

David Scott Ellinwood Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

David Scott Ellinwood served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Brazil from 1964 to 1966 on an architecture and housing project.

Access

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Oral History Interview

with

David Scott Ellinwood

April 21, 2003
Montecito, California

By Victor Cox

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

COX: [00:00:02] Ok, this is interviewer Vic Cox. It's April 21st, 2003, and I'm interviewing for the RPCV Oral History Project, Mr. Scott, David Scott Ellinwood. How do you spell your last name, Scott?

ELLINWOOD: [00:00:20] It's E-L-L-I-N-W-O-O-D.

COX: [00:00:24] Thank you. No G folks.

ELLINWOOD: [00:00:27] Yeah, that's right. You had a G in the email?

COX: [00:00:30] Yeah, I did.

ELLINWOOD: [00:00:31] A lot of people do that. You're forgiven.

COX: [00:00:37] Thank you. Scott, tell us briefly, you know, what your profession is now and where you live. And then we'll go into some of your recollections of Peace Corps.

ELLINWOOD: [00:00:51] All right. I'm an architect. I have my own practice in Ventura, California. I live in Carpinteria, California, which is near by Santa Barbara, California, and we're sitting here watching the Pacific.

COX: [00:01:13] Yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [00:01:15] Yeah, roll in as we're conducting this interview.

COX: [00:01:20] Can you kind of go back in your mind to the early '60s and remember how you first heard about Peace Corps and how you got interested in joining the Peace Corps?

ELLINWOOD: [00:01:37] Well, you remember in 1960, there was an interesting presidential campaign, and I was a student at the University of Michigan at the time. And one of the whistle stops for the Kennedy campaign was the University of Michigan. And so I decided I was pretty interested in that, even though I think at that point I wasn't able to vote yet. I wouldn't be able to vote for another year. But I was very interested in the campaign and very intrigued by what I'd seen of Kennedy on television. So when I heard he was going to show up at the Michigan Union, I, I managed to get over there. And I remember it was a it's not a very nice day, a typical Michigan day. And it was kind of cold and dreary and drizzly. And he didn't show up for quite a while. But and he did eventually show up.

COX: [00:02:37] And this would have been the fall of 1960.

ELLINWOOD: [00:02:41] Yeah, I think so. Before the election. It was before the election. Yeah. And it was on the steps of the Michigan Union that he actually proposed the Peace Corps. Right. And I had always wanted to travel and didn't see how I was going to be able to do that, you know, and I'd help put myself through school. My dad had a good job, but he had four children and not a lot of money. And but I'd always wanted to

travel. And I was very intrigued by novels that I'd read about Brazil and travel, things that I'd read about Brazil. So I was interested in going to Brazil. And the Peace Corps sounded like something that I wanted to do anyway. I was interested in serving my country and I was not interested in being in the military. And this seemed like a perfect way to do it.

COX: [00:03:42] So you heard John Kennedy there on the steps of the Michigan Union?

ELLINWOOD: [00:03:47] Yes. And that was pretty inspirational.

COX: [00:03:50] Yeah. In fact, I think you're understating it seems to me he was hours late.

ELLINWOOD: [00:03:54] Yes, he was.

COX: [00:03:55] And there's like early morning when he finally starts talking.

ELLINWOOD: [00:04:00] I don't even remember when it was. Yeah, I just it's not that part isn't clear at all.

COX: [00:04:06] But you can remember yourself on the steps listening to him?

ELLINWOOD: [00:04:09] Well he was on the steps. We were, you know, using the steps as a platform. And we were kind of out on the sidewalk around here, said a group of people gathered around. But I don't remember the time of day, really. But I remember the message and yeah, and the man. Yeah, the idea. And yeah, it was something I wanted to do. So I was really delighted when I was accepted for training and my family was very supportive.

COX: [00:04:51] That would have been at least three years later, right?

ELLINWOOD: [00:04:55] Yeah. After I graduated.

COX: [00:04:59] Because you're talking about the fall of 1960, you graduated in June of 64. That's right. And of course, by then you knew where you were going, I think, yeah, I got my invitation in April. In fact, I know it was like the first of April because it was the same day they overthrew Goulart in Brazil. So I think I'd remember that. And I assume most of us got invitations to train for that project about the same time. And probably were both in Brazil 12.

ELLINWOOD: [00:05:36] Well, yeah, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

COX: [00:05:39] Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ELLINWOOD: [00:05:40] The University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

COX: [00:05:42] Yes.

ELLINWOOD: [00:05:43] And an all-girls school campus. They had just taken over, as I remember.

COX: [00:05:51] I didn't recall that, but now that you said it does sound familiar. Yeah, I don't remember what the name of the school was, but yeah. Yeah, they know. So when you applied, did you ask specifically for Brazil?

ELLINWOOD: [00:06:04] I did. That was my first choice.

COX: [00:06:07] Did you have any language background in Portuguese?

ELLINWOOD: [00:06:10] No, I had taken a little French in college, Latin in high school. And that was the only language, you know, study I done.

COX: [00:06:23] So. You said that your parents were both supportive.

ELLINWOOD: [00:06:28] Oh, they were very supportive. Yeah.

COX: [00:06:32] And they weren't especially your mom wasn't horrified that you're going to that godforsaken country of Brazil?

ELLINWOOD: [00:06:44] No, I mean, my parents always encouraged me to, you know, do what I wanted to do. No, they were very supportive.

COX: [00:06:57] And were you the eldest of four children?

ELLINWOOD: [00:07:01] Yes.

COX: [00:07:03] And your siblings, how they divide up between males and females?

ELLINWOOD: [00:07:06] I have two brothers and a sister, a sister who's two years younger and a brother who's nine years younger and one who's 12 years younger. So they're almost a separate family. Yeah, they were quite little kids that I, you know, helped change their diapers. You know, so that sort of thing. That was the big brother.

COX: [00:07:31] Were you also invited to train for a community health, community development public health project?

ELLINWOOD: [00:07:40] Yeah, it was that was the only training that was available was public health. And I just graduated with a bachelor's of architecture and was told during training that, you know, it's quite likely that I wouldn't be able to actually practice architecture and I was willing to do public health if that's what it took. But when just and I was scheduled, like you to go to Mato Grosso and in the far southwest of Brazil, and it was shortly before we were to leave that I was told there was an opening for an architect that that in the northeast. And so I jumped at that opportunity. And I think there were a couple of engineers that trained with this also. Bob Donovan and David Ferrier, who are electrical engineers who were recruited to the same place.

COX: [00:08:56] And I think that's a good word recruited because as I recall, there was a project director from the northeast who came to Milwaukee toward the end of our training. Is that when you first got?

ELLINWOOD: [00:09:12] Yeah, I don't remember.

COX: [00:09:13] Clearly a possibility. Yeah, I don't remember going there. Okay. Well, I'm not going to put words in your mouth. Yeah, but I'm and I wasn't part of that group that split off, I think there. Yeah, it was all of you weren't there from our training group, which was a fairly large training.

ELLINWOOD: [00:09:29] Yeah, there were a number of us. And I think we were mostly, you know, kind of technical professionals, you know, architects and engineers and people who had specific skills that they were looking for.

COX: [00:09:46] But not all of you. Margie Veera, she was a teacher.

ELLINWOOD: [00:09:50] Yeah, that's right.

COX: [00:09:52] I don't know what Tom Heyer's training was, do you?

ELLINWOOD: [00:09:54] No. Well, he's a psychologist now.

COX: [00:09:59] Yeah. I mean, it was what it was then. Yeah, I think, you know, Arturo Irizare. Yeah. He went with you, too?

ELLINWOOD: [00:10:05] Yeah. And he was pretty young at the time. Oh, yeah. He was fresh out of college, in fact. And Terry Brandon. Was he?

COX: [00:10:13] Yeah. Terry Brandon.

ELLINWOOD: [00:10:14] Well, he had agricultural experience and he was like 18 years old, had not been to college. And of course, he's still there, now Terry "Braundon."

