the siting and back siting and levels and all that kind of stuff.

KLEIN: [01:04:49] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:04:49] So we're going to go out and measure this land. Well, OK, that's good. So I'm thinking, all right, you take a big long stick and you hang on to the end down here. You measure out here and keep that line straight. And there's the spot.

KLEIN: [01:05:05] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:05:05] No, that's not the way we do things here. We take it, we take it from this point and we follow the contour of the land and mark it there. And then we, from there, we go, we go up the hill and then over the top and then mark it.

KLEIN: [01:05:26] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:05:26] And so one crew started at the end of the property, one started at the beginning at the front of the property. And so right here in the middle there is a no man's land still.

KLEIN: [01:05:37] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:05:37] Where they came up here. Oh, we've got some left over. We got some left. So this is the, the habitat area here in the center now.

KLEIN: [01:05:46] Were they creating plots of relatively uniform size?

LANDEEN: [01:05:50] Oh, yes. Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:05:51] And would it depend on the contour? Obviously, it would depend on the contouring.

LANDEEN: [01:05:56] Well, they. It was plots of a regular size on the surface of the land. It wasn't horizontal.

KLEIN: [01:06:04] OK. And this, what defined the overall piece of land?

LANDEEN: [01:06:11] There was some private property around it that, um, a big cotton farmer had in the, in the area. And the river.

KLEIN: [01:06:26] It sounds like you were extraordinarily busy in the first six months. I mean, which is not common for many rural community development projects where, you know, people spend maybe a full year just wandering the village, learning the language and figuring out what's going on. But you had a, there was a lot going and you participated.

LANDEEN: [01:06:51] But I didn't sit in the village the whole time.

KLEIN: [01:06:53] OK. What did you do?

LANDEEN: [01:06:56] Well.

KLEIN: [01:06:57] You were out helping with the survey.

LANDEEN: [01:06:59] I did that, yes. And, uh, also putting in plants, uh, demonstration plots. We, uh, we have two growing seasons right next to each other in Guatemala, and it's all in the rainy season. So you can get a really good crop of corn. And what happens is you get a really good crop of corn in the first season and then kind of a messed up crop of corn the second go round because of the build up of pests and diseases that are there to hit your new, your second group. So we were looking for a second crop.

KLEIN: [01:07:35] And corn was a traditional crop?

LANDEEN: [01:07:36] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:07:37] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:07:37] And black beans.

KLEIN: [01:07:39] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:07:39] Um. But we found that sesame seed grows well down there. We don't necessarily have the knowledge about how it's to be handled or where it's to go and those kinds of things. But we did a demonstration plot with that.

KLEIN: [01:08:03] How did you organize a demonstration plot, I mean?

LANDEEN: [01:08:07] I worked with, I worked with one of the farmers that was near, actually that lived near me, right near me, and I was very close to his family.

KLEIN: [01:08:18] What was his incentive to do this?

LANDEEN: [01:08:23] A total knowledge that what we could do for him and his family was going to benefit his family. He had a third grade education. His kids had a sixth grade education in school in town. And one of his sons did go on to higher education and became a social worker. And so he was very, I know this is good for my family, kind of a person. He's from the area. He was not imported. He was not one of the imported folks.

KLEIN: [01:09:00] And the interaction with, between the two of you just was such that he trusted that it was worthwhile, and you were able to explain why?

LANDEEN: [01:09:11] Yes. And the thing, one of the things I did notice and all of this, in demonstrations and all that activity, is that his kids liked to be around me. And I never said, this is the way we ought to do it. I said, let's try it this way. And or I heard from the *perito agrono* from location that this is, let's try it. He's going to give it to us. Let's give it a try. And he was willing to do this.

KLEIN: [01:09:45] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:09:46] So we tried sesame and we tried soybeans.

KLEIN: [01:09:50] OK. Now this is all, we're still talking all within the first six months to a year?

LANDEEN: [01:09:56] Oh, year.

KLEIN: [01:10:00] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:10:03] But, OK. I'm a person who had, out of a, in a rural community development group, there were only six of us who had an agricultural background of any sort.

KLEIN: [01:10:13] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [01:10:14] And so one of the things that did happen during the time and may have made my experience in the village different from what it could have been, was the fact that I was called upon by my colleagues to help them, uh, do some agricultural things in their own communities.

KLEIN: [01:10:37] I was going to ask you whether during your initial settling in and it's clear that it seems to me that things were working. I mean, the institutions that were involved, so forth. Plus your role. Did anyone come out from Peace Corps and see what you were doing and pick up on the fact that perhaps you'd gotten all the pieces together in a pretty good way?

