

**Gary Mount Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
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**Creator:** Gary Mount  
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**Biographical Note**

Gary Mount served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Micronesia from 1967 to 1970 on an agriculture project.

**Access**

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Oral History Interview

with

Gary Mount

June 10, 2019  
Princeton, New Jersey

By Candice Wiggum

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

WIGGUM: [00:00:01] All right. Today is June 10th, 2019. This is Candice Wiggum, and I am interviewing Gary Mount, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Micronesia from 1967 to 1970 as a agricultural volunteer. Good morning.

MOUNT: [00:00:21] Good morning.

WIGGUM: [00:00:22] Let's just start off with you telling me why you joined the Peace Corps.

MOUNT: [00:00:26] Well, I was, uh, a 1960s college student, which meant when Kennedy came into office, I was finishing high school. And like many people, his words electrified us. And that's something we always kept in our minds, you know, about the Peace Corps. And, um, you know his famous line about asking not what you country could do for you, but what you could do for your country. So that really, uh, nailed us right there. I,

uh, went to Princeton University and. There were a lot of different opportunities having graduated from there.

MOUNT: [00:01:14] I, uh, I must say that part of my reasoning going into the Peace Corps was that my wife, Pam, was very interested. In fact, she now claims that she wouldn't have married me unless we, I had agreed to go in the Peace Corps. But in any case, this was something we were both, uh, you know, tremendously interested in doing. And they, the rumor was that they might not send us to the same place. Well, of course, that was just a rumor. We got married in June of, and when she graduated from college and we went in the Peace Corps in August. Um.

MOUNT: [00:02:00] We were one of the first, uh, Peace Corps groups to train in-country. Uh, the training before that had been done, for Micronesia had been done in Hawaii. And some of the other Peace Corps training was done at like Rutgers University or places like that. But we went right into the Truk district and we were on a small island called Udot. They built houses for us there, which then stayed behind and became the property of the host, host people. And they brought in language informants and agricultural teachers. And there we were.

MOUNT: [00:02:43] We flew from, we had our staging in San Francisco and got all our shots. Got tremendously sick from all the shots, but we all managed and, um, had the dreaded interview with a psychologist and some people got sent home right then. We couldn't figure out why. But in their wisdom, they chose some people to go home. And, uh, then off we went. Um, a lot of flying and ending up in, uh, propeller, uh, planes to finally get to, uh, Truk and then finally ended up on a World War II landing boat to take us out to the little island of Udot.

WIGGUM: [00:03:33] Wow. What, what kind of background did you have that was useful for you in Peace Corps?

MOUNT: [00:03:40] Well. Um, I did mention that I'd gone to Princeton. And of course, being a smart aleck kid who just graduated from Princeton, I thought I could do anything. And, but a lot of my background came from farming. I grew up on a farm in Princeton, um, on now the 11th generation

of my family to be a farmer in this area, um, going back to the 1600s. But I always liked farming. And now back from the Peace Corps many, many years, I ended up being a farmer.

MOUNT: [00:04:17] But, um, I always liked working on the farm, uh, particularly, uh, being able to solve the problems of farming. My father, uh, gave me a lot of freedom to, uh, you know, accomplish the things that he wanted to get done. And I would, uh, make it work one way or another. And there's also a lot of tremendous variety in working on a farm. It's not like an assembly line job when things, um, when you're trying to accomplish growing something, there's many aspects that have to be dealt with. And, um, so I spent a lot of time, uh, working on the farm.

MOUNT: [00:05:08] One, one summer in college, I, I did say, well, I wanted to do something else, and I worked construction, which I'd not done before, but it came in very handy later when we were in the Peace Corps. I'll tell you a little about later, but, um, my construction skills were a valuable commodity.

WIGGUM: [00:05:30] Mm hmm. Yeah. How did your parents feel about you leaving after you just finished this very elite college?

MOUNT: [00:05:40] Well, um, unfortunately, the year that I graduated from college, um, I didn't aim toward farming. I aimed toward, uh, getting my PhD in, uh, a field then known as physiological psychology, now known as neurobiology. But in those days, there was no such thing as neurobiology. But I had moved into my dormitory room at the University of Virginia for my PhD program. And that very night my father, who was an apple farmer in Princeton, died. So I came back to the farm and actually never went back for the PhD route.

MOUNT: [00:06:26] I stayed at our home farm for a year, working with my uncle who needed my help, and also being with my mother who needed support. And then I got married a year later, as my wife was a year behind me in school. And then we headed to the Peace Corps, which changed everything.

WIGGUM: [00:06:51] Yeah. Yeah, terrific. Did you use anything from Princeton while you were in Peace Corps?

MOUNT: [00:07:00] Absolutely. Um. Of course, nothing in the technical aspect of the things I was researching. Um, we were, in those days, it was the very beginning of figuring out what parts of the brain controlled what and how they did it. So that didn't have much application. However, having a good academic background like that, I never really had any doubt that I could do anything I set my mind to. And fortunately, with my farming background, I could accomplish a lot of those things.

MOUNT: [00:07:41] I was an agricultural volunteer, and there were a lot of unfamiliar agricultural processes in the Peace Corps. I worked on coconuts primarily. I didn't know anything about coconuts in Princeton University, of course, but, um, I was able to, uh, work with all aspects of the coconut production.

WIGGUM: [00:08:04] How'd your mom feel about you flying off to Micronesia?

MOUNT: [00:08:09] Yeah, both my wife and I had to deal with that. Pam's parents were both still alive. And my father, as I said, had died. Uh, my mother, um, was quite supportive. She never was negative at all. Um, Pam's father did tell her, well, what if I die while you're gone? That's pretty weighty. But, um. Uh, actually, my mother was, uh, pretty supportive. She knew I had stopped my life for a year to be home and support her for the year after my father died. Um, and actually, she was quite adventurous herself. While we were in the Peace Corps, she and my younger brother, um, I don't know how she managed to do this, but they came out for a visit.

WIGGUM: [00:09:00] Cool.

MOUNT: [00:09:00] And, um, you know, for a lady who didn't like the heat, going to visit your child in the tropics, that was quite a, quite something.

WIGGUM: [00:09:10] Well, plus, it was not an easy journey.

