

Joseph C. Hanlon Oral History Interview
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Biographical Note

Joseph C. (Joe) Hanlon served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1966 to 1968 on a community organization project.

Access

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Oral History Interview

with

Joseph C. Hanlon

October 14, 2015
Tampa, Florida

By Phyllis Noble

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

NOBLE: [00:00:04] This is Phyllis Noble. Today is, my goodness. What day is today?

HANLON: [00:00:10] August 14th. I mean, October.

NOBLE: [00:00:12] I bet it's October.

HANLON: [00:00:14] October 14th.

NOBLE: [00:00:15] October 14th, 2015. I am interviewing Joe Hanlon, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1966 through 1968 in a community organization project. Joe, let's go back to who you were before you joined the Peace Corps.

HANLON: [00:00:40] Okay.

NOBLE: [00:00:41] Where did you grow up?

HANLON: [00:00:43] Peoria, Illinois.

NOBLE: [00:00:45] Peoria. And were you in a big family? Small family?

HANLON: [00:00:50] No, small family. I have an older brother five years older than I am.

NOBLE: [00:00:55] Just the two of you?

HANLON: [00:00:56] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:00:56] Yeah. And what did your parents do?

HANLON: [00:01:00] My dad was a businessman and my mom was an at home homemaker. She had been trained as a as a registered nurse. And she went back to nursing after I went to high school. When I left the house, so to speak.

NOBLE: [00:01:19] Okay. But she was home for you when you were a kid?

HANLON: [00:01:22] Yeah, definitely.

NOBLE: [00:01:24] And so you went to school. What, local public schools?

HANLON: [00:01:28] Right. Right. Thomas Jefferson Grade school was nearby. We walked or rode our bikes there. It was probably two or three miles away. I came home for lunch. I remember that. So those eight years was at Thomas Jefferson in Peoria, Illinois.

NOBLE: [00:01:51] And then you went to high school?

HANLON: [00:01:52] Peoria High School. Peoria Central High School, it was called. For that, my dad would, on his way to work, he'd take me. And then after a year or so, I had some friends who had cars, so we'd use and get rides

and so forth. But high school was a big thing for me. My brother was five years older and so I devoured his yearbooks.

NOBLE: [00:02:20] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [00:02:21] As I was in seventh and eighth grade, maybe even in sixth grade, in like '56, '57, '58. And also being older, he had those 45 records, you know, Elvis Presley and the Everly Brothers and all that. And so at a very young age, I would secretly play those and lip sync in the mirror over the sink in the bathroom and memorized all those lyrics and tunes, which I know to this day. So anyway, high school was a big thing for me. I mean, I was really excited. I was a good student in grade school. I really liked it, but I sort of knew what I was going to do when I got to high schools by reading those yearbooks.

NOBLE: [00:03:09] Oh yeah. Right.

HANLON: [00:03:09] And thinking about the sports and the studies and the various clubs and so forth.

NOBLE: [00:03:15] Did you do some sports in high school?

HANLON: [00:03:17] Oh yeah, yeah. I played football. I was on the track team. I managed a basketball team, varsity basketball. That's about it. But we had a good football team, great leadership. And actually I made the all-conference fullback my senior year.

NOBLE: [00:03:37] All right. I'm pleased to know you. And what about academics? What were you drawn to in high school?

HANLON: [00:03:48] Pre, pre college, is that what it is? I mean, I knew I wanted to go to college. And so I took all the hardest, you know, English and math. I wasn't the best, but I was very high up.

NOBLE: [00:04:02] Yeah. Did you study a foreign language?

HANLON: [00:04:06] I studied Latin for two years, my freshman and sophomore year. I thought, you know, I never even conceived of speaking it or anything like that. Just to sort of take off for a second. Language in college was a requirement and it very much worried me and bothered me because I felt like I had no inclination or special aptitude for foreign, speaking a foreign language. And they actually had a conversational class. It was all set up. It was in the, you know, early sixties for college for me, and with labs and earphones and tapes. It wasn't academic, it was conversational.

NOBLE: [00:04:55] This is in high school?

HANLON: [00:04:56] No.

NOBLE: [00:04:57] No, later in college? Okay.

HANLON: [00:04:58] I'm thinking about foreign language.

HANLON: [00:05:00] Anyway, I took two years of French and felt like I didn't learn a word of French. Never. So anyway, when it came time for the Peace Corps, that was really a concern of mine. And I kind of dove into it in training and so forth. But anyway, after being in-country for three or four months, and basically the five, six, and seven year olds that were in my neighborhood taught me how to speak Spanish. You know, they didn't laugh.

NOBLE: [00:05:28] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:05:29] They understood exactly what I was struggling with because they had just recently learned that part of it. And so I thought I got pretty good at my Spanish at the time, and it was a big accomplishment for me then, since I'd had that negative kind of experience with Latin and French.

NOBLE: [00:05:47] In the classroom, right. Yeah. Outside of school, as a high school kid, did you, did you go places with your families? Did you travel, vacation, summer vacations?

HANLON: [00:06:00] We did. I don't know exactly why my parents were, you know, wired this way, but when I was four or five, we drove with another couple to Monterrey, Mexico, from Des Moines, Iowa.

NOBLE: [00:06:18] Oh, wow.

HANLON: [00:06:20] And I can remember the hotel. I can remember the, uh, there was like a nightclub that our parents took us to for dinner and stuff. And there were, like, dancers and uh. And then, you know, during the daytime, we rode these burros and we went out and visited somewhere, and everybody got on a burro. And there were souvenirs, like carved baseball bats with Mexican colors and designs. And it was really an exciting thing. And I saved those souvenirs in my bedroom for years. And my, well, and then as we got older, my dad, we took a two week road trip every summer. And, you know, we'd go to California and stop at all the national parks. And next year, we go visit relatives in Seattle. Stop at. We went to New England. We went to Washington, D.C. We went to New York City. You know, it's kind of ironic. The only place that they were not interested in going was Florida.

NOBLE: [00:07:25] Where you are now.

HANLON: [00:07:27] Where I live now.

NOBLE: [00:07:30] And what about summer jobs when you got to be 16?

HANLON: [00:07:37] I was always looking to make a little bit of money there. I guess I had two big summer jobs in high school. One was working for my dad's company, which was a gasoline retailing company around central Illinois, so that there were these small tanks for gasoline that were on farms for farm tractors and farm equipment, and they needed to be painted. And so I had to enlist a buddy of mine. And so we went around painting those things. And at times it would be, we'd stay out in the field for like a week at a time, stay at a local motel out there, because it would be a couple of hundred miles from home, and you wouldn't want to make that trip every day.

HANLON: [00:08:25] The other sort of major job that I had, both in high school and college, was a summer job working at a Portland Cement Company warehouse, I'll call it. It was on a branch of the Illinois River, and there was an elevator and a train, uh, like a little stub of a, of a train track. And they offloaded this dry Portland cement through some kind of a pneumatic tube thing and put it in this elevator, huge tank overhead. And then trucks would come in there and they would load up these trucks with this dry cement. And then they also loaded up railroad cars with this dry cement off the barge from the river. And so that was a good job. That was a Teamster job.

NOBLE: [00:09:17] Wow.

HANLON: [00:09:17] So I think that was like 4 or 5 dollars an hour.

NOBLE: [00:09:20] That was pretty good then.

HANLON: [00:09:21] Big money.

NOBLE: [00:09:21] Yeah. You dad helped you get in there?

HANLON: [00:09:24] No, he didn't. He didn't have, I don't know exactly. I can't remember why I found that, but he didn't have anything to do with that.

NOBLE: [00:09:33] Huh. Well, good for you.

HANLON: [00:09:34] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:09:35] So you graduate from high school.

HANLON: [00:09:37] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:09:37] And you choose a college.

HANLON: [00:09:40] Right.

NOBLE: [00:09:41] Had, your brother was five years older than you, so had he gone on to college?

HANLON: [00:09:46] He did. He went to Bradley, which is a local school in Peoria. And actually he wasn't so driven academically as I was. And so he dropped out after a couple of years and worked somewhere. My parents, you know, said you're going to have to get a job. And so he diligently figured out how to get back into school and finish. He actually got a master's degree.

NOBLE: [00:10:12] Oh, wow.

HANLON: [00:10:12] After that. But my big accomplishment was going to Yale University.

NOBLE: [00:10:18] As an undergraduate?

HANLON: [00:10:19] Right.

NOBLE: [00:10:19] Wow.

HANLON: [00:10:19] Yeah. And so and that's something, you know, my father must have been so generous. I mean, to pay for that. At the time, I never, you take it for granted. But anyway, so that was great fun. Another classmate of mine from high school got in and so we drove out there and we'd come home for the holidays back to Peoria driving.

NOBLE: [00:10:45] Yeah. Yeah. And what did you study at Yale?

HANLON: [00:10:49] I majored in culture and behavior.

NOBLE: [00:10:52] How interesting.

HANLON: [00:10:53] It's, uh, it was at the time. It still is. I'm kind of proud of it. But it was part of the sixties creative curriculum kind of thinking. It was a major comprised of four departments: psychology, sociology, biology, and anthropology.

