

Ray Kurtz Warburton Oral History Interview
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Administrative Information

Creator: Ray Kurtz Warburton

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Biographical Note

Ray Warburton served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1966 to 1968 on a community development project. He also did a short-term disaster response project in Peru in 1970.

Access

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Oral History Interview

with

Ray Kurtz Warburton

August 9, 2016
Somerville, Massachusetts

By Phyllis Noble

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

NOBLE: [00:00:03] Today is August 9, 2016. This is Phyllis Noble, I'm interviewing Ray Kurtz Warburton, who served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1966 to 1968 in a community development program. Good morning, Ray.

WARBURTON: Good morning.

NOBLE: Ray, tell us who you were before you joined the Peace Corps. Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

WARBURTON: [00:00:29] Well, I was born in Pasadena, California, but we moved after the war to Medfield, Massachusetts. So I grew up in a very small town of about 3,000 people, about 16 miles from Boston. And so all my schooling was done in Medfield. And after my schooling high school, I

went to Harvard and from Harvard College, I went to Harvard Graduate School of Design and Architecture.

NOBLE: [00:01:02] Wow. Yes, but a wonderful trajectory. When you were a kid growing up, did you have brothers and sisters?

WARBURTON: [00:01:10] I have a twin, fraternal twins, and a slightly younger brother.

NOBLE: [00:01:16] Yeah, right. And when you went to high school, was it a public school?

WARBURTON: [00:01:24] A public school. The unusual thing about the high school is my mother taught there and she taught all science and math. So my mother was a fine teacher in biology, geometry, chemistry and physics. And my twin was her best student. It was fun.

NOBLE: [00:01:41] Oh, sorry. Good.

WARBURTON: [00:01:46] But my mother is an extrovert, so it worked.

NOBLE: [00:01:52] As a family, did you travel? Do you take vacations?

WARBURTON: [00:01:56] We, uh, my parents' parents were in the West, so every five years my mother would take us on a camping trip west to visit her parents and my father's relatives. My father would sometimes join us.

NOBLE: [00:02:14] That's a long drive from Massachusetts.

WARBURTON: [00:02:17] She loved camping and we loved camping so no problem.

NOBLE: [00:02:19] Yeah. And in high school, did you were you into sports? Were you into drama?

WARBURTON: [00:02:29] No, I was. And I don't know. I was not too introverted, but I certainly wasn't into sports, although I like swimming. But the only

sports in high school were football, basketball and track. And I was not interested in those sports.

NOBLE: [00:02:50] Did you have summer jobs or after school jobs?

WARBURTON: [00:02:54] No, no.

NOBLE: [00:02:57] What you do in the summer then?

WARBURTON: [00:02:58] Summer we went to camp for a month and then, well, we're in the woods and a lot of activities. I mean, we had a swimming hole. We had a farm up the street. So there was woods to roam around. And so there's a lot of that. There was a very strong kind of batch of neighborhood kids. So we'd hang out.

NOBLE: [00:03:21] It sounds ideal.

WARBURTON: [00:03:22] Well, it was the '50s.

NOBLE: [00:03:25] Yeah. And then you went to Harvard College undergraduate. And you majored in?

WARBURTON: [00:03:33] Well, you don't have to. Uh, I always said the reason I'm an architect is because my mother, because of my mother and when we entered Harvard or applied for Harvard, one of the things is what do you think you're going to major in? And one of the majors was called Architectural Sciences. And she said, oh, put that down, you like to draw houses. My mother had no idea what architects do, but so and I always said there were only a few ways I could have gotten through Harvard. And it was all the soft sciences like English, history, social science, architecture, which I really. It was architecture, background architecture. So it had nothing to do with design or anything like that. And then because I was supposed to pay for graduate school, Harvard allowed if you fulfilled the requirements for the graduate school, you

could skip senior year and go right in the first year of graduate school, which was three and a half years.

NOBLE: [00:04:38] Oh, long. So in architectural design.

WARBURTON: [00:04:42] And, uh, yeah, no, well, it's regular architecture graduate program, which granted a bachelor's, at the time, of architecture.

NOBLE: [00:04:55] Did you at any point during those years you have a chance to travel outside the country?

WARBURTON: [00:05:01] No, never been outside the country.

NOBLE: [00:05:05] So was going to Bolivia your first time leaving the United States?

WARBURTON: Uh, yes.

NOBLE: Wow. At what point did you decide you wanted to go into the Peace Corps?

WARBURTON: [00:05:18] Well, as you might suspect, the Vietnam War was going well. I mean, there were three choices, Canada, the Army, or the Peace Corps. I, in Harvard, as an undergraduate, I joined ROTC and I was the first one to I discovered in ROTC I was clumsy. And when we had to wear uniforms to class, I dropped out. I didn't want to be. But so the Army, it wasn't that I had any objection, particularly. I'm not particularly political. I didn't have that much objection one way or the other to the war, except I thought it was ridiculous. And so the kind of reasonable alternative to me seemed to be the Peace Corps. Or try to go into the Peace Corps. I had worked in 1965 in Hawaii and there I met my first Peace Corps volunteer from New Guinea. And had a very exotic cobra infested time in Guinea. And so I was just dying to go to Guinea. So when I applied they didn't give you alternatives. So was the application came back that Bolivia was interested in architects and I

had little interest in going to Bolivia, but I had interest in not going to Vietnam. So I said, yes.

NOBLE: [00:07:00] Ok, so did they say that if you did not accept that invitation to Bolivia, that your chances of being given a second?

WARBURTON: [00:07:09] I don't know, they just said that they had this program and Bolivia had requested architects.

NOBLE: [00:07:16] That was good enough?

WARBURTON: [00:07:17] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:07:19] So you accept the invitation to train for Bolivia?

WARBURTON: Yes.

NOBLE: And what was the reaction of your mom and dad, your siblings?

WARBURTON: [00:07:32] Uh. They are they were completely blasé about there's no, I don't remember any highly. I mean, my mother would have probably been enthusiastic and the rest of the family was probably blasé.

NOBLE: [00:07:51] But nobody saying, don't go. Don't go.

WARBURTON: [00:07:55] Oh, now and then, you know, everybody gets investigated by whoever comes along to do investigations. And so, uh, my yeah, my parents. Well my mother liked to travel, so she would have been for it, my father was not so much. But I mean, to the point of I think they saw what the choices were, so they were not against it.

NOBLE: [00:08:24] Where did you train?

WARBURTON: [00:08:26] We trained in Seattle, Washington, and the University of Washington, which has a very strong Latin American contingent for

whatever reason. So there are a lot of Latin American students who could provide instructors.

NOBLE: [00:08:42] Oh, good. So for language training, you had native speakers?

WARBURTON: [00:08:46] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:08:47] From South America? From Bolivia?

WARBURTON: [00:08:49] Uh, we also had, um, I believe Bolivians actually came up. I am a little hazy on that, but we certainly had, we had from Argentina and Colombia and, um, well, yes, the Bolivians, there were two programs training out once. One was Bolivia 20 and 21, and 21 was educators. So and some of the people in the program already were learning Spanish, had learned Spanish. So they brought up native Aymara speakers from Bolivia to teach the Spanish teachers Aymara. So that's why we had the Quispe, Q-U-I-S-P-E, the Quispe family was there for a couple of them.

NOBLE: [00:09:55] So you were Bolivia 20.

WARBURTON: I was Bolivia 20.

NOBLE: How many people were in Bolivia 20?

WARBURTON: [00:10:00] I think maybe twenty. I mean this was not a large group.

NOBLE: [00:10:05] Were you all architects?

WARBURTON: [00:10:08] Well, there were people and their wives, but there was. No, we weren't all architects, and the requirements then changed, either after we were accepted and Bolivia said we don't really want to use architects, so do community development. So we were not used as architects, which I liked.

NOBLE: [00:10:33] Oh, good.

WARBURTON: [00:10:34] Yeah, because I didn't want to do adobe architecture. So anyway, it's not a country that has practiced architecture the way I was trying to.

NOBLE: [00:10:50] Yeah. So we have mutual friends who were in Bolivia when you were there. Were they in the same training group?

WARBURTON: [00:11:02] Well, Adam Lutynski and his wife. Joyce Bowdon was a returned volunteer, who I know, she might have shown up at training. I don't know how that happened.

NOBLE: [00:11:18] Ok, so there you are in Seattle, Washington. You're studying. If I understand you, you're not studying Aymara, you're studying Spanish?

WARBURTON: [00:11:32] I'm studying, learning Spanish. Seven hours a day for six days a week.

NOBLE: Very intense.

WARBURTON: Very intense. And I was a terrible language student with not a good attitude. So I'm somebody who wants to know, well, why does it work that way rather than, you know, it doesn't work that way. So I that's the way it is type thing. So I was not a good language student. I would be now, but then I was not, and I was not enchanted to be going to Bolivia either. But I made, my bunk mate in the dormitory, became one of my best friends, so we made some really good friends.

