

**Pam Mount Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Pam Mount served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Micronesia from 1967 to 1970 as a teacher.

**Access**

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Pam Mount

February 26, 2019  
Princeton, New Jersey

By Candice Wiggum

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

WIGGUM: [00:00:00] All right.

MOUNT: [00:00:01] All right.

WIGGUM: [00:00:02] Well, can you give me a little background and tell me why you joined the Peace Corps?

MOUNT: [00:00:06] Well, thank you for being here at Terhune Orchards with me, Pam Mount. Um, it was a long story, uh, because now it's been 60 years. We, we, my husband and I joined the Peace Corps in 1967. And, um, I had gone to a small women's college in Ohio called Lake Erie College. I was an art major. And I grew up here in Princeton, and my husband grew up in West Windsor. We started dating when we were in high school, and he went to Princeton. Uh, he graduated in 1966, the year before I did, uh, and was ready to go to graduate school because

he was all into figuring out what, how your brain works and all that. And physiological psychology.

MOUNT: [00:00:55] But then his dad died and they had an apple farm on Route 1. It was a wholesale operation, and it was September. So he decided not to go to graduate school and help his uncle figure out how to manage the farm. Um, they had already sold that farm to a bunch of developers from Philadelphia, but they were, they had a crop and they went running back. And so, um, that was good for me because I was glad he was around. And then, uh, I was in high school. I was a Girl Scout my whole life as a young person. And in high school, I went to, um, Girl Scout roundup in Button Bay, Vermont, in June.

MOUNT: [00:01:38] Our project was solar cookers. There was a woman in the next town over who was developing solar cookers to take to India, and there was this kind of like metal box with these metal things. And you put your foot in the middle and the sun is supposed to shine and make it cook. Well, of course, in Vermont, and the sun came up about ten degrees above the horizon and then went back down again. So luckily we were cooking hot dogs, which you really didn't have to cook. But at the Girl Scout roundup was the Peace Corps recruiter. And I go wait, now this, in that day, Girl Scouts from all over the country came to one place.

WIGGUM: [00:02:18] Yeah. How old were you at the roundup?

MOUNT: [00:02:20] I was in high school. I was probably a junior.

WIGGUM: [00:02:23] That's surprising that they came out early.

MOUNT: [00:02:26] We all sang our national anthem, and, you know, saluting the flag and met each other and exchanged pins. And, uh, and I talked to the Peace Corps recruiter and I go like, this is definitely something I'm doing. I had a great uncle, my mother's great uncle, that lived in Rio, and he was the editor of the Rio Times. And every Christmas he would send a postcard of some exotic thing in South America.

WIGGUM: [00:02:51] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:02:51] My family didn't travel. We weren't, you know, it was sort of a working class family anyway. But, um, the first airplane I was ever on when I went to college, see what it was like. So this all seemed very exciting to me. And of course, my husband is from a farm family. They had, what is the Peace Corps anyway? I mean, and, uh, but he wanted to get married and I wanted to go in the Peace Corps. So I said, I'm happy to get married to you, but I'm leaving for the Peace Corps. And if you want to come, you can come. If not, wait, whatever. And so he decided, well, he'd rather get married and go to the Peace Corps than not.

MOUNT: [00:03:28] So, um, up to the, the moment that we left, people in his, not his family, family, but farmers around would say, you've got to stay here, make your niche, you know, get on the commuter train to New York. You've got a Princeton education. But we, we, it was the '60s, of course, and we were trying to avoid also the Vietnam War. We didn't want to get shot or have to shoot other people. So we were very liberal Democrats. And this was something that, you know, we felt, I particularly felt very strongly about.

MOUNT: [00:04:01] Uh, but I was very involved with everything I was doing at college and getting graduated and having my pictures displayed and stuff that I was doing. So I wasn't really, I didn't really give it too much thought. So when the Peace Corps sent us a form that said, what would you like to do? It was sort of like, print your name at the top and sign at the bottom and said, great, we're in. And then they said, well, where do you want to go? Well, we don't care. We'll go anywhere. And it happened that we found out later that Lyndon Johnson had been coming under quite a lot of pressure from the UN because the American government controlled the trust territories of Micronesia.

WIGGUM: [00:04:43] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:04:43] It was a colony, essentially. And, of course, they hadn't done anything to anybody, hadn't built any hospitals, hadn't built any roads.

You know, I mean, there's like a few things, but not really. And there's tons of islands with a small population on each one. So good old Lyndon said, well, we'll fix that. And he just flooded the place with Peace Corps volunteers, which was great for all of us. We didn't, we didn't care. So it was great.

MOUNT: [00:05:09] Of course, we got this note that said Gary would be working on copra. We didn't, we had to look it up in the dictionary. I don't know what copra is. We didn't know what islands were. We had no idea if we liked it. We knew the beach and the ocean because there were people that actually got recruited there and ended up that were from like Minnesota or Ohio. They'd never been to an ocean. They didn't even know how to swim or whatever. Anyway, it was fine for us. And so we went to, uh.

MOUNT: [00:05:33] So we got married in June, two days after I graduated from college. And then we were home for the summer, working here and there. And then in August, we were, we were shipped out to. Well, first we had to go to, um, Fort Dix and get all our preview shots and all that kind of stuff.

WIGGUM: [00:05:54] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:05:55] And then we really realized we did not want to be in the Army. That was scary. And, um, so then we ended up in San Francisco at some university or something and had more shots. And we were the first group, as we understand it, to train in-country.

WIGGUM: [00:06:12] Uh huh.

MOUNT: [00:06:12] Because before that they had just trained people like at universities here and there. So we went to Truk Lagoon. And um, just to give you a little example of how weird the whole thing was, um, one of the nights out for some unknown reason, really, mind you. But this little group that we had gotten friendly with all decided they wanted to go to a topless bar because San Francisco now had women jumping on. Anyway. Of course, I end up in an island where nobody wore any tops

anyway. I mean, it was like three years worth of topless bar, but that was sort of weird.

MOUNT: [00:06:50] And then one of the things I remember about the training program was this lady from Washington, who was very corporate looking and stuff, told us that one of the things we really should bring with us is a shower cap. So when we're out in the water, in boats, going from one island to another, something like on, I don't know, motor boats, there was no motorboats, that we could wear so we wouldn't wreck our hairdo.

WIGGUM: [00:07:16] How bizarre.

MOUNT: [00:07:18] I'm like, I don't think she's ever been there. I don't know where she is from. I'm a Girl Scout. I'm a, my husband's a farmer. I'm a winner. So that was how out of touch basically the system was. Of course, we benefited from the idea of, from the part of the system that was working, which was language training.

WIGGUM: [00:07:37] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:07:38] But so we went to Truk and they had the little houses, kind of like this wooden house, that they had built for us. It was sweltering hot, of course, and everybody lived in thatch houses where the wind could go right through. So we're living in this sweltering hot wooden thing with the cement floor. It was not great. And, um.

WIGGUM: [00:07:58] And this was for training?

MOUNT: [00:07:59] Yeah. For training.

WIGGUM: [00:08:00] How many of you went over for training?

MOUNT: [00:08:02] I think there was about, there was quite a few of that group, like maybe 50 or 40 or something like that.

WIGGUM: [00:08:06] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:08:06] Oh yeah. There was quite a few. They didn't all make it, but, um. Uh. And Truk was completely different when we were assigned then to Yap District, which is completely different than Truk, except it's in the same ocean, but it's completely different. So, um. But we did learn a little Truk, Yapese. But Yapese, it's sort of like German, it's a very complicated language. And Yapese was the main island in a cluster of islands. And so we ended up there first, and I was a teacher and we lived, we got a house. It was tin house, of tin. It rained often. It was like being in the, in the middle of a kettle drum or you know what.

WIGGUM: [00:08:48] I can imagine.

MOUNT: [00:08:49] And in the jungle somewhere in a little village, edge of a little village, and kind of isolated. So this guy, you know, I walked to school and the school had like three or maybe six grades or something like that. It was a wooden sort of long, just regular. Nothing. No books, no nothing, that a couple other teachers and all these kids. And my Yapese was not good, uh, maybe because I didn't have anyone to talk to. But also, I was supposed to be teaching English.

WIGGUM: [00:09:21] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:09:21] So it was a little stressful. And the Yapese were sort of like the French, you know, they were the higher caste of all these islands. And they had, and they had incredibly vivid history. They built all these stone platforms for their houses.

WIGGUM: [00:09:39] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:09:39] And they had this huge stone money that came on ships from Tahiti or somewhere, and that was their trading currency.

WIGGUM: [00:09:46] Oh.

MOUNT: [00:09:46] It's gigantic. If you go to the Smithsonian museums, you can see these big stone money things. So the history there was fabulous.

And people were, uh, you know, interested in having us, but not really because they had a culture, they had business. They did stuff.

WIGGUM: [00:10:00] Yeah. Can I take a step back?

MOUNT: [00:10:02] Yeah.

WIGGUM: [00:10:02] How did your family react to this? Wanting to go into the Peace Corps and going far away?

MOUNT: [00:10:08] Well, uh, my family, my parents were very supportive. Um, because I had been sort of a little bit of a, uh, maverick most of the time anyway. Uh, my father was a little ill, and I didn't realize it so much. And he said, well, you know, I may not be here when you get back. I'm like, well, I won't go. He said, no, no, you have to go. And indeed, he did die while we were there.