MOUNT: [00:09:12] No. And, um, you know, that was in the mid '60s and women didn't do that on their own then. Uh, but they came, they visited us, uh, in, uh, on the Yap Island where we were first assigned. And then we went, um, traveled to a few other places in Micronesia. I couldn't believe she did it, but she was great.

WIGGUM: [00:09:44] Very cool. So what was training like? You get to Truk. You've got these little houses you're living in. Were, were there a lot of married couples? Were you the only ones? What? What was the group like you were with?

MOUNT: [00:09:58] So we had a group of maybe, um, 70 or 80 or so.

WIGGUM: [00:10:06] Wow, that's a lot.

MOUNT: [00:10:07] A pretty big size group. And it was, there were several married couples. There were a lot of single people. Um, we lived in, uh, oh, probably 6 or 7 different houses that had been built there specifically for the Peace Corps training. And, um. Our first introduction to the training was, I'll never forget it, because it was, our introduction to the Peace Corps', uh, way of teaching language. And that's one of the things I think the Peace Corps does really well.

WIGGUM: [00:10:55] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:10:56] They might not have been expert teachers of the agricultural work that we were going to do, but they could teach the language, and our language informants came. And for them, it was the first time being language informants. And I'll never forget, they came in to teach us and they wouldn't say a word of English.

WIGGUM: [00:11:19] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:11:20] Only the local, only the language that we were learning. And we finally caught on that we were to repeat. And, um, that first day we learned quite a few words and figured out what they meant, because he still wouldn't say a single word in English.

WIGGUM: [00:11:37] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:11:38] Um, it ended up, uh, being very successful training. We went, um, we were living right in the community. So it was also, um, you might say training I guess, or becoming accustomed to another culture. Uh, one time somebody in the, uh, nearby, uh, had a death in the family, uh, the local people. And this is a culture where, uh, wailing was particularly, uh, part of the, of the mourning of the service for a dead person. And the people came in and the wailing, the singing, the more wailing, just going on it seemed for days and days. And that was, that took something to get used to.

WIGGUM: [00:12:37] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:12:37] But, um, of course it wasn't planned by the Peace Corps, but it was an important part of learning that the differences in cultures. And we didn't end up in that culture where we went into discord. We ended up in a different culture, but just the idea that things could be so different.

WIGGUM: [00:13:00] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:13:03] We had, um, a lot of uh training in the language. That was the main thing. But also we did do training, we did an agricultural project, uh, for that, with that community in coconuts. Um. But we were still very much in an American culture because that was all, all of us are, our 60 to 80, however many people there were, but we were, um, still very much, uh, the American culture. And so only once we really got into the Peace Corps that we realized, uh, that the American culture had to be left behind.

WIGGUM: [00:13:53] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Now you had a big training group, but Micronesia has thousands of islands. So most of those people you're not going to see during training. Did you make any friends during training, in training, that you kept afterwards?

MOUNT: [00:14:12] We became close to some, um, but once we went out to our assignments, never to see them again.

WIGGUM: [00:14:21] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:14:21] Because, um, Micronesia is very large in a geographic sense. It's as large as the United States, but as far as land coverage is very small, maybe smaller than Rhode Island. Is that our smallest state? It's smaller than that, half the size of that. And it had 100,000 people. It's not too many, but yet there were 600 and some volunteers sent to Micronesia.

WIGGUM: [00:14:53] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:14:53] Which is maybe more than they had in all of India, because, um. And we thought, well, we thought, wow, you know, we have so many in Micronesia, but the population is only 100,000. And India, with their millions, have about the same number. But the practicality of the situation was when you were on a small island, there was no transportation. And even if there was transportation, you couldn't get from one place to another and back in any reasonable amount of time. So you stayed on your island, and we would hear stories of what so and so was doing on that island, and so and so was doing on another island. And sometimes we, in our district, we had to, we had a Peace Corps radio net, and sometimes you might even get to talk to them.

WIGGUM: [00:15:39] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:15:39] Uh, or at least you'd hear what was going on. But, um, there were many that we never saw again. But we still know to this day.

WIGGUM: [00:15:51] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:15:51] Uh, and there was, um. You know, you might bump into them if you came in for some time off or for a medical thing, or you might bump into them. But other than that, you didn't see each other.

WIGGUM: [00:16:07] Mm hmm. Did you have additional trainings throughout your service or was that it?

MOUNT: [00:16:16] Well, let's see, additional training for me might have been a little different than some of the others because my initial assignment was as a volunteer with the agricultural extension station in the Yap district. And I worked right under the direction of the district agriculturalist, who was a Guamanian man, and but he had formal training in agriculture, in tropical agriculture. And I worked on the island of Yap, which was 28 miles long. I had 3 or 4,000 people there. Um. And I became very familiar with the different kinds of agriculture in that area. Many volunteers that went to their island, that was it. They were pretty isolated and no more training for them. And I think I got a bit more training.

MOUNT: [00:17:12] Uh, we eventually moved to a different island. Um. We had, uh, uh, a small house that was, uh, in a, in a village in the Yap area. And Pam was a teacher in teaching English as a second language, and I was an agricultural agent. Supposed to go, I was supposed to go over, all over this whole island of 28 miles and, um, no transportation. But I was supposed to get there, which led to my first transgression of the Peace Corps rules. But I got a motorcycle.

WIGGUM: [00:17:53] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:17:54] Um, uh, but the, the thing about the being in the Yap area is there was a large American presence, um, government officials. Micronesia being a U.S. trust territory, there were American government officials. There were American teachers and doctors. So we were, as many volunteers are, kind of caught between the two cultures, between the American culture and the Yapese culture. It made it hard to fit in either one.

WIGGUM: [00:18:27] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:18:27] Um, and if you don't mind, I'll go along a little bit about our change.

WIGGUM: [00:18:33] Sure.

MOUNT: [00:18:33] Which, um, the structure of that district, Yap being the main island, uh, the district included, uh, maybe as many as ten what they called outer islands, which were visited by a trading ship once every month or two months or three months, sometimes even longer. But, um. And on that ship would be, um, usually a doctor, a dentist, a trading person, a government representative. And one time there was to be an agricultural presence, a survey, and I went along with our district agriculturalist and went and visited all those islands. Poor Pam had to stay back on Yap all by herself. It was not easy for her.