COX: [00:10:25] I didn't know that.

ELLINWOOD: [00:10:30] He married to Brazillian and he's still there. Tom visits him when he goes.

COX: [00:10:38] Ah cool. When you did go into training, you had already decided that even though your architecture, your degree was in architecture and that's where your heart was, I mean, this is really what you wanted to do. Otherwise, 40 years later, you wouldn't be doing it right. You had made accommodations, so you decided that it was worthwhile to get to Brazil and to be able to serve your country in this manner. Do you remember if you had a girlfriend or anybody who is trying to persuade you not to go?

ELLINWOOD: [00:11:19] No, unfortunately, I don't know anyone like that. I had a I had a sort of a girlfriend, but she was back home and she was going her own way anyway. And so I didn't have those that. Distraction or action, I was you know, I was very focused and this was something I would have done no matter what.

COX: [00:11:46] And your family was prepared to let you go for two whole years?

ELLINWOOD: [00:11:57] Yeah, you know, I've been away from home for a number of times, they encouraged me to go away to school, even though it was only two hours away from East Lansing to Ann Arbor. But, you know, I didn't go home very often.

COX: [00:12:16] So you grew up in East Lansing?

ELLINWOOD: [00:12:18] Yeah, I grew up in a little town called Okemos, which is outside.

COX: [00:12:22] Oh, could you spell that, please?

ELLINWOOD: [00:12:23] O-K-E-M-O-S. It was a little tiny town. There were 58 people in my graduating class. And then I went from there to the, you know, 35,000 plus students at the University of Michigan. But I love Michigan, and it was terrific.

COX: [00:12:43] You get culture shock doing that.

ELLINWOOD: [00:12:45] Yeah, but I didn't. I was right next to Michigan State University. I took music lessons at the university. I played in the university orchestra. And so I was you know, I was used to a campus very much like it. And so it really didn't feel that strange to me.

COX: [00:13:07] During Peace Corps training in Milwaukee, which always felt strange to me, I mean, Milwaukee is so hot and humid during the summer.

ELLINWOOD: [00:13:19] Yeah, well that's the Midwest.

COX: [00:13:21] We had cold nights. We had freezing nights. I remember in fact, I think it was Terry Brandon taking a picture of me all curled up on my covers one morning looking like I had W.C. Fields nose. Or is it just for California? It was a bit of a shock.

ELLINWOOD: [00:13:45] Yeah, well, it wasn't much different than Michigan.

COX: [00:13:51] What do you remember from our training period, that kind of stuck in your mind, including faculty or technical training or language training? I mean, what, if anything, is memorable to you from that period?

ELLINWOOD: [00:14:15] Well, you know, probably the most dramatic impression was made by Popeye Brown, you know, Bill Brown, when he came in cold. I had never seen any of us before. Obviously, he'd read all of read everyone's resume before he stood up before. I don't know how 80 of us or something and called people out by name and knew everything about them. And I mean, I was really blown away by it, by him, and that was the most memorable kind of faculty anywhere else and really faculty. But I don't really remember the faculty that much. I remember feeling frustrated and trying to learn Portuguese and wondering if I ever would be able to you know, I was able to repeat the phrases in the classes and, you know, I did OK or I didn't get at least I didn't get cut. And I was you know, I was very serious about. About making it. And I was glad that I was able to and my roommate was a perfectly

nice guy, didn't make it. And I remember feeling so, you know, bad for him. Yeah. While I was feeling so glad for myself. But yeah.

COX: [00:15:41] Yeah guiltily glad. Yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [00:15:44] And I think he lived here in Santa Barbara, too, for a while, Bob Ingle I think his name was.

COX: [00:15:55] Blond guy?

ELLINWOOD: [00:15:56] Yeah, I was going to say glasses, blond hair. Long hair, slick, curly blond hair, curly hair, almost white hair. Yeah.

COX: [00:16:07] So, you know, do you remember deselection then?

ELLINWOOD: [00:16:11] Yeah. Yeah. So that was I remember that and how hard that was. And how relieved I was that I wasn't one of those. I remember, you know, being kind of frustrated with the training, you know, we you know, the things like going to slaughterhouses and learning to kill rats in the green yards. You know, it wasn't exactly my idea of learning useful skills. And I remember when I heard about what the people did in Arizona, because I married Sarah, who had trained in New Mexico, I should say, and she was terrified of heights. They had learned how to rappel off a cliff and she was motivated enough to make herself do that, even though she was absolutely terrified of heights her whole life. And I was so envious that she learned how to rappel. There's a useful skill.

COX: [00:17:23] That she probably never used either.

ELLINWOOD: [00:17:25] Yeah. Well, we did learn soccer. We did run. You know, had to run a seven-minute mile. And, you know, so we did some good physical training. We learned how to do kip ups and, you know, things like that that were fun to learn. I wish I could still do one.

COX: [00:17:46] Yeah. What was Sarah's last name?

ELLINWOOD: [00:17:53] Fluck. F-L-U-C-K.

COX: [00:17:56] And she trained for what country?

ELLINWOOD: [00:17:59] She trained for Brazil. And in Mexico. And near Albuquerque. And they went to Indian reservations and they rappelled off cliffs and they did all this romantic stuff that I was really envious of.

COX: [00:18:13] I really thought they only did that kind of rappelling type training in Puerto Rico.

ELLINWOOD: [00:18:18] Yeah, they started on the stadium, I guess, and then graduated to a real cliff.

COX: [00:18:26] Wow.

ELLINWOOD: [00:18:26] And she did it. Shows her determination.

COX: [00:18:32] Yeah. Outside of just being happy that you were not selected, as the psychologists like to say, what did you feel about the fairness of the selection system that they were using in the 60s?

ELLINWOOD: [00:18:49] I wasn't I didn't feel qualified to judge, you know.

COX: [00:18:55] So you withheld judgment?

ELLINWOOD: [00:18:58] Yeah. They were smart enough to choose me. So they couldn't be all wrong.

COX: [00:19:07] Right. Uh. I'm not sure we're picking that up. What's that?

ELLINWOOD: [00:19:16] You know, because it's jiggling your mike, it's trickling or rubbing against you.

COX: [00:19:21] Uh, could you describe what job was actually given to you? Why don't you are peeled off and you were sent to Alagoas?

ELLINWOOD: [00:19:35] To Paraiba.

COX: [00:19:40] Paraiba. Because you guys were split up too. So many. We went to around.

ELLINWOOD: [00:19:45] All right. Yeah. João Pessoa is where I went, the capital city in the state of Paraiba, the northeast of Brazil.

COX: [00:19:52] And some went to Recife.

ELLINWOOD: [00:19:55] I don't remember anyone going to Recife. Some went to the interior of Paraiba into, you know, some little towns that were like a 14-hour bus ride away. Over impossible roads. You know, now it only takes two hours, I think. But yeah, you know, how the highways have been in Peru.

COX: [00:20:18] But tell me, you know, what were you told and were you given any other training in country to do the job that you were now being assigned to do in Paraiba?

ELLINWOOD: [00:20:31] No, the only real training was being put in separated from the other English-speaking volunteers and put it in a pencil where I had to speak Portuguese in order to eat or find the bathroom. And that that was really when I learned to speak Portuguese. And it was it took about a month, you know, and I was getting along. Yeah. And then but at the same time, I was already introduced to my job, which was with the State Development Commission. And the assignment was to design a small satellite community of self-help, low income housing, complete with school marketplace police station. And, you know, so. And it was to have a thousand units and maybe have 5,000 people that it would house.

COX: [00:21:43] For João Pessoa?