WIGGUM: [00:10:30] Oh, I'm sorry.

MOUNT: [00:10:32] One sort of problem, because we were far away. Um, but we can get to that. But, um, no, they were very helpful. And I have two sisters, and they did not want to go, but they were happy that I was going. And my older sister is four years older than, five years older than I am. So she was kind of up and off in her careers and stuff. So, no, they were. And I had uncles and aunts all supportive and thought it was. Of course, they had no clue where it was. We didn't know where it was. We didn't know where we were going, what were we doing.

WIGGUM: [00:11:00] Yeah. Plus Peace Corps is fairly new, so.

MOUNT: [00:11:02] Totally new, like 3 or 4 years old.

WIGGUM: [00:11:04] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:11:04] And hardly anybody had done it or, you know, there were like what, probably a couple thousand people maybe altogether were in the Peace Corps at that point. Um, so but we'd rather be in the Peace Corps

than the Army Corps, than the War Corps. So, um, that was kind of interesting. And, um, so we ended up on, uh, Truk for, I think it was a few months maybe, I don't know.

WIGGUM: [00:11:30] For training?

MOUNT: [00:11:31] For training. Yeah. And, um, they had some great, uh, language trainers who, they said something. You said it back. They said it back and back.

WIGGUM: [00:11:40] And what language did you, you didn't learn?

MOUNT: [00:11:43] Well, we were learning Yapese.

WIGGUM: [00:11:43] You were learning Yapese at that time.

MOUNT: [00:11:45] And other people were learning other languages because we didn't all go to Yap.

WIGGUM: [00:11:49] Um, so even though it was all Micronesia, all the different islands spoke different languages, so they had to have several different instructors?

MOUNT: [00:11:56] Yeah. It was a little crazy.

WIGGUM: [00:11:57] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:11:58] Yeah. And, um, actually we never saw any of them after that because we're all in this isolated islands. There's no way to get together. Um, and there was no communication. Of course there was no cell phones. There was no. We had single sideband radios and I'll get to that. But anyway, so then we shipped out to, um.

WIGGUM: [00:12:19] Did you get any, like, how to teach English as a second language? Was it all language training? What else happened during training?

MOUNT: [00:12:27] Well, I don't really remember too much of all that because basically I got a teaching degree when I was in college. I was an art major, but I was thinking I would be teaching art someplace or other. And, uh, and I had always babysat a lot, and I'd been in the Scouts and done all kinds of stuff at the Y and all that, been involved in my church groups. So, uh, I never really worried about what I would be doing.

WIGGUM: [00:12:51] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:12:52] Um, mainly because I didn't know I should think about it. But, um, I don't really remember them telling me anything about what I was supposed to do, how to actually do it.

WIGGUM: [00:13:02] Mm hmm. How about history, culture?

MOUNT: [00:13:04] Uh, yeah. We got some of that. I mean, the guys learned how to drink tuba, which is the fermented coconut sap from the trees. In Truk, they actually mixed up yeast with water and drank that after it fermented, which was just totally disgusting and, um. But basically not really. I mean, the lady with the shower cap was still sort of like doing stuff and people didn't really know what was going on. I mean, outside people.

WIGGUM: [00:13:30] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:13:31] Um. So we ended up in Truk, in, yeah. Which was a much more, uh, a much less developed, much more traditional. Uh, they, the women still wore grass skirts that they made out of leaves, like weighed like 50 pounds.

WIGGUM: [00:13:51] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:13:51] And everybody went topless, that was in the villages and stuff. Uh, we were, we were invited to a. So we lived in a village, a kind of. There was a center of town, colonia, and there was an American bar and a sort of a hotel and a little, and a, and a store with not much stuff in it, and some government offices and things like that. And it was on a, it was on the coast, it was on the bed, you know, there was a harbor.

WIGGUM: [00:14:22] Inlet.

MOUNT: [00:14:22] So the boats came and went a little bit. And then there was a cluster of, uh, places, kind of like grass houses and stuff, where people from the outer islands, they called them, which was, Yap was the center of all these outer islands, came if they had to go to the hospital or they needed. So they had to stay in this sort of ghetto place down, a swamp by the edge of the coast, where everybody else lived up on the hills and did whatever.

MOUNT: [00:14:50] And, um, so we, we. Gary got right into it with the agricultural stuff. There was no transportation, of course, like there was nothing. So we, we got a motorcycle. It was a Honda 50, just like one step above a bicycle.

WIGGUM: [00:15:07] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:15:07] And he's big and I'm not small. So we managed to get around a little bit on that. And he, if he was going to a further away village or something he would ride the dump truck, went back and forth a little bit, standing on top of dump truck. And so, but then I was stuck in this little village with these kids who weren't all that keen on education, school. Hadn't had all that great of an experience and stuff, and not really getting, not really being very fluent in the language. It was like a little touch and go. And there were a couple of other young teachers there who, um, Didn't know what they were doing either and didn't really care too much.

WIGGUM: [00:15:45] But they were from Yap?

MOUNT: [00:15:46] Yeah, from Yap. And, um, so then Gary was offered an opportunity to go on the field trip ship every six months or something like that from Yap out along all these outer islands and collect the copra, which is dried coconut meat that they use in suntan lotion and whatever else. And, uh, it's like a two week trip. And so we said, okay, great, you go and I'll, I don't know, hang out here. And, um, it turned out to be a

really wonderful experience for him because he really saw really how people were. The thing about Yap also was they, there were a bunch of Americans there.

WIGGUM: [00:16:22] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:16:23] From the Interior Department because they were running the, because it was a colonial power they had to have. And all these people were like from Ohio and very conservative and crazy, really, and I don't know. So there was this kind of, you didn't really fit in with the village and you didn't really fit in with any. And you didn't really want to fit in with the Americans. And then, but there was this back and forth thing. You could go have a hamburger at this, uh, bar place, uh, the Yap Islander Bar. Um, so there was always, so it was kind of schizophrenic, I thought.

WIGGUM: [00:16:56] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:16:57] And the Peace Corps staff was excellent. We had an on site doctor who, he and his wife were very welcoming and, you know, and there's a director or something, I don't remember who he was but. So anyway we, so he went on this long ship ride. This ship is like about the size of this room or a little. You know, not much of a ship. But, uh, and then they stopped at islands all along the way. And so at the very end of the islands was an island called Satawal. It's a mile long, half a mile wide. 400 people have lived there for hundreds, maybe thousands of years. It came out of the ocean 23 feet and then back, and didn't have a lagoon. It was just a reef island. It was like the top of a mountain and the only one around.

WIGGUM: [00:17:45] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:17:46] And some other islands had wonderful lagoons and lobsters and all kind of stuff. You just float around. Not Satawal. It was like a rugged place. And um, so when he got there, uh, also the Catholic priests always went on these trips, and so he'd sit around with everybody and they'd drink the, um, whatever you call the blessing wine from the whatever they didn't use up in the church and play cards or

something. And so Gary kind of got talking to all the guys and so then the chief said to him that they would like to have a Peace Corps volunteer come to their island. There was some, there was a guy there who was a health worker, but supposedly he was about to leave or something. So, uh, and they wanted a teacher and they wanted someone to help them with some projects. So since we weren't all that thrilled with Yap, um, we, uh, when he got back, we decided to go. So of course, this is a whole different language.

WIGGUM: [00:18:44] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:18:44] Um, so we found a guy in the hospital who was recovering from TB, who was from Satawal. So we went and visited with him for a while and back and forth, and we taught him how to teach us. Uh, so when we got there, we could say like, hello or something, I don't know. No, not much really.

WIGGUM: [00:19:02] Yeah, yeah.

MOUNT: [00:19:03] Uh, one of the experiences that I remember, floating out in this little boat to Satawal, we came upon a yacht that had some kind of missionaries in it, and they were totally horrified that my husband would take a white woman to live with those Black people. I mean, really, Black people?

WIGGUM: [00:19:23] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:19:24] And we go like, what are they doing out here? How could they be possibly? So, you know, we felt that this was really going to be a really special place. Um, and indeed it did turn out to be fantastic for many reasons. But one of the major reasons is the island was so isolated you couldn't, you couldn't get anywhere with a motorboat, even if you had gasoline and even if you had a boat, there was no place to go because it was everything was too far away. So they, I brought this out. Um, the men, and they do it still today, uh, make their own outrigger canoes like this.

WIGGUM: [00:20:08] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:20:09] And a big, uh, this is the, the, um.

WIGGUM: [00:20:14] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:20:15] Sail. Uh, so a big log floats by, because they don't really have that many big trees on the island. It's not that big of an island. So, um, they haul this stuff in and they have these big, um, canoe houses which were, like, open thatched things where the canoes could be stored out of the rain and all that.

WIGGUM: [00:20:33] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:20:34] And the men would hang out every afternoon and drink their, um, fermented coconut juice. Tuba. Um, so there was an incredible culture of seafaring. And these people are the last people of the Pacific, north and south of the equator, who still make these canoes and still sail using legends that are passed down orally from father to son.

WIGGUM: [00:21:01] Fascinating.

MOUNT: [00:21:02] They don't write anything down, and they, they can go out. Even if they get in a storm for two days, they can put the sail back up and look at the stars and see the waves and know how to get home.