NOBLE: Oh good, that helps.

WARBURTON: Yeah, Adam and Mary were good friends too. So we formed kind of that were people who got along quite well.

NOBLE: [00:12:37] So you seven hours a day, just language six days a week. Surely there was more training than just language. Were they not talking about Bolivia?

WARBURTON: [00:12:48] We had endless things about how we were going to feel going there. You know, all the psychologists, psychiatrists. How are we going to feel, you know, and culture shock and this, that and the other thing and I don't remember particularly much about language training. We did field trips. A couple of, we did a couple of field trips, I think the purpose of the field trips was to put what they viewed as incompatible volunteers together and see what happens out.

NOBLE: [00:13:29] Ouch. They were watching. So was the word deselection being used?

WARBURTON: [00:13:34] Oh, yes, deselection was being used. And our group also turned out to be the first group that had in-country training. So we went from three months in Bolivia, uh, Seattle to a one month training in Bolivia. And so therefore and then we were also unusual in that we had site selection.

NOBLE: [00:14:01] You were given some options once you got to Bolivia about which site you would have?

WARBURTON: [00:14:06] Yes. So we got quite, quite a wide variety of options.

NOBLE: [00:14:11] So before we go into that one month of training in Bolivia, were there political discussions in Seattle? Did they prepare you for talking to people about communism and democracy and governance?

WARBURTON: [00:14:27] No, there were no political discussions. And it turned out while we were there, of course, Che Guevara was hunted down and killed. And there was probably a pretty big CIA presence in the country and I think the, later on, we can talk about that, the volunteers were

used as spies in a sense. Not spies. They were asked to tell who are the leaders, right, things on who are the leaders in the communities and blah blah. The kind of politically aware people in the group at the time said, you know, listen.

NOBLE: We're not going to do it?

WARBURTON: Well, they might have done it, but they also said this is not exactly aboveboard, but it probably wasn't.

NOBLE: [00:15:20] Kennedy would have been appalled.

WARBURTON: [00:15:22] Yeah, well, I have no idea, you know, how it was used. But even one of the Bolivians said, you know, I think this is for the CIA. And I said, no, but he was probably right. Anyway, training was, we had some athletic experience, learning soccer. To say what type of volunteer I was, I mean, my attitude, which I said was not terribly positive. So we happened to have a psychologist who stuttered named Dr. Ernie Katz. So he had me in and he said, oh Ray, some of the volunteers think you're rather... And I said, snotty? He said, oh, yeah, that's a good word. How do you feel about that? And I said, well, you know, if I've offended people I didn't mean to offend. I said, well, I have to know who they are. If I've offended people I didn't mean to offend, then I'd be concerned. But I've offended people I meant to offend, what's the problem? So proving how snotty I was. So I was a kind of a reluctant volunteer, but I managed to not be too snotty.

NOBLE: [00:16:54] No, clearly not.

WARBURTON: [00:16:58] So anyway.

NOBLE: [00:17:00] So did this deselection process also then include peer to peer review?

WARBURTON: No, they did not.

NOBLE: Did the psychologist get this idea that some other volunteers were saying that you were?

WARBURTON: [00:17:13] Oh, well, there were all meetings with, I mean, there were endless, as I recall, endless meetings with psychologists, psychiatrists and all this. How are you going to feel?

NOBLE: [00:17:23] Did a lot of people in your group get deselected?

WARBURTON: [00:17:29] No, not at all. Oh, uh, one guy kind of freaked out during the VD movie, he probably got deselected. There were probably only one or two and then one immediately upon arriving in country, he decided it wasn't for himself and he was right. So his favorite movie, which he'd seen seven times, was The Sound of Music. So.

NOBLE: [00:18:03] Oh, OK.

WARBURTON: [00:18:05] Bolivia was not for him.

NOBLE: [00:18:08] So you between your three months in Seattle and your continuing training in Bolivia, did you get to go home?

WARBURTON: [00:18:16] Yes, we got to go home. And I took pictures of my mother cooking a pot roast and had all these pictures of my town that I took because I could at that time, I had access to a studio at, probably a friend's studio. So I had these took these pictures of what my hometown life was like and. And probably buy things and buy a portable typewriter.

NOBLE: [00:18:48] Oh, good.

WARBURTON: [00:18:49] And in Seattle, we went to REI. REI was just starting up there, so all our supplies were brought bought at REI.

NOBLE: [00:18:59] You had to buy them? Peace Corps wasn't buying?

WARBURTON: [00:19:03] Oh no, I'm not sure how that work, might have been given a stipend.

NOBLE: [00:19:07] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So then you have a big going away party or something?

WARBURTON: [00:19:12] No, not that I recall.

NOBLE: [00:19:14] Nothing particularly dramatic?

WARBURTON: [00:19:16] Kiss you goodbye and put you on a plane.

NOBLE: [00:19:19] See you in a couple of years.

WARBURTON: [00:19:20] Yeah, see you in a couple of years.

NOBLE: [00:19:22] Then you somehow you flew from Massachusetts. Did you have some central meeting?

WARBURTON: [00:19:29] We met up in New York City. It was a central meeting point. And then there was the flight to, I don't know whether we went by Miami to Lima, but, well, we ended up in Lima and then we took a Super Constellation over the Andes. Practically its height limit was probably ten thousand. But, you know, it was not as much as the Andes probably. But I'll always remember the plane because it had a kind of a curved lounge in the back and it was very elegant. And our first impression of Bolivia was rocks.

NOBLE: [00:20:11] Where did you land?

WARBURTON: La Paz.

NOBLE: La Paz. Way up high with the city. Wow.

WARBURTON: [00:20:16] You don't see it. You just see the, uh, the Altiplano and not a tree in sight, and the spectacular mountains in the distance, but basically looked pretty inhospitable.

NOBLE: [00:20:31] And then you stay in La Paz for that extra month of training?

WARBURTON: [00:20:34] No, we did not. We stayed in the, I think, we all may maybe a few days in La Paz and the Hotel La Paz, which was kind of an art deco shaped hotel, and, you know, we had to see the Peace Corps doctor and do all this, whatever preliminary stuff, as I recall, and measure your pulse as you walked up the street at one hundred and eighty. I mean, it was just the fact of the altitude.

NOBLE: [00:21:07] Oh, yes. You're two miles high.

WARBURTON: [00:21:11] And then we got shipped out to Pillapi, P-I-L-L-A-P-I, which was a site that was used for training the Bolivian kind of equivalent of the Peace Corps at village level. Bolivia also had village level workers, and that's where they were also trained. So we were there for one month, which, additional in this case I think we were taught this. I'm at a loss. I don't think we were taught Spanish, and then we had field trips to a variety of sites and then.

NOBLE: [00:22:10] Where is Pillapi?

WARBURTON: [00:22:11] Pillapi is fairly close to Lake Titicaca. It's probably north of La Paz. So that it actually had a tree for shade somewhere there, but it was kind of, I think there is a little plateau. So we were housed there and continued and we had some very interesting field trips.

NOBLE: [00:22:41] What do you recall?

WARBURTON: [00:22:45] Our first field, you were shipped off by yourself. And I think the object was to A, use your Aymara, and B, find out about the town.

NOBLE: [00:22:56] Use your Aymara? You'd only been studying for a few weeks.

WARBURTON: Yeah, I know. Exactly.

NOBLE: What can you say? Do you remember any?

WARBURTON: [00:23:06] Mama [speaks Aymara] which means, lady does your dog bite? And I could not do the translation anyway. So the first field trip was on the shores of Lake Titicaca and there are kind of the stone walls between the villages, well, around everybody's compound, because everybody owns their own little territory and the stone walls might be five feet high. And on top of the stone walls are snarling dogs, hungry, snarling. And you are taken around by the let's say they are called the mayor, who has a whip of office, which he used to beat back the dogs when he would enter somebody compound for a meeting. The dogs were not nice. And all I can remember is that I was put in a house at night and they locked the door.

NOBLE: [00:24:19] Locked you in? Well, that was also locking the dogs out.

WARBURTON: [00:24:23] Locking the dogs out. So I think in that trip, I went with one of the Bolivians and there was somebody who spoke Spanish and he said, well, let's go to the top of the hill and we'll look out for foxes. We'll be on the lookout for foxes. And Bolivia in Aymara has many tales of the fox and the condor. It's kind of like Aesop's Fables. So the fox is a big actor Bolivian lore, as is the condor. We saw no foxes going up the hill. But, you know, we had a nice view of Lake Titicaca.

NOBLE: [00:25:08] Any condors flying?

WARBURTON: [00:25:09] No condors, I don't think in Bolivia I ever saw a condor. And then I saw that I made it through that field trip. And then the second field trip was to Oruro. And this was completely flat. It's a province.