MOUNT: [00:19:32] Um, but we got to our final home, which is our home away from home still, which is called Satawal. It was a small island, a mile long and a half mile wide. Uh, I knew, I knew one person there because he had been a worker at the agricultural station in Yap for a while, and then he had returned home to his home islands. But when he saw I came, he quickly talked to the chiefs, and they approached the district agriculturalist and the Peace Corps director and asked if my wife Pam and I couldn't please be transferred out there. Uh, they were the last island in the chain of islands. They never got help or assistance. When the ship came, it was just about empty of trading goods. Uh. And very often they got short circuited in assistance in any project on the island.

MOUNT: [00:20:32] They were very self-reliant as a result, but this also made them very self-directed and eager to do projects to improve their island. And one of the things that they wanted, they wanted a teacher for their girls, which was remarkable because in this culture, the girls did not go to school and they didn't leave the island, and they wanted their girls to learn, and they really wanted a woman there to teach them. So when we went out to Satawal, Pam was the first Caucasian woman ever to live on any of the islands out there, um, in the Yap district, uh. And, um, I came along. I was there as an agricultural volunteer. But as anybody familiar with the Peace Corps knows, you get involved in a lot of other things.

WIGGUM: [00:21:34] So tell me about some of those things.

MOUNT: [00:21:38] Well, um, we were fortunate we were not the first volunteers there. There was a health volunteer who preceded us in an earlier group.

Um, and he set the stage for, um, some of the projects that we worked on that related to health. Uh, he was still there when we got there and overlapped for a short time before he ended his term of service and went home. So we went on the ship, which was 120 feet long. It's a pretty small ship, but we loaded up all of our goods and, um, finally got to the island, which in Satawal there's no lagoon. And to reach the island, you have to go in a little motor boat right through the waves, right through the breakers, to get to the island and.

WIGGUM: [00:22:36] Were you guys a little nervous about being that far out?

MOUNT: [00:22:39] Nervous about everything. And we were out there on the ship and out there on the ship, and they were sending in our supplies and sending in our, our personal goods and our Peace Corps goods. And we were still on the ship. And finally, the Peace Corps volunteer that had been there, uh, Dan Demizio came out to the ship, and he says, you really have to come on shore now. So we did. And, um, as we got to the beach, the entire population of the island, which was 400 people, were there on the beach to greet us, and they were singing a song that they had made up just in honor of our arrival.

WIGGUM: [00:23:30] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:23:30] And they were dancing. Uh, and there we came. Well, sorry about that. This is, uh.

WIGGUM: [00:23:41] That's all right.

MOUNT: [00:23:42] Something I haven't talked about for a while but.

WIGGUM: [00:23:44] You can tell it's really meaningful.

MOUNT: [00:23:46] Um, as we got on the beach, uh, we were led up to, I was led to the men's canoe house to sit down with the, the men, and Pam was quickly taken by the women. They took her up to one of their houses. Off came her dress, on went on the lavalava, which is the skirt that they wore. They sat her down, put a piece of chicken in her hand, and she was theirs.

WIGGUM: [00:24:15] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:24:15] Uh. We had, uh, not learned this particular language at the Peace Corps training. We had learned the language for Yap, which being 500 miles away, was actually much further away in terms of culture. It was a completely, completely different culture and a completely different language. And we had learned that language. But then when we found that we were going to Satawal, we by that time had figured out the Peace Corps, quote, method of teaching. And we found a language informant who had been in the hospital. He was in the TB ward at the local hospital on, on Yap, and we asked him to be our teacher, and we figured out how to structure it so he could be our teacher. And we did learn some of the language before we got there. Not enough, but just barely enough, I guess you might say.

MOUNT: [00:25:21] Uh, the ship that arrives at Satawal is a trading ship, only stays one day. So.

WIGGUM: [00:25:31] Then you watch it sail away.

MOUNT: [00:25:34] So at the end of that day, uh, the ship left, and there we were. Um, it was tremendous that the people of this island were so welcoming, and they were, more than any other group, so eager to improve, uh, their lot in life. Uh, they, they were healthy. They were subsistence living, but everybody was fed and clothed and housed. Um, but they, they knew that there were things that they didn't know and they wanted to learn.

MOUNT: [00:26:16] Uh, shortly after we arrived, I received a message that the chiefs wanted to talk to me. And on this island there were three high chiefs. They were hereditary, hereditary positions, and they wanted to talk to me. Well, my language skills are pretty low at this point, but fortunately we did have the other Peace Corps volunteer who'd been there two years who was just about to leave, maybe on the next ship or something like that. Um, the next ship is not the next day.

WIGGUM: [00:26:53] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:26:54] It might be two months, three months, but. So he came along to help interpret it a little bit for me. And they just sat me down and they said, well, what do you know how to do? Like, gulp. And I told him the things that, um, I was supposed to do as directed by the Peace Corps, which was coconut rehabilitation. And then I told them about the other things I knew about. I did have experience in construction, and I, I knew that they had, through the Peace Corps volunteer, applied for a self-help project to build a water tank. Their only health problem was through contaminated water.

WIGGUM: [00:27:39] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:27:40] And so they had internal parasites, that type of thing. Not serious, uh, devastating diseases, but not what they wanted either. And they had learned where the sickness was coming from, and that was clean water. It could go away. So they signed up for this self-help project, but they'd never built anything out of concrete. And I said, oh, I've done some of that. Okay. And, uh, and we talked about replanting coconuts. We talked about, um, uh, devising, building devices to dry the meat of the coconut so they could be ready for sale when the ship came. And also sanitation projects in the coconut groves to reduce the numbers of rats which would eat the coconuts while they're still on the tree and really reduced the crop.

MOUNT: [00:28:42] And they said, okay, well, we have a tradition in our island, and every two days, every week, two days a week, everyone is required to work. All the men are to require to work for island projects. So what we're going to do is, they're going to work for you those two days.

WIGGUM: [00:29:00] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:29:01] And first we'll do this project and then we'll do this project. And they listed them all, everything I knew how to do. They had a schedule in their mind that we would work on it. And so here I was, this youngster, um, 22, 23 years old. And twice a week, if I wasn't out there by 6:00 in the morning, there were 100 men ready to go.

WIGGUM: [00:29:28] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:29:28] And wondering where I was. And we did start with one project and do another. Uh, it was a scary thing. Of course, being a smart aleck kid, I had no doubts that I was doing the right thing. But now look back at it, it was pretty scary because.