WIGGUM: [00:21:13] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:21:13] I mean, they just know everything. And so these guys are so smart, and everybody was smart on the island. I mean, the women pretended they weren't smart, but they were very smart. The. And because of this whole sailing thing, the women in the culture owned all the land.

WIGGUM: [00:21:31] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:21:31] And made the decisions really, because what happened is if the guy goes off and gets lost and ends up in the Philippines? We never see him again. So they got, you know. And they also had a tradition of every everyone who was a, a baby who was born, was adopted by another family just to have more security. And so the young people had babies and old people adopted them so the young people could work on these things.

WIGGUM: [00:21:58] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:21:59] And it was very, and, and also there was a no competition. Zero, zero competition. You were not ever to kind of present anything directly to anybody. You might go around the gossip tree if you don't. So they had, uh, town meetings, island meetings every Sunday after church. The Catholics had built a big tin church with leftover tin from World War II from Ulithi, which is a big island group that had all those Navy ships and everything. Uh, and so they had all kind of stuff left over. So everybody scavenged all that stuff. And, um, then they would sit around and decide what they're going to do that week. And Tuesday and Thursdays were island work days. Everybody worked together.

MOUNT: [00:22:42] So since Gary was there, they would say, okay, well, what do you want to do? You have some projects you think we should do? And they would say what the projects they had and he would say, well, we could do this or that. And so they came up with all kinds of fabulous projects that he helped them form. And there was a little school building. And the guy who had been there before us, the Peace Corps volunteer who was a health worker, had been lobbying to get a real school. You know, it was just a little thatched thing and hadn't had too much success. So before I knew what was going on, they torched the school at one night, like the day before school was supposed to start. And I'm like, oh, well, whatever. There's nothing. There's no books, there's no pencils. There's no, no, no anything.

WIGGUM: [00:23:26] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:23:27] There's nothing.

WIGGUM: [00:23:27] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:23:28] And I go like, well, I guess we don't need much. And so as a woman, I was really not supposed to go into these canoe houses.

WIGGUM: [00:23:36] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:23:37] Because that was a men's domain. There were all these canoe houses, like 7 or 8 canoe houses, huge big building along the beach where the canoes could come up and the guys would sit around and they'd make their rope and they'd whittle more canoes and do whatever. So they decided, well, we'll just have to divide up the school a little bit and have different classes in different canoe houses. Um.

WIGGUM: [00:23:57] How many kids were in this school?

MOUNT: [00:23:59] About 100 kids. They had sort of a population boom since everybody was now healthy after the war. The Japanese controlled all those islands. That's why we got them after the war. And, um, it sort of was between Wake and Guam, all those islands. Uh, so when the Americans came, they brought, uh, you know, penicillin and the Navy, you know, loved all these people who could sail and be out in the ocean and everything. Um, but still there was, still living as though they were had always lived.

WIGGUM: [00:24:30] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:24:30] I mean, they cooked in big fire pits and ate coconuts and taro and breadfruit and fish. And everybody fished every day, you get enough fish for everybody. And they fished and then they divide it all up depending on how many people there were in your family or whatever.

MOUNT: [00:24:47] And um, so for Gary, it was an incredible experience for, uh, kind of challenging the things he knew about. One of the main projects that had sort of started, but nobody knew how to do it, was to build a water tank. The only health problem they all had was, on a coral island

the salt water comes into all the coral underneath the land, and then the rainwater sort of sits on top on a kind of a lens. Well, they had bathing holes around and a little wells and stuff. So a kid craps in a bathing hole and it pollutes the whole thing. And everybody had intestinal parasites, and that was sort of the main thing. So they wanted to end this. This health worker had convinced them all to boil all their water, which they were doing, and that made a difference. But, you know, it was like they had to go find the wood and do, you know, that's kind of labor intensive and stuff.

MOUNT: [00:25:37] So they, he suggested that they get a grant to build a big cement water tank. Of course, no one had ever built anything out of cement. They only, you know, they had sticks for their houses and they tied them together with rope. But Gary had worked construction in high school. Uh, so he actually knew some stuff. And then, of course, he just made it all up. And so they made this gigantic, uh, water catchment. They caught all the water off the roof of this Catholic church, which is really some benefit to having that church anyway. And then they had a pump on top and they put. Everybody lived, there was sort of a, the island was sort of like a, uh. Well, it was kind of long and narrow. So everybody lived in one area. And then there were all the coconut trees and the taro patch, all that stuff out there in the woods where there's evil spirits and weird stuff going on. So they all lived right smushed together, like in a tenement house.

WIGGUM: [00:26:33] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:26:34] And, um. Which seemed okay, I don't know.

WIGGUM: [00:26:37] It's a communal culture, so it makes sense that they all live together.

MOUNT: [00:26:39] The women, um, had their houses along the beach. So, um, they built a water tank right there where the church was and put the water pipes along the village so they could just turn it on and off.

WIGGUM: [00:26:54] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:26:54] And when we went back about now probably about ten years ago, they were having a huge festival because one of the guys who I taught when I was there had now graduated from seminary in California. He had connected with my daughter Tannwen when she was living in California after she finished Princeton. And so then he was being ordained and they decided somehow or other that he should be ordained on his back in his home island. And so we got this email. Come to the party. We want you to be there.

WIGGUM: [00:27:29] Easy to get to.

MOUNT: [00:27:32] So we were by that time, we owned this farm and we like we hadn't left ever. I mean, it was like, are you kidding me? And it was June when everything was like, we got to go, like, oh, we got to go. So Tannwen was able to go with us. And so we met her in California. It took five days of straight travel all the way, and then the last two days on boats and canoes and whatever. And then we stayed for three days. And it was, but it was fabulous. So. Well, of course we'd forgotten the language by then, but everybody had. And there were two really, really old men that were very good friends with Gary. I'm going to get sad. Anyway, they, um, they were just waiting for him to come before they died.

WIGGUM: [00:28:15] Aww. Oh.

MOUNT: [00:28:16] That's so amazing. Anyway, we got very attracted to those people.

WIGGUM: [00:28:22] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:28:23] Um, it was hard to leave. But the Peace Corps wouldn't let you stay longer than three years.

WIGGUM: [00:28:29] Well, how did you live while you were there? What did you, what did you live in? How did you cook? What did you cook?

MOUNT: [00:28:35] They gave us a little house in the midst of one of the family units.

WIGGUM: [00:28:39] And was it a thatched like theirs?

MOUNT: [00:28:41] Yeah.

WIGGUM: [00:28:41] So it was cooler and better.

MOUNT: [00:28:43] Yeah, it was good. And, um. And the sides grew, you know, you had to prune the. You put the stick on the ground, just grown.

WIGGUM: [00:28:50] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:28:50] And, um, they all had houses that were low and you crawled in because they didn't want them to blow away if it was a hurricane or something like that.

WIGGUM: [00:28:58] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:28:58] Which there was very few because the storms you would start there and then they go slam into the Philippines or something. So but they knew Americans like to walk into their house for some unknown reason. I don't know how they figured that out, I guess from Yap or something. So our house had a door and was tall and but we left, you know. And they had a lot, or all around the village, they had, uh, coral, dead coral that would wash up on the beach. And they saw this white coral everywhere. It was a little rough on the [inaudible] or whatever, little flip flops. And, um, so we slept under a mosquito net on a mat that was sort of made out of the same kind of pandanus as this thing. And, um, yeah, that was the house. And then we had a little house next to it that was just, it had a water catchment but barrels next to it.

WIGGUM: [00:29:44] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:29:44] So you could have some fresh water, even though we bathed in the ocean. And then we came back and rinsed off or whatever. And

then I had a little gas stove, but we didn't cook. The island gave us every, all our food every day. And they gave us so much stuff that we then when we sort of said, well, we shouldn't, we can't eat all this stuff. And we were trying to say to people, we don't need so much. And one of the chiefs finally came and said, listen, the only way we have to thank you is by giving you this stuff. So you take it and if you can't eat it, you just give it to somebody else. We all know who belongs to which plate or whatever, whatever. And so things like that were so special.

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

MOUNT: [00:30:23] And we luckily had each other, but also we had skills that they really wanted. And they were really keen on getting their kids graduated and getting an education. And so we're cranking along and there were two other teachers, three other teachers. The guy who was supposedly the principal had a third grade education under the Japanese.

WIGGUM: [00:30:45] Hmm.

MOUNT: [00:30:45] And so when I got there, he was teaching capital cities in the world, of the world in alphabetical order. I go, I think we got to do a little bit better than that. It's like, well, what do they know? They didn't know.

WIGGUM: [00:30:56] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:30:57] And, um, so, uh, then about six months into it or a little bit more, another Peace Corps volunteer arrived, Mike McCoy, and he was sort of a fisheries guy. He had been in Truk, but then he and his wife split up and she went home and he came out to us. And so he was teaching too. And so then we decided to have school in the morning and do teacher training in the afternoon. And by this time, I had gotten the Peace Corps people to send us a hand-cranked mimeo machine.

WIGGUM: [00:31:30] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:31:31] Because we didn't have any books, we didn't have any anything. So we made our own little worksheets. And Mike was a

fantastic, he really was a historian. He was fascinated by history and knew all kinds of stuff about everything. And so he really helped the teachers celebrate who they were and what their island was and what their nation is all about, and their geography and culture and everything. And that was great for all of us. And, um, and then I, you know, taught them how to dance and sing and speak English. And then after a few months, when I, you know, we had the language. We had to learn the language because no one spoke any English, because it was either figure it out or be very, very quiet.