LANDEEN: [01:11:05] I don't know if he actually saw that, but our regional supervisor did come out. He made it a point to visit one of us every week.

KLEIN: [01:11:15] Oh, every week.

LANDEEN: [01:11:16] I mean.

KLEIN: [01:11:17] Oh, yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:11:18] He made sure that he made a trip.

KLEIN: [01:11:21] So how often did you see him during the first six months?

LANDEEN: [01:11:24] Um, well, besides the fact of seeing him in the office, um. And that he had a, he had a house where we could go in and crash when we came out of the towns.

KLEIN: [01:11:39] Was this in Guatemala City?

LANDEEN: [01:11:41] It was in Mazatenango, which is a regional town that's ahead of the, it was halfway between the Mexican border and the port of San Jose.

KLEIN: [01:11:54] How far from where you were?

LANDEEN: [01:11:55] Um, well, it was on the highway, so it was, that was the hour out of town.

KLEIN: [01:12:00] Yeah. And that was where you would go? Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:12:04] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:12:06] I was going to ask whether during the six months, how often did you come out of the village for whatever reason?

LANDEEN: [01:12:13] I was able to come out probably once every two weeks, a week or so. I mean, I. Um. Goods were available in Mazatenango, and it was also a place where we had our regional office. So if we knew that folks were going to be in, we would, uh, we'd be there at the same time so we could go to lunch or do dinner or something like that before we had to go back to do so.

KLEIN: [01:12:46] Living in the village, did you, did you find that you had a loss of privacy? I mean, Americans generally, we tend to want to.

LANDEEN: [01:12:57] Well, here's a deal is that, I told you I lived with the family in their house. Well, school let out for the summer, which was over Christmas, and they thought that it would be much more comfortable for me to go and live in the school building. So I said, yeah, all right, fine. It's a big, huge, long thing. And it's got a stage at one end, the raised stage at one end, and then there's, there's that much space between the boards along the walls and every place else.

KLEIN: [01:13:37] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:13:38] Um, so basically created a room up on the stage and washing stuff down below. And it was also during the time when we were starting to talk about building the house. And the community said, yes, we'll do this and we'll cut the wood. We've got a carpenter. We just need, we need cement, we need blocks, we need reinforcement rods, we need roofing, uh, we need nails. And so we took my whole allowance and got those things and then hired somebody to haul the gravel for the foundation.

KLEIN: [01:14:17] Where in your service did this occur?

LANDEEN: [01:14:19] This was, this was in the end of six months.

KLEIN: [01:14:23] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:14:24] Because, um.

KLEIN: [01:14:25] And after having lived at the school, on the stage at the school for a little while.

LANDEEN: [01:14:29] Yeah. I lived on the, and you know, you can live on the school stage for quite a while but you realize you have to get up at 6:00 every morning and get things going and out and so that you're not there when the class starts.

KLEIN: [01:14:51] So. And was the house built in reasonable time?

LANDEEN: [01:14:56] Yeah, I was. I had it before the end of my first year.

KLEIN: [01:14:59] Your design or?

LANDEEN: [01:15:01] My design. Um, I learned something when I did that. I came up with a great design, and then I realized that I needed to put the, instead of the porch over here, I needed to put the porch here and basically flip the design, but I should have rewritten it for the guys. But it was just, it looked like a lot of the other houses. It was, that was, um.

KLEIN: [01:15:28] Concrete block walls?

LANDEEN: [01:15:29] Concrete block, well up three feet, a meter rather, and then two meters of wood, and not, not a full two meters, but, about that much space of screen all around the top.

KLEIN: [01:15:50] Oh, OK.

LANDEEN: [01:15:51] Underneath the eaves.

KLEIN: [01:15:52] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:15:53] Um. Doors or window, shutters on the windows.

KLEIN: [01:16:00] Asbestos composition roof?

LANDEEN: [01:16:02] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:16:03] But no ceiling.

LANDEEN: [01:16:04] No ceiling.

KLEIN: [01:16:04] In the room so.

LANDEEN: [01:16:06] And it had a, it was basically a square and half of it was the living room kitchen kind of area. And then half of this was porch and the other half was the bedroom.

KLEIN: [01:16:18] OK. Go ahead.

LANDEEN: [01:16:21] And an outhouse out back.

KLEIN: [01:16:24] Mm hmm. So it must have been like moving into a palace when it was finally done.

LANDEEN: [01:16:29] Oh, yeah. The kids loved it because they'd come over and sit on a clean floor and play jacks or whatever.