WIGGUM: [00:29:48] What were you, 24 then?

MOUNT: [00:29:50] Hmm?

WIGGUM: [00:29:50] 24?

MOUNT: [00:29:51] 22, 23. Yeah.

WIGGUM: [00:29:53] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:29:55] Um, but now that I look back, you know, it's a little scary because they were very trusting of me.

WIGGUM: [00:30:02] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:30:03] Uh, fortunately, the things that I did worked out.

WIGGUM: [00:30:08] How do you build a water tower?

MOUNT: [00:30:11] Yeah, that was one of the first things they, it was a self-help project. So they had to come up with 10 percent of the cash money, and which is pretty hard for them because they didn't have much money.

WIGGUM: [00:30:23] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:30:24] Uh, and they had to contribute the local materials and the labor. And then once that was, the deal was sealed and they had sent the money off, finally the supplies arrived on the ship. Concrete, plywood,

nails, tools, reinforcing metal, and a lot of piping and that sort of thing. Anything that you might need for a water project. And, um, one of my.

WIGGUM: [00:30:59] Anything like a plan?

MOUNT: [00:31:01] Oh, there were plans, and, uh, there was actually a, uh, a volunteer who was, this was one of the other married couples in our training group that had been assigned to the main island that Truk, I mean, the Yap Island. And he was actually a, a licensed engineer.

WIGGUM: [00:31:24] Ah.

MOUNT: [00:31:25] And so he did the design, the ordering of materials, and the plans. And then sent detailed instructions. And there I was. We had to build this tank. So the plan was, it was amazing that we did it, but it was a 20,000 gallon concrete water tank, which is, oh, you might say, the size of a really spacious bedroom in a, in a good sized house. Or, you know, it's like, uh, uh, 20 feet by 30 feet or something like that. And, uh, there's no concrete truck on Satawal.

WIGGUM: [00:32:13] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:32:14] So the concrete was, uh, mixed by hand with shovels on pieces of tin, shoveled into buckets, and lifted up and poured into the walls. So the people had assembled all the sand and gravel and coral stone needed for the project. Um, and we started.

WIGGUM: [00:32:40] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:32:40] There was no, um, I was the experienced person. We built this thing. Um, it stood about ten feet tall, maybe a little more, and actually then had to have a concrete roof, which was a real leap of faith for the people.

WIGGUM: [00:33:00] How could you do that? Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:33:03] Uh, that were there. Well, you, you build a frame and, and you put the reinforcing rod and poured concrete, basically concrete floor that could be a ceiling. And, um, so, um. [phone rings]

WIGGUM: [00:33:23] Okay.

MOUNT: [00:33:25] Well, to make a concrete ceiling is just like pouring a concrete floor.

WIGGUM: [00:33:31] Except what?

MOUNT: [00:33:32] Except for.

WIGGUM: [00:33:33] The weight. That's what I'd worry about.

MOUNT: [00:33:36] Well. Um, most buildings, multi-story buildings have concrete floors. And you pour the concrete with reinforcing rod and it stays up. We supported it with, uh, wooden posts cut from the forest there on the island. Put plywood up, laid down reinforcing rod. Poured the concrete. However, it did take quite a leap of faith for somebody to come inside that thing with me to take down the post. I noticed that they stood right next to the opening. They weren't going under the rest of it to get it down. I had to do that. But of course it stayed up.

MOUNT: [00:34:19] Um, the rest of the project involved, uh, piping throughout the village, uh, so that people could get water for drinking. This was not a water system that was, um, going to be adequate for bathing, but it was for clean water for drinking and cooking. And all the water was caught from the church roof. So there was some maintenance to do on the church, church roof, with gutters that brought the water down to the, to the tank. And there's ample rainfall, so it filled it right up and people had clean water.

WIGGUM: [00:34:55] Wonderful.

MOUNT: [00:34:55] They really liked that.

WIGGUM: [00:34:56] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:34:57] And so much so that when we were able to return about 20, 25 years later. You don't know what's going to happen in these projects that you do, because they are kind of an outside project and you wonder how long it's going to last after you leave. Got there. And not only was the tank still there and still in use, but they had greatly expanded the water system. And for this special event that we had attended on the island, it was a four day event and it doubled the population of the island, and they actually had, still had a surplus of fresh water.

WIGGUM: [00:35:41] Great.

MOUNT: [00:35:41] Now that was amazing, that that was still there. And that tank, I couldn't believe it. Um, but it was interesting. The piping system was not something they really were that interested in. They, they had, had a tradition of walking to get the water and bringing it back to the house. And so they kind of did that with the water tank. And they would walk over to the water tank and get the water and chat and converse and then go back to the house. The piping from throughout the village wasn't that interesting to them.

WIGGUM: [00:36:16] Well, I think sometimes we forget the importance of community.

MOUNT: [00:36:19] Yes.

WIGGUM: [00:36:20] That getting together and just meeting someplace and chatting.

MOUNT: [00:36:24] Yeah. But that was, um, a big, uh, bricks and mortar type project. Another project that I worked on that, um, being a farmer, I guess it's one of the things that strikes me as most amazing. But we, they grew coconuts and the coconut for an island like that, a small, uh, tropical island, Pacific island. The coconut is, it's really life itself. Without the coconut, they wouldn't be able to survive there. It's not only food, it's shelter. It's also the dried meat of the coconut is their one cash crop that they can sell. And they, they dry the meat of the coconut, put it in a 100

pound sack and sell it when the, when the ship comes. And at that time they only got \$5 for a 100 pound sack. A lot of labor for \$5.

WIGGUM: [00:37:22] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:37:22] But um, the problem was their, their coconuts that they had were extremely soft, small. They were like, uh, a baseball.

WIGGUM: [00:37:36] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:37:37] Once you husked them, took the husk off, the basic part of the coconut was about baseball size, not very big. And one common agricultural technique is a better variety. And I was able through the agricultural station, I was able to bring in coconuts that were larger.

WIGGUM: [00:37:59] How long would it take those to grow?

MOUNT: [00:38:02] Well, it takes a while.

WIGGUM: [00:38:03] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:38:04] And it's a process. So we got the coconuts. They came on that ship and we unloaded them all and put them out in a nursery. The coconut then will sprout and start to grow. And what you do is you take the best ones. There are some that are not going to be so good and you discard those. But the good ones, then you dig them from the nursery and plant them out.