Completely flat. And then there'd be these little clusters of houses and then there would be these enormous piles of cow dung with them that the bulls would get tethered around there at night and they would farm. And I one of the things I can remember is that the people said, they might have been Seventh Day Adventists, that God would never allow man to land on the moon. So it's right around the time that, you know, Sputnik was known, well it was post-Sputnik, but this would be 1966. So God was not going to allow man to land on the moon. And every morning we would have roasted corn kernels and black coffee for breakfast. So I was staying with this couple in this compound with these dogs.

NOBLE: [00:26:32] And this is part of the field trip?

WARBURTON: [00:26:34] Yes, it was part of the field trip. And the couple give me their bed to sleep on and they put on sheepskins on the floor to sleep. So their dog's outside and in the middle of the night.

NOBLE: [00:26:54] And you're the only volunteer in that particular house?

WARBURTON: [00:26:58] I'm the only volunteer. And in the middle of the night, I get the shits, so I'm thinking. So I finally wake him up. I said, and I could not I didn't know how to politely say, I've got to shit in Spanish. So I used the Latin. I said, tengo che defecare, I think. And so he got up and, you know, the dogs. I said, where should I go? He said, well, you know, go in the dung pile with all the bulls. So all the bulls are tethered and you dig your little hole, you know, go back. Half hour later, gotta go again. So embarrassing.

NOBLE: [00:27:40] So you were really sick.

WARBURTON: [00:27:43] That was the most embarrassing. But one a side thing about Bolivia is that diarrhea was on everybody's mind and it was the major topic of conversation and volunteers would meet in the city is what has happened to you and you would take these trips in Bolivia that could

be 15 hours long trek back and you better know what's going to happen. I mean, kind of take an internal.

NOBLE: [00:28:16] Did Peace Corps give you, was it lomoto, something to dry you up?

WARBURTON: [00:28:19] We had stuff. But as your friend Adam would say, he had to do a latrine and he could scarcely keep up with his latrine trench for some of his visitors. I mean, so there were real horror stories. Fortunately I never had a real horror story, but there were many horror stories. And one of the funny things about Peace Corps training is that. On the shores of Lake Titicaca was a volunteer named Andy Cohen, who is from New York, and he would send tape recordings and he was just so ingenuous and he.

NOBLE: [00:29:00] He'd send tape recordings to?

WARBURTON: [00:29:02] Us in training, I think.

NOBLE: [00:29:04] Oh, OK. All right.

WARBURTON: [00:29:05] So one of the tape recordings was he really missed female companionship. So he bought a little female llama. Everybody did eye roll. Eye roll. So anyway, when we got to Bolivia, I think we met Andy and he might have been a real extrovert and the shores of Lake Titicaca were feudal until 1952. I mean, Bolivia was a feudal country with peasants tied to the big *latifundias* until 1952. So that was when they had one of the few Democratic establishments, overthrows of the country. And that is why the U.S. put in like 300 volunteers. I mean, it was a country of, I don't know, five million people or something. So there's enormous volunteer presence. So there was a very famous market up there called Achicachi, I could not spell it.

NOBLE: [00:30:30] And that was near Lake Titicaca?

WARBURTON: [00:30:32] Near Lake Titicaca. And so during Peace Corps training we'd go there. And Andy Cohen, because he was a real showman. I mean, he could bargain and people would just come to watch him dicker.

NOBLE: [00:30:45] Bolivians would come?

WARBURTON: [00:30:48] Oh, yeah. He was a major show. He was fun. So we discovered early on the very nice weavings and artifacts in Bolivia are one of the great weaving cultures anyway. So then it came to country selection. And another factor of Bolivian culture is it's kind of pagan Catholic and they have these enormous, let's say, six day long fiestas that are complete alcoholic blowouts and the people also chew coca. So you have a Bolivian one foot from you with green spittle, reeling drunk, pulling your arm and asking you, mister, would you do X, Y or Z? I was raised basically in a teetotaling family and I don't like being around drunks and don't like the esthetics of green spit. So when it came time for village selection, I ended up in a Seventh Day Adventist village in Bolivia because they don't drink.

NOBLE: [00:32:24] This is your choice?

WARBURTON: [00:32:25] This is my choice. This was a deliberate choice.

NOBLE: [00:32:27] And when you say Seventh Day Adventists, are you talking about Americans who are down there as missionaries?

WARBURTON: [00:32:32] No, this is a very interesting village, this village called Rosario. Well, it was in the province of Pacajes, P-A-C-A-J-E-S. And Pacajes is on the railroad line or the railroad line from La Paz to Areca, Chile, goes through Pacajes. And so quite a few volunteers had the selected little towns along the railway because there were village level workers and the village level workers wanted, let's say, the prestige of having American volunteering in their town. So at the center of this was your friends, Adam Lutynski and Mary Lutynski in Calacoto. And then

my village was further towards Chile and another volunteer named Bill Stecker was further towards La Paz. And the line was Ray Petty. And there were probably four other volunteers in Adam and Mary's town. And that was where the head of the village volunteers was a guy named Clemente Alcon, A-L-C-O-N, falcon. So it was because I, I selected for the reasons, A, Adam and Mary were my buddies as was Bill Stecker and, B, it was the Seventh Day Adventists. And the reason was that 70 years previously, an American missionary had descended out of the blue, landed there and converted. And there was a Seventh Day Adventist church. The Catholic Church was in ruins. There had been a Seventh Day Adventist health clinic, which was in disuse. And later on, I decided one of the reasons I like the community was, the Aymara Indians in a way are very similar to New Englanders.

NOBLE: [00:35:01] In what way?

WARBURTON: [00:35:04] Well, the Indians are not Latin Americans at all. And I'm not a dancing Brazilian or Argentinian type person. So they kind of keep to themselves. They're, you know, they're not Latin. They're more self-sufficient, um, and pleasant. Some of the villages were not that friendly. So it was it was a good match in the sense that my prejudices at the time.

NOBLE: [00:35:43] When you got to Rosario, did somebody escort you to Rosario?

WARBURTON: [00:35:49] Yes. There was a village level worker, uh, they were called TVCs, I think, now that I think of it. His name was Ambrosio Montevigilia. You speak Spanish?

NOBLE: Yes.

WARBURTON: OK, so there you go.

NOBLE: [00:36:14] And so Ambrosio maybe was the one who collected you from the training side and took you to Rosario?

WARBURTON: [00:36:21] I have no memory. But anyway, he provided me in his compound, a house, which was probably twelve feet long by seven feet wide.

NOBLE: [00:36:36] Oh, the whole house.

WARBURTON: [00:36:38] Yeah, well, his compound, there wouldn't be, there would probably be a little house upon the street and then my house and then their house and a little cooking shed. So it was a regular little compound.

NOBLE: [00:36:51] You're all surrounded by walls?

WARBURTON: [00:36:53] Surrounded by adobe walls. Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:36:56] And your house would have had a bed in it?

WARBURTON: [00:37:02] A tin roof and a bed and I, the volunteers were responsible for, you know, I probably got a table for it and we had our kerosene cookers and our hundred liter drum of kerosene.

NOBLE: [00:37:21] Oh, so you were expected to cook for yourself?

WARBURTON: [00:37:24] All right. Well, some people could do. I suppose some people have pensions, but I was fully prepared to cook for myself and most, I think volunteers and that I knew around all cooked for themselves.

NOBLE: [00:37:40] So when you got there, you would have had to go shopping for a couple of plates?

WARBURTON: [00:37:44] Well, before we went out to our site, we had to do a major shopping expedition. One of the things we were told is that by the Peace Corps doctor is that beef is perfectly, you can keep beef out of the, and that at that altitude in the air, just cut off. If it turns green, cut it off and still perfectly fine, cook it up, unlike chicken. So beef will be keep for quite a while. So and eggs were available in the town, but anything else you'd have to, any fresh vegetables, anything you'd have to bring out from the city.

NOBLE: [00:38:25] Oh my. So all you have available locally was meat?

WARBURTON: [00:38:30] Well no, not even meat. We would bring that up from the city. There was the only thing available locally was probably, and much higher price, might've been onions and eggs. And the little stores would have, you know, crackers and rice and noodles. But I didn't really cook with that.

NOBLE: [00:38:51] So what did the what did Ambrosio and his family eat?

WARBURTON: [00:38:56] Oh, they. Well, they cooked on the ground, they kind of had a very low interest and made out of adobe, and it was this fire, a little stove like affair that had a variety of holes in it for their different pots. Their terracotta pots would sit on the holes.

NOBLE: And this is outside?

WARBURTON: This outside. Yeah. And I guess they would I really it would be a lot of soups and they'd buy bread. There was probably. I know there wasn't a bakery in town, but there was bread available. They ate a lot of bread and soup.