WIGGUM: [00:32:15] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:32:16] And although I had lived in Germany for three months and when I was a student, and I was very quiet those three months, but luckily it was only three months, not three years. So. Anyway, by the time I really was pretty fluent, I went to one of the chiefs. They had three chiefs, the internal chief, external chief, and a head chief of something. And I said, well, I'm feeling guilty about teaching English because I was thinking that, uh, even if I don't intend to, I somehow might be giving people the impression, these children the impression, things about English speaking countries and people are better than their language. And I don't know, it just sounds why would they really need that? They're out here in the middle of nowhere. Every once in a while, a Japanese fish fishing boat would come by and the older people in the island could speak Japanese. And then once every six months, maybe eight months, the boat that we came on would come by. I mean, it wasn't like very often.

MOUNT: [00:33:13] So he thought about it for a minute and he said, well, here's the story, Pam. Uh, I need my people to learn to listen to, to speak English and understand English, because what happens is people come to the island and they say things. And we don't understand what they're saying, and we smile nicely and shake our heads. And before we know it, there's a submarine base here or an airport or some kind of horrible stuff. And we want to be able to say no.

WIGGUM: [00:33:44] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:33:45] It was a very good lesson to learn. I've said that often when I was in government here in town. Uh, so I went back to teaching English, but then I taught math and, you know, other stuff too, because there was, why not?

WIGGUM: [00:33:59] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:33:59] And, um.

WIGGUM: [00:34:03] What was your biggest challenge in teaching?

MOUNT: [00:34:05] Well, from an American point of view, the only way you teach here is by competition. One kid wins, the other kid loses. You call on one kid, he's got an answer, and you punish him if he doesn't know the answer. Well, that didn't work. Forget it. I would ask a question of one kid and they would all answer. I mean, they don't, can't stand to have anyone singled out.

WIGGUM: [00:34:23] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:34:24] And so there was no competition. Okay, so then what do you do?

WIGGUM: [00:34:27] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:34:28] So that was pretty challenging actually. I mean, it doesn't sound that, you know, but when you're really sitting there with at least all these little eyes looking at you, it's like, okay, how do we do this now. And of course there was no way to test anybody what the point was, you know, but they so wanted to learn. It was like dry sponges being put in the water, you know. And so they all showed up. So it became, well, how to decide whether the kid is ready for school or not? And so they had these, um, the boys wore these little cloths. The girls wore sort of like these little grass skirt things. And so I figured that if the kid could keep his cloth on, he was old enough to come to school. Otherwise they just ran around naked.

WIGGUM: [00:35:13] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:35:14] So that sort of worked out. So anybody on campus who came to school or whatever. But this was pretty progressive. So they allowed their daughters, which nobody did that, to go to high school, which was on Ulithi, which was a big island. So all these islands and then it was Ulithi, and then there was Yap at the other end. And at Ulithi was the outdoor, out, um, Out Island High School. And there was, the Yapese had their own high school. So it was mostly boys because the culture there was, on our island was, if you get married, the man comes to the wife's family and lives with the wife's family. And in other places it goes the other way. So they didn't want to lose their girls to the, to other islands. So. But they thought it was worth the risk.

WIGGUM: [00:36:02] Plus the girls own the land.

MOUNT: [00:36:03] Yeah. And they didn't want to go someplace else either.

WIGGUM: [00:36:06] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:36:06] But, um. It was a big, it was a big leap to enable girls to learn and to be part of the deal and to be, you know.

WIGGUM: [00:36:16] And to leave the island for a while.

MOUNT: [00:36:17] Yeah, and it was a year long boarding school. I mean, they didn't, like, come and go because it was far away and the boat only came once a while. So, um, yeah, it was, it was big. And so some girls didn't go. So I started a little class just for the girls, teenage girls who didn't go. And they didn't know anything. They didn't know what, what, the map of the world. I mean, they, you know, they don't know anything. So it was very exciting and it was very challenging for me to teach kids who were just so exuberant about everything and wanting to know and learn.

WIGGUM: [00:36:50] Yeah. And how did you get, like, supplies? Like a map of the world?

MOUNT: [00:36:54] Well, we would, we had a single sideband radio on the island. We were supposed to keep in touch with the main Peace Corps people in Yap. And so I think it was once a week or, yeah, probably not once a day I think. But anyway, we would come up and say hello, and then they'd say, well, the ship is going to come in another, you know, ten weeks or whatever. And so then we'd order some stuff, like the hand-cranked ditto machine or paper or a few things like that. But they really didn't have that much on Yap either. I mean, they didn't have books, so my relatives would send us some stuff and, you know, people would, I don't know. We just made it all up.

WIGGUM: [00:37:31] Yeah. And how was the communication back and forth with home? I mean, I would guess that would take forever.

MOUNT: [00:37:37] Yeah. Forever. Yeah. And we had a camera so we would take pictures and they were, of course there was film. So we'd have to send the film home and they reproduce it and then send the pictures back, the slides back. And, um, when I got home, there was an envelope with censored across the top with all the pictures of me topless.

WIGGUM: [00:37:57] Well, I was wondering how you went around.

MOUNT: [00:38:00] Not going to show everybody those pictures.

WIGGUM: [00:38:01] I was wondering how you went around the island if you did the island custom.

MOUNT: [00:38:05] Oh, yeah. Yeah, well, we started when we were in Yap. I mean, I thought, well, if we're here to be with the people, we have to do what they do. Live in their kind of house, eat what they eat, look like they look. And the Peace Corps was a little bit nervous about it. Um, there was one festival where all the people were dancing and doing some, some kind of religious festival or something. So the villagers made this big grass skirt for me, which was so heavy and then got full of bugs. But

anyway, whatever. And, uh, and then they wore little black string tie down and then went, you know.

WIGGUM: [00:38:40] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:38:40] So that's what I wore, I mean everybody, they were all wearing it. Well, that created a bit of a stir. And then, uh, they, Peace Corps decided that it was okay to look like everybody else at the festival. But riding the Honda on the road like that was a little. So I got reprimanded about that part of it. I got like, how was I going to get there? I don't know, whatever.

WIGGUM: [00:39:04] And did you have trouble with sunburn? I mean, they're all darker complected and used to the sun. You're fairly fair.

MOUNT: [00:39:09] They would say, you've got to get out of, they would always tell me, got to get out of the sun. Your blood is going to boil. Because I love the sun, I love to be out in the sun. I love it hot. So it was perfect for me.

WIGGUM: [00:39:20] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:39:20] I'd walk along the beach and swim in the water and all that. So it was a perfect place and it was very, the breezes. It was such a small island. The breezes off the ocean always kept the place kind of cool. I mean, it was pretty hot really, but, you know, relatively speaking. And we were left to our own devices. I mean, we could do whatever we wanted. I bought a few, we had all the slides because it was slides. I brought a few just pictures to show you a little bit about what it looked like. And, um.

WIGGUM: [00:39:52] So, Gary. Um, so here's what they're going to look like when they're waiting and ready to go somewhere. And this is Gary, uh, cutting the, um, when a coconut tree has a bunch of flowers comes out, and then they kind of break open and then the coconuts start growing. Well, if you get that as it's just coming out and wrap it all up tight, it's like a, I don't know, spadix they call it. Anyway, if you cut the end then it drips

out. And so they'd cut the end and they get an empty hollow coconut, coconut shell and tie it up there. And then it would drip into that. And then it's kind of spongy in the middle from the fermentation of the day before. And so over just a few hours it would ferment into this alcohol stuff.

WIGGUM: [00:40:36] Yeah. So that's how they made the.

MOUNT: [00:40:38] That's how they made their.

WIGGUM: [00:40:39] Tuba.

MOUNT: [00:40:39] Tuba, yeah. Yeah. And so that's what he's doing up in this. They gave him one tree. He miraculously never fell out of it. But he was a lot bigger than most of them.

WIGGUM: [00:40:47] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:40:48] And then I'm teaching, um, the hokey pokey. I think we were dancing to the hokey pokey. So this is what their canoe houses look like, where the men did their sitting around making these canoes and stuff like that.

WIGGUM: [00:41:02] So it was sort of a communal meeting area too.

MOUNT: [00:41:05] Yeah, it went by family.

WIGGUM: [00:41:07] Families.

MOUNT: [00:41:07] Every family had their own, but they, you know, shared around and stuff. Um, and then the women. So this is them putting new thatch on and they, they were so incredibly self-sufficiently sustainable. And they were all healthy. They loved their children. They married for life. They didn't make, you know, go crazy and stuff. And the women all had to get along with each other because the grandmothers, the aunts, the mothers, everybody.

WIGGUM: [00:41:38] Everybody's related, I imagine.

MOUNT: [00:41:40] Together all the time, cooking and doing all the stuff that they have been doing. And so. We had a dog named Laundry, which we, whom we found in Yap in a laundromat. So he came, um, with us. And I don't know, this is all playing around with this is, that, this is the after it was fermented, then you put it in a bottle and take it to the. And then they sat around every afternoon. They drank whatever they collected in the morning. And then in the evening they drank whatever they collected in the afternoon. So Gary was a little tipsy the most of the time he was there.

WIGGUM: [00:42:18] So it fermented that quickly?

MOUNT: [00:42:20] Oh, yes. Pretty high.