MOUNT: [00:38:30] Another agricultural technique which is very common is proper spacing of a crop.

WIGGUM: [00:38:37] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:38:38] If you, you would think, well, as they thought, the more plants per acre, the more production per acre, but it's not really so. There was an optimum number, and I think the spacing was in the order of 30 to 40 feet by 30, you know, in a grid pattern was had been proven to be the best for

coconut production. And, uh, so we, uh, replanted about half the island while I was there.

WIGGUM: [00:39:13] Wow. So did you have to take the old coconut trees out?

MOUNT: [00:39:18] Uh, there was some of that.

WIGGUM: [00:39:20] I mean, that seems like it would be very, yeah, labor intensive.

MOUNT: [00:39:24] But no, it's labor intensive. You know, we had the labor and we had the time, but to get them to cut down their coconut trees, that was a hard sell. But fortunately, a number of years before we arrived in the district, the agricultural station had gone out to different islands and actually paid property owners to thin out their coconut groves to the proper spacing, and they paid them for that so that they didn't mind the temporary loss in production. And by the time we got there, it had become very apparent to everybody that there was something to this proper spacing.

WIGGUM: [00:40:06] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:40:07] So it was a little easier for us to convince people to thin out their groves. Uh, but to go back to our time when we returned 20 or 25 years later for the visit, uh, those trees had grown up and were producing these incredibly big coconuts, bigger than any of the surrounding islands had. And they'd taken those and they had replanted the rest of the island.

WIGGUM: [00:40:39] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:40:40] And so I felt so good about that because, you know, they were, they took the knowledge of, of a better variety and a better spacing and they greatly increased the number of coconuts, the amount of coconuts that they had. And even as I was sitting at this special event, um, I did overhear some people from another island and some, the one person asked, where did these people get these big coconuts? And I loved hearing that, I really did. That was, um, uh, my primary thing was coconuts, so I was really pleased that it did work out.

WIGGUM: [00:41:27] And their economy is still based on coconuts?

MOUNT: [00:41:30] Yeah. There's, um, not much in the way of, uh, their economy is based on coconuts there. There's not much in the way of paying jobs out there. When we were there, there was a, chiefs got a small stipend for chiefs. So there were the three chiefs. And then there were two health aides, and they got a small salary. And then there were two weather observers. These are the days before satellites and the weather bureau in the United States had these stations all over. The observations being taken by a person who would then report the observations by radio four times a day.

WIGGUM: [00:42:18] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:42:18] So those were the only paying jobs, and any other money had to come from the sale of coconut meat. And, um, but I got involved too, with some animal husbandry work which I was very unfamiliar with. But we did bring a large male pig on the island to crossbreed with the local pigs to try and improve the breed, which I think had some success, but that's kind of a long term project. Um, we did a lot with sanitation. These islands are small and trash can build up. And when it does, then, uh, things such as rats can become a real problem.

WIGGUM: [00:43:11] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:43:12] We worked with that a lot. And um, but, um, I had another thing that I was tremendously interested in. On this small island the, um, there are a lot of small islands out in the Pacific. I mean, there's 2,000 of them in Micronesia alone, of which 100 or so are inhabited.

WIGGUM: [00:43:34] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:43:34] But, um, what made this island unique was they had maintained their traditional sailing, uh, methods.

WIGGUM: [00:43:45] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:43:46] They were, as I mentioned before, the last island in a long chain of islands coming out from the main island of Yap. The ship would come out to Satawal and then turn around and go back. It just so happened they had a lot of relatives on the next island, which was part of another district, and the ship never went over there. It was just about impossible for them to get to see their relatives. They could conceivably take the ship into Yap, which is the main island, and if they had enough money, they could fly to Guam and then to Truk and come out on the ship from there, which would be a long trip and very expensive. Well, they had their canoes and they could sail there in a couple of days.

WIGGUM: [00:44:37] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:44:37] Now that doesn't sound like a big deal but that's a big deal. It's 120 miles of open ocean.

WIGGUM: [00:44:44] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:44:44] And they maintained, and do to this day, the skills and the stories of how to get there, the sailing directions as it were. They made their own canoes, and we had seven major canoes on the island when I was there. And, um, in addition to visiting the islands 120 miles away to visit relatives, there were two smaller uninhabited islands that, um, it was sort of like the grocery store. There wasn't enough food right on Satawal and definitely not enough fish because there was no lagoon and the fishing was not plentiful. But they would sail to these other islands which were 40 or 50 miles away. That was just no problem. Forty or 50 miles of open ocean is daunting.

WIGGUM: [00:45:38] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:45:39] Just daunting. But they could sail there. They, they wouldn't hardly pay attention to what they were doing. They just could sail there so easily because they knew how. And they'd go to these other islands to catch turtles, to fish, and even to bring coconuts back from these other islands. Um, so these two factors, the relatives and the sailing to the islands, to the grocery store, so to speak, uh, has kept this sailing, uh,

tradition alive. And they still to this day, it's a revered position to be a navigator in the Satawalese society. And there is absolutely only one way that you can become a navigator, and that's to learn it from your elders.

MOUNT: [00:46:34] Well, in the developing world, I think it's hard for the older generation to compete with the book learning and the schooling of the younger generation. Because the kids go to school, they learn English, they access the Western technology, and they easily outstrip what the people back home have. On Satawal, the people back home have one thing that they can never get anyplace else, and that is the ability to sail. And every, um, one that, every child wants to be a navigator, uh, and they have to learn from an uncle, a father, a grandfather, somebody like that. And they have to sit down and learn from them.

MOUNT: [00:47:31] And it's a tremendous feat of memory, of knowledge and application of, uh, knowledge of the surroundings. And they do it and they still do it today. In fact, they've had a big history in the world now with transmitting this knowledge to the Hawaiians who have revitalized their sailing history. And they've revitalized it in one way, because the through the navigators from Satawal, who still knew how to do it.

WIGGUM: [00:48:07] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:48:08] Um, they've also taken longer trips, four and 500 mile trips to the Marianas Islands, where there is one island group up there. A group of people who are, uh, related to the Satawalese and history of the same culture, same language. And they sail up there. They did one trip while we were there, it was the first time, uh, since the '20s.