NOBLE: [00:11:12] Wow.

HANLON: [00:11:13] It was an honors program. There were like maybe ten or 15 students in it. At that time Yale was all men. The full four years I went there, it was all men. So it was a small program, honors program. There were, freshman, sophomore year at Yale, there was sort of a commitment, a curriculum probably for 80 percent of your classes. And then you could begin to do your major stuff in your junior and senior year. And there was a paper too, some kind of a paper. But anyway, it was fun because I could choose in that major, I could choose higher level courses and graduate courses in the biology department, in the psychology department, in the anthropology and sociology, and then put together your own sort of curriculum. And I got good grades, I was a good student, and so that's what I did.

HANLON: [00:12:18] And it was good training for Peace Corps. And the idea at the time in the sixties, culture and behavior is, you know, those, that's when the Darwinian evolution was sort of sinking in. Not really. Everybody was a Darwinian. There were nothing else, but evolution of, um, not just physical DNA, but behavior and man as a social animal. Instincts, you know? How does a spider make a web? How does a bird know to migrate across, you know, endless ocean without any speck of land in sight? And how is it that men have come to be so technologically proficient and develop their material culture, and so forth. All that stuff.

NOBLE: [00:13:17] Provocative questions.

HANLON: [00:13:19] Yeah, it was good.

NOBLE: [00:13:22] Now I know that when you went into the Peace Corps, you went in as a married man and you married somebody from Peoria.

HANLON: [00:13:29] Correct.

NOBLE: [00:13:32] Just talk briefly about how you met Bev. And was she at Yale when you were at Yale?

HANLON: [00:13:39] No.

NOBLE: [00:13:39] You went, you had.

HANLON: [00:13:40] So our love affair started, you know, fairly innocuously as we were classmates in homeroom freshman year. We'd gone to different grade schools. So I didn't really know her, but, uh, and we were, we were good friends in high school. We really didn't date much. And senior year we dated a little bit, but it was just that we were competitors actually, like officers for the student council. And actually our, for the student council president, we ran against each other and she won. She was president and I was vice president.

NOBLE: [00:14:23] Oh.

HANLON: [00:14:24] So anyway, the romance kind of started in college and I think.

NOBLE: [00:14:32] When you'd come home for vacation?

HANLON: [00:14:34] Right.

NOBLE: [00:14:34] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:14:35] And I think I proposed to her like the summer after my junior year, and we sort of began planning and thinking about what to do. And the Peace Corps was something that both of us were interested in. And we applied as a, you know, before we were married.

NOBLE: [00:14:55] Now this would have been what year?

HANLON: [00:15:00] '65. We got married in the spring of '66. I graduated in June, and we went into the Peace Corps like in August of '66.

NOBLE: [00:15:14] Mm hmm. So you both were talking about Peace Corps. You were both interested in it. Did you know other people who had been in the Peace Corps? Were any of your friends joining the Peace Corps?

HANLON: [00:15:25] No, I don't think so. No, I don't think I knew anybody. Another thing I should say is the Vietnam War and the draft were a big motivator.

NOBLE: [00:15:35] That's right.

HANLON: [00:15:35] For me.

NOBLE: [00:15:36] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:15:37] And for Bev and I as a married couple. I can't remember all the details about my draft number, but I'd had a safe deferment in college. The headlines were full of the dangers and risks. I think it was just the time when the U.S. was gearing up with a much heavier sort of boots on the ground military involvement in '64 and '65.

NOBLE: [00:16:03] Yeah. So you get married in, when did you say, in spring of '60?

HANLON: [00:16:12] April. Six.

NOBLE: [00:16:14] Six.

HANLON: [00:16:15] 1966.

NOBLE: [00:16:17] And you had graduated from college in?

HANLON: [00:16:20] No, we hadn't graduated. It was my senior year. And so we just, we got an apartment for a couple of months, and I just blindly wrapped up all my senior year commitments and so forth.

NOBLE: [00:16:32] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:16:32] She had left college. She went to the U of I, down at Champaign-Urbana.

NOBLE: [00:16:39] Illinois.

HANLON: [00:16:39] Right. And, uh, but she had left after her freshman year or sophomore year, to take a year off. She was working in Peoria for a year. Then she went back and then we sort of decided to get married and it was kind of impulsive. So she dropped out that year too. So when we moved in together in New Haven in the spring of '66, I was doing everything I had to do to complete all my requirements to be able to graduate and to go into the Peace Corps. That was the next big thing on our agenda.

NOBLE: [00:17:20] Mm hmm. So you applied separately before you were married?

HANLON: [00:17:25] Yeah. Probably like in November or December.

NOBLE: [00:17:28] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:17:28] And we applied, you know, I can remember the application. It was like Africa, Asia, Latin America, Micronesia.

NOBLE: [00:17:39] Those were the choices that you were given?

HANLON: [00:17:41] Something like that.

NOBLE: [00:17:41] Did they ask you to rank those in in order of your preference?

HANLON: [00:17:44] I thought it was just one. You know, I can't remember.

NOBLE: [00:17:47] So which one you did you say you wanted?

HANLON: [00:17:49] You know, we talked about it and it's like, well, Latin America. Okay. So we sent it in and then we were accepted. And, you know, the letter said Honduras, and it was like Honduras, where's that?

NOBLE: [00:18:05] Where's that?

HANLON: [00:18:07] So we go to the atlas and look it up. Well, there is a place called Central America, and Honduras is one of them. Let's go. But it wasn't, uh, it wasn't because of a burning interest or deep knowledge

about Mexico or Latin American culture. It's just, you know, pick. Pick one out of five world continental.

NOBLE: [00:18:32] And that sounded okay.

HANLON: [00:18:33] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:18:34] So what was your, what was the reaction of your family, your mom and dad, your older brother? Did they, what did they think about this?

HANLON: [00:18:42] My older brother was married and had a kid by that time, and we were close to them. We were close to my parents. Everybody was in favor of it. It was like, okay. I was probably, I think I got accepted into law school. I think I went through the application procedure to go to law school at University of Chicago, and actually my class, my roommate Eddie.

NOBLE: [00:19:13] Your roommate at Yale?

HANLON: [00:19:15] Yeah. We both applied there together and he got in and I got in and then, but I sort of. Anyway, everything seemed to be fine. The idea was, and the University of Chicago said, you can go to the Peace Corps and we'll honor that when you get out, when you come back. And so that was not, it was not conflictful.

NOBLE: [00:19:38] Good. So you and Bev were invited to go and train. Where did you train?

HANLON: [00:19:46] Saint Louis University.

NOBLE: [00:19:48] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:19:49] Is that right? Or maybe Washington University in Saint Louis.

NOBLE: [00:19:52] In Saint Louis.

HANLON: [00:19:53] In Saint Louis, I think that's where. They had, they had, uh, trained Honduran groups for several years. They had a core program there. This guy named Ray Swan was a director for our specific group. I think our group was seven. Honduras VII. And I think that there would have been 60 or 70 of us that converged on that campus. We lived in the Y and went to classes over on the university campus. Married people were together in rooms. Single people were more roommates and stuff like that.

NOBLE: [00:20:39] But you were all at the Y?

HANLON: [00:20:40] Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

NOBLE: [00:20:42] How many? How big was your training group, do you remember?

HANLON: [00:20:44] I think 60 or 70 people were in there.

NOBLE: [00:20:47] To start?

HANLON: [00:20:48] I think so, yeah. Big group.

NOBLE: [00:20:52] How many married couples?

HANLON: [00:20:54] Not too many. Maybe five. Ten couples, maybe.

NOBLE: [00:21:01] So you're at the Y and you go to the university for classes. Talk about that a little bit. What did they, what were they teaching you in training?

HANLON: [00:21:13] The introduction when we got there and some of the descriptive information we took there from that was mailed to us described our project as being social workers are going to work with the national social work organization or agency in Honduras, whose titular head was the wife of the president of Honduras. And so we would be spread out throughout the country, sort of associated with schools and, uh, I want to say alcaldes, mayors. But anyway, where they were hoping to set up and expand an existing social work program. And so we were going to be the manpower.

So in St. Louis, we trained. We learned how to sort of manage and conduct children's games. Kickball.

NOBLE: [00:22:22] Oh.

HANLON: [00:22:23] We did some gardening. We had gardens, and actually we had them in those, near those sort of despicable high rises that were later blown down. I don't remember the name of it, but it was, uh. So we, you know, we did various, I'm going to call social work type activities, and that was the program that we studied, because half of the curriculum was conversational Spanish.

NOBLE: [00:22:53] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:22:54] And the other half was this kind of varied social work stuff, whatever they could put together. The whole thing was scheduled to last about three months, so it wasn't like we were going to get deeply trained in any kind of social work activity or accomplishment. But we, you know, the language training was intense.

NOBLE: [00:23:13] Who taught it?

HANLON: [00:23:15] There were two or three native Hondurans.

NOBLE: [00:23:17] Yeah. So it was Honduran Spanish.