WIGGUM: [00:42:21] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:42:21] And if you, if you used a clean coconut shell, then they collected it sweet. And the kids and the women drank the sweet stuff. So these are all my students working hard on. Well, they got a care box from, um, I don't know, or something like toothbrushes and things in it.

WIGGUM: [00:42:39] Yeah. Like when you would write and ask your relatives for something, how long would it be before it arrived, like a year?

MOUNT: [00:42:46] Oh, probably in a month. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. It was not too. One funny thing that happened was when we were deciding to leave, they, well, Gary, they had little pigs, which really weren't too much of anything. So he decided, well, he would call the extension service in, the agricultural people in Yap, I mean, on radio and ask them to send out a bigger type of pig so they could breed and make bigger pigs. So they sent this gigantic pig. I mean, it really hardly ever could breed with these little pigs because they couldn't even, like, walk right over them.

WIGGUM: [00:43:21] Would kill them. Yes.

MOUNT: [00:43:23] So at the end, we knew everybody was going to eat that pig. Uh, I sort of had to, I fed it and they thought it was just such a joke. Everyone, they tied their little pigs just by a string to a tree. Well, of course, this thing, you know, the tree would fall. And then they kind of roped him in on like, the thing was full of flies and grabbed them. Every once in a while, they'd let them loose with nothing else to do. So they say, oh, Pam, your pig is loose, you got to go get him! So I would go down and he's probably raiding somebody's kitchen, you know.

WIGGUM: [00:43:51] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:43:52] So I have a bowl of food and he chased me down the beach. All the guys had lined up looking at this woman flying down the beach. I'm like, oh my God, how did I do this to myself? So, um, but there was always some fun things going on. And I did a, um, I won't forget any pictures. I decided that, and then they have these great dances that they, uh, for the, in the. In the church there was a calendar and it had saints days or something were in red. And every time red showed up there was no school. I go like, what is this with red? And so they said, well, it's whatever this day is. And now nobody even knew. And I go like, well, whatever. I don't care if they have school or not. And then they would have dancing parties and stuff, and so they would get if there was some kind of special thing on. And so I learned how to dance all these crazy dances.

WIGGUM: [00:44:43] Now, the whole time you were in Peace Corps, you were on that island? You never left for a vacation, you never?

MOUNT: [00:44:48] Well, my dad died. So halfway through. So, uh, we got this message relayed from one island to another on the single side band radio. My mom says come home. Like, oh Christ, it's not that easy. And so then how to get off that island? And, um, they, they, since Guam was not that far away, they had lots of Navy and, you know, all kind of military there. Uh, so they, the Peace Corps said, well, we'll get a plane, a pontoon plane, to come get you. But they couldn't land because we didn't have a lagoon. There was no small waves.

WIGGUM: [00:45:25] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:45:25] And so we took a canoe. The guys and Gary and I sailed in one of these canoes from our island to the next island, which is like 50 miles away, which is like an overnight sail or something. It took a while, a day or so. So we got there and they had a really good. So then we waited around there for a while until this Navy pontoon plane came. And so on the ship we had, you know, our own taro and whatever. So and then we got to this pontoon plane and they had, uh, I don't know, ham and cheese sandwiches or something. And this guy had name called JATO bottles, they somehow gave a thrust. So he had these, he was wiring up all these JATO bottles that are on the outside on the wings to give the thing enough energy to get up and out before they ran out of lagoon.

MOUNT: [00:46:13] And so he's diddling around and there's like 3 or 4 of these guys and this pilot and stuff. And then he goes like this, okay, I'm like, he's got to cross his fingers to get us out of here. And this could be, this was worse than going on open ocean in that little canoe. And, um, so then we get to Yap, and of course, I had this kind of grass skirt on, and I had one shirt, which is kind of a scoop thing with, you know, no sleeves, uh, t-shirt kind of thing. And Gary had to borrow a shirt from the Peace Corps volunteer on that island that we went to because he didn't have any shirts. We left everything on the main island because we knew we were coming to this place, we didn't know where our clothes were. We realized.

MOUNT: [00:46:56] So then we get to Guam and everyone is dressed to the nines. The ladies have stockings and they have fancy hairdos in the airport, and they're all military people.

WIGGUM: [00:47:05] Yeah, yeah.

MOUNT: [00:47:06] They're all dressed up like, oh Christ. It was beginning of May, 1st of May. So then we get on an airplane and Pan Am, fly to California and get off in San Francisco, where there's Haight Ashbury and all that.

WIGGUM: [00:47:20] Yep.

MOUNT: [00:47:21] Nobody blinked an eye, and they're all dressed up as Indians and, I don't know, all kind of weird stuff. And it was absolutely.

WIGGUM: [00:47:28] You fit right in.

MOUNT: [00:47:29] Right in. Until we get to Newark in May. May 1st. It was like 30 degrees. And my mother takes one look at us and she's, like, bursting in tears. So. And it was so horrible because Gary's mother was a widow, and now my mother was a widow, and they both lived. So one night we'd have dinner and sleep at my mother's house, then the next night we'd have dinner and sleep at his. He gained a pound a day.

WIGGUM: [00:47:55] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:47:56] And the only thing that saved me was I had my wisdom teeth taken out. I couldn't eat. Finally, we were getting ready to leave, and it was, you know, so sad and so horrible and everything. I was like, okay, well, um, because we had decided to re-up a year, they gave us a vacation time anyway, so this was what was supposed to be a vacation. So then we were trying to figure out how to get back, and we went to the travel agent and realized that we could go to Japan for the same price and go down to the end and come off onto Guam, as go straight to Guam. So we thought, well, we'll go to Japan. So the last week of our deal or ten days, we wandered around Japan, which was fabulous, just wonderful. And, um, sort of made up for all this horrible stuff at home.

MOUNT: [00:48:40] And got back into Yap and then had to wait a little bit for the boat to take us back out again. So that was a break that, um, yeah, that was not that much. We would rather have not gone, but whatever.

WIGGUM: [00:48:55] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:48:56] Um, but that's the way it went. And so basically, though, we were there the whole time and, um, which was okay because it was so much going on. I helped deliver 35 babies.

WIGGUM: [00:49:09] Wow.

MOUNT: [00:49:09] There was always a baby being born somewhere or other, and they were always building something, or the men were leaving or coming and there were canoes being built and the water tank thing being built. And then Gary showed them how to make copra dryers, which you took the coconut out of the coconut shell, and they would lay them out in the sun and they heard on the radio, they all had transistor radios, that the ship was coming. Then they'd quickly got a whole bunch of coconuts and try and dry them in time to sell the coconut, dried coconut to the ship people.

WIGGUM: [00:49:39] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:49:39] And so he helped them make dryers that was viable. And other people tried to do it. Hi. This is my daughter, Tannwen.

TANNWEN: [00:49:48] Hi.

MOUNT: [00:49:49] I'm talking about [inaudible] of course.

TANNWEN: [00:49:51] Great.

MOUNT: [00:49:52] Um, other people on other islands tried to do it, but. But he was, he knew how to do stuff.

WIGGUM: [00:49:59] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:50:00] And, um, then he, he showed him how to make a rope walk because they, they made rope out of the husk of coconuts, right. When you wind it all together. They weren't all that keen on that because they like doing it the way they did it forever and ever. Um, but those kind of projects were. And he also, they had lots of coconut trees in the woods and a coconut falls down and just starts growing and they just let everything grow. And then he realized that they were overcrowded and that's why. And so he got a whole bunch of big coconuts, seed coconut

from Yap. And then they made a nursery and started growing them. And then he convinced people to cut down the trees so that they would be, all the trees.

WIGGUM: [00:50:43] Get more sun.

MOUNT: [00:50:43] Would be able to grow better.

WIGGUM: [00:50:43] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:50:44] Which was a big leap of faith.

WIGGUM: [00:50:46] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:50:46] Um, but these guys have been all over the news and they had seen other demonstration projects about this kind of spreading of technology. So they have a very productive and they are going to track. So we have soup in the store if you want some lunch. [tape break]

WIGGUM: [00:51:05] Okay. Now it's recording.

MOUNT: [00:51:08] Um, I think you're right that, um, we had a really great experience on the small island because the people, when we had, they had invited us to come, and they had been thinking about what they would do if they had some help doing them. And, um, we were more than happy to reach out to whoever we needed to reach out. For instance, the men had these big sailing canoes, and they had, uh, the sails were made out of, uh, cloth, cotton sail cloth. And it was very heavy when it got wet. This poor canoe was. And if they got into a storm, they had to put it down. And then they had to dry it out and it was off and they would rot and, you know, mildew and stuff like that.

MOUNT: [00:51:51] So Gary found this guy in Hong Kong that had Dacron sail material by the yard or whatever. So he got a whole bunch of bolts of this Dacron sail material and then got it back, and they made their sails out of Dacron and it made their boats faster and better and it never wore out and never rotted. It took them a while to figure out how to, because it

didn't stretch, they had to change the way they sewed. They had this little hand-cranked sewing machine, and it kind of slipped on the Dacron and stuff. And so they asked me to come and show them. Of course, I had no clue. I'd be like, I'm not the person. Gary's going to have to do the sewing. I don't know. But since I was a girl, I'm supposed to know how to sew on this little hand-crank thing.