ELLINWOOD: [00:21:44] For João Pessoa, in the industrial sector, there was a site was selected for it. Yeah. So that was my assignment and that was the reason I was brought there. But the State Development Commission's

offices were only open in the morning, and so that left the afternoons free. And so in the afternoon, I was recruited to the State University. Who was designing a new campus just outside town? So I was. There was one there was an architect there. There was no architect in the State Development Commission, and they had apparently tried several times to get a project through the Brazilian federal agency Sudeni, I think was called, I can't remember. Yeah, what that stands for, the acronym stands for. And USAID was also sponsoring this, and they had had their proposal rejected twice, and we're kind of desperate to get this thing done. So that was my assignment. And basically I had the design done in a month, you know, not yet, and proceeded to help get it approved through the Brazilian federal agency. So I traveled was to receive four meetings with. The Brazilian architects that were in that agency and then representatives from the USAID.

ELLINWOOD: [00:23:36] And basically, I got it approved, you know, probably within six months, you know, through them. But at that point, the state government changed. And the governor who had whose pet project this was, was not reelected and his opponent came in and so the project then just sat for the rest of the time. But meanwhile, there was another project that was to be funded by the World Bank, that I designed as well, a similar size community.

COX: [00:24:11] Also in João Pessoa?

ELLINWOOD: [00:24:17] No, not in João Pessoa. It was it was in another community. I don't even remember the name. I don't think it ever went forward. But the project that I did design just when I was leaving Brazil, there was another regime change in the state government, and the former governor was re-elected and the project started to go forward. And I was invited to stay to kind of, you know, oversee the initial construction of the project, which would have been very exciting, it's very tempting, but at that point I was. Wanting to go home and wanting to. I've made plans to travel to Europe. So I was I was ready to leave. But once I got home, I wanted to go back. You know, it was hard.

COX: [00:25:19] So you passed up the chance to become your own straw boss and construction foreman?

ELLINWOOD: [00:25:27] Yeah it would have been interesting to see that happen.

COX: [00:25:35] What were your living conditions when you were in country there? Since you mostly stayed in the capital city of João Pessoa, so did you stay in one place all the time or did you end up having a variety of living conditions?

ELLINWOOD: [00:25:50] Well, after the initial month, yeah in the pension, then the two electrical engineers and myself took over the house that that a USAID bureaucrat had vacated. And we also inherited his *impregata*, the housekeeper, cook and her toddler. And she was what? She was a wonderful cook. This was a very nice little suburban house with I think there were two bedrooms. You know, we had to share bedrooms, but we had our own maid and cook and uh, we were expected to live at the same level as the people we were working with. That was the philosophy. The big faux pas that I made was I was so gung-ho about my job that I wanted to be there. I was so anxious to get to work that I made a real faux pas. One of the one of the Brazilian engineers who worked there was a charming guy, but he spoke nothing but slang. Mean he would I couldn't understand him, you know, even though I was learning to speak Portuguese. Everything you said was in slang. But he was this charming guy and he offered to pick us up at home and take us to work in his Volkswagen, which was, you know, a real honor to ride to work in a car. It was too far too far to walk. But he was you know, he was always two hours late, you know. Because, you know, it was Brazil. Yeah, this was fine. But, you know, being this. You know, driven American who have very strong work ethic. Yes. So I had to be there and I really wanted to do this job, and it was very exciting for me.

ELLINWOOD: [00:28:03] So I, I requisitioned a bicycle and I got the Peace Corps to buy me a bicycle, and I rode a bicycle to work. And it you know, and really someone in my position is not supposed to ride a bicycle, that is for someone at a lower station. And this engineer is things prosaically.

And he was, you know. He was really hurt that I would rather but ride a bicycle than wait for him and ride in this car. And it took him a little while to forgive him. And finally he realized that I was just this crazy American and I'll never forget what he said, because it is classic and so true. He said, you Americans have everything backwards. You live to work instead of work to live. And you know, he's exactly right and it's taken me all this time to figure that out.

COX: [00:29:16] The whole concept of time in Brazil was, I think, a difficult one to accept and integrate into, especially I think the professionals schedule. We had nurses in Mato Grosso that left in pairs, because they had trouble adapting their knowledge and their sense of what a professional nurse did to the Brazilian hospital situation with its extremely limited resources, technology and it's totally weird from their point of view time cycle. So some couldn't do it, but others went native. I mean, they were quickly able to see the wisdom and civilized qualities of the afternoon siesta. Very wonderful. It's like that. And I was one of the men in my little town. I really started to appreciate that because actually I always had a choice. You could take your siesta time through the hot hours of the day, you know, inside your hammock in bed or whatever you had. Or you could spend some time until it cooled a little bit there and then you went out and sat under the shade trees. And you know sipped liquids and just talked philosophy with the other shade tree philosophers. I really enjoyed that because it gave me a different view of the people I was living with than just working with them. You know, it's a different level of interaction. I always appreciated that I had that option. Well, it sounds like you spent what many siestas doing that kind of thing.

ELLINWOOD: [00:31:31] Yeah, I did. I did. You know, I took the noon hour.

COX: [00:31:36] Side two of tape one. Scott Ellinwood, Brazil, 1964 to 66.

ELLINWOOD: [00:31:47] Yeah, well, where I was on the coast, so it didn't get as hot as was true. Nor as cold, I suppose, but. But yeah, it was. You know, the hammocks were wonderful. It was a wonderful way to sleep. Breaking up the day and having two different jobs, and then the job

would still be light and we'd convene for four beer, you know, at a local bar. And, you know, I can remember probably a couple of times where we would. Doing more than we should have. I'm sure, and kind of finding our way home somehow. But how? You know, it was really a wonderful time. I did learn to relax a little bit.

COX: [00:32:47] And did you have these *aguaje*, drinks they call pingé, batida da pingé?

ELLINWOOD: [00:32:57] Yeah, we had batidas. There was *cachaça*, but I didn't drink that very much. Mostly it was Brahma Chopp, the wonderful beer. And yeah, and there was this wonderful little there was a lagoon in the center João Pessoa that had this fountain in the middle that was working when I got there. And magically, when the regime changed and the governor changed the ballot and stopped working, and then just before I left, it started working again, just like my project. So it was symbolic. But around this perfectly round lagoon with this fountain right in the center was a kind of a bamboo. Forest of a park and within that was a palapa with a little bar and go there and we'd have our Brahma Chopp, shrimp and stuff like that after work and then stagger home and then have a light dinner and play chess and talk. That was a wonderful time.

COX: [00:34:07] You had electricity, of course. And you're in the capital city with electricity.

ELLINWOOD: [00:34:12] We had electricity and we had electrical engineers. Yeah, but the electricity in town was not reliable. And but one of the engineers that I worked with, his name was David Ferrier. You know. I don't know whether it was or not, but he was this crewcut guy who looked like you should be wearing a trench coat or a gray suit all the time. He was, you know, and just had this kind of a rigid demeanor is a perfectly nice guy. But he would always be practicing his Morse code on his he had a little shortwave radio and was practicing his Morse code. So I don't know whether he was maybe he was CIA or something. I don't know. But the worst was that he that he got a generator. And when everybody else's lights were out, our lights were

on. And he was practicing Morse code and interfering with other people's radio, you know. So I'm sure we were seen as spies. And maybe he was I don't know.

COX: [00:35:25] You said you lived in a suburban neighborhood.

ELLINWOOD: [00:35:29] Yes.

COX: [00:35:31] Who were your neighbors?

ELLINWOOD: [00:35:33] We had very nice neighbors. There were ladies would come over and bring us fresh. I remember fresh watermelon drink, you know, asked watermelon, processed into it into a liquid. And as an exotic drink. Yeah. They were very nice people, and I remember the you know, the street vendors would go by with the baskets on, you know, on their shoulders, over their shoulders and sell fresh fish. And I remember a guy who would go out and buy the fish for dinner and then prepare it. She was a wonderful cook. It was great, that great food.

COX: [00:36:18] Were they still using the *jungares*, five of them?