HANLON: [00:23:19] Yeah. Yes, I think so. There were some American Spanish, you know, they were Spanish, but they were Americans. But there were, I bet half of the teachers were from Honduras.

NOBLE: [00:23:31] Oh, that's terrific. And then were there classes about the history of Honduras, political situation?

HANLON: [00:23:39] I think so. I know that we had some book assignments and stuff like that, that kind of stuff.

NOBLE: [00:23:46] Do you recall if there were American studies, talk about communism?

HANLON: [00:23:51] Well, I do remember that we were told that we couldn't wear beards. You couldn't be like Castro. Castro was fairly new. He had just come in in '59 or '60 into Cuba, and he was exporting his Cuban revolution throughout Central America and the Caribbean. And it was a big concern to the Americans and to the established governments of Mexico and Central America. So anyway, we were, we couldn't have beards. We shouldn't be dressing like Che and Fidel. Sandals were kind of prohibited because, again, that, it looked like you could possibly be a leftist communist guerrilla. I think the women were told to wear skirts and dress formally, not too. Uh. I don't want to say loose, but you know, it was the time of the hippies.

NOBLE: [00:24:50] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:24:51] And so long hair.

NOBLE: [00:24:52] You were not to look like a hippie.

HANLON: [00:24:53] Yeah, you weren't to look like a hippie.

NOBLE: [00:24:55] Yeah. Yeah. No tattered blue jeans.

HANLON: [00:24:59] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:25:01] So part of training often is medical stuff. Did they give you a whole battery of vaccinations?

HANLON: [00:25:12] Yes. I think Beverly had her wisdom teeth pulled.

NOBLE: [00:25:16] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [00:25:17] That was a routine. They looked at mine and I said, I want to keep them. So I didn't have them pulled. But yeah, we went through some kind of screening for that and it was not an issue.

NOBLE: [00:25:31] Did you have physical ed training?

HANLON: [00:25:35] We, yeah, you might say sports.

NOBLE: [00:25:38] Sports.

HANLON: [00:25:38] A little bit of activity.

NOBLE: [00:25:39] But not like an Outward Bound endurance challenge?

HANLON: [00:25:42] No. I don't think we did that.

NOBLE: [00:25:44] Deselection. Was that part of your training program?

HANLON: [00:25:51] Yes. There were several times when there was sort of a black ball exercise where we were all given lists of everybody and said, you know, do you think that this person should continue and go or should this person not go? And I can't remember that I really had strong feelings about anybody not going. But there were, there were some that were deselected out. I think there were sort of, there were several self-selected.

NOBLE: [00:26:23] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:26:23] People who were ambivalent, who had other things to do. It wasn't turning out to be what they thought it would be.

NOBLE: [00:26:32] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [00:26:32] But, you know, a lot of the men with this deferment thing hanging over. It was like, you know, we want to get finished with this, get the deferment, and go to Honduras.

NOBLE: [00:26:41] Do it. Yeah. Did you have psychologists coming out to interview you?

HANLON: [00:26:46] I think we did. I think we did.

NOBLE: [00:26:49] Individual sessions?

HANLON: [00:26:51] Maybe. Maybe. Maybe not everybody. Maybe just some people who were showing worse signs than others. I don't remember that.

NOBLE: [00:26:59] Yeah. Do you remember, um, do you ever remember feeling that there was some injustice, that people got deselected who you thought would be terrific volunteers?

HANLON: [00:27:11] No. I don't remember having any strong feelings about that. I think a draft board got this one Black guy in our group, and that was, it seemed bad and it seemed racist because my draft board was cooperating. I don't remember where he was from and I don't really remember anything about it except that his participation didn't protect him at that time.

NOBLE: [00:27:42] Right. And you thought it ought to for most of you?

HANLON: [00:27:45] Yeah. It was doing it for all the white kids.

NOBLE: [00:27:48] Were there other Black people or was he the only one?

HANLON: [00:27:50] I think there were several. I think there were some females. Uh. I do remember Powell, a girl named Powell, who was, she was Japanese. Her parents had been interned. She had actually spent some time in one of those in the Second World War in California. I'd never met anybody like that.

NOBLE: [00:28:11] No kidding. So that was one of the interesting aspects of training, of being mixed together with people quite different from those you would have met even at Yale.

HANLON: [00:28:21] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:28:24] Did you develop close friendships with some of your fellow trainees?

HANLON: [00:28:28] I think so, yeah. Certainly the ones that we went on to be close to in country. And there were some that we had good friendships with who didn't go. And so there was no future to that or didn't follow up.

NOBLE: [00:28:46] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:28:47] But we had a good time. We had a good time in Saint Louis.

NOBLE: [00:28:52] Do you think it prepared you? Was it an adequate training program?

HANLON: [00:28:57] Well, about two thirds of the way through, the sky race one gathered us all together one morning and said, well, the social work program has just collapsed.

NOBLE: [00:29:06] Oh. Oh my.

HANLON: [00:29:08] What we thought you were going to go do for various bureaucratic reasons, you're not going to do that.

NOBLE: [00:29:14] Oh.

HANLON: [00:29:15] Don't worry, we'll find something for you to do, but you're not going to do that. And it was like, well, uh, what does that mean? What are we going to do? Nobody knew. Nobody, nobody had any answers. And I guess even, I think that some people knew. I think I'm just, I've kind of forgotten or put it out of mind about why it was. Maybe it was local politics in Honduras more than any Peace Corps snafu. But again.

HANLON: [00:29:47] You know, we were not teachers going to teach. We were not engineers going to be engineers or some of the specialized Peace Corps programs that I think are more prevalent nowadays. I think it's more technical now. You kind of get, they select for a specific type activities. You get training for that and you go do it and you make a contribution. For us, it was really the community organization, the people to people kind of stuff, and it was. In an important way, it didn't make any difference what

kind of training we'd had or what kind of. As long as we could go there and they would support us health wise and so forth, it didn't matter to me what we were doing.

NOBLE: [00:30:37] Yeah. So it's not clearly defined.

HANLON: [00:30:39] Not at all.

NOBLE: [00:30:40] What your role was supposed to be. Um, is there anything else you'd like to say about training before we move on, into Honduras?

HANLON: [00:30:49] Great language training. I think toward the end, it was almost 12 hours a day.

NOBLE: [00:30:53] Wow.

HANLON: [00:30:54] For a couple of weeks.

NOBLE: [00:30:55] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:30:57] I think, again, I try to describe that frustration I felt about being naturally disinclined to learn a foreign language and kind of. But I think that the repetitive, lengthy, intensive training that we did get in St. Louis sort of laid the foundation so that I could pick it up easily when I got there.

NOBLE: [00:31:22] Once you got there. Yeah. So training comes to an end. Swearing in ceremony maybe? Do you remember anything about that?

HANLON: [00:31:29] No. No, we went home.

NOBLE: [00:31:32] You get to go home after training?

HANLON: [00:31:33] We went home for a week or two or some period of time. And when we were there, I can remember Bev and I ran around Peoria putting together that trunk. We had a trunk, some kind of a dimension. We went and got one of those and we actually bought that chicken fryer thing that you see over there, some kind of a cast iron. We went down to the

hardware store and bought some cooking type stuff. I went to the clothing store and bought some basics. Bev's sister-in-law made her several dresses. You know, we tried to think about two years and being in this foreign place.

NOBLE: [00:32:12] Right. Where it was going to be hot.

HANLON: [00:32:14] Yeah. And, you know, we knew we could get, like, toothpaste and stuff like that, so we didn't have to stockpile. But for example, I went to the Army Navy surplus store and bought like three or four pairs of shoes, which turned out to be trash. They were just very poorly made and fell apart the first time I wore them. But anyway, stuff like that that you kind of tried to think about.

NOBLE: [00:32:39] Yeah, right, right. They probably gave you a list of things that you needed too.

HANLON: [00:32:43] Probably.

NOBLE: [00:32:45] And so you're saying goodbye to your family. Do you remember going away parties?

HANLON: [00:32:50] No. I'm sure there were some.

NOBLE: [00:32:53] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:32:55] We had friends there. I can remember some friends of ours from high school gave us a wedding present because we had gotten married in New Haven really. So they had just, so back in Peoria, there were some stuff like that.

NOBLE: [00:33:12] And then you go somewhere to get on a plane.

HANLON: [00:33:15] Yeah, I'm sure that we got on it in Peoria.

NOBLE: [00:33:17] Really?

HANLON: [00:33:18] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:33:19] Just you and Bev flying into Honduras, or did you fly over on a chartered plane?

HANLON: [00:33:24] Yeah, we gathered in Miami, the Peace. Our group reassembled in Miami at the airport on such and such a day.

NOBLE: [00:33:34] And this was what time of spring?

HANLON: [00:33:36] No, it was late summer, early fall.

NOBLE: [00:33:37] Late summer. Okay. All right.

HANLON: [00:33:40] And I suppose it was a chartered plane. I never gave it any thought, but we were all on one plane and we flew to Tegucigalpa.

NOBLE: [00:33:50] Yeah, and that's from Miami. That would have been what, four or five flight?