MOUNT: [00:52:34] So, um, things like that. We thought we, we were able to be resource people for, um, as long as we could figure out what it was they wanted. Um, and so sitting around and talking to everyone, you know, that, uh, drinking circle. He would go from different men's groups to have and me cooking food with all the women and stuff was part of, I mean, part of being part of a community. But mostly it was also wanting to know what they, how they wanted things to go, what they needed help with, what they thought was important.

WIGGUM: [00:53:08] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:53:09] And health was very important to the women, of course. And they wanted their babies to be healthy. And that clean water from the water tank was very important. Um, I, uh, when I was home when my dad died, we went into Columbia Presbyterian, and I observed a delivery, but it was so far out of. It was all sani, it was all stainless steel. And they gave shots to all the women, and they were like, oh, my God, this is so horrible.

WIGGUM: [00:53:34] What was it like the first time you helped deliver a baby?

MOUNT: [00:53:36] Well, they all knew how to deliver babies. They've been delivering babies for thousands of years.

WIGGUM: [00:53:41] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:53:42] So I just sort of said, well, how about washing your hands, you know, things like that.

WIGGUM: [00:53:46] Uh huh.

MOUNT: [00:53:47] And so, uh, I was more like, you know, the blessing person or something.

WIGGUM: [00:53:53] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MOUNT: [00:53:54] They know what, they knew what they were doing for sure. Um, and they never lost a baby. I mean, they, you know, they were, they knew what they were doing. But it was, I just got to participate. It was fun.

WIGGUM: [00:54:05] So you're on the island for three years. It's getting to be time to leave.

MOUNT: [00:54:09] Mm hmm.

WIGGUM: [00:54:10] What was that like for you guys? Because it sounds like you were so integrated.

MOUNT: [00:54:14] Gary could have lived there for the rest of his life. No problem. I was getting a little itchy. I wanted to travel and see the world. I wanted to see everything about it. And also the women's life there was not that exciting.

WIGGUM: [00:54:28] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:54:29] They had to cook, they made babies. They cooked and cooked and did whatever. Whereas the guys, they would sail and they'd go around and do good stuff and build water tanks and things. So, um, it was hard work too.

WIGGUM: [00:54:45] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:54:46] It was, I mean, people think, oh, it's paradise. Well, wait a minute. It's a lot of work to live in paradise. And especially when you don't have anything, you know, you have some pots and nothing. Uh, now, when we went back, they had solar panels on some buildings, and

the French had been in there giving them, you know, how to figure out these solar panels. And they all had water tanks next to their buildings, too, as well as the water tank for the whole community. Uh, they had refrigeration, you know, stuff happened. So. But then it was really like being at Girl Scout camp for.

WIGGUM: [00:55:20] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:55:21] It was.

WIGGUM: [00:55:22] For three years.

MOUNT: [00:55:22] Yeah. I was like, hard work. And also I was really, I, you know, I worked a lot with the kids and I worked, you know, I was, I planned out what I was doing and it, you know, um, made things for them to do and all that. And they all went off to high school and they all, when we got back ten years ago, they were all from our island, were leaders of the whole country. They were in charge of the transportation. They were in charge of communication. They were in charge of education. Whatever.

WIGGUM: [00:55:49] Did you feel like you guys had a part of that?

MOUNT: [00:55:51] Well, that's what they said to us, you know, that we started them out with an idea that they could succeed.

WIGGUM: [00:55:59] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:55:59] And what more is it that you'd want to do to someone?

WIGGUM: [00:56:02] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:56:03] You don't have to show them everything. All you have to do is give them the encouragement to say that you are special and you can do whatever you want, and you're better than most people, and all you have to do is figure out the system and then you're good to go. Um, so that was, you know, a good lesson for us. But also I think they all took that to

heart. And when they went to high school and then on, some of them went on to college, we had some kids here, uh, who went to college in this country afterwards, because in Micronesia they were, they were sort of like Guamanians and they were sort of citizens.

WIGGUM: [00:56:35] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:56:35] They were, so, um. Yeah, I think we learned, of course, as much as most Peace Corps volunteers say that they we learned as much as they learned. But in this situation, they were so ready.

WIGGUM: [00:56:48] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:56:49] And if you're going back, like, I know when we were traveling, we went to the Philippines and they were, already been 30 Peace Corps volunteers in that village or whatever. Um, because they had such turnover and there were lots or 20 or however many. But being the first woman on any of those islands.

WIGGUM: [00:57:06] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:57:07] Um, and Gary being the first agriculture guy and, you know, whatever, um, made it very special for us. And so we were starting lots of things that somebody else would have just have to follow along or whatever.

WIGGUM: [00:57:21] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:57:21] So, excuse me. I'm gonna run to the bathroom and we have the right over here if you want to pop over. [tape break]

WIGGUM: [00:57:27] Okay.

MOUNT: [00:57:28] So we had a going away party, and we decided that since that big pig, they were going to eat it anyway once we left, I was like. So we decided, well, we'll just say, yeah, go ahead, let's have it. And so they, so, but the deal with pigs are, if it's a male pig, which is just a male pig,

that they have sort of smelly skin or whatever. So Gary wrote back, thinking about this a while beforehand, Gary wrote back to the Mercer County Agricultural Extension Office and said, do you have a pamphlet on how to castrate a big pig?

WIGGUM: [00:57:59] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [00:57:59] Because all the guys on the island, I'm the expert, people from all other islands call me to come and castrate their pig. I could. Everybody said the same thing. Which means he knew that didn't mean, that meant nobody could castrate a pig or whatever. They had never even seen a pig that big.

WIGGUM: [00:58:13] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:58:13] So he, so they, the thing arrived, the plant had arrived and the time came and it was supposed to. Because you have to let it heal. And then the, they, it has to live a while before it gets, the meat is.

WIGGUM: [00:58:27] The gaminess goes out.

MOUNT: [00:58:29] Yeah, whatever. So, um, uh, so he's, they've tied the pig up, and he's screeching like he can hear all over the island. And, uh, Gary's got his pamphlet and he's got his knife. And then people are walking by with firewood thinking, the thing is definitely going to be dead by the morning, and it's not going to live through this. And hi, this is my daughter, Reuwai.

REUWAI: [00:58:50] Hello. Hi.

MOUNT: [00:58:51] We're talking Peace Corps here.

REUWAI: [00:58:52] These came already cooked?

MOUNT: [00:58:54] Yeah. Okay. And, um. He, looking back on it, he'll tell you on his story, part of the story. But he said it was really probably a really dumb thing to do, because if he had failed at that, all the things that he

had tried to teach them over those years would have come into doubt. He couldn't even, you know, castrate a pig. His whatever advice he gave was probably no good either. So luckily the damn pig lived.

WIGGUM: [00:59:17] Yeah.

MOUNT: [00:59:17] And it all worked out. So then when we were having our party, slaughtered the thing and they had it all laid out on the beach, it was like a thousand flies on every inch of the thing. And he said, oh, Pam, well, you need to come down and choose a piece of meat that you want. This is, I don't care. I was like whatever. I hadn't had meat for three years, so I didn't care. And it's all these flies. And I go like, well, I think that piece looks good right over there. So that was kind of special. And everybody's crying. We're all leaving. And it was terrible.

MOUNT: [00:59:47] But then when we started traveling, we got reimbursed from the Peace Corps because we never spent any money. I mean, we didn't have anything to spend it on anyway. I mean, a few things like Gary got this tablecloth and stuff, but, um. So we had, I think it was \$75 a month, a couple of thousand dollars. And so we thought we were totally rich. And so we decided we would just walk home since we were already halfway around the world. So we went to Guam and our idea was, well, we would go, uh, we would get on a boat from Guam and go to Australia. Uh, well, it turns out that all that the American Coast Guard, the kind of boats that came into Guam, they wouldn't allow Americans to ride. I don't know, it didn't meet specs or something. This is not helpful. We don't care.

MOUNT: [01:00:37] But so we think we get a boat. So we decided that we would just start out. So we went down the Philippines to Zamboanga, to the end of the Philippines. And then, um, we were in a place called Zamboanga and it had a lot of, um, coconut plantations around there. And they had big coconut processing plants and stuff. And we ran into these two guys. One was a general in the army or had been the major general, the top guy in the Filipino army, and another guy, a business guy. And so while we were in Zamboanga, we said, well, how do we, we went to the town register guy, how do we get out of here to get to

Borneo? And he goes, well, you can't because there's, all the boats have pirates in them and they'll, you know, they'll call you for ransom or whatever, whatever.

MOUNT: [01:01:25] But, uh, these this general is coming through with his plane, and he and his other guy are going to Borneo because they have a logging concession there. And so you could just go to the airport at 6:00 tomorrow morning and they'll give you a ride. So that's what happened to us all around the world.

WIGGUM: [01:01:42] Wow.

MOUNT: [01:01:43] And we went through Borneo. And then we got to Borneo. And then we were in this end of Borneo, northern end, it's this huge place. And there was a big oil refinery place and I was like, how do we get out of here? And because the boats don't go very often or whatever. So it turned out that we went up to the oil refinery place and said, well, you know what kind of transport? And the guy said, well, we happen to have, they need a part for the pumping station halfway down Borneo. And so we're going to take, uh, Land Rover with this part and drive down this running road through the jungle. And if you want to ride along, you're welcome to it. Off we go. So all along that, we went all.