NOBLE: [00:39:48] Potatoes, I think potatoes.

WARBURTON: [00:39:51] This is major potato country.

NOBLE: [00:39:53] Yeah. What did you do for water?

WARBURTON: [00:39:59] Water, we would boil.

NOBLE: [00:40:01] How did you where did it come from?

WARBURTON: [00:40:04] It came from, I think there was a little stream there, but I go down and get a bucket of water. And also wash my clothes in the stream. There were no latrines.

NOBLE: [00:40:22] So you had to figure out where to go?

WARBURTON: [00:40:27] Well, I figured out where. Every morning I'd hop over the little river, I'd go up to the ravine, dig a little hole and I worked my way down the ravine for two years.

NOBLE: [00:40:38] So did you essentially stay in Rosario for your two years?

WARBURTON: [00:40:43] Yes, I did.

NOBLE: [00:40:46] And what did you do?

WARBURTON: [00:40:49] I stayed out of the Army.

NOBLE: [00:40:55] Community development. You were supposed to figure out. What did they tell you that you were supposed to do?

WARBURTON: [00:41:00] I mean, when I when people ask about community development is, in Bolivia, because Bolivia was a feudal state and because the peasants, in a way, are looked down upon by the mestizos and the city folk. The volunteers provide a link between the resources of the country and the community. But under community development, you're always, you're not supposed to impose any of your ideas for projects. You're supposed to respond to whatever their needs are.

NOBLE: [00:41:39] And they are speaking Aymara?

WARBURTON: [00:41:41] Now, another reason I chose my community is because well, the interesting thing about the consequence of this Seventh Day Adventists missionary 70 years ago is that there were people in the town who had sent children to Loma Linda University in the United States, which is the Seventh Day Adventist university or college in California. They had people in Brazil, they provided school teachers for the area. There was a, uh, secondary school in the town. So there were primary school and secondary school and students would come and board in the town. Now, this town was no bigger than 350 people, if that, and it was surrounded by little villages that I would go to.

NOBLE: [00:42:44] But the young people would have studied Spanish because they had a school there.

WARBURTON: [00:42:48] Yeah, well, I would say that the province probably spoke Spanish on the whole and not, I mean, all the women spoke Aymara. In my town, the women and well, the women and men spoke Aymara, but in many towns the women might not be so good at Spanish, whereas the men were probably pretty bilingual. And the other thing, a lot of people in my town, in order to make money, the men would go to work in the mines. And they would disappear for months at the time.

NOBLE: [00:43:24] So the mines were in Bolivia.

WARBURTON: [00:43:26] The mines were in Bolivia. Well, no, that would be the tin mines in Potosí, I think. But there were also mines, I think relatively close by, but I'm not sure. But the men would. And the other interesting thing about what had happened as a consequence of American aid is that they connected La Paz to the tropics with the world's most terrifying road blasted out of a cliff. So every town also would have family members who were in the tropics. So they were the town people would send down, let's say, onions and sheep, and they would get

back oranges and stuff from the tropics. And so people had members in the tropics in La Paz and in the town. So there was kind of a triangular trade. So what did I do?

NOBLE: What did you do?

WARBURTON: Well, I played the recorder, I ran my Shakespeare. The first project we did was they had a sheep dip that was never really utilized.

NOBLE: [00:44:53] And a sheep dip would be? I'm a Chicagoan. I don't know what a sheep dip is.

WARBURTON: [00:44:56] A sheep dip is a concrete trough that has corrals at each end and the trough is filled with water and insecticides put it and the sheep are driven through the sheep dip, they'll swim through. And it's to remove all the insects and all that little bloodsuckers. Bolivia had the rattiest looking sheep, as we discovered when we during our field, one of our field trips, we went to the agricultural station in Bolivia where they had these lovely merino sheep that are just, you plunge your hand into the wool is six inches deep versus the scruffy little interbred Bolivian ratty sheep.

NOBLE: [00:45:47] So there's merino sheep were demonstration animals from the U.S., perhaps?

WARBURTON: [00:45:51] Probably from Argentina. So the responsibility of the children was herding the sheep, the women would milk the sheep every morning, make cheese from that. So our area basically the only crops they could raise were potatoes. And as I discovered in one of my little potato, another thing I did was experimental, a potato patch. And so we planted potatoes here and there. And one of my friends said, well, you know, if it survives through some stay, it'll probably do OK, but, you know, whatever it was, usually a hailstorm. Sure enough, on that day or near that day, the experimental potato flattened. So for that reason, the Bolivians plant at many different altitudes, in many different

locations all over and over and quite a few varieties of potatoes. And so, my friend, I made a good friend there named Esteban, and he took me on a potato harvesting day where they roast potatoes in the ground in a rock oven, you know, they heat up rocks and put potatoes on top. It's called a *huatia*, H-U-A-T-I-A. But anyway, it was really nice potatoes. And so what I did. So we first project sheep shearing and then we had a great group from the University of Utah. I don't know if they came to my town, they might have. They demonstrated sheep shearing and I learned how to shear a sheep and these guys were real extroverts with wild American accents. *Cómo está usted señor?* And the peasants loved them.

NOBLE: [00:48:07] From Utah. So sheep shearing is.

WARBURTON: [00:48:08] So I learned how to shear a sheep.

NOBLE: [00:48:09] And sheep shearing was not part of the culture? They had not been.

WARBURTON: [00:48:13] They would shear their sheep with a sharpened tin can on a rock. So they did not use hand shaves. So one of the things I did do was give a little speech and sell shares if they wanted them. So basically, if you regard my role in the community was community entertainment I think. Another thing I did was ladies cooking classes. So we had a high altitude cookbook, and so I would go to the little community centers and all the ladies would come with their notebooks and I show them how to cook banana bread and, you know, things that they might cook. I had my two burners and my two ovens.

NOBLE: [00:49:08] And they had bananas.

WARBURTON: [00:49:10] Yeah. Oh yeah, well from the tropics.

NOBLE: [00:49:12] Oh that's right. It would come up from the tropics.

WARBURTON: [00:49:15] But basically how it was that was very entertaining both for them and for me. I might have taught a little English. Uh, eventually we had a community project to build a community house, which was the house that I financed and lived in for maybe half a year. And it was *mano de obra* of the community. I bought all the materials and they did all the labor stuff, that was that was a fun project.

NOBLE: [00:49:51] When you said you bought all the materials out of your own money? Out of your living allowance from high school?

WARBURTON: [00:49:56] Yeah. We were paid the equivalent of a secondary school teacher and it was plenty of money.

NOBLE: [00:50:07] So you had excess after your living needs.

WARBURTON: [00:50:11] Yeah, certainly. And then we had the month vacation or whatever it was. That was our own money. I mean our money would save so.

NOBLE: [00:50:19] So your month long vacation came at maybe the half point after your first year.

WARBURTON: [00:50:24] Yeah. And we also had a, and my whole family arrived. As an aside, when I went to the Peace Corps, I basically said, I don't really want to see my parents. All they do is bicker. But then I relented. I said, well, let's not be, you know, dog in the manger type of thing. My parents would probably love to come down here, so I invited them to come down. So they came down and I had two brothers for a couple weeks.

NOBLE: [00:50:58] And what point in your service?

WARBURTON: [00:51:01] Midpoint. Because we were having the conference in the semi tropics for the whole Peace Corps in that I mean, for our group, I think and my parents were there at that time.

NOBLE: [00:51:17] Did they get to ride the bus going down that terrifying road from La Paz?

WARBURTON: [00:51:21] Ah yes. I guess that's all completely changed now, a super highway. I've been back many, many times since. Last time I was there, that was 1999. So they were building the highway, but it was still terrifying because where I went was not the super highway anyway. So they came down and had an interesting time. We met in Peru and we went to Machu Picchu and then ended up at that conference and whatever it was.

NOBLE: [00:52:06] Did they get to see Rosario?

WARBURTON: [00:52:08] No. But, uh.]

NOBLE: [00:52:11] There wouldn't have been, I'm wondering where they would have stayed.

WARBURTON: [00:52:14] Rosario, for a while, for example, by train out of La Paz, Rosario is 70 kilometers out of the city. But it was at least a seven hour train ride. And in rainy season by truck, it could be twenty four hours by car because you get bogged down in the Altiplano. No, we did, we went to Cochabamba and my father had to go back. He only had two weeks vacation, so my mother stayed on a little and then my younger brother went to Chile to ski, I think. And so everybody was quite adventurous.

NOBLE: [00:52:58] I would like to go back to that community house that you mentioned there. What did you call it, a *mano de obra*?

WARBURTON: [00:53:05] Yeah, it's called, they provide the *mano de obra*.

NOBLE: [00:53:09] Ok, which is the work they did. They did the labor and you provided the material. And what was this for? What is the community like?