WIGGUM: [00:48:36] Yeah. Wow.

MOUNT: [00:48:37] Or the 1910s and 1920s that anybody had sailed up there, but they still had the stories of how to get there. The sailing directions, you might say. Um.

WIGGUM: [00:48:48] So it had been passed down all these generations, even though people hadn't done it? Wow.

MOUNT: [00:48:53] Even when they hadn't gone there, they still passed down the stories of how to get to Saipan and how to get back. It's a lot easier to go to Saipan, which is a tall island that can be seen for from 40 miles away, giving, giving you an 80 mile window. For coming back, you have a ten mile window to hit Satawal and beyond the ten mile.

WIGGUM: [00:49:15] And you'll never see it.

MOUNT: [00:49:16] Yeah, yeah. So, um, I, I just naturally was tremendously, I was just supportive of the sailing as I could be. Um, that led to my second transgression of Peace Corps rules, because I would sail on the canoes, but we were not allowed to sail on the canoes. If we got lost, it would be bad for the Peace Corps budget.

WIGGUM: [00:49:42] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:49:42] So we weren't supposed to sail, but, uh, we did. And I, uh, there were some things that I was able to do. Uh, there was one beautiful canoe that had a small rotten spot in the hull, at the bottom of the hull, and they were about to scrap the whole canoe, and I found some waterproof glue and got somebody from home to send it. They were able to fix that canoe. Uh, I was so pleased with that.

MOUNT: [00:50:19] But I did one other thing, which was shortly before we left, um, as I became more familiar, I found that their, their access to sailcloth was only heavy canvas that would rot, it would mildew, and if it got wet, it would be so heavy it would, it would drive the bow of their canoe. These canoes were only 20 feet by eight feet long. It would drive it down, you know. But I, I found out I was able to get Dacron, which is what Western sailboats use.

WIGGUM: [00:50:56] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:50:56] And I could get a light Dacron. I got some samples and ended up ordering enough for all seven canoes from Hong Kong.

WIGGUM: [00:51:04] How did, how was that paid for?

MOUNT: [00:51:07] They paid me and they dug the money up wherever they had it hidden. And there was some of that money that came from jars that were underground. And, um, I didn't try to make any money on it, but I did need to have, have it paid for. I fronted the money out of our accumulated Peace Corps allowance, and, um, and, uh, before we left, they, they bought it all.

WIGGUM: [00:51:39] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:51:40] And put Dacron sails on their Satawalese sailing canoes. It was great. They still use Dacron sails today and they would never use.

WIGGUM: [00:51:53] Sounds like you built a tremendous trust back and forth. I mean, they really trusted you and you really trusted them.

MOUNT: [00:52:02] We had, we were so lucky. I mean, they, they wanted us there. They asked for us to come. And not their government asking our government to have us come. No, they asked the director. The people right there asked the director for us to come. When we came, they supplied our house. They also decided that the only way they could thank us was to give us food. And we never paid for food. They supplied us, a different family's responsible for giving us food every day.

WIGGUM: [00:52:34] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:52:36] Um.

WIGGUM: [00:52:36] What was the food like?

MOUNT: [00:52:39] We came to love it. Uh, they were starches, which was taro or a root crop.

WIGGUM: [00:52:46] Yeah, like poi.

MOUNT: [00:52:47] Um, there were bananas and fish. And also the other proteins. Sometimes they would catch a turtle, and they, um, that was a real delicacy for them to have a sea turtle. And that was a very seasonal thing. But the, um. Uh. It was, we learned an interesting lesson there because, uh, Pam would teach school all week. But on Saturdays, all the women would get together in the different family groups with each family group would prepare enough food so that on Sundays they didn't have to prepare food. And Pam would go from family group to family group and sit and talk and help prepare food. And then she'd go to the next family group. Well, then in the evening, a pot of food would come from each family group.

WIGGUM: [00:53:50] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:53:50] So if there were 7 or 8 family groups she had visited, there were eight big pots of food.

WIGGUM: [00:53:57] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:53:58] Oh my gosh. I mean, we could eat some of one pot. Partial of one pot. I didn't know what to do. What are we going to do with all this food? We were, we just were in a quandary. And I told Pam, I said, well, you just have to tell them that we can't take it. Big mistake. And finally the chief came to us. He said, everybody is really mad. He said, you have said no to taking food. He says, you can't say that in here. You can't say, no, I won't take your food. And we just didn't know what to do. And he said, just give it to somebody else.

MOUNT: [00:54:37] It turned out all the pots were marked and everybody knew whose pot was whose. And we'd get 7 to 10 pots of food. And then Pam would go out and she'd give them to other people, which was fine. That was terrific. We didn't say no to anybody, and then we'd keep some for ourselves. And that continued the whole time we were there. Now, that was a lesson that this man, the chief, taught us. Uh, he said, in their society, you can just cannot say no.

WIGGUM: [00:55:13] Mm hmm, to a gift.

MOUNT: [00:55:14] An offer of food. But we didn't, we'd just talk, you know, our Puritan American background or whatever, wasting these, this food. He said, I don't care if you don't find anybody to give it, to give it to your pig, but don't say no.

WIGGUM: [00:55:31] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:55:31] We did learn a lesson there. It was, um. It extended our, our time in the Peace Corps. We ended up spending three years in the Peace Corps. We did have, um, one time that was a little difficult because Pam's father died while we were there.

WIGGUM: [00:55:56] Oh, dear.

MOUNT: [00:55:57] And this is the one that said, what are you going to do if I die?

WIGGUM: [00:56:01] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:56:01] And Pam and I had talked about it. We decided if he died that we would not go back. But her mother sent word that she wanted us to come back. And of course we did. But we were out there on this island in the middle of nowhere. There's no airstrip. There's no, um, the ship comes every two, three months, sometimes longer. One time it was six months. Um, so how would we get home? We could not land a seaplane at Satawal. There was no lagoon. And the, this ocean, even though it might look calm, would be, um, a lot of swells that come right across the Pacific and landing a sea plane was pretty hazardous. I guess it was done in times of war, but not commonly done. And.