MOUNT: [01:02:25] We went down to Bali and went to Indonesia. And we stayed with a family in Indonesia. Went to, um, uh, we didn't go to Vietnam. We jumped over Vietnam, Cambodia. But we went to, um, Burma just had opened up, and the guys had machine guns on every corner. And you had to whisper and pretend that you didn't speak any English. And we hiked through Nepal up in the mountains. We didn't have any shoes. We didn't have anything. We went to the Peace Corps office and they loaned us, um, two bedrolls and we, I don't know how we made it. And then we went to India and Afghanistan. We got to Europe and it was raining in, um, Turkey when we got to the airport and it was raining. So we just went on to Greece.

WIGGUM: [01:03:15] Ha.

MOUNT: [01:03:16] But Greece was great. And then, you know, we did a little bit of Europe, but by that time it was getting to be Christmas time. And for some unknown reason, my husband decided he needed to get home to his mother at Christmas time.

WIGGUM: [01:03:25] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:03:25] I would have just kept walking wherever, but that worked out. And so then we're back here and then of course the Peace Corps reentry.

WIGGUM: [01:03:35] Yes. Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:03:37] And it was 1970.

WIGGUM: [01:03:39] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:03:39] Not the best time anyway.

WIGGUM: [01:03:41] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:03:41] And we had missed everything. We thought, oh great. We got the, the Peace Corps sent us the week in review from the New York Times, and we'd get the whole six month stack at once, put them in the right order, and then we'd start reading them. And it seemed like, you know, there's marches on Washington and the civil rights movement, and the African American people are doing all kinds of great stuff, and the women's movement. And we got back and it is exactly the same as when we had left. But we couldn't tell where's the movement. We go like, I don't know where the movement went.

MOUNT: [01:04:11] And so then we have to figure out, well, what kind of work are we going to do? Gary had a brother who lived in Doylestown who had an appraisal business, real estate appraisal business, and he really wanted to sort of get into selling commercial real estate. So he told Gary, well, come on, you can, you know, start this commercial real estate. Well, of course, this was really not what Gary wanted to do. But, you know, a job

is a job. So we went to Doylestown. Doylestown is a typical suburban community. There was nothing there. They like have a museum, but. So I volunteered at the museum. But by that time I had Reuwai, she was a newborn and they didn't like having babies there. So Gary would come home at lunch or whatever, watch Reuwai. And I'd go to the museum and give a little tour to the schoolkids or something. But really, there was no parks, there was no community, there was no nothing. And rich people on this side of town, poor on this side.

WIGGUM: [01:05:06] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:05:07] So we were just about to leave the country when one of his cousins came by. We had a little house that we managed to buy because it was totally cheap. It was less than a car right now. And but he said, well, at the end of Terhune Orchards, you know, we both lived in this town. And he knew my mother used to come out here and get apples and stuff. Um, there's a little sign that says for sale by owner at the end of the drive at Terhune Orchards. And Gary goes, really? Wow. Of course, I had no clue. And he goes, well, I sort of want to be a farmer. I go, you do? I mean, really?

MOUNT: [01:05:46] And so we started negotiating with the people that, the two people that owned the farm. She had, her father was a Terhune and so she inherited the farm from him. They didn't have any children. There was no mortgage. And they grew three crops, apples, peaches, and pears, and only a few of that. And the whole place was full of these big old trees that you see as you come in the driveway there. They're like 100 years old now. The whole farm was full of these big trees like that.

WIGGUM: [01:06:14] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:06:14] And totally unproductive and.

WIGGUM: [01:06:17] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:06:17] Terrible. And well, we didn't know, it was okay. And, um, uh, then they also had a little store, but they only had it open in September,

October, November. Uh, August, September, October or something. Three months out of, three crops, three months out. I said how? We said, how hard could that be? Work three months to get, 55 acres isn't that big. Of course we had no money. Zero. Zero. Uh, so we sold our van and bought a used pink pickup truck, and it was sort of beige pink. And then we had. And so we started negotiating with him, like in September. And by March I was now pregnant with Tannwen and we finally had a settlement.

MOUNT: [01:07:02] We had to borrow so much money. We'd just go from one bank to another and they kept saying, sure, we'll loan you some more money. And then, uh, by the time we got to settlement, we had the last of the settlement on our visa card. So. So we go like, well, we're young. We could, if we don't fail, if we fail this, we'll just go back and live on Satawal. You know, there's always a little escape hatch there. And so I think from, so because we didn't know anything. I mean, he grew up on an apple farm, but he didn't know anything about growing apples. His dad said, take this truck to Philadelphia and come back.

WIGGUM: [01:07:34] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:07:35] And he went to Princeton High School.

WIGGUM: [01:07:37] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:07:37] And he wanted to go. He thought he wanted to go to night school, he said later. But his dad said, when he found out he could get into Princeton, his dad goes, are you kidding? You go to Princeton.

WIGGUM: [01:07:46] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:07:46] You can pick up the farming thing later. And which, of course, has worked. But the thing that has been most important about it. So for me, I go like, oh, this would be so great. We can ask all our Peace Corps friends to come and we can have a commune. Yeah, there's this house. The house wasn't that big like this. This, we added all this stuff on.

WIGGUM: [01:08:06] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:08:07] And it was this 1840 house over there. You had to walk from one room to get to, there was one bathroom, it was two rooms upstairs. And the people had painted all pea green, sort of institutional green, like mental institution green. And, uh, it was like a disaster. But, um, we didn't care. We lived in grass houses. And, um, and they couldn't, they decided they couldn't move out of the house because they had lived here so long. So Gary built a little shop on the end of a bunch of garages because he wanted to be able to fix machinery and stuff.

WIGGUM: [01:08:40] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:08:41] And so we lived in the shop on the floor, and the rain would come in and we would sweep it out and we'd put the garage door back down. And finally in September, they finally moved out. And not that this place was that much better when we moved in, but we didn't, you know, we didn't have any furniture, we didn't have anything.

WIGGUM: [01:08:59] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:08:59] So it all worked out. But, um, I think the thing. So we did it. So he said, well, you know, we can't have a commune because I'm not having, making decisions about this farm by committee. I mean, you know, I'm going to be in charge of like, I should have seen that as a sign. But I was like, okay, well. Then it turned out, well, who is going to buy this stuff? So our first crop was some cherries. There was these giant cherry trees that we couldn't figure out how to even pick.

WIGGUM: [01:09:27] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:09:28] So we had like 20 quarts of cherries and we had a couple of high school kids help us pick the cherries and put them on a little table right out there by the driveway. And they sold them for like \$30. And we went out to dinner. How was the first crop? Great. It's wonderful. We're going to make some money. Um, but, but. So then the question was how to get people here because it's cold. So I rode the last river road in New

Jersey. There was no one. I mean, it was before all these Bristol-Myers Squibb's and all that stuff, before people commuted everywhere.

MOUNT: [01:10:01] And, uh, so one fall, one of the first falls, the guy who was running the Nassau and trying to get people to come to the Nassau called and said, how about if you donate some apples to me at the Nassau Inn? Because I want to have an Oktoberfest. And I think if I give people a free apple, they'll come. And I go, like, what is wrong with this picture? Um, if that's worth it, I'm going to give three apples for people to come here. So I decided to have my own Oktoberfest and I called it Apple Day. And I have every year now I have a big tin of apples piled in the parking lot in memory of that guy from the Nassau Inn, and I give everybody a free apple. Sure enough, it works.

WIGGUM: [01:10:42] Uh huh.

MOUNT: [01:10:43] So we started going to all the conventions, all the meetings, reading all the magazines. We still have, we still have tons. And Gary's now had a meeting in New York State. He's a board member of the International Apple Institute. Apple growers from all over the world get together. It's always very nerve wracking when he comes back, he's coming with some great idea to do everything differently.

WIGGUM: [01:11:03] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:11:04] But he belonged to all the fruit and grower, apple grower groups, and we all went to all the conventions. And I was sort of the marketing person.

WIGGUM: [01:11:12] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:11:13] My dad would say, when I was in high school, I planned all the parties and everything. If you would only read books, take as much time reading books as you do planning these parties, you would have straight A's. And I'd be like, well, I don't really want straight A's, I don't care. But of course, what have I done with my life? Plan parties.

WIGGUM: [01:11:27] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:11:29] It all worked out.

WIGGUM: [01:11:29] Big parties.

MOUNT: [01:11:30] Yeah. And so having these festival things and having activities here, bringing people to the farm. So maybe about five years into it, we thought, oh, well, there was a guy who was planning on building a new development in Montgomery, and he really thought we should come and have a farm there, farm market there. And I mean, it was really a struggle getting people to come.

WIGGUM: [01:11:54] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:11:55] So we go, well, maybe we're, you know, then they were saying they were and they still they still say it, but it's not really true. Location, location, location. You got to have your store in the right location. Otherwise forget it. So, um, we hired this guy named Jerry. Anyway, he's from New York, and he, uh, was a site. He could, he figured out how to site things like 7-11s and all kinds of stores and all kinds of stores and all kinds of stuff. And he was a really nice guy. So, uh, we gave him a couple of places we thought, you know, maybe we could do this place in Montgomery and a corner here or there. There was something wrong with everything.