HANLON: [00:33:55] I don't know. No, I don't think so. I don't think it would be that long.

NOBLE: [00:33:58] Ah. Yeah. And then you get off the plane. And what was that like? Did you remember what it felt like to get off that plane and find yourself in Tegucigalpa?

HANLON: [00:34:14] It was the capital city. There were lots of other volunteers around, people who'd been there while. There were staff. There was, you know, things to do, like be here tomorrow morning at 9:00, kind of organizational stuff. We were all anxious to go to our places where we were. And by then, I think we had an assignment. We knew we were going to go in this place called Goascoran, wherever that was. And no, just kind of a mad whirlwind of keeping everything, not losing anything. And basically, they probably drove us to our site. I'm sure they did. I'm sure that some staff guy put three or four volunteers in kind of a big station

wagon and went down the southern highway down toward Nacaome and dropped some people off there, and then went on to Goascoran.

NOBLE: [00:35:12] You mentioned something a little earlier before we turned on the tape recorder about wallets. Your dad giving you 200 bucks? Did you tell that story?

HANLON: [00:35:22] Yeah. My dad had given me 200 bucks cash just to kind of walking around money, which was kind of a lot of money in '66. And I also had a very nice camera. I had gotten a camera and I hadn't really thought too much about security and so forth. But anyway, we stayed at this reputable pension, it was called. It wasn't really a hotel. It was sort of bedrooms off of a couple of patios, maybe a couple of different levels, in Tegucigalpa. And I can remember sort of waking up in the night and thinking, you know, there's some movement or something around here. But it was all so exciting and new to me. I'm sure I didn't get any sleep anyway, but the next morning I noticed that the \$200 cash had been taken out of my wallet. Everything else was safe. But, you know, it's.

NOBLE: [00:36:20] Your camera?

HANLON: [00:36:21] Yeah, it was safe. Good. It occurred to me that that would, you know, just be so natural to. You'd have these incoming Americans, all of them with some kind of money, and all you got to do is go take it out of that wallet.

NOBLE: [00:36:37] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:36:38] And there it is, hanging on a nail right by the guy's.

NOBLE: [00:36:41] In somebody's pocket.

HANLON: [00:36:43] So that made sense to me afterwards. At the time, I was upset.

NOBLE: [00:36:47] Well, I would imagine you were upset. That's kind of a rude welcome to a country. But here you are, a middle class American who's a wealthy man in the eyes of poor Hondurans.

HANLON: [00:37:02] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:37:04] So you. You're taken in a Peace Corps transport to the town of Goascoran. Tell us, now you know where it is in Honduras. Where in Honduras is that?

HANLON: [00:37:16] Well, it was southwest, so to speak. It's near the Pacific Ocean or it's in the lowlands along the Pacific side. A lot of Honduras is in the north side, along the Caribbean.

NOBLE: [00:37:31] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:37:32] The major ports, San Pedro Sula and Tela and whatever the other ones are. And the cruise ships go to those resort islands up there, Roatan. Anyway. And then Tegucigalpa is in the central part, in the mountainous part. And in the south you have the south, and the Pan American Highway runs through Mexico and through Central America to South America, or at least to the Panama Canal.

NOBLE: [00:38:02] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:38:03] Through that southern plain. And so our village was, actually it was on the river, which is the border with El Salvador. If you looked over the river, that was El Salvador. And a three mile or five kilometer walk down our road got you to the Pan American Highway. And there was a *la frontera*, the frontier customs, the formal entry on the Pan American Highway for each country, Honduras and El Salvador, was right there. So there was a military installation and all that sort of thing. So anyway we.

NOBLE: [00:38:47] How close to the ocean?

HANLON: [00:38:49] Pretty far, I would say 50 miles.

NOBLE: [00:38:52] Oh, okay. So you couldn't walk to the beach.

HANLON: [00:38:54] You couldn't walk to the beach. And there were actually when we did go down there, it wasn't much of a beach. It was just kind of marshy and mangrove-y. And there was some black sand some places. But over in El Salvador at La Union, I'm pretty sure it was called, there was a Pacific beach. And it was a beautiful beach and it was like a two or three hour bus ride from our site. So if we wanted to do that, we'd go.

NOBLE: [00:39:21] You could go for a little R&R.

HANLON: [00:39:22] Yeah, over to El Salvador.

NOBLE: [00:39:23] Yeah. Yeah. So you're taken to Goascoran, and did Peace Corps staff introduce you then to the mayor or people that would be your coworkers?

HANLON: [00:39:39] There had been a volunteer there previously, you know?

NOBLE: [00:39:44] Oh, there had?

HANLON: [00:39:44] There had been. And I think that she had left like maybe more than a year, but not much more. But it wasn't like we were right on the heels of that. There had been quite a time gap. But I think most of the people there knew sort of what we were about.

NOBLE: [00:40:03] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:40:04] And I think they had kind of made arrangements. They put us in one house that night and it was raining in this and that. And then they decided that that wasn't really where we should be. So they found another house for us, which was the house that we stayed in for the two years. But there, yeah, the priests, the Roman Catholic priests who were French-Canadian.

NOBLE: [00:40:32] No kidding.

HANLON: [00:40:33] They and they had kind of a clinic there with some nuns. I don't think the nuns actually lived in Goascoran, but they were there often. They

were, I think they were part of a welcoming committee with sort of like the mayor and the school teacher and others, kind of welcoming us and trying to find out if we needed anything, if we wanted anything. And it was very soon that we got very comfortably settled in. One story that I like to think of is that we stayed in this first place on these sort of roll away beds. And then somebody said, you know, you shouldn't be down here because the river is right there. And there could be these ladrones, these thieves, that would come across the river and steal your stuff. I don't really know how.

HANLON: [00:41:26] But anyway, they had found this other room and where we were going to pay a nice rent. And the landlord was a former mayor of the town and he had built this room as part of his house and sort of upgraded it so that it could be a store, a tienda. So it had a nice tile floor, it had real wooden doors on the doors and it had a window opening with bars in it and shutters. It wasn't glass. But it was new. And actually there was a latrine in back and there were, there were no toilets in town.

NOBLE: [00:42:00] When you say a latrine in back, that's outside?

HANLON: [00:42:03] Yes, it was outside, but there. I bet there weren't 20 latrines in this town. I think, it was a town of, say, 1,500 people, 2,000. Not a big place, but it was a county seat and it was an old town. The church there had been there three or 400 years. And so it was kind of a sleepy, old, primitive, you know. There was no potable water. At some point, somebody had installed a water distribution system by putting a fairly large tank up on a nearby hillside and then running galvanized pipe throughout the village. And there were maybe 100 spigots.

NOBLE: [00:42:50] Oh.

HANLON: [00:42:52] Maybe half of those would have been in private homes and the other half were in public squares in different places that were convenient.

NOBLE: [00:42:59] So you'd go down there with your bucket and fill it up?

HANLON: [00:43:00] Yeah, our place had one.

NOBLE: [00:43:02] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:43:03] And of course, that's why they got it for us, because they know we needed it and we wanted it and we could pay for it. And, uh.

NOBLE: [00:43:13] But this was not potable water?

HANLON: [00:43:15] No.

NOBLE: [00:43:16] This was water that you'd have to purify, boil.

HANLON: [00:43:18] Right. Otherwise you'd have to send a kid down to the river, you know, with a three gallon.

NOBLE: [00:43:24] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:43:25] And bring it back. And that's of course, if you look at the pictures, that's what most of the people did most of the time.

NOBLE: [00:43:31] They'd get the water from the river.

HANLON: [00:43:33] Well, now that it was piped. But I mean away from our town, out in some other place where there wasn't. Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:43:39] And so if people didn't have even a latrine, and I was going to ask you where they would go, but describe your latrine. Was it a toilet?

HANLON: [00:43:50] Well, it was a pit latrine. It had a wooden box over it. It was a one holer and it was just a pit dug in the ground and on the seat there was a tin can full of lime, calcium or something. White stuff.

NOBLE: [00:44:06] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:44:06] And when you'd go there was toilet paper, when you'd go you'd sprinkle that in there. And if you are real curious and you wanted to shine your flashlight down in there, you could see what was down in there. But it was private, it was ours, and it was comfortable. It was built in a corner of

our backyard. Our yard was an adobe wall on two sides, and it was in that corner. So it was 20 feet away from our back door. And eventually we roofed over that so that you wouldn't even have to get wet going out there if it was raining. But you know, it takes some getting used to, but the alternative was basically to defecate on the ground.

NOBLE: [00:44:52] Yeah. So you'd go out to a field somewhere.

HANLON: [00:44:55] Well, or any corner. I mean, you, you know, and that's what 99 percent of the townspeople did.

NOBLE: [00:45:04] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:45:04] And that was normal. And it was healthy, so to speak, and routine. There was nothing. And you never saw it. You never were dealing with it. Part of it is the pigs and the chickens. They're roaming everywhere.

NOBLE: [00:45:18] Right. And they clean, they'd clean it up?

HANLON: [00:45:20] Everything. Yeah. When you, like when a baby would have an accident. Boom. Dogs, the pigs, the chickens, and it would be clean as a whistle.