ELLINWOOD: [00:36:21] Yes, there were there were some *jungares* in the villages kind of away from town there. But in João Pessoa, they had more of the Portuguese style boats that were without still here. There was sailing mostly at that point or. But there was a little town between João Pessoa and Recife that I went to a couple of times that was like going back in time and there was no electricity there. And you know, everybody bathed in the stream that went through the jungle on the way to the village, and you had to walk into the village. You couldn't drive in. And the village was right on the beach. And all of the men were fishermen, went out on the shore and got us and brought that cash back. It was just wonderful. I spent a couple of weekends there. There was a little, you know, little vacation that, you know, I can remember going into the there was a little kind of a general store. I remember going in to get a cold drink. And the woman at the counter was ironing with one of these charcoal irons, you know. And so I asked for a cold drink. And she says, well, I'm sorry, I can't give it to you. I'm

ironing. Because they had that they had this strong belief that they if they touch something cold while they were doing something hot, that they would die and they would. So she allowed me to get my own drink and then, you know, explain that she just couldn't do that. But it allowed me to go behind the counter and get my own.

COX: [00:38:06] She probably had one of these little kerosene fueled refrigerators. Yeah, something like that. Yeah, it's it is interesting, isn't it? There are a number of very strongly held beliefs, which I can remember hearing about that same belief in the far west. Which isn't too surprising because a lot of the northerners had migrated to the far west over the years.

ELLINWOOD: [00:38:35] Because there they could own land.

COX: [00:38:37] Yes.

ELLINWOOD: [00:38:38] Yeah, that was the draw.

COX: [00:38:39] And my pension mother, and I was in a pension for two years. And so, yeah, she used that same kind of iron with hot coals from the fireplace and a cast iron clunker. It did a beautiful job, though. I could never complain about the ironing she did for me.

ELLINWOOD: Yeah. Interesting.

COX: Do you remember any other beliefs or what we call superstitions, I suppose about food, for example, certain foods you didn't mix with other foods?

ELLINWOOD: [00:39:24] Well, the hot and cold. I remember. I don't remember a lot of other things.

COX: [00:39:29] Ok, no problem. So you've kind of given us a little description of your typical day, I think with the morning be devoted to the architectural work and the afternoon you said I guess some day is

not every day you went to the university, you know, every day. Every day you went to university.

ELLINWOOD: [00:39:55] Oh every day. The University of Paraiba. Yeah.

COX: [00:40:03] And there you taught?

ELLINWOOD: [00:40:05] I didn't teach. No, I did. I was a campus planner to architectural design for a new campus buildings. I designed a chemical institute that was a new building they were going to do. There was one other architect and he was assigned to do a teaching hospital. And I assisted him with that. I helped him build a model of teaching hospital. It was a multistory thing. It was quite elaborate. It's fun. And in order to do research for the Chemical Institute, I found out from the university that the Federal University of Sao Paulo had just completed a chemical institute. And the architects there were willing to share, you know, the materials and methods of construction that were appropriate for a chemical institute. So the Peace Corps actually paid for my trip to fly this little ball over. And I spent a week with the architects at the university there. No, I didn't learn what materials to use, and that would be chemically resistant that were available in Brazil. And so I brought that back and then designed it. And that building was actually under construction.

COX: [00:41:36] How big was this? Roughly?

ELLINWOOD: [00:41:40] Oh, it wasn't a really big building, it was a classroom with probably six. You know, it probably had six labs and six classrooms.

COX: [00:41:49] So a single story.

ELLINWOOD: [00:41:51] A single story. The courtyard between. On the new campus, it was to be the first building, a new campus. And I also did help with the campus planning.

COX: [00:42:08] You must have developed a fairly high degree of fluency then, at least in a specialized language, you know, vocabulary for Portuguese.

ELLINWOOD: [00:42:20] You know, the nice thing about technical language is it's fairly universal. So I was able to communicate quite well with the architects there, even though they didn't really speak English, you know. And in the more complicated word, the more the more Latin it is and the more similar it is and the more easily, you know, translated it is so, you know, actually. You know, you could use a pretty complex vocabulary effectively just by figuring out how to say the same thing with a Portuguese accent almost. And it worked. So I was able to communicate quite well. They seemed to be impressed with my vocabulary, told me so.

COX: [00:43:19] That's interesting.

ELLINWOOD: [00:43:24] I think at the end I was pretty comfortable on the telephone. And I think I tested it out like a four point five on that federal whatever that it, the language proficiency.

COX: [00:43:42] So I think five is top, isn't it?

ELLINWOOD: [00:43:45] Five is top. Yeah, I was very good. I was doing okay. I guess I had a little, I wasn't the best at Portuguese, and everybody always said that my roommate, who was from. From Mississippi had the best accent because he spoke Portuguese with that wonderful Southern drawl.

COX: [00:44:15] Well, that clearly wasn't David Farrier.

ELLINWOOD: [00:44:17] No, that was Bob Donovan. Donovan, I totally lost touch with, somebody that were kind of best buddies and travel. We vacation together and traveled together.

COX: [00:44:32] Where did you go for your vacation or vacations?

ELLINWOOD: [00:44:36] Well, when I went to Bahia, that was probably my favorite one. That's where we went together.

COX: It's like almost next door.

ELLINWOOD: Oh, but it's wonderful. And then he, this was near the end of our tour of duty, and he was offered a job with a little town way out in the back country of Bahia, out in the sarto. Actually, there was an altiplano and then there was a sudden cliff. And there was a waterfall that came off the top of this cliff at the back of this town. And they had an old hydroelectric station and somebody had put it in the 20s that they wanted to upgrade so that they could put in an aluminum processing plant, because there was there was bauxite somewhere nearby. They weren't going to buy that process. And so we thought we borrowed a Jeep from the Peace Corps in Bahia and drove a couple of days back to this village and to check this situation out. He decided not to do it. It was so remote. But it was an interesting trip. We had to get the Jeep back in time to catch a bus to make our bus back, and it was it was kind of an exciting trip.

COX: [00:46:11] Yeah. I think all except me, because you never knew, especially when you're going into the interior. Oh, you never knew.

ELLINWOOD: [00:46:21] Well talk about superstitions, you know, driving. Yeah, there were some real invention, you know, coming back from receiving one time. And we thought we had an old blue GMC suburban, you know, or. That was the precursor. We called it the blue bomb. You know that. And somehow in Brazil at night on a rural road, the courtesy is that when you see a car approaching, you're supposed to turn your lights out completely out. No parking lot lights, nothing. Everything. Just so you don't blind the other driver. And there you are heading on a two-lane road, you know, totally blind.

COX: Hundred kilometers an hour toward each other. Totally blacked out.

ELLINWOOD: Well, that just was too ridiculous for me. I wouldn't do it. So I left the lights on. Well, the truck as it passed is all of the men and the truck

were shaking their fists at us and shouting as they did a U-turn and started chasing us. They were so in sense they were going to beat the shit out of us, I'm sure. So fortunately, the blue bomb was able to keep ahead of the truck. Somehow we lost them on the streets coming in to João Pessoa and so we escaped.

COX: [00:47:46] But you could say they took their lights, not lightly. Gosh. Can you give me any other examples of either pleasures or difficulties that you encountered and how you coped with each of them? And I'm thinking, OK, you told me about how you made that cultural faux pas in terms of going with your bicycle. And here's another one about the lights. Although, you know, I have to.

ELLINWOOD: [00:48:27] That was self-preservation.

COX: [00:48:28] Yeah, I probably would have done it somewhere.

ELLINWOOD: [00:48:32] You know that the accident rate in Germany is 10 times what it is in the U.S., you know, per mile driven. In Brazil, it's 100 times. Guess why?

COX: [00:48:46] Yeah. Or maybe you can remember some instance of culture shock from your first few months there. I know. Sometimes it's hard. Just pull something out of your memory like that. We can come back to it if you want to.

ELLINWOOD: [00:49:06] But I think I had more culture shock coming back to the U.S. than I had adapting to Brazil, because I expected that to be expected to be different. And attitude was that's OK. That's the way things are. There's something to learn here. And but what was hard was going back to the U.S. and. And, you know, probably the worst thing was the coffee in the U.S. how bad the coffee was. And I don't even drink coffee before I left. But of course, I learned to drink it in Brazil and how bad the beer was.