KLEIN: [01:16:37] I gather that on any given day, you had very little privacy. I mean, there was always some either professional activity going on or informal activity.

LANDEEN: [01:16:48] Yeah, your privacy came at night and. Except on the day that they inaugurated my house, because then they, the officials came over from the nearby *parcelamiento* and they were, administrators like to get in on all kinds of things that they might have really supported and they did, they supported this. So I had him standing outside my door that night with a serenade going on and the family that I was close to across the street wondering what was going on. And they were so tired that they would fall, they couldn't stay up and follow what was happening. I had to say, no, go away.

KLEIN: [01:17:40] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:17:41] It's time for me, keep my door locked and everything. It was just.

KLEIN: [01:17:46] During the first six months plus, did you become closer friends with any people in the village, kind of as an entree into the traditional life, you know, celebration of births and marriage and any holidays?

LANDEEN: [01:18:03] Yes, actually, Don Hilario and his family lived across the street. I was very close to that. So I was in on their birthdays. And they had a little boy while, shortly before I got there, and I got in on his funeral, which was really sad, because I was out of town when he died and I got back just in time for the funeral. That was really sad because I liked the little kid.

KLEIN: [01:18:36] Was there a Catholic church in town?

LANDEEN: [01:18:40] Uh, yes, but it was, uh, it kind of looked like the. It was one big old room.

KLEIN: [01:18:50] It was not a cathedral?

LANDEEN: [01:18:52] No. And it was one board thick on the walls. And it had a light that came from the generator, from Dona Elicia's place, because she was Catholic. And when the, um, when they would have a padre come in, irregularly, then we'd have, um, services. And it was right next door to my house.

KLEIN: [01:19:18] Ah, OK.

LANDEEN: [01:19:20] But there were a lot of evangelical chapels.

KLEIN: [01:19:23] Oh really?

LANDEEN: [01:19:24] Yeah, there were probably three other chapels in the area.

KLEIN: [01:19:27] Did you attend any of the places, any of the churches?

LANDEEN: [01:19:31] I would go. I didn't because I didn't feel comfortable singling anybody out.

KLEIN: [01:19:39] Uh huh. OK.

LANDEEN: [01:19:40] Although when it came to doing the Posada at Christmas time, everybody seemed to participate in that for, as a Catholic tradition. But everybody participated in that so.

KLEIN: [01:19:51] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:19:51] We did that.

KLEIN: [01:19:52] And what, isn't there also the November 1st, the second *día*, day of the dead?

LANDEEN: [01:20:00] Not to celebrate it in.

KLEIN: [01:20:02] OK, maybe it's more Mexican.

LANDEEN: [01:20:04] It's Mexican. But for national holiday, the quince of September, yeah. Involved in the parade of the kids in all their brand-new uniforms.

KLEIN: [01:20:17] Did you parade or were you simply on the sidelines?

LANDEEN: [01:20:23] Um. I was in the age group that didn't.

KLEIN: [01:20:26] Oh, OK. You weren't expected to carry a Peace Corps banner down the main street?

LANDEEN: [01:20:30] No, no.

KLEIN: [01:20:35] During the first year, did you do any recreational travel?

LANDEEN: [01:20:41] Actually, yes, I did go to Mexico City for Christmas and met my parents there and my sister, and I traveled with a Peace Corps buddy friend. That bugger. We were supposed to see him last week, last year. But he didn't show up in New Mexico. Um, but we traveled. We did that. And about six months into our stay, Peace Corps brought us all together at a kind of a retreat place for about three nights.

KLEIN: [01:21:23] The whole group?

LANDEEN: [01:21:24] The whole group.

KLEIN: [01:21:25] Highlands as well as coast?

LANDEEN: [01:21:26] Highlands. Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:21:27] And was it still 36 or had some people left?

LANDEEN: [01:21:30] No, it had to dropped a few then, there was a couple of couples. Oh, there was two couples I think that left.

KLEIN: [01:21:39] And what went on at the retreat?

LANDEEN: [01:21:43] Um, it was a storytelling time. I don't. We weren't. I don't think we were tested at that time, but that was also. When did we get our next gamma globulin shots?

KLEIN: [01:22:04] It may have been then, because they can come fairly often.

LANDEEN: [01:22:09] But it was kind of a debriefing and it was held at a hot springs. And so we were all in these little cabins around there with fire going. And it was about 5000, 6000 thousand feet elevation. And so it was a.

KLEIN: [01:22:28] It must have been a nice break from the village and the food as well as the, well, not being in public all the time.