NOBLE: [00:45:29] Be gone. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:45:29] And within, you know, 10 minutes. So that was interesting. And then the electricity, I want to mention, you know, utilities and so forth. There was a light bulb in our room and like a 40 watt light bulb hanging down from wire in the middle of our room. Our room was like 12 by 12, or 15 by 15, something like that.

NOBLE: [00:45:53] And this was your entire living quarters, right?

HANLON: [00:45:55] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:45:55] This one room?

HANLON: [00:45:57] Yes, it was a good sized room.

NOBLE: [00:45:59] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:45:59] We did have a back porch and that's actually where the water spigot and the pila, kind of a cement tank thing.

NOBLE: [00:46:08] A sink.

HANLON: [00:46:08] Yeah. And there'd be a storage thing next to it, because the water would go off.

NOBLE: [00:46:13] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:46:13] You couldn't always get water out of that spigot.

NOBLE: [00:46:15] So you want to have a supply.

HANLON: [00:46:16] They have like ten gallons in this tank thing. And then the sink and the water. The empty water just went out the back of the spigot there. And that's where you'd planted all your plants and everything and they'd get the water.

NOBLE: [00:46:29] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:46:30] But anyway, this electric light bulb. Right behind us, uh, the, there was a private generator owned by kind of an entrepreneur in our town. And I think he supported like, say, 100 light bulbs in town or I don't know how many, but you paid him a monthly subscription and he turned his generator on at 6:00 in the evening and he turned it off at 10:00. And so you had this 40 watt light bulb going during those four hours.

NOBLE: [00:47:05] For 4 hours every evening. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:47:08] And there were a lot of battery stuff, the radios and flashlights and. And radios I guess really is what I'm thinking about, the battery. But so it was primitive. It was primitive without what you would talk when you

would think of water or electricity or plumbing, you know. But our room was dry, it was comfortable, and it was all very civilized. Well, I know the story that I was getting to is when we got, when we moved into this permanent room, we're all standing. It was dark and it seemed like it had been raining. And so we had some mud on our shoes and we had our suitcases and trunks and we're all kind of getting the lay of the land, looking around here. And our landlords, Don Jesus and Dona Blanca, they had like 16 kids.

NOBLE: [00:48:07] Oh.

HANLON: [00:48:08] And some of their older kids had kids. So there were a lot of kids.

NOBLE: [00:48:12] A lot of kids around.

HANLON: [00:48:14] And I think it was China who was about, I'm going to say four or five years old. And of course, we didn't really know her at the time. But anyway, she was in there and we were standing around and I sort of had my back up to the wall and everybody's talking, you know, you can't understand very much and this and that. And I saw this great big, huge spider start to walk up this whitewashed wall right behind me. And I went, ooh! And I moved away from it. You know, it was like, because it was dark and shadowy in there. I move away from it. And China was on the other side, this little four year old girl. And she looked at me and she looked at my eyes and she looked over at that spider and she slapped with her hands, smashed this huge spider. And it was like, China, what bravery! And, you know, so it was a great welcome to that house.

NOBLE: [00:49:19] A wonderful introduction.

HANLON: [00:49:21] Then we got to know China.

NOBLE: [00:49:23] Yeah. So this family with the 16 kids, they were crammed into a very.

HANLON: [00:49:29] The other two rooms.

NOBLE: [00:49:31] The other two rooms of this building. Yeah. Wow.

HANLON: [00:49:34] That's what they wanted though. They didn't, they wanted the rental income. They never intended to occupy this fancy space. The other rooms had mud floors.

NOBLE: [00:49:43] And yours had, yours had a tile floor.

HANLON: [00:49:45] Yeah. And they didn't even have doors and they didn't, they. I think they might have used the latrine before we got there, but they were not bothered by the fact that they could no longer use that latrine back there in the corner.

NOBLE: [00:49:58] And they didn't have a latrine for themselves?

HANLON: [00:50:00] Right. There was no other latrine.

NOBLE: [00:50:01] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:50:03] I will say that, you know, in these adobe houses with a tile roof, you have a center line. It's a peaked roof.

NOBLE: [00:50:15] Oh yeah.

HANLON: [00:50:16] And so whether you have gable ends or whatnot, you still have this peaked roof and the tile. So interior walls that divide between spaces do not typically go up.

NOBLE: [00:50:31] You'd have a triangular open space at the top.

HANLON: [00:50:33] Yes, exactly.

NOBLE: [00:50:35] Between your living quarters and your neighbors.

HANLON: [00:50:37] Yes. So that was permanently occupied by little faces. They were always looking over.

NOBLE: [00:50:45] Looking for you.

HANLON: [00:50:45] And we'd go, get down from there! So but that was how our privacy was respected.

NOBLE: [00:50:53] Oh my goodness. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:50:53] And hardly any other neighbor kids would, they would let them in there. But those, our friends. They would. They couldn't resist. And you could hear them inside, Dona. Get out, *bájate!*

NOBLE: [00:51:07] Oh, the parents telling, the parents telling the kids to get down off the wall. Yeah. What about cooking? Did you cook for yourselves?

HANLON: [00:51:17] Yeah. Beverly cooked. I didn't cook, but Beverly cooked. And we'd go out, I guess, a little bit. There were little eateries around there, nothing like a restaurant, but there were places where workmen and others who were away from home could get a meal. And so Beverly cooked. Once a week, there was a butcher that would slaughter. One week he'd slaughter a cow, and the next week he would slaughter a pig. And it was on the town square. And you went down there and you looked around at this meat hanging in his living room and you'd pick out a couple of pounds of it. And, uh, after a while, it might have been six months or I don't know. After some time we bought a used refrigerator. It was a kerosene fired refrigerator, which, you know, sounds crazy. But anyway, if you light a fire in the bottom of a fridge, this kind of special refrigerator, the heat coming off that thing will do certain refrigeration, uh, boiling and condensing and transporting this coolant around through that refrigerator somehow. I still don't know how, but you could have ice in top. It was a little refrigerator.

NOBLE: [00:52:42] Wow, it was efficient enough to make ice?

HANLON: [00:52:43] It would make ice. Keep beer cold. Keep meat cold. The downside was that if you put meat in there and then you went away for two days and somehow the wind blew that fire out.

NOBLE: [00:52:55] Oh.

HANLON: [00:52:55] It would spoil inside.

NOBLE: [00:52:56] By meat. Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:52:58] And it'd be kind of a mess.

NOBLE: [00:53:00] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:53:00] Smelly and so forth.

NOBLE: [00:53:01] But for the first several months, you lived without refrigeration?

HANLON: [00:53:05] I think so, yeah. We had a kerosene cook stove and we had pots and pans and we bought more and we rigged up kind of a little kitchen shelving arrangement over by the, this kerosene cook stove and a kind of an L-shaped kitchen arrangement. You know, we saw, we tried to replicate an American kitchen.

NOBLE: [00:53:31] Ah yes.

HANLON: [00:53:31] Rather than, of course, everybody else cooked with wood. *Leña*.

NOBLE: [00:53:34] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:53:34] Little pieces of wood.

NOBLE: [00:53:36] Right.

HANLON: [00:53:37] And they'd stick them in these sort of clay, uh, beautifully made fire pits, and they'd put this big clay, oh, what would you call it? A bowl. But it was a very shallow bowl and then cooked tortillas on it. And they had pots and pans to fry meat and fry rice or to cook rice on this wood fire. But we did it on kerosene. So it worked. But we had, we ate good. There

was tomatoes, onions, celery. We had to worry a little bit about, well, we called it douching the vegetables in a very light rinse of some kind of disinfectant.

NOBLE: [00:54:21] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:54:21] But nothing that would really taste bad.

NOBLE: [00:54:23] And that was to eat them raw?

HANLON: [00:54:25] Yeah, well, even if you're. Yeah, I guess so.

NOBLE: [00:54:29] Even if you were going to cook it?

HANLON: [00:54:29] No, I guess if you cooked it, you could. But yeah, it seemed like we did that to even to tomatoes that you were going to sauté before rice.

NOBLE: [00:54:40] Uh huh. So you had rice?

HANLON: [00:54:41] We had rice. We had meat.

NOBLE: [00:54:45] Pasta?

HANLON: [00:54:45] Probably had pasta. Yeah, I think Beverly made spaghetti. At the store, it was a very simple store, but they were like cans of peas and capers and there was ketchup and mustard.

NOBLE: [00:54:56] Capers, wow.

HANLON: [00:54:57] They had capers and a lot of it in these tamales that were just delicious. Oh my gosh. At Christmas time, they made a tamale with a banana leaf wrap, you know, and this corn masa and little pieces of pork and it's delicious. It was just, it's just to die for.

NOBLE: [00:55:14] Yes.

HANLON: [00:55:16] So beer. We drank a lot of beer and we had a water filter in there so you could drink some water. But the beer was, you know, seemed safer.

NOBLE: [00:55:27] Did you have to boil the water before you filter?

HANLON: [00:55:29] Yeah. Well, yeah, yeah. You were supposed to boil the water. You couldn't count on the filter.