MOUNT: [00:56:55] It ended up, um, we actually got permission from the Peace Corps that the people took us to a nearby island, which was about 40 or 50 miles away, that did have a beautiful big lagoon. And they took us there on a canoe. And all three chiefs were on that canoe to take us there. We got to the other island, loaded down with, uh, things such as *lavalavas*. It was common to put *lavalavas* in the coffin of a person who died.

WIGGUM: [00:57:31] And what's a *lavalava*?

MOUNT: [00:57:33] That's the skirt that the women.

WIGGUM: [00:57:35] Yes.

MOUNT: [00:57:35] Wove themselves using backstrap looms and coconut fiber. And then fiber they would dye using dies. [phone ringing]

WIGGUM: [00:57:49] Okay. I never quite get that to go on that side. I'll do it there. Okay.

MOUNT: [00:57:55] Well, all three chiefs were on the canoe. They were men. And in addition, there was the, the best navigator on the island. He was the one that ended up later working, uh, with the Hawaiians to help them bring back their sailing. His name was Mau Piailug. Um, he, um, they, they got us there and a Navy seaplane came in.

WIGGUM: [00:58:26] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:58:26] So, of course, this canoe was loaded with food for us to eat, and we were eating breadfruit and taro and drinking coconuts on the way over to that other island. Sort of an overnight trip. When the Navy sea plane came in, they had ham sandwiches for us as we got to Guam. And then we got on a Pan Am jet and had beef stroganoff on the way to Hawaii. Uh, I didn't even have a shirt at that point, but I did borrow one from the Peace Corps volunteer on the other island, thank goodness. And we finally got back to Newark and totally frozen in the month of May. It was so cold to us because we were so used to the tropics. And we got here to visit when Pam's father had died, uh, and she was able to put some of the lavalava skirts in the coffin.

WIGGUM: [00:59:27] Oh, nice.

MOUNT: [00:59:28] For her father. Yeah. So that was, um. Uh, in those days, I don't know if it's still done, but if you extended your time in the Peace Corps, you were allowed home leave. And I guess that combined, that trip ended

up being our home leave. And then we went back to Satawal. Uh, so it's much our home. Um, we, I talked a few times about our, our return there, uh, 20 or 25 years after we'd been there. And maybe it was longer. I guess we, we've been gone from Satawal 50 some years now. But, uh, we did get to go back and, uh.

MOUNT: [01:00:23] We got an email that someone had sent on the, on the behalf of the chiefs, and they said that they were having this special event. It was the ordination of a young man who had been one of Pam's students, had gone on to seminary and be a student at seminary in the United States, and was going to be ordained in the Catholic Church. They were going to do the ordination on the island. And they were also going to give him the honorary title of navigator, which is a tremendously important island ceremony. And they wanted everybody who was important to the island to come, and that we had to come.

WIGGUM: [01:01:07] Ah.

MOUNT: [01:01:07] And when the chiefs say that, you.

WIGGUM: [01:01:09] You go.

MOUNT: [01:01:09] You go. We went. It was, uh, of course, the long trip, it was very remote. Um.

WIGGUM: [01:01:18] And this is 25 years after, and they still remember you and honor you?

MOUNT: [01:01:24] Oh yes, did they ever. Um, 20, 25 years later, we got there, and, uh. We got to, uh, Satawal. And again, there's no dock. There's no wharf, there's no lagoon. You still take the motorboat through the waves. And there was everybody on the island. Uh, dancing and singing.

WIGGUM: [01:01:55] Nice.

MOUNT: [01:01:56] Uh, a song that they had specifically made up for our return.

WIGGUM: [01:02:01] Ah.

MOUNT: [01:02:02] And Pam quickly took off her dress and put on her skirt and danced with them. Um. It was, it was pretty special. Uh, it was, uh, really an important thing to the island too. They had the archbishop. The religion there was Catholic and the, the priests, the, the group of Catholics was the Jesuits from Brooklyn. And they had the archbishop come from Brooklyn.

WIGGUM: [01:02:41] Wow.

MOUNT: [01:02:41] Came on the same ship with us to be there for this thing, it was that important. And then they also, uh, did the, uh, native ceremony inducting this priest as an honorary.

WIGGUM: [01:02:57] Navigator.

MOUNT: [01:02:57] Navigator an the same time. We walked around the island. And the people would come running to see us. And we were so fortunate one of our daughters got to go with us, and she was in her 20s. She was much the same age as we were when we were there. And people would come running up and they'd grab our daughter and hug her. And then they would figure it out and they'd say, wait a minute, that's not Pam.

WIGGUM: [01:03:31] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:03:32] Because she looked very much like Pam looked in those days.

WIGGUM: [01:03:36] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:03:37] And then they'd look at these two old people and they'd figure out that this was Pam and Gary over here. And that was our daughter. Uh, we, um, would. When you walk around, you pass anybody's house, they don't say hello. They say come eat.

WIGGUM: [01:03:59] Hmm.

MOUNT: [01:03:59] And you either stop and eat or you say you just ate, but you don't say no.

WIGGUM: [01:04:04] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:04:05] Uh, we, um, didn't get to stay on the island too long, only two nights. One of the big tragedies of my life is that even though I was completely fluent in the language when I was there, I had forgotten it. I couldn't imagine that I had forgotten it. I could think in that language, but I couldn't say a word. It was only at the end of the three days that I. [phone rings]

WIGGUM: [01:04:42] Okay. We're on again.

MOUNT: [01:04:46] Um. I, I sort of am a sequential language learner. And we had spent some time in France after that, and I had brushed up on my French and really gotten my French back, which I had forgotten at that time because I'd learned Satawalese. Well, as soon as I learned the French, the Satawalese went out the window, and it was only at the end of the three days that I was starting to get it back. And you know what? I was embarrassed, and I just would sit there and I wouldn't say a word, and I knew exactly how people felt who didn't speak the language.

WIGGUM: [01:05:25] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:05:25] And I should have grabbed the nearest high school kid and told him they had to come with me every minute. And but I was just embarrassed. It was, um, I had three men, uh, uh, two of whom were chiefs and one, uh, a very close friend. There were my three best friends when I had been there, and the one man died shortly after we left. He had a circulatory problem. Uh. But the other two men, uh, had been waiting for me.

MOUNT: [01:06:06] You know, as a young person, you say some stupid things. And one of the things I said was, when we left, well, we'll come back. And they said, sure, yeah, you'll come back. You said you would. And they were

waiting. They knew I would come back. I didn't know I would come back, but they had waited. Actually, um, they both died the next year.