LANDEEN: [01:22:37] Right. It was a nice time deal.

KLEIN: [01:22:41] There's kind of an embarrassing question, but were you developing the reputation that in some projects we used to refer to person as a super vol? I mean, that what you were doing really kind of was, you know, represented the best of the Peace Corps could do, I mean?

LANDEEN: [01:23:02] I don't know if what I was doing at the time in the village was recognized as something that. I think the fact that I expanded and did something in the, I developed another project.

KLEIN: [01:23:19] Which was?

LANDEEN: [01:23:20] Uh, it was a tropical fruit improvement project. And I piloted it with my people in my town and a couple of others who recognized this as a possibility. And that is, um. They would plant, they'd get a really great orange and plant the seed, and be very disappointed five years later when it didn't come out the way they wanted it to. At the same time, AID had worked with Extension Service over the years before and helped them develop a very reputable nursery and an extension site.

KLEIN: [01:24:05] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [01:24:06] And so I discovered that and they had mangoes and oranges, all the citrus, and a wide variety of mangoes grafted that you could purchase for the citrus to get it for \$0.30 a plant for the mangoes. It paid \$0.50 a pound for cashew. You paid \$0.50 a plant. Well, I worked on a project, I developed a project to actually teach the farmers how to graft and how to take care of their trees.

KLEIN: [01:24:45] And were you doing this not on a cooperative basis, but with individuals, individual farmers?

LANDEEN: [01:24:51] I did it with, um. Actually, I did it with a group of farmers from a village. They could send. I got some funding and they could send, uh, five or six people from the village to this, to a short course. And I had them come from not only my village, but they, the other volunteers had three or four people, and we brought them together and got funding for their housing and for their food. We hired somebody to cook for them while they were at the site. And then the people on the site, the *agrónomos* on the site ran courses on how to bud and graft and introduce different varieties of fruit, of mangoes.

KLEIN: [01:25:47] And you were so, although there were other volunteers involved in this, you had taken the initiative to develop it?

LANDEEN: [01:25:54] Yes. Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:25:56] And was it, were they? But they were still growing individually, not, you didn't create a huge citrus grove that was cooperatively?

LANDEEN: [01:26:07] No. No.

KLEIN: [01:26:09] OK, I just.

LANDEEN: [01:26:11] Because people were, had a certain amount of pride of ownership, I guess. And also in most of our sites, a big orchard of mangoes was not feasible. We just didn't, people didn't have that have five hectares of land to contribute to something. They might be able to have two or three trees in their, on their patio or the edge of their, of their corn plots or something like that. So what we did, that was only one part was to show them how they could do that and get them acquainted with Los Brillantes.

LANDEEN: [01:26:54] And then we did a, then I helped establish some nurseries in a different, two or three, two other sites. The volunteers there were working with the schools in doing gardens, and so they actually developed a garden, a nursery plot for citrus. And we went down and taught them how to do the budding on grafting on their seedlings so that and help them get good, uh, showed them how to get good buds from trees that are producing something they liked, and also brought some from the experiment station down for them to put in. Sally did one of those nurseries at her site and her team of, I mean, the leaders in her area did put those on.

KLEIN: [01:27:55] You mentioned at one point that you I mean, you're talking about how you're helping your Peace Corps colleagues. Was that role formalized by the Peace Corps so that you were expected to travel along the coast or the south and help individuals?

LANDEEN: [01:28:12] Well, I was given a vehicle.

KLEIN: [01:28:15] OK. That certainly frees you up.

LANDEEN: [01:28:18] So and encouraged to do that. Now, did I.

KLEIN: [01:28:21] By Peace Corps?

LANDEEN: [01:28:22] By Peace Corps, by my advisor, by my regional supervisor.

KLEIN: [01:28:27] And was it at your initiative or his initiative or?

LANDEEN: [01:28:32] We kind of decided what I needed to do, where I needed to go and where I needed, some of the things I needed to do. But the truck or the vehicle actually came into even greater play in our third phase of the fruit development project, and that is that we would take orders for the plants and collect money from the farmers. And I'd go and pick up the plants and then deliver them to the various Peace Corps sites.

KLEIN: [01:29:14] And this was being developed out of the regional headquarters?

LANDEEN: [01:29:21] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:29:21] So did you begin spending more time there?

LANDEEN: [01:29:26] Um, I spent some, I would say I wasn't a lot of time. Two nights at a time maybe.