NOBLE: [00:55:37] Yeah. Yeah. How was your health? Did you maintain health?

HANLON: [00:55:43] I lost weight. I probably lost 20 pounds. Ten, 20 pounds. That was normal. I mean, I walked everywhere.

NOBLE: [00:55:51] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:55:52] And, uh, the idea was, or everybody said that the men are going to lose 10 pounds and the women are going to gain 10 pounds.

NOBLE: [00:56:00] Yes.

HANLON: [00:56:01] And most of that, I think, from this diet of corn tortillas and rice and beans and a little bit of meat and some salad and stuff. So anyway, my health was good. I did have parasites, oh, maybe five times during the two years. And I felt bad. You'd smell bad. Your breath, your farts. You knew that something was wrong. You'd go to Teguc and get a stool sample and they'd identify it, and then they'd give you something and it would go away. And I never had anything that really was invasive or life threatening. I just had an ongoing, inconvenient parasitical problem.

NOBLE: [00:56:51] Yeah, and you could deal with that.

HANLON: [00:56:54] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:56:54] So you talked about going into Teguc, which is Tegucigalpa, the capital city. How far how far away from the capital city were you?

HANLON: [00:57:02] We were pretty far in terms that we were at the end of the line, let's put it that way. But what that meant was if you wanted to go to Teguc, you'd tell somebody, and at 4:00 in the morning, they'd come by the front of your house.

NOBLE: [00:57:19] I just want to look to see how much we've got, how much time we've got. I think we're okay. Continue. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:57:29] So anyway, you'd, at 4:00 in the morning, you'd get on this little *busito*, little VW van.

NOBLE: [00:57:36] Van.

HANLON: [00:57:36] Yeah, mostly. Sometimes it would be a freight truck. It was not a big truck, but it was bigger than a pickup truck where they were, uh. They had room for maybe ten passengers and then a bunch of other stuff. Anyway, you'd climb onto this thing and make this arduous trip from, I think it was four or 5,000 feet up. I guess I should look to see what the elevation was. But it was, the road was constantly climbing for the last two or 3 hours.

NOBLE: [00:58:06] Climbing up to Tegucigalpa?

HANLON: [00:58:08] Right.

NOBLE: [00:58:08] Because that was in the center of the country.

HANLON: [00:58:10] Yeah, well, it was in these mountains.

NOBLE: [00:58:12] Right.

HANLON: [00:58:13] I suppose it was in a valley. So you went back down at the end, but uh.

NOBLE: [00:58:16] But you were coming from coastal flat land.

HANLON: [00:58:19] Right.

NOBLE: [00:58:19] Going up.

HANLON: [00:58:20] Right. And these tiny little engines, tiny little VW engines straining away. So it was like a five hour trip, four hour trip.

NOBLE: [00:58:29] Would you go and come back on the same day or did you usually spend the night in Teguc?

HANLON: [00:58:33] I think we usually spent the night.

NOBLE: [00:58:34] Uh huh. And where, when you got to Tegucigalpa, where would you stay? Was there a Peace Corps hostel?

HANLON: [00:58:40] Well, there was one that a lot of Peace Corps volunteers used. There were several. And we each had our own favorite. And we'd go there and usually there was room and we had a room and, you know, it felt good. I think it was Dona Teresa, where the one that we wound up staying the most at.

NOBLE: [00:58:59] So there was a Peace Corps office there in the capital city?

HANLON: [00:59:02] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:59:02] Peace Corps doctors?

HANLON: [00:59:04] Yeah. The whole Peace Corps staff was there. And, you know, we were supposed to give, I think, monthly reports and we were supposed to write things and send them things. And they'd have programs. Okay, all the southern volunteers are going to meet at this place for this weekend, and we're going to study. Some of the projects that I got into were organizing a credit union, sort of crop improvements, an agricultural project, and school construction.

NOBLE: [00:59:41] Hmm.

HANLON: [00:59:41] And each one had a certain arrangement and profile. The school program was courting, CARE, and the deal was that if you could organize a community to build four adobe walls with window openings, and so over just four adobe walls, which was a fairly easy thing for a community to do. No big engineering. No, not expensive. They could build a school building. Well, I could get money to buy the material for the roof, for the doors and windows, and for a cement floor to be poured in there.

NOBLE: [01:00:17] How were you supposed to get the money to do that?

HANLON: [01:00:19] CARE.

NOBLE: [01:00:20] Oh, through CARE. Okay.

HANLON: [01:00:21] Yeah. It was like this program and, you know.

NOBLE: [01:00:23] You just had to apply?

HANLON: [01:00:25] Yeah. And you'd say, well, I've got, they did it out in such and such. Nacino. And so then we'd go into town, go to Teguc, get the money from CARE, go round to the stores, buy this stuff, try to figure out how to get it out there, and then go back out there and tell them it's coming on such and such a day. And you need to have a work crew here because we're going to have the lumber and so on and so forth. You're going to have to put it up. And they were all very excited once, uh, if this community would get a school, then the central government would assign a teacher to it.

NOBLE: [01:01:06] Oh, fine. Okay. But they had to provide the building for it?

HANLON: [01:01:08] They had to build it.

NOBLE: [01:01:09] So this wasn't within the town of Goascoran, it was an outlying village?

HANLON: [01:01:12] Right. There was plenty of schools in Goascoran.

NOBLE: [01:01:14] Okay.

HANLON: [01:01:15] This would be an outlying place.

NOBLE: [01:01:16] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:01:17] Ten, 15 miles away. 20 miles away.

NOBLE: [01:01:20] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:01:22] You know, if it was only five miles, the kids could walk in.

NOBLE: [01:01:25] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:01:26] To go to school in Goascoran. There was no need to build another one.

NOBLE: [01:01:28] But beyond that, they needed their own school.

HANLON: [01:01:30] Yeah. They'd have to come in and board, have family or friends or pay money.

NOBLE: [01:01:35] That's expensive.

HANLON: [01:01:36] Yeah. And so they'd rather have the school out there. Plus, the schoolteacher was, you know, part of the economic improvement of that. Here's another salary. Here's somebody that wants to buy things and stuff. So it was a, it was good to have a school building in your community.

NOBLE: [01:01:54] Yes. So you were responding to an expressed need of that little village. They had said what we need here is a school. And then you were, you were there to help make that happen.

HANLON: [01:02:04] Right. They knew about the program. They couldn't, they didn't know how to access it. I suppose they could have, but that's what I did.

NOBLE: [01:02:13] How did you find out that that would be one of your roles?

HANLON: [01:02:16] I'd be out there just walking around saying, you know, you guys want a school, we can do a school. And they'd say, what do you mean? Blah, blah, blah.

NOBLE: [01:02:22] Ah, okay.

HANLON: [01:02:24] And the other, like I mentioned.

NOBLE: [01:02:27] And who put that into your head to ask that question? Did Peace Corps suggest that?

HANLON: [01:02:30] Yeah, yeah.

NOBLE: [01:02:31] That this is one of the things you can do.

HANLON: [01:02:33] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:02:34] Yeah. You were trained after you got to Honduras in that.

HANLON: [01:02:37] Right. We were told about it, yeah.

NOBLE: [01:02:38] Right. Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:02:40] The other was a UN, a United Nations program for Food and Agricultural Organization, F-A-O, FAO. And for that, at the Peace Corps headquarters in Tegucigalpa you'd talk to somebody and they'd say, okay, we'll get you one of these. It was a crop demonstration kit.

NOBLE: [01:03:06] Hmm.

HANLON: [01:03:06] And it was a box. And inside the box there would be like three kinds of corn seeds, three kinds of fertilizer, and three kinds of insecticide. So you'd go out and you'd find a farmer, hopefully with a plot that was on a path or a road or the corner. Something that was visible.

NOBLE: [01:03:27] Where people could see this, yeah.

HANLON: [01:03:28] Yeah, yeah. And you'd say, hey, look, if you'll plant these, plant these three rows this way, you know, plant these sections.

NOBLE: [01:03:36] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:03:37] And then the other way we're going to do these fertilizer, insecticide, and, uh, whatever the other thing was. Herbicide? Fertilizer? Anyway, the idea was one half of this thing would grow up big and tall.

NOBLE: [01:03:55] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:03:55] And the other half would be all stunted.

NOBLE: [01:03:57] Kind of puny, yeah.

HANLON: [01:04:00] Puny. And it was sort of experimental because it was using different seeds and different fertilizer and different, some with insecticides, some without. That kind of thing. And, uh, they liked to do it. There was some question about the utility of it. And all of us volunteers used to worry about this because if some eager beaver Honduran got excited. Well, first of all, their normal agriculture thing was just a real simple, primitive slash and burn.

NOBLE: [01:04:39] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [01:04:40] They'd grow a mealpa of corn or beans and they'd harvest it and they'd cut everything down and they'd set fire to it and it would burn off and they'd get ready to do that next year. And it was all just by hand.

NOBLE: [01:04:53] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:04:54] Mostly just putting a hole in the ground with a long stick. Some of the other guys had like oxen and they'd drag a simple plow through and do all that. But the point is, is that they had their seed corn and beans and so forth left over from the year before, and it was free and they'd go and plant it and they'd have a crop.