MOUNT: [01:12:37] So we were sitting on the front porch one afternoon evening, and the sun was setting and it was gorgeous. My flowers are out in the garden. And he goes, you know? This. He gave us a story that he had an ice cream guy who wanted to figure out how to run his ice cream truck, so he thought he'd have to have all kinds of exotic things like rum raisin, that kind of thing. Whatever. And so Jerry convinced him that rum raisin is okay. But unless you have chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla, which is what 90 percent of the people want, you're never going to make it with rum raisin. So even if we went to some kind of high end place and they were building the market fair out there, and that was going to be this high end, like, this is strawberry, chocolate, and vanilla right here.

WIGGUM: [01:13:24] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:13:24] And so then we turned around and said, okay, so we're going to build this into a place where people want to come. And then we started with the donuts which everyone, wherever I go in the whole world, I say I'm Terhune Orchards, they say donuts.

WIGGUM: [01:13:39] The donuts. Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:13:40] They never say, oh, I love the apples. Oh, the broccoli is okay. And then having these parties and having tours for children and all the stuff we do now. So instead of having a commune, now we just invite the whole world.

WIGGUM: [01:13:54] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:13:55] But they go home again.

WIGGUM: [01:13:56] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:13:56] And what has been wonderful for me, I think also is that over the years there's something about this place and the way we run it and the way we communicate to people that everybody seems to feel welcome. And so on a fall weekend, it is the Model UN here. I mean, there's a Japanese family and the Russian family and the Polish family and the Mexican, and they're all mixing it up. Everybody gets along perfectly well together. There's no problem, there's no conflict. They're all picking their apples and eating, eating cider donuts and whatever else. And you go like, well, how is, why is it so hard? I mean, this is, see, this works.

WIGGUM: [01:14:36] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:14:37] Uh, but somehow I'm not sure exactly how it all happens, but um, it's very gratifying to us. And it's a direct line from Peace Corps to a

Model UN here and being welcoming and, um, encouraging for everyone to come.

WIGGUM: [01:14:54] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:14:55] Um, and having something for everybody. But of course our key ingredient is family. And we have a big family and they're all here now. Our daughters both went to Princeton University and studied and excelled and everything, um. And Reuwai then taught. She was, then she taught at Lawrenceville. She was a rower. She was a captain of all the rowing teams, and she was on the national team and all kinds of stuff. And she never, ever lost a rowing competition from the beginning of high school right through college into the national team. I was like, how could anybody do that? But so, then she was just about deciding to go to the Olympics, but it was going to be three years worth of training, and they had this horrible East German coach guy who was like, after Princeton, when everybody shares and she was like, you know, so that didn't work.

MOUNT: [01:15:42] So she went to Lawrenceville School, started their environment there, um, environmental studies kind of program. And then she taught in New England. Well, it turns out this other guy who had been here in her class in Lawrenceville was teaching in New England. And so they connected. And then, um.

WIGGUM: [01:15:59] Well, let's bring it back to Peace Corps.

MOUNT: [01:16:01] Mmm.

WIGGUM: [01:16:01] Um, I think one thing Peace Corps teaches everybody is flexibility. And to use every skill you didn't even know you had.

MOUNT: [01:16:10] Right.

WIGGUM: [01:16:10] And it sounds like that really is come in useful to you here.

MOUNT: [01:16:13] And that, that having experienced that. Um, also our feeling was, you know, we could have gone to Washington and done stuff that we could do, run for something or other done, but focusing on our own community and our own resources here and bringing everybody here to make something happen rather than being a worldwide something or other, was really a decision we made. And we, and that's the Peace Corps experience, because that little island taught us that you can have a huge impact if you really focus on what it is that people really want to do. And when I ran for town council, when our kids were up and out a little bit, and became mayor of this town.

WIGGUM: [01:16:54] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:16:54] Um, being, doing that town, the community building thing.

WIGGUM: [01:16:58] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:16:59] And then we started doing sustainability kinds of stuff because we always felt that we were the stewards of this land. It really belonged to us, it belonged to the world. And so we had to take care of it and make sure that we did the best for the land and for the future. And we've been noted for all our conservation stuff and sustainability stuff and solar panels and irrigation and take care of everything. And so we started these programs in Lawrence, which then built into Sustainable Jersey, which is, was the first chair of Sustainable Jersey for three years. And that has now, in every town there's a green team and they're working on projects. And now there's schools working on projects.

MOUNT: [01:17:36] And then the last three years I've been working on climate change because I'm very worried about climate change because my little island is going to be underwater.

WIGGUM: [01:17:44] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:17:45] And um, so we need to figure out how to bring some urgency to people's awareness of what's happening. Now certainly three years ago we were the only people shouting in the dark about it. But now even

The New York Times has articles and the Wall Street Journal has articles. So things are happening. But of course, I don't see that there's a whole lot of action. But what my group is called Sea Change Conversation. And we have a little primer about the science of climate. No politics. So we tell just how the climate has changed in the last billions of years. And we have now been invited all over the country to show that little thing and talk to people and bring communities together and get people to give, help people find a sense of, um, being able to be in charge, being able to affect, change something, to be part of the solution, not just wring their hands and say, there's nothing I can do. So that's a Peace Corps experience.

WIGGUM: [01:18:42] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:18:43] So all these kinds of things that I, that we as a family, and Gary. He started the first, um, he was on the state Board of Agriculture and he wrote the Farmland Preservation Program, knowing that we would not be here if we had to keep going and paying all the taxes. And some guy wanted to build a shopping center here and offered us \$10 million. So the Farmland Preservation Program has now preserved almost 300,000 acres in New Jersey, and without it, there would be no farms. I mean, that those developers would have eaten everything. So, um, those are the kinds of things that because of our, our sense of how important the land was to the people that we lived with and how they could be totally self-sufficient on this dinky little piece of sand.

WIGGUM: [01:19:27] Mm hmm.

MOUNT: [01:19:27] By being creative and hard working and using all the resources that they had together. Everybody had a different kind of job. There was one guy, they rebuild, they, one of the beams on one of their big, uh, boat houses cracked. And so they'd been watching for a beam, piece of wood to go by that be big enough. So then it happened that one came by. And so they, it was. So we didn't know what this guy's role was until he had to do his architectural stuff and get everybody organized about getting that huge thing down. It was like watching the pyramids being built.

WIGGUM: [01:20:02] Yeah, yeah.

MOUNT: [01:20:02] And so, you know, we realized that everybody has their place. Everybody has a piece that fits into making a puzzle work, but you just have to be receptive to, maybe they're doing things a little differently than you would, or they look different or whatever. But, um, and that has been always really great with all the work that we've done in our community and in our state. And, um. And I think has, uh, which is a frustrating part about the Peace Corps being so small, so few people. I mean, what is it, like 200,000 altogether? I mean, it's like less than a college in three years. So it's just so shortsighted of our government not to have more kids out there experiencing these things and, and, and testing their, their powers, as you did and others. Um, so anyway.

MOUNT: [01:21:01] But so we really, even though it was hard at times and, um, but Gary definitely, he thought it was great, he would stay forever. And, but this has turned out pretty well too. So, and of course, our greatest success is our girls buy into the whole idea of being a public farm, having a commitment to the community, having their now six grandkids, our six grandkids here all the time, running around doing their lemonade stands and, you know, promoting the farm and being part of it, um, as being. So my friends say, well, how did you get your kids to come back and stay here and stuff? I said, well, we just pay them whatever they want and, you know.

WIGGUM: [01:21:41] Make it a wonderful environment.

MOUNT: [01:21:43] Buy a farm and your kids will come back. Uh, but, um, you know, I think it is pretty unique in this culture that people, that young people would see themselves being able. But now there's a turn too. Once we've started the Farmland Preservation Program, farms are available to young people. It doesn't cost so much, or they can rent them on a much cheaper, because the value of the farm has been reduced once the farmers, landowners get paid the difference. And so from the, we had to pay the development price, we paid the price, whatever the price was. I mean, it was outrageous. And it took, I mean, it took forever

to even make a dent in that cost of this farm when we first started. But we were 55 acres to start with, and now we're 200 acres because we were able to buy a few other ones. We sold some development rights, we could buy another farm, whatever.

MOUNT: [01:22:31] And that made a big difference because then we could, when we have trees everywhere, you can't like grow vegetables. You have to move the vegetables around, you know. So now we have the farm where the winery grapes are grown and our organic vegetables and all that. Another farm where it's pick your own apples. And then when the girls came back, Tannwen had been in California. And so we were trying to reel her back in and her father said, well, you know, what it would take to get you back to working here at the farm? And she said, well, here it is. I need a, I want a farm, a farm house. I want a husband and I want to start a winery. And he goes, fine, whatever. We can do that.

MOUNT: [01:23:06] And so and miraculously, it's all worked out. She married her guy that she knew, knew at Lawrenceville and who had, you know, they'd gone separate ways and reconnected. And now they're living on a farmhouse on the farm.

WIGGUM: [01:23:20] Nice.

MOUNT: [01:23:20] By the road, and they have their three kids. So, uh, it's been a really, really great experience.

WIGGUM: [01:23:26] And all started with the Peace Corps.

MOUNT: [01:23:28] It would not have happened without the Peace Corps.

WIGGUM: [01:23:29] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:23:29] Definitely.

WIGGUM: [01:23:30] Yeah.

MOUNT: [01:23:30] If we had ridden the commuter train, we probably would be divorced or something. You know, it wouldn't have been good, so. Or we would be bumming around different countries all over the world trying to figure out what to do.

WIGGUM: [01:23:42] Yeah, well, it's a great story. It's a great story.

[END OF INTERVIEW]