KLEIN: [01:29:35] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:29:36] That kind of thing. But I was more, I was. If I'd go to a, if I'd go to the, say, the Benzlers' site, I would be there for two days, come back. And actually I don't recall now, I'm trying to remember how many times I might have actually had the vehicle down in my village. And I don't remember too many times having the vehicle down in my village.

KLEIN: [01:30:04] You were driving it?

LANDEEN: [01:30:06] I would drive it, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:30:07] Was it a pickup truck or?

LANDEEN: [01:30:10] A Gladiator. Well, it is a pickup truck. A jeep.

KLEIN: [01:30:13] Oh, OK. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:30:15] And but we had two, and we had three Wagoneers, the two Wagoneers on the coast, two of these pickups. And so I got the one that had the winch. So it was a wench with a winch.

KLEIN: [01:30:37] Was it ever suggested that you become a Peace Corps staff member? There was a category, I think, of volunteer leader.

LANDEEN: [01:30:45] No, but I did extend a year.

KLEIN: [01:30:48] OK. But during the second year, you were, you were playing this role of. Did you feel you were slighting your village?

LANDEEN: [01:31:00] I didn't because they were involved in those activities. I mean, and there were. I didn't feel I was slighting it. There was. I don't know. The whole idea of development is to get the people in the village to operate on their own and be able to know where those resources were. And whatever we did and whatever, it was at the right time and place. I went back five years later and they had built a clinic next door to my house and had a nurse that lived in the area. They had latrines, outhouses, on the properties. So something had happened that carried that on. And when I had a conversation with the people who lived across, the families that lived across the, who I was close to, um.

KLEIN: [01:32:27] This is after five years?

LANDEEN: [01:32:28] This was after five years. They. They never said, they came and did this for us. This is what we had done.

KLEIN: [01:32:42] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:32:43] So something that we did in that time helped that community at least come closer to the middle of the 20th century?

KLEIN: [01:32:54] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Well.

LANDEEN: [01:32:58] And they increased the number of teachers from one to three.

KLEIN: [01:33:03] I mean, there are so many, uh, well, not disaster stories, but almost non-stories in rural community development, particularly where people have going back years later and found that, in fact, you know, there was almost no trace of what the volunteer felt he or she was trying to do. I mean, this is kind of extraordinary. And what was the story in the other villages in the south where the volunteers were? Now you're part of what they're doing because you're doing the fruit tree nursery business.

LANDEEN: [01:33:39] When we went back.

KLEIN: [01:33:41] Now, we?

LANDEEN: [01:33:42] I went back five years later with a, uh, with five friends.

KLEIN: [01:33:48] All from the?

LANDEEN: [01:33:49] No, I was the only one. I was the guide actually. And when we went to visit the various, a couple of the spots that had been. We found the trees growing. We found in the. [tape break] There was a demonstration parcel and a pair of my colleagues, actually one of my colleagues started it. A couple took it over, really ran some great demonstrations of corn holler, a corn dryer, hog operation, a chicken operation. We had a big old party over there with a chicken barbecue after they demonstrated.

KLEIN: [01:34:43] Now were these volunteers?

LANDEEN: [01:34:44] Yes, yes. They were from our group.

KLEIN: [01:34:47] OK. Got it.

LANDEEN: [01:34:47] So I went back. Well, that was one of the things that we did is we put in this demonstration orchard on this plot and it had probably ten varieties of mangoes on it. We, when we came back and when I went down there five years later, met the *guardián* on the property. There were no volunteers on the property any longer. But the INTA had interest in this property. But the *guardián* was there. He knew me, remembered me and everything. And so while we were there, he said, come see what I've got here. And we went to his house, looked on the floor, and he had a big old net full of the best mangoes. I mean, he. These guys didn't know what they had, but he knew what they had.

KLEIN: [01:35:42] It must be very sweet, literally, to go back and enjoy the fruit of the trees that you had been involved in getting the whole thing going.

LANDEEN: [01:35:56] It was exciting.

KLEIN: [01:35:57] Yeah, that's incredible.

LANDEEN: [01:35:59] That was exciting. In fact, got a picture of him and stuff like that, some of the good ones.

KLEIN: [01:36:04] Well, let's jump back to your volunteer service. On toward, as you came toward the end of your second year, that would have been the time when you would terminate.

LANDEEN: [01:36:18] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:36:18] And what went on that got you into the third year?

LANDEEN: [01:36:22] Well, the project I'm describing to you, another group came in, uh, June. Anyway, it was in, it was in the rainy season. And basically I stayed on so that I could introduce the new group to the. They were in

June, they were coming in in June. It was raining. And that was when I just got through delivering the first or the second batch of mangoes or trees to the villages. And so we wanted to get another cycle in. I wanted to get another cycle in. And so I went and I worked with the new group and trained them about what we were doing, to talk to them about the whole mango process so.