COX: [00:49:57] You were spoiled! Yeah. Coffee and beer.

ELLINWOOD: [00:50:02] And, you know, and how everyone believed what they read in Time magazine. I still have a problem with that.

COX: [00:50:15] Do you recall having any health problems when you were down in Brazil?

ELLINWOOD: [00:50:23] Well, I remember we had our own kit, you know, our own medical kit. And. So we were able to and we were trained in kind of the medical stuff, and I wasn't doing that, so I had a practice on myself and I was pretty healthy. I didn't have major problems. One of my roommates, though, Bob Donovan, got hepatitis and he had to go to the receiving. And recover in a hotel there and go down and visit. So I remember traveling to a village that was just down the river from the capital city. There was a I can't remember some little development project. We were going to go and just do it over like a four-day weekend. And we had to get there by dugout canoe and the river was silted up. The river was reputed to be full of schistosomiasis. And but we the dugout canoe got grounded and we all had to get out and push. And so, you know, I was worried about getting schistosomiasis. Chagas disease was another thing that, you know, living where I was living was not a problem, but. My roommate, Bob Donovan, just thought living in this house is not a real Peace Corps experience. I want to go live in a mud wall, adab hut with it. I'm going to go it to the kind of favela outside town, and I'm going to live there and work there on weekends when I'm not doing my job. So I'd go on weekends and I'd go visit him and we would make concrete bricks. And we were digging latrines and doing the things we were trained to do in Milwaukee on the weekend. And then he had a little so he had this little mud wall and dab hut. And I'd go and I'd stay there for the weekend and help him feed his pig.

COX: [00:52:53] And worry about *chagas*.

ELLINWOOD: [00:52:55] So we you know, you've got to check the cracks and butter them up so that we wouldn't have problems with beetles crawling out, biting us in the middle of the night.

COX: [00:53:07] So when did Bob Donovan move out of your suburban villa into the *favela*?

ELLINWOOD: [00:53:13] Well, it was probably the last six or eight months that we were there. So he stayed there all week and commuted into his job.

COX: [00:53:27] By bicycle or?

ELLINWOOD: [00:53:29] On the bus, I got on the bus with everybody else. Then everybody there would get up and have *cachaça* for breakfast. Yeah. But you just got tired of being pampered and. I just thought he was being cheated out of a real Peace Corps experience.

COX: [00:53:52] So. You mentioned more than one vacation, but you always said you went to be here for a while to vacation.

ELLINWOOD: [00:54:01] There one time and the next one, I went to Manaus by myself. That was quite interesting trip I took. I got there by rubber boat, by a boat that was transporting crude rubber now, OK, back from I guess I can't remember, I went one way or the other. I can't even remember which way I went by this, you know. His work boat basically took a number of days to get there, and it was quite an experience.

COX: [00:54:48] And you had your hammock?

ELLINWOOD: [00:54:52] On the deck. And the captain had this Margay cat that would jump into bed with you in the middle of the night. Aaa! Fortunately, with his claws in, usually. It would stop at night because you couldn't go at night because of the floating islands, they might crash into one of the four islands. So you couldn't navigate at night, so it would tie up against the bank at night. We get up in the morning and dove off into the water and swim there, take a bath and climb back on a toter, a barge behind them with a cow which they slaughtered halfway along the line. So we'd have fresh meat. It was quite an experience.

COX: [00:55:43] These floating islands you mentioned, they were debris?

ELLINWOOD: [00:55:48] Yeah, basically they were they were just you know, they were sometimes they'd have trees on them and they'd be floating down the middle of the Amazon. And, you know, they might have trees and animals on them, but they were being, you know, washed out to sea, basically. The flow of the Amazon.

COX: [00:56:11] I can't recall, of course, I didn't go on the Amazon, it was on, though I spent all my vacation time touring different parts of Brazil, too, but I can't recall ever even hearing of these floating islands. And yet they were so common that when you're navigating the river, you knew to tie up at night to avoid them. Interesting.

ELLINWOOD: [00:56:35] That was a nice, nice trip. I went totally on my own. I'd read in the book that inspired me to go to Brazil was a book about exploring the Amazon, and so that was something that.

COX: [00:56:54] Do you remember the title?

ELLINWOOD: [00:56:57] The Rivers Run East.

COX: [00:56:59] Or the author? Not to worry. Well, looking back, you know, after two years of this kind of life and contribution, did you feel a sense of achievement or do you feel if you could have done more but hadn't, or how did you feel about it?

ELLINWOOD: [00:57:28] Oh, I felt good because, you know, I don't I accomplished the assignment that I was sent there to do. Plus, I'd done you know, the building for the university was under construction. I helped with the design of the teaching hospital that hadn't been funded yet with the campus plan. Played in the orchestra, and then there was a local orchestra, there's a wonderful little theater building. One of the volunteers was a woman from the theater department at Yale, and she put on one act plays and I designed sets and helped with the lighting and music and stuff for that. And that was fun. And it was a great community of volunteers. And there were, you know, the engineers that I worked with were for really nice. You know, we socialize a little bit. But there was a, I had a feeling that I had done my job and I'd

learned a lot and I felt that I'd gotten more than I'd given, but I didn't feel guilty that I had been given what I could. So, yeah, it is a feeling of satisfaction.

ELLINWOOD: [00:58:58] But the most wonderful thing that I brought back from Brazil was that I married Sarah Fluck, you know. And while we didn't, we didn't really date while we were in João Pessoa. So, I mean, she was initially not enjoyable. So she was stationed in the interior and working in a in a clinic, delivering helping deliver babies and giving shots. And she was horrified at what she was expected to do. But she just adapted and did it. And then her she was stationed there with another young woman was from Boston, whose father died right after the first year, that they were there. And Sarah had already had an accident riding a horse. I mean, the doctor that ran the clinic heard that they like to horseback ride, and so he offered them his horses. What he told them was that they were racehorses. And one couldn't stand being behind the other. And that was the one she was on. And he just took off and she was thrown and broke her wrist pretty badly and then had to be. It wasn't set properly and then she had to be flown out to have it reset or re-broken and reset or something, and then her partner's father passed away and so her partner had to leave and they didn't want to leave her alone in this little remote village, 14 hours by bus away from any other volunteer. So she then came to João Pessoa and started working with the fishermen on the beach, starting a cooperative and then starting a child care program for women so they could do work. She was a pretty, she was a very effective volunteer, I think, but she was dating other people. I remember the first time I saw her when we and her group came in a little after our group.

COX: [01:01:19] You know what Scott? I think we're going to take a little break to change the tape. And maybe, you know, stretch or.

ELLINWOOD: [01:01:28] Sure.

COX: [01:01:29] Then we'll take up Sarah's story. OK, good. I think as far as the tape is concerned, I think we should be able to finish up with just this side.

ELLINWOOD: [01:01:47] How much more time do you think it's on the tape?

COX: [01:01:50] So I'm guessing the other 20, 30 minutes at the most. OK. But I mean, we don't have to fill it or anything like that. It's just. Trying to let you tell things your own way, as well as cover the bases and.

ELLINWOOD: [01:02:11] You think it's appropriate to talk about my recollections of Sarah's experience as she related them to me?

COX: [01:02:11] It would probably be better just to focus on the experiences you've all shared and how you met and things like that in Brazil. I mean, it was the Brazil, the sixties. Uh, there was a frequent characterization of the Peace Corps then as the Marriage Corps, because it seemed like so many volunteers, either married Brazilians or married each other.

ELLINWOOD: [01:02:56] Well we were of that age.

COX: [01:03:01] So it's up to you. You yeah. You have every liberty and right to share or not share with them.

ELLINWOOD: [01:03:12] Well, I think that relates to some of the questions you had at the end, how it affected that, how I've lived my life since.

COX: [01:03:21] And that is definitely going to be where we're headed, as you can tell.

ELLINWOOD: [01:03:25] She's an essential part of that.

COX: [01:03:29] Yes. How did you meet Sarah Fluck?