WARBURTON: [00:53:18] Well, theoretically, it was going to be, well, they might put up teachers there or visiting whoever is basically when I went back in 1989, it was not being used. And you have to also know that the Altiplano probably well continues to be depopulated. So when I returned in 1989 on the way to my town, I saw the *vicuñas*, which you never would have seen when I was there.

NOBLE: [00:53:54] And *vicuñas* is sort of like alpaca?

WARBURTON: [00:53:57] Well, it is. It's a very short and very fine, fur, haired camelid and they're basically tan cream, tan color. They're the most desirable of all the hair for weaving.

NOBLE: [00:54:19] So how is it how would you explain that there will be *vicuñas* later on that hadn't been there before.

WARBURTON: [00:54:23] Because the area would continue to be depopulated.

NOBLE: [00:54:27] Okay. So it was safer for the animals too.

WARBURTON: [00:54:30] Yeah. There now fewer people, I assume. I mean, it was really it was, really. Even though people came back and really improved their whole house. So there were now whitewashed walls and iron gates and something that would never have been in the town and probably maybe even, I don't know if they had electricity. I doubt it. So people would still go back to the village because relatives would remain that would herd their sheep. So they still owned sheep and llamas, probably in the town, but didn't require the number of people.

NOBLE: [00:55:20] But the original idea for this community house was what would be happen? What had you hoped might happen in it?

WARBURTON: [00:55:29] Basically, I thought it was a good project to build me a house. I'm an architect, what can I say.

NOBLE: [00:55:37] In fact.

WARBURTON: [00:55:40] Uh. Yeah, I can't remember exactly, but I have enormous number of letters that I wrote. So, yes, I have a treasure trove of letters that my mother saved and so all that it could be explained. But what I remember now is, who knows? As I said, I learned and probably knew fairly early on that a really good volunteer is an extrovert and I'm not an extrovert. They like being out with people. They like chatting it up. They like sitting on the steps of the plaza, they're extroverts. And I am not that type of person.

NOBLE: [00:56:32] You've got a pretty narrow definition of what makes a good volunteer.

WARBURTON: [00:56:36] Well, I've seen them in action. I mean, I think you are or else you, well the ones I saw. None of us in our little group, I think, I mean, in the impact case, had any stellar results for community. For what we were, the ideal of what we were supposed to do. And I always said, I think the major thing the Peace Corps does is for returning U.S. citizens, to make them better citizens. And certainly from my point of view, it was one of the most significant things in my life. Learning a second language which opens you up to another culture, and actually the friends I made in the Peace Corps were a wider number of friends than in college or graduate school. So basically the friends that I maintain from college or university and Peace Corps, are Peace Corps friends. As you know, probably when you, I mean, there were 300 volunteers, and you could be sure that if you traveled anywhere and you went to some volunteers down there, hey, come on in and stay, you know, the incredible hospitality. And I happen to live with housemates. And one of my previous ones, uh, when she knocked on

the door at first, she said she was a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco. I said, fine, you know, what more do I need to know?

WARBURTON: [00:58:34] She's one of my very good friends.

NOBLE: [00:58:40] You had such an open ended job description. Did Peace Corps staff come to visit you from time to time to give you ideas or to help her check up on you?

WARBURTON: [00:58:56] No. Every month we would all go into La Paz for payday.

NOBLE: [00:59:00] Oh, OK.

WARBURTON: [00:59:02] So first we had one of the projects I did was try and make a hot water shower, sun, solar shower for Adam and Mary's, matter of fact. So we would assemble ahead of time at Adam and Mary's so the volunteers would come there and then we'd all take the train. The train was a locomotive 1919 and the dining car was 1909 Brussels and was serving four course meals. And endless meals would be served at Adam and Mary's. So it was, you know, I really like going in every month, any excuse. And some people would leave their sites for quite a long time, but I never did. So it was, uh. So the major advantage was what it did for me, not what it did to the town. The town was unusual, I think that it's education level and the supplied second, you know, primary school teachers. It was relatively sophisticated. You'd never know it from looking at it. But when you find out where people have gone, they'd come back from Brazil having worked in an airplane factory, you'd say, well, these people have been around.

NOBLE: [01:00:43] Right and they got the skills.

WARBURTON: [01:00:46] And also the other thing I was used to, I was never went to church. I was raised Unitarian and I've been an atheist for a long time. So I was not going to get involved in Seventh Day Adventist Church, which is a Saturday religion. But people just didn't care. I say they're

like New Englanders. Oh, well, that's the grain guy, you know. So what? And I made quite a few friends in the village and I when I went back in 1999, I'd go see the couple that now lived in La Paz and with Esteban we would go out, we went out to the town. And I'm still in contact with their daughter who is in the United States.

NOBLE: [01:01:42] So and your friendship with these people was happening in Spanish?

WARBURTON: [01:01:51] Yeah. But my Spanish, I was always. My Spanish is kind of peasant Spanish, so I'm very reluctant to speak Spanish with educated people, so I never. I am an intermediate, if that, speaker of Spanish. In my career, later on in my career, I did some major projects in Chile for the Opus Dei university. So that was a completely. And who could ever understand the Chileans?

NOBLE: [01:02:28] Do you mean their Spanish is different?

WARBURTON: [01:02:32] It's very different. It's very rapid. Very idiosyncratic and enigmatic, so it's very rapid and the great thing about Bolivia is that Spanish basically for the natives is the second language. Everybody speaks slowly and it's very well in Mexico. So communication was relatively easy, but I never was around educated people in the Peace Corps, so I was always reluctant to speak Spanish publicly.

NOBLE: [01:03:13] Depends on your audience, I would imagine.

WARBURTON: Uh, no. No.

NOBLE: So you come to the end of your two years, were you itching to get back home?

WARBURTON: [01:03:32] Well, I was not quite 26. My birthday was July 21st, and we finished, I think, like June 5th or something, so my mother trots over to ah yeah, she goes over the Norfolk draft board to talk to the ladies and

the lady said, oh, he's too old. We like them young and dumb, no problem. So that's what my mother reported to me. Now, my good friend Bill Stecker, who was my bunkmate, draft board drafted him and his birthday was that November, so he had to serve.

NOBLE: [01:04:19] Was extending your time in the Peace Corps not an option?

WARBURTON: [01:04:23] I don't think they offered it as an option, and I think I was ready, certainly ready to come home and start architecture practice. It wasn't that I missed architecture, but I never worked as an architect and I always tell people that's probably one of the reasons I am an architect, is that during graduate school, I never worked in an architect's office, I worked for engineers and other things. But because my career turned into being a designer all through my career. But the chances of doing that are like 15 percent. If you look at the way an architecture office builds. So were I to have worked for an architecture office and I thought, gee, my chances are wrong. But I had you know, when I came back, as all my friends say, you just assumed you'd get a job and furthermore, you just assumed you'd get a job you want.

NOBLE: [01:05:30] That was a while ago.

WARBURTON: [01:05:32] Yeah, it was a while ago. I mean, it's completely. Yeah, and you could live in your own apartment, whatever. So, um. I think. Now, supplementary story to this is I was Peace Corps disaster relief in Peru in 1970 for four months.

NOBLE: [01:06:00] Wow.

WARBURTON: [01:06:02] So in that in that story, I would say I actually did some versus round number one, which was a benefit to me. And the second time was a real experience.

NOBLE: [01:06:19] Let's talk about that. Where in Peru?

WARBURTON: [01:06:22] Uh, Cajamarquilla.

NOBLE: [01:06:26] And how old were you when you do that?

WARBURTON: [01:06:31] It was two years. I was two years older. So it was 1970. So I was 28.

NOBLE: [01:06:43] Oh, so that was just two years after you got back from Bolivia, you turned around and went back to Peru for this disaster relief. So what did what was the disaster? What had happened in Peru?

WARBURTON: [01:06:53] A major earthquake that wiped out the city of Yungay to the tune of thirty thousand people buried under a mudslide. There were probably 100,000 people killed. Oh, and Pat Nixon even flew down to visit that city. So the capital of the provinces, Huaraz, which was totally flattened, basically. So this region and the only reason, once again, I have no altruistic bone in my body. I think I got a call from a woman with the best telephone voice I have ever heard in my life, who said there's been a disaster in Peru. We need returned volunteers.

NOBLE: [01:07:45] Oh they contacted you?

WARBURTON: [01:07:46] This woman called me up. She said, you know, we want to put people in immediately. We're looking for people who speak Spanish, blah, blah, blah. It so happened that two years into my career at Shepley Bulfinch kind of unbeknownst to me, the firm was going downhill. So I'm asking myself what are what's going to happen to me here? Well, so she calls me up and I said, well, I'll consider it. She said, well, we want you to go next week. And so I start talking to my friends and boss and everything about should I go, should I go blah, blah, blah, and then finally I figured I have to go because it would be humiliating not to go talk to her. So I decided it would probably benefit me, my career, to say that I could leave this firm to these people and then return. And besides, it be interesting, but it was more I was not

looking forward actually to seeing the image of, I mean, I knew what had happened. How are you going to function? Well, it turned out that we were in the second group, so I didn't go the first week, I went two weeks afterwards. And then we were in Huaraz for another probably two weeks while the Bolivian, I mean, the Peruvian coordinators decided what they wanted to do with us.