NOBLE: [01:05:16] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:05:16] And we'd say, oh, that stuff, you know, we can get you better seed and we can get you better fertilizer and this and that, but you're going to have to pay for it.

NOBLE: [01:05:24] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:05:25] And so now this guy is making an investment of \$200.

NOBLE: [01:05:29] And can he use that, the seed from that improved crop for the following year?

HANLON: [01:05:35] Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't like that.

NOBLE: [01:05:36] Or did he have to keep buying it?

HANLON: [01:05:37] No, it wasn't. That's sort of a modern thing.

NOBLE: [01:05:39] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:05:40] Genetically modified.

NOBLE: [01:05:41] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:05:42] Sort of proprietary seed. No, it wasn't that. It was just a question that if it didn't rain, that farmer would get a bad crop. And not only would he, he might go hungry that year, and he sure didn't have enough left over to buy another \$200 worth of stuff.

NOBLE: [01:06:02] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:06:03] So you haven't helped him at all.

NOBLE: [01:06:05] Ah.

HANLON: [01:06:06] It would have been better for him to plant this free stuff and just suffer through the bad harvest than to incur a debt of \$200 plus have a bad harvest.

NOBLE: [01:06:15] Right.

HANLON: [01:06:15] And so, and there were all kinds of issues about storing these grains, building these little things. Because if you built a storage facility there, he could hold that grain for six months and then sell it at a much higher price. Because at the harvest, the price goes way down. Guys go out in the countryside and collect all this stuff and then sell it back to them at higher prices, you know? But they need the money. I mean, it's, it's complicated.

NOBLE: [01:06:43] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:06:43] It's a, it's an economic deal.

NOBLE: [01:06:45] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:06:46] And so we used to sit around and kind of theorize. But anyway, that was the food. And then the last was. This one, the credit union organization was really. I couldn't see any flaws to it, couldn't see any obvious problems. An outfit in Madison, Wisconsin, a Credit Union International [Association], CUNA, put together a Spanish language credit union promotional package. And there were books. There were like ledger books and accounting books. There were little pass books. There was all these like instructions in Spanish. So you'd get that thing. And we'd, we went to the priests, this time we got the priests involved. They were happy to be involved. They were great men, these French-Canadian priests and, uh. So. And the way we promoted it, it was kind of fun. I would get these, like two-reel movies. Cantinflas, this Mexican comedian.

NOBLE: [01:07:57] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:07:57] These are movies like out of the thirties and forties, black and white, and a generator and a projector. And get somebody with a wagon.

We'd take that thing way out in the middle of nowhere and set it up, put the generator behind the hill and hang up a sheet and have a movie. And that was some, you know, people, they all knew what movies were. They'd all been to Tegucigalpa and seen movies, but nobody had had a movie there. And so that was fun. And so then you'd talk to them about the credit union and all the advantages, and you're going to bring this stuff out on such and such a date. You're going to have this training thing and the priests are involved and everything. It's going to be fine.

NOBLE: [01:08:39] What was, what was the role of the priests? Were they the ones who would keep the money so that people would trust them not to rip them off?

HANLON: [01:08:46] I think so, but it was also just sort of credibility and to get everybody involved. You know, you're basically trying to establish a branch bank in this remote area. These people do have some money they need to save and they could certainly use loans. Since then, these micro lien, loan things have become a big deal.

NOBLE: [01:09:09] Right.

HANLON: [01:09:09] It's very interesting.

NOBLE: [01:09:11] Isn't it?

HANLON: [01:09:11] What they do in India.

NOBLE: [01:09:12] But in 1966, that concept of microloans probably didn't exist.

HANLON: [01:09:17] Never heard of it.

NOBLE: [01:09:17] But this was sort of like that.

HANLON: [01:09:19] Same thing.

NOBLE: [01:09:19] People could get the capital they needed to get something started.

HANLON: [01:09:23] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:09:24] By borrowing it.

HANLON: [01:09:25] Right. And this American credit union thing had it all figured out, and they had a package. And so you just, you know, it took some time and you had to promote it and talk about it. But you'd have these meetings and these guys, they understood. They knew what in the city, their cousins and their relatives used banks and borrowed money to build houses and run businesses. And they wanted to do it too. So we did. We organized a credit union. Uh. And so, you know.

NOBLE: [01:10:01] When you say we, who's the we? Who was working with you on organizing? I know about the priests, but who else was involved in getting this set up?

HANLON: [01:10:11] I can't remember specifically, but I think it would be the town leaders. David Carcamo lived across the street from me. He was a businessman and a store owner. He was older. You know, I was like 21, 22. He was probably 40. But he wanted to, uh, there were, there were businessmen types around. My landlord, Jesus, who had been a mayor of the town. He was a liberal. Liberal. And they kind of traded him back and forth between the liberal and the conservative parties. They'd trade these political positions of mayor and this and that. Well, he had a truck. He owned the truck. There were like maybe three trucks in town. And Don Jesus owned one of the trucks, La Rapida. You know.

NOBLE: [01:11:04] The fast one.

HANLON: [01:11:07] And so, you know, two or three times a week he was going in to Tegucigalpa because on the way you'd pick people up and you'd pick up cargo, you'd pick up a sack of beans, load of chickens, and they'd sell it in Tegucigalpa and then come home. And he was the freight hauler for all that. Two or three times a week, he would do that. So, you know, he maintained that truck, he got gas for it and this and that. And I'm sure it wasn't the first truck he ever owned. So he was involved. The usual

suspects, everybody, everybody participated. And we'd have the meetings in the schools and stuff. But it worked. They actually, we actually organized a credit union.

NOBLE: [01:11:57] Who kept the money in? Was there a building for it or was it in the parish house?

HANLON: [01:12:01] I think the priest did. But, you know, it was sort of on paper and in pass books and stuff. I think they might have taken the money like into Tegucigalpa and really put it in the bank.

NOBLE: [01:12:12] Uh huh. And was there some capital that was given from somebody initially to get that started? Or did you have to start with what people invested when they trusted you with their own money?

HANLON: [01:12:25] They joined the credit union.

NOBLE: [01:12:27] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:12:29] I don't think, no, I don't think there was any outside capital.

NOBLE: [01:12:32] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:12:33] Once we had it going and we had meetings and they had books and they could, you could kind of see that it was probably, nobody was going to just steal it.

NOBLE: [01:12:43] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:12:44] Then you'd trust it and you'd put your little bit of money in there. You didn't have much money. You know, people are living, these rural families with that subsistence farming. They had a great standard of living. I don't want to suggest that they're starving or they were culturally deprived. It was fine, but it was not cash intensive. They didn't have cash. Buying oil, batteries, things that they couldn't make.

NOBLE: [01:13:15] Right.

HANLON: [01:13:15] Was an issue.

NOBLE: [01:13:16] Yeah. Buying a generator. You need cash.

HANLON: [01:13:19] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:13:21] Did, um, did you get any support from Peace Corps? Did you get advice, help? Did people from Tegucigalpa, Peace Corps staff, come out to visit you and see how you were doing?

HANLON: [01:13:32] Not much, but that wasn't a problem. We had, we had friends, other Peace Corps volunteers that lived in nearby communities, Bill and Ed. They had their own projects. I was interested in watching them do their projects. They had that housing project in Nacaome, and that took up a lot of time and energy to kind of watch that thing. And we all talked about what we were doing and, and uh, but no, the staff didn't really come out. You'd talk to them in Teguc about what you're doing, what you need, which things you need, and they'd like get that. The doctors were helpful.

NOBLE: [01:14:13] I was going to ask if the doctor came out to visit you and give you shots or something.

HANLON: [01:14:18] Yeah. I think his name was Peter. Beverly remembers the doctor, but he didn't really come out for, but just to visit us and support. We were near the Pan Am Highway. We were some of the most accessible volunteers in Honduras. We were not in a, when I say we were in a remote location, we were, it was primitive and it was remote. But it was also a stone's throw from the Pan Am Highway, which was a main thoroughfare for Central America.

NOBLE: [01:14:52] Whereas other people might have been, I don't know, much more isolated.

HANLON: [01:14:56] Yeah, could get there by Jeep.

NOBLE: [01:14:58] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:14:58] And maybe once a week you'd have some car come in and it was remote.

NOBLE: [01:15:05] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:15:07] One bit of evidence about how accessible we were is this visit from my parents.

NOBLE: [01:15:13] Talk about that. Your parents came when? When in your two years there did your parents come down?

HANLON: [01:15:19] It must have been, you know, it was after a while. And I don't remember much of the planning, but my parents had been Airstream aficionados.

NOBLE: [01:15:29] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:15:30] This is 1966 or '67.

NOBLE: [01:15:34] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:15:34] And I bet they got their first Airstream in the mid fifties.

NOBLE: [01:15:38] Ah, when you were a kid.

HANLON: [01:15:39] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:15:40] So you remember it?