WIGGUM: [01:06:29] Wow.

MOUNT: [01:06:30] And they had just been waiting for me. And it was amazing to see them. Um. Of course I couldn't talk to him. Uh, that was pretty tough. But, uh, being able to go back there, it's really important to us.

WIGGUM: [01:06:52] Yeah. I'm glad you could.

MOUNT: [01:06:54] Yeah. Yeah. But, you know, um. This little island with its 400 people had a tremendous influence on us. It seems everything that we do, every way that we act, every action that we take, especially with sharing our farm with the community or, um, the causes that we support, are traced right back to that, to having been in the Peace Corps. It's one of the reasons, um, although I'm ashamed to say, but we haven't been involved with the returned Peace Corps group for very long. But now that we have made our firm connection, we find here are all these people that we can fit right in with.

WIGGUM: [01:07:52] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:07:53] That we didn't know about that. And when I see the other returned Peace Corps volunteers, I see they're doing similar things with their lives that we do with ours. And it's so different from everybody else. Now we're all just, uh, programmed after the Peace Corps, we're programmed to keep doing those things after we come back.

WIGGUM: [01:08:21] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:08:22] Everybody in the group, we had here a returned Peace Corps volunteer group, um, kind of an annual reunion we had here at the farm last week. And everybody you talked to, when you find out what they're doing, and it's all just like they came back from the Peace Corps and kept doing the same things.

WIGGUM: [01:08:43] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:08:44] Yeah. So we, um. We had a lot of other things that we did on the island. We became, um. Hmm, I guess you might say leaders. We, uh, as teachers, as people who taught things, we were honored for that. People listened to every word that we said. It was a little bit scary, in a way.

WIGGUM: [01:09:16] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:09:16] If I hadn't been such a smart aleck kid, I would have been really worried about it at that time. Now I think back and I said, oh my gosh, what if we had led them astray on something? But, um. It made us, uh, you know, very important people. This island had had 402, us being the two, uh, 402 people. I mean, we were important. And coming back to the United States was tough.

WIGGUM: [01:09:48] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:09:48] It was really tough because we went from that situation. We came back to the United States and young, well-educated people in the Princeton area, they were ten a penny. We were nothing special. And that was a real jolt. We were here for 4 or 5 years, and I'd say that we were pretty dissatisfied with just living the normal suburban life. Uh, we had one child, we had jobs. We lived in suburbia. I had a job. Um, and we always thought every single day, well, would we go back to Satawal? Maybe we could go back there, because we just weren't that happy. We were, we really kind of devastated being back in the United States. Uh.

MOUNT: [01:10:45] We, uh, we did have an inflated view of what had happened in the United States in the late '60s, where we were gone and there was such a time of civil rights and, uh, things like that, marches on Washington and stuff, which we missed. Um, we even missed the whole drug scene because that's when everybody seemed to be experimenting with it. And we weren't anywhere around. We didn't even know what that was all about.

WIGGUM: [01:11:15] Hmm.

MOUNT: [01:11:15] Um, but um, uh, the good things that had happened in the United States and even the bad things were, they're greatly inflated by the media that we didn't have access to.

WIGGUM: [01:11:30] So you really didn't know what you were coming home to.

MOUNT: [01:11:32] No. Or the things that we expected weren't really so.

WIGGUM: [01:11:36] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:11:37] And but fortunately for us, I mean really we're so lucky. But in the middle 1970s, we saw this, uh, farm that I knew about, um, when I grew up. This was not that far from where I grew up. It was another apple farm, and I had even worked here a little bit after, um, we came back from Satawal. But then we saw this for sale by owner, and we ended up buying it and have made it now into a successful business and also a place to have had our children and now grandchildren to be a part of. So we were really fortunate. And it wasn't until we came here to this farm in 1975 that I stop thinking about going back to Satawal every single day.

WIGGUM: [01:12:42] Hmm.

MOUNT: [01:12:44] So it was, it was tough for us to come back on. I don't know if all Peace Corps volunteers, I think everyone has a hard time. Uh, the readjustment is, is tough because you've gone from such a position and goal in life to not having that.

WIGGUM: [01:13:06] Yeah. And unanticipated, that's the other thing. They prepare you for introduction to another culture, but they don't prepare you for introduction back to your own.

MOUNT: [01:13:16] Yeah. Well, they don't have a facility to do that because they don't really get hold of you.

WIGGUM: [01:13:24] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:13:24] Because you're, before you go in, they have you, you're there in the meeting, you're in the training, you're in the staging, you're in the preparation. But when it's over, it's over. You disperse and you're gone.

WIGGUM: [01:13:36] Yep.

MOUNT: [01:13:37] We, um, we did over three years accumulate a little money because one, we didn't have to spend our living allowance and there's nothing to spend it on there. And the people provided us with housing and food and clothing. So what else was there? And then, um, there was the accumulated readjustment allowance for two people over three years. So we had some funds and decided that we would travel around the world on the way back, which went through, all through southeast Asia and Europe, and then finally came home. Um. That was a nice, uh, trip, but not an adjustment to what we found when we came home.

WIGGUM: [01:14:32] Mm hmm. Is there anything else you'd like people to know about your experience in Peace Corps, Peace Corps, anything like that?

MOUNT: [01:14:48] I think the one thing I would like people to know that, I mean, people have enough imagination and knowledge to realize that a Peace Corps volunteer can be helping people and that it can be a people-to-people communication. It can be a, an assistance to, uh, helping that, uh, developing country. But I think that what people have no way to realize is how being in the Peace Corps can help the volunteer themselves and how it changes them. It changes what they do.

MOUNT: [01:15:29] It changes, uh, if you look at the nonprofits, the things that are helping people, the hunger projects, the housing projects, they're just full of Peace Corps volunteers. That's what they do. Um, any kind of community organization, there's a bunch of Peace Corps volunteers still part of it. And I think, uh, people don't really realize, uh, what a tremendous change it makes, what a tremendous difference it makes to the volunteer.

WIGGUM: [01:16:05] Mm hmm. I totally agree.

MOUNT: [01:16:07] Yeah.

WIGGUM: [01:16:09] Well, thank you so much for taking this time. Well, it's great to have.

[END OF INTERVIEW]