NOBLE: [01:09:32] Oh oh. How disappointing.

WARBURTON: [01:09:34] Meanwhile the Russians to set up a huge field hospital nearby, I guess. And so we were there and then finally we get assigned and my friend is, still friends with this guy named Mike Wellingham. He was an MIT boy and he did not speak Spanish. But his brother had served in Latin America, and so he thought this might be interesting and the Peace Corps assumed he was his brother, so they let him in. And I, you know, Wellingham said when they were deciding about who would go where, I said, I want him to go with me. They wanted to put him in the desert. I said, I want to go with me. Basically, I think I need somebody who knows, who's a smart guy, knows something. Plus, we're compatible.

NOBLE: [01:10:39] From MIT, he was an engineer?

WARBURTON: [01:10:45] Well, he's a jack of all trades, actually. He's had more careers than anybody. But as he said, he was the only Catholic, probably the only Catholic convert at MIT of the mystical variety. He's a very odd duck. But anyway, so we got paired up. And they ride us out to where we're going to be met by people from wherever we're going. And as we get off the truck, we're not told what we're supposed to be doing. There is no, I said to the guy, what do you want us to do? Oh, he said, well, distribute aid and do a census or something like that and relocate the town. And relocate the town and bye! So that was it. So we were met by two *campesinos* with two horses, and we proceeded to go up and down. When you went uphill, your nose was kissing the main because you were so close to the horse and you go downhill, you

were practically flat on your back. I mean, it was really. So our first. So we're on this road. And there's a little town and my kids in front and everybody comes out of nowhere and they cluster around him and all of a sudden they disappear and they come around me and they say, what are your proposals, what do you intend? What are you going to do for us? And I said, we will have to study the situation. We shall return. And I said, Mike, what did you tell them that they all disappeared from around you? And he said, that somebody greater than I was coming.

NOBLE: [01:12:48] Well, that would be you.

WARBURTON: [01:12:51] That would be me. So our first so and then they had been building this road. And the next thing you see is that the bulldozer's at the bottom of the ravine. There was no, this is, there was no flat country in this period. That was all it was irrigated with fields. So that enormous lines of irrigation ditches with eucalyptus trees. So we go another hour and a half and we're in Cajamarquilla, which is at that time that was a military dictatorship. So the military, whoever it was, was in that town, the equivalent, and the mayor and it was the central town. So the little town we had gone through was one of the subsidiary town. It was surrounded by 20 house villages related to it somehow.

NOBLE: [01:13:56] And some of these houses have fallen down?

WARBURTON: [01:13:59] Everything was flattened. I can show you pictures. I mean, there was not anything standing in the town and for the first week the people said that it was so dusty you could not see. One tenth of the population was killed. In a certain sense, it happened when people were in the fields during the day. And when you look at this territory, the hills had these mesas on the top. And so the boulders were rolling down the hills and they were dodging them in the field and some of them would hit the eucalyptus trees. But basically, I think one out of 10 were dead, but by the time we had arrived, it had been a full month. So people had erected their makeshift tent houses out of the town. And so

we arrive, let's say, in the middle of the day. And immediately they want a town meeting and they want to know proposals to us.

NOBLE: [01:15:06] What are your ideas, proposals?

WARBURTON: [01:15:09] You are an architect, and if you're an architect in Latin America, you're also an engineer. So Mr. Architect Engineer. So I fortunately do the little bullshit about we have to study the situation. We just cannot tell you what to do immediately. But we're going to study.

NOBLE: [01:15:27] Well, that's actually true.

WARBURTON: [01:15:29] Yes. But not to people who think that you're a magical persona who's going to solve it immediately. I don't think we ever, there was no aid to be distributed as far as I know.

NOBLE: [01:15:41] They must have been hungry.

WARBURTON: [01:15:43] Well, no, they had their fields. I mean, the fields were intact. We had pension with the pension who, um, who fed the local school teachers. So once again, I mean, this was Quechua speaking, but everybody spoke Spanish. So basically our project was to survey the town which had been entirely flattened and survey the little subsidiary towns. And this shows how smart I was because Mike Wellingham made a theodolite out of a razor blade.

NOBLE: [01:16:27] He made a what?

WARBURTON: [01:16:28] Theodolite, it's a surveyor's instrument, it's called a theodolite. I know quite know how to explain theodolite.

NOBLE: [01:16:38] We'll worry about that later.

WARBURTON: [01:16:39] Yeah, so he jury-rigged this thing so he could slide along it and we could do estimates. And so we surveyed we surveyed the town

and. And then they visit doing field trips, and my favorite story is that so. It's the military governor, decides he's going to take me to this little village on horseback. And he gives me a horse. Now, the trails, as I said there no, there are only valleys. There are no flat areas. So there are little trails that go around the edge of the mountains. And he's behind me and he's flicking my horse with his whip. And I keep on going, stop that! I mean, this is not so. And he's with his 16 year old daughter. So we go to this little town and the first thing they feed us, in a town in the middle of nowhere, a nice little feast of guinea pig. And since they're poor, they only give you a quarter of a guinea pig and a little, what's the drink? That's gone. Anyway. You know, the alcoholic drink and then I do my Peace Corps number, where do you think you'd like your town to be relocated? Oh, right here, mister. Well, right here mister looked like a very steep, steep slope. I mean, one of the type that you're on the top and the slope kind of disappears and then comes out the bottom. So I said, we'll have to study the situation. So we go around, Mike and I, looking at alternative sites. Well, they were right. That was, oh, they said, *este es el mas nivel de todos*.

NOBLE: [01:18:47] This is the most level of all.

WARBURTON: [01:18:49] Well, they were right. So. Oh and then during this little lunch before we did that. The 16 year old says to her father, daddy, daddy, the horse! The horse died. Shut up, we have other horses. I turn around. The horse they'd given me had fallen off a little 10 foot cliff and killed himself.

NOBLE: Oh, my goodness.

WARBURTON: The horse that he was whipping on my trail was the most unsure. And so every time we returned to the town, the horses more and more eaten and more as we go. So anyway, on the way back, the town is here and it's kind of like a U so we come around the bend maybe a quarter of a mile away, and we were not allowed to survey the town because we're architects, engineers, we should know. So because the

slope was so vertical, Mike and I stood, I said we got a lot of ground land, so we got a notebook and I said, well, Mike, how long how far do you think it is from that little place to that little place? Let's say eight hundred meters, OK? Eight hundred meters. That is from there to there, maybe 200 meters. So we're do a little map.

NOBLE: [01:20:11] You're eyeballing it.

WARBURTON: [01:20:13] We're eyeballing it. So we were doing this surveying and meanwhile, at the same time, we were talking to people and saying, look, now's the opportunity that you can when you replant your town, you can change a lot sizes to lots that are usable because during the years with inheritance, things get heated up and, you know, people ended up with these a lot. Well, that's the communist idea. We were told that didn't prevent us from doing it. But nonetheless, you know, we explained you said you could do it by lottery and, you know, everybody would have the same size and would have the time we do it. So the road could be a future road could come up the hill. Well, it turned out so in the middle of this, I get really sick and every night chills and fever and I take a break and this go on for about a week. And I'm getting really pissed because when we went there into this place, the Peace Corps never really said, what do you do in case of a medical emergency? Absolutely no instructions.

NOBLE: [01:21:43] And you don't have an iPhone with you?

WARBURTON: [01:21:46] Yeah, there's no way. There's no telegraph. There's no nothing. So after a week, I decide and I'm, you know, in my delirium thinking, oh, I'm going to write my congressman. I mean, I'm going to have to go to a Russian field hospital because some jerk-off in the Peace Corps doesn't give me medical instructions for what I'm doing when I'm out to lunch. So I, you know, go by horseback and back to a town that the traffic goes to and I get shipped back to Huaraz. And I take a taxi to Lima, and it's like a 12 hour trip through a certain night and I cannot remember the name of the Peace Corps hotel. What is

the name of the Peace Corps hotel? Where am I going to go? And I know it's kind of near the Hotel Bolívar, but I can't remember the name of it. So finally, I remember the name of the Peace Corps hotel, so I see the Peace Corps doctor. And then he leaves on vacation and I'm shipped to a very fancy clinic for observation, and they give me all this tests and the doctor, the Peace Corps doctor, gave me this medication, so I continue to take it.

NOBLE: [01:23:13] Now, I'm assuming this is dysentery.