ELLINWOOD: [01:03:37] Well, I met her in João Pessoa, so when her crew came in and I remember. Our group of volunteers took the new group of volunteers on kind of a tour of the town where there was market day, so we took them to the marketplace and we took them to the beach and we took them to the downtown. I remember the first time I saw her

was just smitten. I just thought she was the most gorgeous thing I'd ever seen, and I wasn't usually attracted to blonds. And she was you know, she was very blond and blue eyed, statuesque. And I always had this serene expression, always. I was totally taken with her. But somehow we never dated, she was always dating either other volunteers or that there was this very sexy Uruguayan painter who came in and kind of moved into the group. And then, you know, she was his girl for a while at the. I remember, you know, sitting down in a bar one time when she and her partner were back from their little town in the interior of, I can't even remember the name. Cajazeiras?

COX: [01:05:11] How do you spell that?

ELLINWOOD: [01:05:13] Cajazeiras, I think it was what it was called, I can't remember. Deep in the interior part of Paraiba. And they were in and I met them at the at the bar, at the hotel and talked to them for a while, and she told me later that she and her friend thought that is the most self-centered, conceited person she'd ever talked to. And I was just trying really hard to impress her because I was so smitten with her. So I did the opposite.

COX: [01:05:50] Well, you have impressed her not quite the way you hoped, I guess.

ELLINWOOD: [01:05:57] Then I remember her folks coming to visit and I met them. And then they actually came when she was about to leave. And then I remember saying goodbye to her in João Pessoa and saying, have a nice life. And, you know, and kind of wistfully. And then when I got to Rio, she was supposed to have already been debriefed and on her way, but she was still there in Hotel Florida.

COX: [01:06:30] Good old Hotel Florida.

ELLINWOOD: [01:06:33] And because she was awaiting a friend who was coming to travel around South America with her and three other volunteers and her friend had been delayed. So I remembered that she liked classical music. And there was a concert going on in the opera house in Rio of

the Brazilian symphony. And so I invited her to go and she accepted that. And we went and then the night was still young. So we ended up going to a nightclub and dancing all night. And her friend came and we went back to another nightclub and danced that whole night away, too. And we went to Pondarsucar and had dinner on the restaurant there. You know, I was totally in love at that point. And but then I had I had scheduled a flight to Portugal on the Lodar Bizzocchi. And she had this tour around South America with her with her friends. And so we said goodbye. When our separate ways and I went to Europe because I'd never been to Europe and I had always wanted to go so I flew a Lockheed Constellation from Brazil. It was a one-hour flight. It took forever, but it was very comfortable.

COX: [01:08:13] Stop over the Azores, right?

ELLINWOOD: [01:08:15] Stop over the Azores, yeah, they served wonderful Portuguese food and wine. And it was a very enjoyable flight. And there were Margery Vieira. Yeah, Wayne. I can't remember. Anyway, three of us went to get or part of it. I can't remember who the fourth person was. There were two girls and two guys. So we went to Lisboa and we stayed there for a little while. And then we rented a mini Amaras Mini and we went to this little town called Obidos, which is a medieval town that because we had a mini we could drive in. But yeah, that you'd have to leave the car at the gate. And we slept on straw mattress and it was like going back in time. It was really charming place. And then the big one, and then the girls went their separate way. And when I went on to Madrid and Barcelona and then we went our separate ways and I wanted to go through France and he wanted to go a different way. So we separated there. And then I went and spent a month or so, and I went to all the places I'd studied in my architecture history to Rome. Anyway, I did, at least I went. Didn't get degrees at that point and went to Rome and Florence and then. Out of money, so went home and soon as I got home. I wrote Sarah a letter saying I was going to come out to California to look for a job and I got to drive away car because I was living in Michigan, you could take a car from Detroit and deliver it to California, and they gave you four days to do it. I picked up a brand-new GTO, a Pontiac GT, with the

three speed transmission and drove it across country and I had four days to do it, and of course, I did it in two days. So I did a hundred and thirty miles an hour in the Nevada desert.

COX: [01:10:27] This baby really is going to.

ELLINWOOD: [01:10:31] It overheated, the darn thing. I had to slow down to eighty-five to keep it from overheating. But in those days, there was no speed limit in Nevada. But yeah, that was fun. So I went made a beeline for San Francisco, where Sarah had a job already with the vice president of Bectel. That was his executive assistant secretary, basically. Yeah, but it was a good job. And she had an apartment in a high rise and on Market Street and a brand-new high rise.

COX: [01:11:07] Well, was she a Californian?

ELLINWOOD: [01:11:08] No, not at that point. She was still in a hotel, but she had the job.

COX: [01:11:13] No, I meant was she born and raised in California?

ELLINWOOD: [01:11:15] She was born and raised in California. She spent summers in Santa Barbara. She had a grandmother here, a couple of markets. And her mother was born here. And she grew up in Orange County primarily but spent summers here with her grandmother. So that's how we ended up here. So I basically renewed the courtship in San Francisco and I had to leave guys because I was running, you know, there was the Vietnam era trying to find a job where I would get a deferment. And you can do that in architecture if you work for a Defense Department. Uh, you know, a firm that has a contract with the Defense Department. So that was a criteria for my job at that point, and then I couldn't go to Vietnam. Yeah, well, and I would have left the country instead if I'd had to.

COX: [01:12:18] Had already made up your mind about that?

ELLINWOOD: [01:12:20] I knew I couldn't kill anybody. Yeah, I just couldn't do that.

COX: [01:12:24] This would be the late summer fall of '66. Yeah. And your local draft boards there and East Lansing, right?

ELLINWOOD: [01:12:37] Yeah. And they weren't really pressing me, but, you know, it was looming as part of the buildup.

COX: [01:12:42] That's when things were escalating.

ELLINWOOD: [01:12:49] I did have a job offer in Omaha, Nebraska, that I got in on the way across town with it across the country and with a firm that actually had projects in Brazil, as well as projects with the Defense Department, and they offered me a job, but I really wanted to work in San Francisco if I could. There weren't any jobs available. You know, there were, well, we'd love to hire you, but I know we don't have an opening line now. Can you hang around for a month or two? Probably. And something will open up. And I said, well, I don't think I can. So I took the job in Omaha.

COX: [01:13:27] You did take the job in Omaha, ok.

ELLINWOOD: [01:13:35] And the night I was going to leave, you know. That in a little bar in the hotel, you know? And I said, I want to ask you something, and she said, well, I thought you're going to ask if you could write to me. And I asked her to marry me, and she said she about fell off their chair. And she said, well, she'd have to think about it the least. She didn't say no.

COX: [01:14:08] Yeah. Which gave you plenty of insight for writing.

ELLINWOOD: [01:14:13] Said, you know, but you know, we haven't even slept together. But this was pre-pill days, you know the days before the pill. So I moved into her hotel. We didn't share the same room, but then I came into her room. But then, you know, we slept together, but we didn't have sex because, you know, she didn't want to get pregnant.

COX: [01:14:46] Right.

ELLINWOOD: [01:14:52] And then we corresponded. And ran up huge telephone bills because she had her job and I had mine. And then she decided that I. I hated Omaha. You know, I was working in this huge firm. You know, the incentive perhaps being able to get to go to Brazil was not enough to keep me working for this firm. I just didn't feel comfortable there. Omaha was not a very appealing place, and I actually got jumped on the street one night there, really, and had to fight for my life. The only time I've ever fought. I was jumped by a gang of about 20 thugs. That was pretty scary thing. But I got a job back in in Lansing, Michigan, for a firm that was doing schools in about five states. I got a job as a designer. At a better pay, and so I said, OK, now will you? Now will you marry me? You know, I got a better job do this. And so she decided she'd come and she came to Omaha and then we drove together to Michigan. And then she enrolled at Michigan State University. She checked things out and then decided that she'd accept that she would marry me. Planned the wedding, which was back in California. Then she came back and got her master's while I was working and then got her master's in education and taught in the inner-city school in Lansing. And we saved her first year income and took a three month trip to Europe and picked up a new car. Then came back flat, broke, and I lined up a job in Hawaii.