KLEIN: [01:37:24] Where did that happen?

LANDEEN: [01:37:26] It was in country. It was near, uh. It wasn't at Los.

KLEIN: [01:37:37] Well, that's OK. But it was in country.

LANDEEN: [01:37:39] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:37:39] And again, were you working with the group that was assigned to the south?

LANDEEN: [01:37:46] Yes. Yes. And going in and replacing. Actually, they didn't replace my group. They must have been in a little earlier than that because they went into some of the other spots that were empty or vacant. And so I went and told them about, I got them involved in the project. And then when they got started, they wanted to know more about the groups that they were working with. They, their farmers wanted to know more about it. So I would go down and tell them about it.

KLEIN: [01:38:22] Your Spanish must have been pretty good by then.

LANDEEN: [01:38:24] It was good enough to describe all that. In fact, one of the deals. One of the, uh, sites was, oh. Something like that. Anyway, it was on the day of an eclipse. And the myth and this is rampant about eclipses and all this business. And I had not seen any, been in that kind of an area during the eclipse and I was excited about it. So we went down with our volunteer, the other volunteers, and the guys were all hanging out. The men were there at this particular house, but there were no women out and they had brought their children in. They'd taken their children in and they didn't want them hurt by the eclipse. And I'm sitting

out there underneath the tree and I was looking into the ground and this is weird. All the shadow patterns are all the same underneath this tree. So I got out my tape recorder and I said this. I recorded what I saw and how quiet it was and all this. It was the first time I'd seen the crescents, uh, sunspots.

KLEIN: [01:39:45] Uh huh.

LANDEEN: [01:39:45] You know, the spaces in the trees act like pinholes.

KLEIN: [01:39:48] Yes.

LANDEEN: [01:39:49] And I'd say, come out and see this. And the guys were kind of, eh, you know, and they'd look at it. And what are you looking at? I said, look at this. And afterwards I remembered that. So that was, that was kind of neat.

KLEIN: [01:40:04] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:40:05] But anyway, I stayed so we could get another cycle of workshops and get another cycle of fruit sales. And then somebody else I worked with, one of the guys from that group, and they took over.

KLEIN: [01:40:28] And you continue to live in the village the third year?

LANDEEN: [01:40:30] Yes, I did. Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:40:32] You said that your parents came down to visit at one point?

LANDEEN: [01:40:35] Yes, they did.

KLEIN: [01:40:36] When during the?

LANDEEN: [01:40:38] Well, first of all, they met me in that first week, the first year in, uh.

KLEIN: [01:40:43] Mexico City.

LANDEEN: [01:40:43] Mexico City, yeah. But then they came in, in my second year, and they came down and they traveled a little bit in Guatemala and we visited a couple of sites. We went down along the coast over to Caballo Blanco, where one of my colleagues were housed there, went out to see what they were doing. I was delivering, I was probably delivering trays or something at the time.

KLEIN: [01:41:15] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:41:15] And then, um, they wanted to be, they came to my village then and met the folks and I had to be this translator for my folks.

KLEIN: [01:41:28] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:41:28] And Don Hilario came over and Don Pedro came over and they came over and stayed to talk about how they were taking care of their daughter and how they were glad she was there. And I'm like, OK. I'll translate for you folks. But they were.

KLEIN: [01:41:44] Just saying all kinds of nice things about you.

LANDEEN: [01:41:46] Oh, yeah. And they were just, they were extremely pleased to meet these parents. And, you know, I think back on it right now and they were younger than I am now when they went down there.

KLEIN: [01:42:03] And they worked their way through the culture shock and everything?

LANDEEN: [01:42:09] Yeah, my sister traveled with us too, and we went up, was there, and she was in high school, so she got a bang out of it because she would, um, had just enough Spanish to handle the markets and got excited about things. Then she came down. She and another friend came down the Christmas after I extended and did some traveling around by ourselves, and that's where I discovered my sister is crazy about fireworks and *bombas* and things like that cause that's, oh yeah.

KLEIN: [01:42:49] So your third year was a continuation of what you were doing the second year?

LANDEEN: [01:42:56] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:42:57] And by the third year, was Peace Corps still secure in Guatemala or had there been?

LANDEEN: [01:43:06] They were secure. It was during our second year, the group of us were headed into Guatemala City, and we happened to stop at a restaurant where an American was a proprietor there. And he says, you better come and look at this. And so we went and looked at his television and said, well, I think we'll stay here tonight. Because that's when the ambassador was shot on the street.