WARBURTON: [01:23:15] It's like typhoid or something like this.

NOBLE: Oh, my goodness.

WARBURTON: It was something that was chills and fever, chills and fever. Not dysentery. So the doctor finally, I don't know, the Peruvian doctor somehow comes out, are you still taking the medicine? Well, you're correct, all the tests. He says to me, I said, well, nobody interviewed me about not taking the medication or what I was taking, you guys are the assholes, not me. So they never found out what it was. And I went back to my site. Meanwhile, Michael, who.

NOBLE: [01:23:55] Wait, wait. You went back to your site? You're feeling a little better?

WARBURTON: [01:23:58] Yeah, I had semi recovered, I guess. So there was a two week break, I guess. And I go back to come out here and Michael meanwhile, scarcely speaking Spanish, has made a major trip to some other town and surveyed or done some come back and maybe at that time we now had a telegraph tent in the town. And rainy season was just about beginning. And I remember somebody said, oh, when rainy season comes the clouds will come up, come up the valley. And I thought, really? In Bolivia they come over the mountains, but sure enough, one day whoosh, up the valley and the clouds enveloped it and it started to rain. One of the things I want to say about Bolivia,

when we arrived, there was not a cloud in the sky. There was not a cloud in the sky for six months. And you really miss clouds, really. But the nighttime sky is spectacular. And the Big Dipper would, every night I'd get out of the middle of the night to go pee or whatever it was, and the Dipper would be rotating and Orion and fabulous. And where I was was in mesa country. So you could see electrical storms 360 degrees around. It was it was country I really liked because it was like, I always like kind of New Mexico, Arizona type dry country with little rivers. And so physically, I was I was quite comfortable in this, even though there was no green. But I was glad when the first clouds were pushed up over the Andes. And so back to, so, we now got all our information on the surveys.

WARBURTON: [01:26:03] And one of the good things about working for my architecture firm, which was the second oldest in the country, is that they really did good presentations. So we were under a tent, there was light drizzle, and we were doing drafting in ink on vellum to do the layouts of first the existing conditions. I have a whole book of this and then the new town plans. And then we went to the city and we had them, and I wrote a description in Spanish about what we did and what they needed and blah, blah, blah, and using the subjunctive like mad. And so we really had an extraordinarily professional product of this town plans for this. And I think Mike later on said because of that, quite a bit of money was funneled into that area. And maybe two years ago, Michael was doing Google Earth and Googles our little town. And it's been rebuilt, of course, not to our town plans. But there is a little blue church. And, you know, there are all this you know, you can see where you can see it on Google Maps. So one of the things he wanted to do was to revisit and his wife died last year from Alzheimer's. And so that was something he wanted to do sometime in the future was return to this town. So I would say from, and I thought we were just there a couple of months. And no, he said we were there from July to December. And by God, he was right.

NOBLE: [01:27:53] Well, there was a significant chunk of time.

WARBURTON: Yeah, it was significant chunk of time.

NOBLE: Yeah, sure. And you did significant work.

WARBURTON: [01:27:59] This time, well, I mean, we at least in this case, we had a task. And we delivered very good, I think later on in the middle of this, he actually gets surveyor's, he managed to get a surveyor's instrument and he was, you know, here's a good template. And so I have some good friends from that period, too. But, yeah, the comparison between, um, being kind of open-ended versus task.

NOBLE: [01:28:34] Yeah.

WARBURTON: [01:28:35] Was quite dramatic and probably 10 years later and you look back, how could you do that? You know, I didn't want to be humiliated. That's the major driver in my life, that I do not want to say, oh, I've talked about it with 40 people and I'm not going.

NOBLE: [01:29:01] Good that you went. And when you came back, your job was still waiting for you?

WARBURTON: [01:29:06] Yes, I my job is still waiting, but the firm actually continued on down. I mean, I did some I had an interesting time, but it turned out that the firm was in the place where, up to then it had a client base and people called them, and all of a sudden the whole economic climate changed for hospitals. They did major hospitals and universities where they're now interested in seeing what other firms did. And so you'd have interviews and our firm just wasn't accustomed to marketing. And so it really tanked. So in 1975 it went probably from 120 down to 25 people. So I was eventually laid off, got another job, and then returned in 1984 and spent the rest of my career in that firm.

NOBLE: [01:30:11] So you mentioned that you've been back to Bolivia several times.

WARBURTON: Yes.

NOBLE: And have you been back to Peru too or is that something you're thinking doing?

WARBURTON: [01:30:20] Yes, I've been back to Peru in 1999. The reason I went back to Bolivia so many times is that Kirsten, who in one of your photographs, was a very good friend, and she divorced her husband and the seven year itch divorce, I guess, like so many volunteers seem to that I know. And she went to Clark University in geography and then got a job with CARE as a project coordinator and then. So she was in Bolivia with her son in 1987, so that was the first time. So she's there in '87, then she went to Guatemala. She eventually ended up as director of CARE in Bolivia and their son was going to the American school. So I went the last time I went was for his graduation, 1999, from high school. And during that trip, I also went to Peru and Cusco had changed dramatically. I mean, they really gussied it up. The Spanish and put in a lot of money or so. And so I think Kirsten and Nicholas had both left maybe and I had stayed on for a few days and I decided, well, I go back to the conference town's name is Tarija. I guess it's so it's in the subtropics. So I decided I would once again take this ride down to the subtropics. Well, I hire a taxi cab driver who had never done it, who giggled as he drove. And he told me, he said, well, you know, it's one way, they've made it one way during the morning. And then the afternoons return, and I thought, oh, sure, it's Bolivia, that will never happen. I'll be able to go down, come back. So we make it down to Tarija, and sure enough, he was right, they blocked the road for return until, let's say, four o'clock and this is a one lane road. Well, it was like the Grand Prix take off of all these taxis, racing up this thing in clouds of dust. And like 15 minutes into the trip, the windshield wipers no longer work because there's no water and the driver can scarcely see. And he's giggling as I thought, oh, I'm so glad I have my will made out because this is it. But we do, we do make it to the top.

NOBLE: [01:33:24] I think I've been on that road. I remember this year on the edge of the cliff and there's no railing there. Sheer drop down. All those crosses.

WARBURTON: [01:33:29] And it's a little markers, crosses going down. And many times we go down, we go down in trucks and literally you can see that the dark were this far from there, a foot from the edge, and you could look down a thousand feet and became blasé, quite blasé.

NOBLE: [01:33:49] You're looking down at the clouds.

WARBURTON: [01:33:52] Yeah, it's just. In 1999, I was no longer I was much more timid I guess, because it was nerve wracking. So anyway, that's. So Peru was probably better from the Peace Corps question of what did you accomplish.

NOBLE: [01:34:13] Yes. So if you were, if somebody from Peace Corps administration would ask your opinion about the kinds of programs that ought to get Peace Corps volunteers into, what would you say about community development, open ended programs?

WARBURTON: [01:34:30] I think the ideal, I think it's a great idea. I just think it takes, you know, real extroverts to do it. People who are willing to spend the time with other people and chatting of who need a need, other people in the chatting type, they need to interact and interact and things happen. And so I thought. And the other thing that was good is. And I learned that later on is that basically, if you're just out of college or university, you don't know anything, but you do know maybe a little more than the locals now. So how do you put so your best thing you can do is be a liaison between resources and hook to the hookup and all that type of thing really takes? I think either you have to be driven by a cause kind of you know, from day one you are interested in elevating the educational levels of the Bolivians when I was a little boy. But, you know, so you're drilling you could be an introvert by driven for doing something for people. But so I think I think it was good. I think they

became later on and they became too focused on individual projects, I guess. So I was glad that I did not do architecture in Bolivia. I found ways of entertaining myself, I suppose, in both, you know, cooking or English or whatever I was doing. But when you say, did you leave a lasting mark on the community? Well, the community house, is it really used in the community. The community is dying, basically.

NOBLE: [01:36:36] But did the community leave a lasting mark on you?

WARBURTON: [01:36:40] I. Well, it kept me from being killed, yes. I mean, the whole experience, I think, was a great experience. I think just, I mean, I think I was wise in the choice I made, but it is not. I think I would be much happier in Bolivia than in real Latin country where everybody is *muy alegre*. And I mean, it was one of the things I remember on the train coming back from Cusco in 1999, there were some Brazilians and they had a jukebox and they got practically the whole train to dance. I mean, they were very loud, so people were dancing and then the lights go out and the lifeguard before you descend into Cusco, so you can see the city, the lights on. So, you know, those are the type of Latins I would have a very hard time with.

NOBLE: [01:37:44] That wasn't you.