ELLINWOOD: [01:17:15] But there wasn't really a job in Hawaii, it was a job for a Hawaiian firm, I was supposed to open a new office for them in Los Angeles to do a project that we're going to do there, but spend a month in Hawaii. Well, it turned out the job wasn't. I wasn't going to get to open a new office, it would have been to stay in Hawaii, and I realize that well, I liked Hawaii. It wasn't. I felt kind of claustrophobic there. And it was so expensive, and even though the job sounded like it paid a lot. When I realized what it cost us to live there and move everything there and that we couldn't bring our dog and cat that had been our first children. Decided not to take the job and then came back. Found a job in Ventura. I've been here ever since. She was pregnant also, which was another reason not to be in Hawaii, and we had our first child in Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. He's now 32, six foot three, blond like his mother. He's an adventure guide. He's an artist with a degree from

California College of Arts and Crafts. A very accomplished glassblower has things in them, permanent collection of the Seattle Civic Center and worked in Seattle.

COX: [01:18:54] What's his name?

ELLINWOOD: [01:18:56] Joshua Ellinwood, Joshua James Ellinwood. And we have another son who's now 30. He's also a glass artist and a carpenter and his name is Matthew. We call him Teo, short for Matteo. And then when they were still toddlers, we well, Teo was two and Josh was five. We adopted. We decided before we were married that we wanted to adopt children who wouldn't otherwise have a home. This was the result of, you know, all the homeless children we saw in Brazil and we knew there were children in the U.S. who also didn't have. So we decided that was something that we wanted to do. And so we ended up adopting [name], who was 11 at the time, she's black and was from Seaside and had been reportedly abandoned by her parents along with three of her siblings.

COX: [01:20:12] You adopted several children.

ELLINWOOD: [01:20:14] She was the first we adopted. She was a real case. Put us through hell.

COX: [01:20:28] Really?

ELLINWOOD: [01:20:29] Yeah, she really did. It was hard, but we got her through high school and she was a bright girl. Very attractive, but a sociopath. Love cannot conquer all, cannot cure a psychopath. Though she did learn how to live within society, to live within the rules, though. At one point she broke them enough to go to go off to prison. And the time she was pregnant. By that time, we'd adopted the second son, who's now 23. He was severe learning disability. He's supposedly a quarter black, but you can't really tell, kind of looks Hispanic. He's a real success story. He's 23. He's expecting his second child in an ongoing relationship, looking working at the base in Lompoc at Vandenberg Air

Force Base and food service, you know, holding down a job and supporting a family.

COX: [01:21:38] Great.

ELLINWOOD: [01:21:40] Yeah, I'm really proud of it. And just went to my granddaughter's first birthday, his daughter's. I mean, he's the only one who has produced children so far. The only one who's been in an ongoing relationship.

COX: [01:21:53] Yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [01:21:56] And then we adopted [name]'s son, who she conceived when she got herself into a lot of trouble and went away to prison for a couple of years and we ended up adopting him, but he's now 18. Living in Santa Barbara. But he's living on his own, is independent. The jury is still out as to whether or not he'll live up to his potential, he's very bright, very. A talented young man. Is kind of trying to find his way right now. His way is better found not in my house. You know, I learned that that doesn't work. He's got to be on his own. See what you can do.

COX: [01:22:48] Yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [01:22:52] It's that he was, he was 12 when Sarah passed away of breast cancer and seven years ago, it was very hard on him. Yeah, it was hard on all of us.

COX: [01:23:09] It's interesting that you and she, you know, connect your Brazil experience to your desires to adopt hard to adopt children and, you know, obviously taking taken on some challenges.

ELLINWOOD: [01:23:37] Yeah. Not entirely successfully.

COX: [01:23:39] No, but your expectation probably wasn't for 100 percent success rate either, was it?

ELLINWOOD: [01:23:45] I mean. No, but I think we were naive enough. You know, I think the flaws that the prevailing philosophy at the time was that, you know, that environment was the most important factor in raising a child. If you created the right nurturing environment, a child would turn out OK. You know, of course, an 11 year old is having a lot of history before.

COX: [01:24:10] Yeah, exactly what I was thinking.

ELLINWOOD: [01:24:12] And but she also has that genetic material. And that was really clear with her son, who I mean, he didn't even see her for so many years, and yet he had all of the same mannerisms, really. And it was really striking for you. Roll his eyes, you know, certain expressions and look exactly like his mother. And the way he'd react to things. You know, this kind of attitude about right and wrong kind of parallel too in the end. So it was a lesson in the power of genetics in that sense.

COX: [01:25:07] Yes. All right. Do you feel that because you made these decisions and because you weren't always successful in dealing with the children, that somehow diminished your experience in Brazil?

ELLINWOOD: [01:25:22] Oh, no.

COX: [01:25:24] There's two separate things, right?

ELLINWOOD: [01:25:26] Yeah. One influence the other. But I think the Brazil experience gave us a different way of looking at the world that I think we shared with our children. And I think our children are better for that. I think that our two biological sons, I think, are happy to declare them as my sons. They're wonderful friends and young men that I'm happy to know as well as be related to.

COX: [01:26:14] And they've all turned up as artists, which is remarkable. Would you have, knowing what you knew after those two years in Brazil, would you have done a Peace Corps service?

ELLINWOOD: [01:26:27] Yes, I would.

COX: [01:26:29] Do you think you might still do Peace Corps service someplace else since there's no Brazil program?

ELLINWOOD: [01:26:37] Yeah, I would consider it. You know, I'm concerned about the state of the Peace Corps now after the government's attack in Iraq. You know the world, how we're seen in the world. I think it makes the Peace Corps all that much more important. But I worry about its independence as administration. But yeah, it's something that I consider doing again. You know, it was certainly an experience that I cherish.

COX: [01:27:24] Have you kept in touch over the years with any of the people you knew and worked with in Brazil?

ELLINWOOD: [01:27:31] I really haven't. I got so involved in trying to succeed and survive in my profession and raise my family and your friend, then going through Sarah's terrible illness, all those here. Yeah. As the battle against cancer. So it's one of my goals to go back. I've kept in touch through Tom Heyers with a Brazilian family. Well, one. It was kind of my best Brazilian friend there. You know, I sort of keep in touch through Tom with Sergio. So I was hopeful that maybe this year I could go back to Brazil or visit, but things are kind of conspiring against that right now. I'm trying to do a critical project for my retirement, I write. So I have to see how that's going to go before I make that trip.

COX: [01:28:58] And you've kept in touch with at least fellow volunteers from that group. Yes. Some of your training group people like Tom Heyers, that you're mentioned. Terry Brandon.

ELLINWOOD: [01:29:09] And not really Terry Brandon, only through Tom. Oh, I saw Arturo Irizarry. I kind of reconnected with him after Sarah passed away and he came up to visit a couple of times. I really haven't made the effort to keep that going. That was nice to see him. So I got to keep in touch with him through Tom to Tom's really good about emailing everyone. I really haven't been. And that's one of the reasons that I wanted to join the Santa Barbara Peace Corps volunteers. You know,

because I was feeling disconnected. And put, you know, my whole focus on Sarah for so long. Yeah.

COX: [01:30:21] We reconnected after Sarah's death. And that's because you were kind of reaching out and making yourself known, raising your profile, as it were.

ELLINWOOD: [01:30:36] Yeah. Get out of my shell.

COX: [01:30:46] I think, you know, you pretty well described how being in the Peace Corps has affected your life in many different ways. With our whole conversation tonight. Looking back and trying to put a framework of the Peace Corps' three goals, you know, getting to know people in other countries, getting other people to know Americans, and then bringing the world back home, as they say. Would you say that all three of those goals or two of those three goals or whatever number you choose, you know, have been part of at least pieces of your life or even? You know, it's kind of interesting to me and I'm injecting myself a little bit here, maybe too much. But it's interesting to me that you met your mate, you know, through Peace Corps, you accomplished a childhood dream in the Peace Corps. You came out of Peace Corps with a much more expanded view of the world and the differences among peoples. But with your idealism intact and then, you know, you and she decided to, you know, open your hearts, your homes to what turned out to be a mixed results experiment. That still doesn't seem to have quite, you know, squeezed all the idealism out of you. Still you're still hopeful, aren't you?