KLEIN: [01:43:31] OK. Was there other anti-American or civil unrest around that time, or was it just an individual act?

LANDEEN: [01:43:43] It was just an, it was in the city. That was all. We never felt, um, during our time there, we never felt challenged in the, when we were out in our sites or even in the larger cities outside of Guatemala.

KLEIN: [01:44:00] And Peace Corps wasn't giving you any indications of their being nervous?

LANDEEN: [01:44:06] Um. We were told, we were told to, if there was anything, to look for telegrams and they'd tell us what we needed, if we needed to do something. We didn't have, I don't recall us having like an evacuation plan or anything like that.

KLEIN: [01:44:23] Oh, OK. That came later. Coming to the end of the third year, did you think maybe you'd go for four or where were you at?

LANDEEN: [01:44:36] Oh, what was I was doing? OK. Well, I was spending less and less time, of course, in the village and another group came in because. Yeah. And I was replaced in the village.

KLEIN: [01:44:57] Did you meet your replacement?

LANDEEN: [01:44:58] Yes, I did. I did.

KLEIN: [01:45:01] Did she or he inherit your house?

LANDEEN: [01:45:04] He inherited my house. And um, I don't remember what his, whether it was still rural development or just what his responsibilities were. I seem to be, you know, got the trees on the ground and distributed that year. And I had become more acquainted with some other volunteers for, that were in a fisheries project. So I had an opportunity to explore the countryside where they were.

KLEIN: [01:45:42] Just going to encourage them or?

LANDEEN: [01:45:46] To encourage them, to see what the tropics, the agricultural stuff was around the area. But also it was, I got probably a little bit more social.

KLEIN: [01:45:57] So you were sort of also in the semi staff position. I mean, clearly you just weren't a volunteer in a village.

LANDEEN: [01:46:03] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:46:04] Although I don't know if that was recognized in your pay.

LANDEEN: [01:46:08] No.

KLEIN: [01:46:09] Or status. OK.

LANDEEN: [01:46:11] Which was fine.

KLEIN: [01:46:13] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So what was your plan then, as the end of the service, what were you going to do next?

LANDEEN: [01:46:21] I had no idea.

KLEIN: [01:46:24] Did anyone from Peace Corps approach you and ask if you were interested in a staff position?

LANDEEN: [01:46:30] No, no.

KLEIN: [01:46:31] I'm surprised.

LANDEEN: [01:46:33] No.

KLEIN: [01:46:35] OK.

LANDEEN: [01:46:36] I could, I mean, you met my regional supervisor.

KLEIN: [01:46:41] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [01:46:43] Uh, Dwight Walker.

KLEIN: [01:46:44] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:46:45] And so, um, he had moved off of this, off the coast by the middle of my third year because some of his responsibilities had changed. And he was also very interested in his now wife. So they had property up in Guatemala City. That's where they were. Anyway, so I think he would have encouraged me, but I don't recall looking at that in particular. I actually ran into a group of folks from California. Cal Poly had a USAID grant for some extension work in Guatemala. And they had a cadre of their professors working with some extension agents in things like strawberry development, things like that, and some other community activities.

LANDEEN: [01:48:01] I met some of those folks and one of those guys, Bob McCullough, saw the things that we're doing and he actually came down to our site, the demonstration plot site in La Maquina, and was there for an event and saw some of the things that we were doing. And then I went with him out to Barrios, to another volunteer site, and we looked at the potential for other fruit development projects out there. He saw what I was doing and some of the things that happened, and he was the one

who said, maybe you should look at being an ag teacher when you get back. By the way, the head of agricultural education for the state of California is going to be in town, is going to be visiting at my house next week. You come and visit. And at that time.

KLEIN: [01:48:54] This was in Guatemala?

LANDEEN: [01:48:55] In Guatemala. And at that time, in order to get into the teacher preparation program for ag ed, you had to have an interview with state staff. And so I had my interview in Guatemala with Don Wilson.

KLEIN: [01:49:12] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:49:13] And then came back. I targeted getting back so I could be home for a friend's wedding. She was married, I came back on the 26th of August, she got married on the 29th. On the 2nd of September, I was in a teacher preparation program at UC Davis.

KLEIN: [01:49:35] Leading toward a master's?

LANDEEN: [01:49:38] Toward a credential.

KLEIN: [01:49:39] Oh, but not necessarily a master's.

LANDEEN: [01:49:41] Not necessarily a master's. And on the 10th of September, I was student teaching in Modesto.