WARBURTON: [01:37:47] Yeah, I prefer the New Englander, the Aymara Indians, who were more me. So I think it was wise that I was and I didn't. I wasn't in a fiesta town with the Seventh Day Adventists and the Indians. I mean, their values, values were kind of compatible. I think the thing that was distressing about Peru was so interesting. Here is, everything is destroyed, and one of their favorite words, somebody would say is, oh, Phyllis is *muy envidiosa*. She's very envious of somebody else everybody was using, oh they're very envious. And if somebody has something nice to say about somebody, they're probably related. It isn't you know, they're somehow in the family or cousins or something. So there was an under undertone, it turned out, of I think of this of this envy or pettiness or something that.

NOBLE: [01:39:07] So people who are not in your immediate family or clan were suspected?

WARBURTON: [01:39:11] No, it wasn't suspect, but they were they were envious of what you had. You have a bicycle, they don't. You have a radio or you know, why do they have that way? And to an outsider, you say you these people basically have nothing. Why? Why are you envious? But that doesn't stop people from being envious. I don't think that was the funny thing about the Bolivian community was because it was a 70 year old Seventh Day Adventist community and they get a young pastor. Well, of course, they knew more than the young pastor. So it was very New England in that sense too, who's this young whippersnapper coming into town, blah, blah, blah. So that was fun. But the other thing about the climate is you were never warm on the Altiplano.

NOBLE: [01:40:05] Even in the daytime when the sun was out?

WARBURTON: [01:40:07] Even in the daytime, your sun side would be warm and your shady side would be cold, just because of the thin air, and you never say, hey, I want to take my clothes off and jump in the river. Oh well there were some days you would jump in the river. But basically they were pretty cold. So but it was, I guess, a test of some self-reliance. Other volunteers were stationed with other volunteers. I was basically, I was by myself.

NOBLE: [01:40:39] Yes. How often did you get to see your Peace Corps friends?

WARBURTON: [01:40:43] Uh, well, at least once a month and a lot of time. So that's sort of be an excuse to be more frequent. So when we go into town and be for at least four days, I'm sure.

NOBLE: [01:40:55] So when you were in when Peace Corps gathered in La Paz for these monthly meetings, where would you stay? Was there a Peace Corps hostel or were you?

WARBURTON: [01:41:05] There was there was called the Hotel Torino, which was a real third class hotel. And the showers were electric showers, so before the nozzle, there'd be this beehives, I mean, a wasp sized instrument that ran electricity through to heat the water and next to the shower would be one of the big electrical prongs which would flip down. That type of hotel.

NOBLE: [01:41:45] So the water was heated as it was passing through the nozzle onto your head, but that this proximity of electricity and water sounds a little iffy.

WARBURTON: [01:41:54] Sounds a little iffy, but it worked. Uh, and, you know, we'd go out to so-called good meals. And the other thing about me is I don't have food cravings. So I would be with people, I'm really dying for a hamburger. You know, I don't you know, I don't. I mean, a good hamburger would be nice, but. So basically, as I said, the main topic of, the first topic of interest is, how are you doing from the help.

NOBLE: [01:42:30] Yes, sure. Sure.

WARBURTON: So where were you?

NOBLE: I was in Nigeria.

WARBURTON: Oh, Nigeria. OK.

NOBLE: As a teacher. Totally different experience.

WARBURTON: [01:42:39] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:42:40] So, Ray, is there anything else you'd like to say about either Bolivia or Peru or how any of that has affected your life since then? That was that was a full 50 years ago, 1966.

WARBURTON: [01:42:57] Well, I always imagined that maybe Spanish would come in handy, and it finally did in my career when we had a walk-in client which is the Opus Dei, first for two projects in Boston, and then because of the Boston project, the university of the Andes in Santiago was talking about fundraising with the head of the project from Boston who was down there. And they said, fundraising and campus planning, and they said, how do you know a firm that that can consult on libraries and campus planning? Oh, sure. Shepley Bulfinch. So they sent somebody else and our firm gives them like zero time of day. I mean, somebody meets with them, but I think they persisted. And then, uh, we had a meeting with the president of the firm. Are we really interested in doing this? And I said, I am. And one of the associates said he was. You had visions of opening up new territory in Latin America. And so we went down in 1999 as consultants for university planning and for campus planning.

NOBLE: [01:44:32] To Santiago, Chile?

WARBURTON: [01:44:33] To Santiago, to the university, and is now this is a real Peace Corps experience. So the associate I'm teamed up with is supposed to be an expert on educational buildings. And he's very careful and he negotiates business trip, business class flights to Chile, which is seven times more expensive than so, very expensive tickets. And we're going to the Chileans are putting us in a five star hotel. And so, like four days ahead of this, I think, maybe I should know something. So campus planning is not my expertise at all. So I read the definitive book on campus planning and I figure, OK, make some we've done all sorts of campus planning, Shepley Bulfinch, innumerable ones, and we have them all to scale. So we have Harvard to scale and you can compare it with MacAllister. So I made a series of maps. And we were going down with Antonio Bellalta from another firm

whose whole family is from Chile and she's a landscape architect. So Wendell is the so-called guru and I'm the partner in charge of design. So we get picked up through the airport after our business trip where you can't touch the seat in front of you and get taken to the hotel and we have two hours to freshen up. So it's an overnight trip. So it's a 13 hour flight from Boston to Santiago, and you arrive at 7:00 in the morning at the hotel, they pick you up. We go to the existing buildings on the campus. They take us, they open the door, there's room and there are 30 men in black suits in the room. And my colleagues said, you get paid the most. You do the talking.

NOBLE: [01:46:45] Oh, huh. Well, were you similarly dressed in a black suit?

WARBURTON: [01:46:50] No, I mean, we were dressed, but I mean, we were not dressed in black suits. OK, Peace Corps! Fortunately for me is we were translated. So that adds gravitas to whatever you do.

NOBLE: So you were speaking in English?

WARBURTON: [01:47:08] I was speaking in English and translated. And so not only are you also gives gravitas and also a lot of time to think. And so basically I give them an overview of the history of campus planning in America and what you might want to achieve with your campus. And it's like the Peace Corps in the sense that they never thought that the architecture organization of your campus might be delivering a message about how you want to relate to the students or what type environment. So I did little diagrams on chalkboard. And, you know, it's just like, will I ever get through this? So it was really in the sense the Peace Corps, I know a little more than they do and I'm in the capital. So, and they were wonderful hosts and they know their food. So, uh. And then we had to review, so the first thing, that's on tax planning and then Wendell, who's the library expert and I'm a library expert in that sense, I designed them, had to review the plans that the Chilean architects were doing. And they were terrible, it's like they were doing a parking garage. And the client wanted everything in this building and it

was facing, well, this the campus is on a slope that faces due west to where the sun sets in west Chile. So there's heat load, but there's also view of Santiago. And we, you know, gave our input. Well. So they hired us to start a campus plan and continue consulting. So we made it through there and I said to myself, I will never, ever go anywhere so unprepared. In my time, I was what were we thinking? They give us business class tickets. They put us up in a five star hotel and we're going to wing it. I mean, it's outrageous. I mean, let's. How could you be so casual? Let's pretend or me to put you know, you're just going to chat about things. So anyway, I learned my lesson and the Chilean architects, the architects in Chile are not like who are firm, which our firm is very interactive and we make proposals, we'll give you three different approaches. And the Chileans were artists. We will tell you what you need. So the Chileans were very stubborn and actually, which is very difficult for any kind. They were fired by the university and we were hired to do the library, but we were hired only for let's call the schematic phase, which is 15 percent of the project, because we're so expensive. And we were shadowed by a Chilean, a very talented designer from a Chilean firm. So eventually and that resulted in continued. I went down there two years ago for the dedication of the last project, which was a teaching hospital that I designed. So I designed a library, a student center, a school of economics, and a teaching hospital. So in that sense, Peace Corps training helped me get through that interview.

NOBLE: [01:51:06] And you were very good at winging it.

WARBURTON: [01:51:09] Well, ah, they were very gracious. So it took them, they said, after maybe three meetings, oh, now we're beginning to understand you, understand your sense of humor. I'm beginning to understand. One of my buddies said there three political parties in the United States: Republicans, Democrats, and Warburtons, the giraffes. So what did you want to know?

NOBLE: [01:51:41] Well, I think just give us some idea. Do you have any final thoughts about Peace Corps? Good idea, would you recommend it?

WARBURTON: [01:51:51] I thought it was I thought it was fabulous. I thought it was a fabulous idea. I wish those right wing Republicans had gone, got some experience going abroad with other cultures. I think the more people are educated that there are other cultures and different cultures and people who don't think the way we do would benefit our country and would not have led to the Iraq war. Basically, they're going to greet us as liberators and bring democracy to this country. No, we don't. It's just. So the benefit, I think the benefit is to our country and if the projects are good, it can be neutral. But from a self-serving point of view, it's money well spent. I recommend it.

NOBLE: [01:52:50] Thank you Ray.

WARBURTON: [01:52:50] Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]