ELLINWOOD: [01:32:57] You know, there's another way that Brazil affected me professionally. I think that that kind of redirected my architectural focus into what's now called sustainable architecture or green architecture.

COX: [01:33:13] Scott, your career also reflects some of your experiences in Brazil because you learned in a situation where you really kind of carry your architectural teeth on practical projects. You learned how to work within the restrictions of the environment, it sounded like.

ELLINWOOD: [01:33:33] Exactly. Yeah. So there wasn't reliable electricity, so we couldn't make windowless schools that were air conditioned. You know, which is such an inhumane thing in the first place. So we learned how so I had to make schools that would work with natural light and natural ventilation and so orienting them properly. And I learned all that at Michigan. And I was raised in a family where Frank Lloyd Wright was a demigod. Yes, parents had the design of a home by Mr. Wright that they've never built, and they had that they did build a house that I designed for them. But so I already had some of that idealism, architectural idealism, and the idea of designing in harmony with nature rather than, you know, trying to overcome it with brute force, which was the architectural style of the time that I went to school. All right. And so I put that into practical use that I have specialized to doing that with my career and I've gotten some national attention. Last year I did a building that was named one of the top 10 great buildings of the U.S. by the U.S. Department of Energy at the American Institute of Architects, and since 1982, I did have a building that won a National Energy Conservation Award given by Owens Corning fiberglass for a multistory building that was entirely daylight during the day, not requiring the electric light at all during the day.

COX: [01:35:34] Wonderful.

ELLINWOOD: [01:35:36] And so I use those lessons that I learned in Brazil and I don't think my practice. It's given it me some expertise, some chops, if you will, in my profession. I was made a fellow of the AIA ten years ago, a pretty young age.

COX: [01:36:02] Is that an honor bestowed by the AIA?

ELLINWOOD: [01:36:07] Yes.

COX: [01:36:07] You don't just apply for it or earn it in terms of accumulating certain credits within the organization?

ELLINWOOD: [01:36:15] You have to be nominated for it. It's a national jury decides who joins their ranks. There are about eighteen hundred fellows of the

AIA in the country out of 70,000 architects or so. So it's a fairly high number.

COX: [01:36:36] Yeah. Great.

ELLINWOOD: [01:36:39] And I you know, honored to lecture at M.I.T., UCLA, USC. At some conferences, national conference run by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Pacific Gas and Electric and Edison Company. Things like that, given seminars to other architects to learn the techniques of using natural light at buildings. Publish some papers. That's a tribute, some of that, at least what I learned in Brazil.

COX: [01:37:23] Yeah. Don't you find sometimes that that old phrase *dar um jeito* comes to mind? There's always a way, there's always a way. You find a little solution there, a little solution there. Yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [01:37:42] Well, that's very much, you know, the architect engineer kind of an approach. That's the problem. We'll find a solution to the problem. We'll find a solution. In Brazil, I think it was usually a way out of a problem rather than through it. It's harder to avoid a problem than solve it.

COX: [01:38:12] Right. Do you remember first time you went to Sao Paulo?

ELLINWOOD: [01:38:16] Yeah, it was when I went for the Chemical Institute. That's the only time I went to San Paulo, it's the only time I wanted to go to Sao Paulo. The university was nice, but the city is, it's just overwhelming.

COX: [01:38:36] It is overwhelming. It's gotten worse, of course, but it was the first time in my life I'd ever seen wavy buildings. I mean, it was just architecturally it must have struck some sort of response. Well, if you remember that.

ELLINWOOD: [01:38:54] I wasn't I didn't really do a lot of touring of there for a specific purpose. And this was, you know, in my compulsive phase of architecture, I was there to do it. So I you know, I was in my hotel

room, some cheap hotel room somewhere out of the city center. And it was still very urban. But not a very attractive area. And then university at that time I spent university with the university campus was attractive. Too much touring and softball. I had to get back and apply what I just learned. Any money to tour is all right.

COX: [01:39:54] I just remember, you know, some of the buildings in downtown Sao Paulo impressing me and then Brasilia, too, was an interesting thing as an experimental city.

ELLINWOOD: [01:40:07] Yeah, I did go to Brasilia. Yes, that was an interesting experience too.

COX: [01:40:20] Yeah, I don't know, I thought Brazilians, both their architects and their construction people, I mean, they had to devise unusual techniques for some of the.

ELLINWOOD: [01:40:36] They had brilliant engineers and architects, you know, really world class and the structural engineers that I work with. Excellent. They could make a concrete diving board, you know? And did. They do curves, spiral ramps that nobody here would attempt, you know. Paper thin. You know, curves, spiral ramps, reinforced concrete that would bounce as you walk down. And without breaking, you know. Yeah. They were good. There was an appreciation for the esthetic that it's hard to find in engineers here. Though I have my favorites that do appreciate that.

COX: [01:41:48] Unless you can think of something that we should have covered, that we haven't. I think that, you know, we've pretty much gone what the wound down.

ELLINWOOD: [01:42:00] Yeah, we've covered pretty much everything. Well, another big influence, of course, is my taste in music.

COX: [01:42:07] Oh, yeah.

ELLINWOOD: [01:42:07] Yeah. I think that's the way I maintain my Portuguese is listening to Brazilian music. Because I don't have that many Brazilian friends. But I know when I run into the Brazilians, I can still carry on a conversation. And I usually get a compliment on how well I speak for how long I've been away.

COX: [01:42:29] Yes. How many years?

ELLINWOOD: [01:42:32] Yeah, I went to Hawaii recently and there were some Brazilians, I just heard them talking as they were collecting their luggage and started a conversation. That was fun.

COX: [01:42:49] I guess there's a fair size student community of Brazilians going to city college in Santa Barbara. I ran into a few while on campus, too.

ELLINWOOD: [01:43:04] But in Rotary Club, there's a Brazilian study group that's going through now.

COX: [01:43:12] So you're a member of the Carpinteria Rotary Club. Any other community groups that you're a member of besides some of our Returned Peace Corps Association?

ELLINWOOD: [01:43:25] So the chairman of the Architectural Review Board for the city of Carpinteria. My wife, Sarah, started the Carpinteria girls club, which is now called Girls Incorporated.

COX: [01:43:41] What? Girls what?

ELLINWOOD: [01:43:42] Girls Incorporated.

COX: [01:43:43] Incorporated. OK, excuse me.

ELLINWOOD: [01:43:45] The Boys Club decided they wanted to call themselves the Boys and Girls Club. But it was when she was staying at home with our two young boys, and basically she was bored out of her mind. But she noticed there were all these programs for boys and there was nothing

for girls to do after school. So she set up a card table outside the junior high school and recruited girls and started teaching, just some sewing skills and stuff like that. Arts and crafts. Recruited other young mothers and, you know, enlarged the program, then went to the city council and browbeat the city fathers into giving girls some time in the city's athletic fields. Which were all reserved for boys and start girls softball and girls soccer.

COX: [01:44:51] This is probably well before Title IX came on board as well.

ELLINWOOD: [01:44:56] It was well before. So that was a directly result of her activism in the Peace Corps. Accomplish that. Yeah.

COX: [01:45:13] Well, sounds like you did get what you hoped you'd get out of Peace Corps and then some.

ELLINWOOD: [01:45:19] Oh, I think so. Totally transformed my life. I wouldn't have it any other way. Yeah. If I had a choice, I'd do it all over. Even if I'd do some things differently, like not ride the bicycle. I would have waited, you know, if I'd been a little more astute.

COX: [01:45:49] Well, thank you very much. Enjoyed this. And I think you got a good.

[END OF INTERVIEW]