KLEIN: [01:49:48] Things happen fast. So at that point, you, what you want to do is become an ag teacher.

LANDEEN: [01:49:55] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:49:55] And that would be within the state of California.

LANDEEN: [01:49:59] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:49:59] Is that mostly secondary level?

LANDEEN: [01:50:01] Yes, it is.

KLEIN: [01:50:02] It would be, OK. And is that in fact what happened?

LANDEEN: [01:50:06] Yes. Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:50:08] Uh, over the first two to three years after you came back, what kind of contact did you maintain with friends or people in Guatemala?

LANDEEN: [01:50:21] Um, actually, I had several letters in that first four or five years with folks in Guatemala, with the family, Hilario and his son. Ah, which one was it? The second son is the one that went on to become a social worker. Um. Not too much other contact, except that when I went back five years later, we went right down and then I wanted to keep up some more contact but.

KLEIN: [01:50:58] What prompted the trip after five years?

LANDEEN: [01:51:04] Well, I ran into this friend of mine who went in the Peace Corps same time I did, but went to Venezuela. Had been on a rafting trip with a couple of folks and they said that they wanted to travel in South America and we got to be good friends. And they had a couple of friends that here. And we put together this three week trip.

KLEIN: [01:51:24] With you as the guide sort of?

LANDEEN: [01:51:25] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:51:25] Yeah. OK.

LANDEEN: [01:51:27] And then I went on from there. I went down to Costa Rica to visit some folks before I came home.

KLEIN: [01:51:36] People also talking about the third goal of the Peace Corps, you know, coming back and trying to help inform our community friends about the Third World or the other parts of the world.

LANDEEN: [01:51:48] Hm hmm.

KLEIN: [01:51:48] Were you able to do much of that through the first five, six years?

LANDEEN: [01:51:55] Uh, I did in a lot of ways because those stories were still so ripe in my head. And I was teaching in Modesto and there were a couple of kids that were new arrivals from Mexico. And so I was speaking Spanish to those children. I also had a tough time with English because there were words that I was more familiar with in Spanish that described more what I wanted to talk about than, oh, let's go out to the farm. The idea of going out to the campo is in my mind, it means that you're getting out of town and that's what I wanted to say.

KLEIN: [01:52:42] Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:52:43] So, I was invited. When they knew I was in, had been in Guatemala and I had artifacts and things, I was invited by several different ag teachers to come and talk with their kids about agriculture in Guatemala. And so I have a really pretty extensive slideshow that shows mangoes and cashews and corn planting and roofing and stuff like that.

KLEIN: [01:53:19] What's been your involvement through the years? It's now been quite a few years.

LANDEEN: [01:53:25] Yeah, I've been, well, I got involved with the returned Peace Corps volunteers here in Sacramento when they first organized, I think around year 25.

KLEIN: [01:53:37] Yeah. Yeah.

LANDEEN: [01:53:40] So I participated in a couple of the national conferences.

KLEIN: [01:53:47] Right.

LANDEEN: [01:53:48] I, within our organization, the Sacramento Returned, Sacramento Valley Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, I've taken on, been a part of the board of directors and I have taken on specific projects in that activity, volunteer activities within or volunteer community development activities in Sacramento area has been kind of my focus, although I have been available for talking to schools and classes and helping other people make those connections with various. Because of my background and my connections in education, if somebody wants to know something about Ghana, I can look up and find somebody who's been there.

KLEIN: [01:54:43] Any further trips to Guatemala?

LANDEEN: [01:54:45] I haven't. I haven't been. I want to, but I'm a little afraid. I mean, it's been 30 years and the people that I, that I knew.

KLEIN: [01:54:55] Go back, it's worth it. Anything else you'd like to include in the interview?

LANDEEN: [01:55:04] Um. I'll tell you, actually getting re, getting back with my colleagues from Guatemala has been exciting.

KLEIN: [01:55:19] Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [01:55:19] And so we've had two reunions, three reunions, since we've been back. One in Colorado. One here on the West Coast. And one on the East Coast. And we'll have another one in three years up in Seattle.

KLEIN: [01:55:37] And that's the group that was, the Ghana, the Guatemala IX group.

LANDEEN: [01:55:43] Yes, the Guatemala nine group.

KLEIN: [01:55:44] Yeah. That's great.

LANDEEN: [01:55:46] And it has included some of the staff members.

KLEIN: [01:55:48] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

LANDEEN: [01:55:50] Not just, not just the volunteers.

KLEIN: [01:55:53] Yeah. Good.

[END OF INTERVIEW]