HANLON: [01:15:41] Oh, yeah. We went camping and traveling in that Airstream. And my parents, like, when I went, I started high school in '58. Well, after that, in the summer time, they'd go to Canada. And, uh, and they upgraded their Airstreams. They'd started with tiny little one and after a couple of years they'd get big. And they went on these Wally Byam caravans. That's the whole Airstream kind of thing. Well, I'm pretty sure by

the time that they got to visit us, they had like a big four door Cadillac and I'm going to say a 24 foot Airstream.

NOBLE: [01:16:19] Which they pulled behind the car?

HANLON: [01:16:22] They drove from Peoria down through Mexico and through Guatemala and El Salvador.

NOBLE: [01:16:28] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:16:28] And they actually drove up. Our the road to the Pan Am was dirt and it wasn't very wide. It wasn't paved. But anyway, they drove on it because that's kind of the Airstream thing, you know, it's self-contained and it's the suspension and so forth. So they pulled it up in front of our house on that little cobblestone street. You know, it was quite the sensation in town.

NOBLE: [01:16:52] I can only imagine.

HANLON: [01:16:54] Look at what the Hanlons.

NOBLE: [01:16:55] And you knew they were coming, right?

HANLON: [01:16:57] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NOBLE: [01:16:58] How did you communicate with your folks?

HANLON: [01:17:00] A letter mostly.

NOBLE: [01:17:01] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:17:02] You could get a telephone call, but it was complicated. Crank phone. You had to make announcements and it was letter, so we were just expecting them.

NOBLE: [01:17:12] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:17:15] They hung around for a day or two. We introduced them to everybody and walked them all around and showed them everything about Goascoran, and then Bev and I got in it for a two week odyssey.

NOBLE: [01:17:26] The four of you?

HANLON: [01:17:28] Four of us. You know, it's about the size of here, from here to that wall. That's 20 feet away.

NOBLE: [01:17:33] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:17:34] And so we were intimate, to say the least, and uh. But we had a great time.

NOBLE: [01:17:42] Where did you go?

HANLON: [01:17:43] We went up into the Yucatan. We went back, you know, through Guatemala, and then we went north out of Guatemala into the Yucatan. I think we went to Merida, which is, you know, the northern part of the Yucatan and then back and in two weeks. And then they dropped us off. And we had a lot of adventures. I could talk for hours about some of the great adventures, but then they drove back to the United States.

NOBLE: [01:18:17] And what stories they had to tell.

HANLON: [01:18:19] Oh my gosh.

NOBLE: [01:18:23] So you kept in touch with your family writing letters. You had each other to talk to, but there wasn't any other Peace Corps volunteer in town.

HANLON: [01:18:32] No.

NOBLE: [01:18:33] How often would you get together with other volunteers? You mentioned Jim and Ed. They were nearby, but in different towns.

HANLON: [01:18:42] Our closest American friends were in Nacaome. Nacaome. And that's like maybe a half hour away. And you could walk down to the Pan Am, stand at the intersection, and within a half an hour you could get a ride for money, didn't have to have to hitchhike or anything.

NOBLE: [01:19:04] Oh. Hmm.

HANLON: [01:19:04] There'd be cars going back and forth, and it would take like maybe a half an hour to get to Nacaome. You'd, and they'd probably take you right into town. And so, and so we could go down there and. In Nacaome, there was Ed. He lived there. Bill and Marianne O'Hara. And there might have been some other people during those two years that I'm kind of forgetting, who spent a lot of time in Nacaome. At one point, Howie. Howie Knox was there because they did a housing project. I've shown you those slides.

NOBLE: [01:19:46] Those guys were architects.

HANLON: [01:19:47] Yeah. Howie Knox was an architect. And Jim Piker. Jim wasn't really stationed there I don't think. I think he had, he lived in Tegucigalpa, but he would spend time down there. Him and Howie, especially, could come down, because they made a special design for a single family house that was supposed to be, you know, very progressive but very economical. And I could talk about that house for hours, about all the things that they thought about putting into it and everything, how it was going to be an improvement over the traditional adobe house. Or even an improvement over the traditional tiled enclosure that would have four main corner posts, but then be filled in with twigs and leaves.

NOBLE: [01:20:40] Oh.

HANLON: [01:20:41] Without any windows and maybe not even a door. But it would keep the rain out, and it kept most of the wind out. That's the, the upgrade that was an adobe house. But anyway, so they, they thought up this thing and they got funding for it somehow and they built it. And it was, it was magnificent.

NOBLE: [01:21:02] And so you and Bev would be able to go down and lift a few beers with them from time to time?

HANLON: [01:21:08] Exactly.

NOBLE: [01:21:08] Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:21:09] And they'd come over, when they got bored, they could come over our way.

NOBLE: [01:21:11] And visit you.

HANLON: [01:21:13] And Ed, uh, he, I think that eventually he finagled some kind of a job. Maybe it was with the federal, with the credit union, *federación de credit union*. He had a jeep. And so he could pile two or three people in there and come over to our place. And if he had something to do down at the border, he could come get us, take us back.

NOBLE: [01:21:37] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [01:21:38] So and then we had good friends in Tegucigalpa and there was ice cream in Tegucigalpa. And there was movies in Tegucigalpa. There were.

NOBLE: [01:21:49] How often would you get into Tegucigalpa?

HANLON: [01:21:51] I would think once a month.

NOBLE: [01:21:53] Uh huh. Okay.

HANLON: [01:21:54] Maybe once every two months. Frequently.

NOBLE: [01:21:58] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:21:58] That was what you did.

NOBLE: [01:21:59] So it would keep you sane knowing that it was there?

HANLON: [01:22:02] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:22:05] Yeah. What about friendships with Honduran people? Did you manage to socialize at all with Hondurans?

HANLON: [01:22:11] Yeah, we sure did. Yeah. I haven't talked about Bev at all. Bev had this great project.

NOBLE: [01:22:18] But that's okay, Bev. Bev will have her own interview.

HANLON: [01:22:20] Yeah, but part of it is that her project. We were friends with some of her coworkers, so part of our socializing there had to do with, was kind of through her. The men that I worked with and in some of these remote locations, we didn't socialize with them too much. I didn't develop any big, strong friendships, but Beverly did. I tagged along.

NOBLE: [01:22:51] And you get to be part of that scene.

HANLON: [01:22:54] Another thing I did, or we both did, was we taught English in the high school.

NOBLE: [01:22:58] Oh, you did?

HANLON: [01:22:59] For a year or two.

NOBLE: [01:23:00] Ah.

HANLON: [01:23:01] It was an evening class, I think.

NOBLE: [01:23:04] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:23:05] Maybe it was an adult thing. It was, you know, here's an American. He speaks English. We've got to use them somehow. So they kind of enlisted that and got it going.

NOBLE: [01:23:16] Oh, that's terrific. So your parents came what, about halfway into your time there?

HANLON: [01:23:23] Uh. I think it was more like three-fourths or something.

NOBLE: [01:23:28] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:23:29] I think we were almost done.

NOBLE: [01:23:31] Did you feel towards the end of your time that you were more efficient or whatever, that you were beginning to accomplish things in a way that you hadn't when you first arrived?

HANLON: [01:23:44] Uh, yes, but I really remember sort of a sense of boredom. And this is over, you know? I've got to move on.

NOBLE: [01:23:53] Okay. So two years was about the right amount of time. Yeah. So your two years is eventually up. What was the goodbye scene like? You're about to leave Goascoran.

HANLON: [01:24:08] The, I think the way I think about it is that our group still had another month or two to go. But because I was going to go to law school, there was a beginning date.

NOBLE: [01:24:21] Oh, yeah. Right.

HANLON: [01:24:22] And it was, so we left a couple of months early.

NOBLE: [01:24:25] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:24:26] And so it was, you know, we knew we were leaving, we told everybody, we thought about it. We said goodbyes. It was nice. And then in the capital city, I guess we sort of planned a vacation that wasn't very. Like, I. I think I just sort of mentally I just sort of started thinking about what to do next.

NOBLE: [01:24:51] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:24:51] And we'd never been to those Mayan ruins in Honduras. That was sort of out of the way. So we went there. We stayed there for a couple of days. I think that we flew from there to Belize. And Belize, or old British Honduras, which was just very nearby.

NOBLE: [01:25:13] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:25:14] And stayed there for a couple of days. And then we caught a bus.

NOBLE: [01:25:17] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:25:18] And we went through some coastal parts of the Yucatan. Then we went to Merida. And we stayed there for like maybe a week, maybe longer, and looked around at all the Mayan ruins and the old town. And then we flew from there to New Orleans.

NOBLE: [01:25:34] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:25:35] And then we took another bus, like a Greyhound bus, from New Orleans to Peoria.

NOBLE: [01:25:41] Did Peace Corps give you money for transportation home?

HANLON: [01:25:45] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:25:45] A readjustment allowance?

HANLON: [01:25:47] Yeah, something like that. You know, the financial thing was \$75 per month per person.

NOBLE: [01:25:54] Uh huh. That was set aside for you?

HANLON: [01:25:56] Well, that in a minute. That was our salary.

NOBLE: [01:26:01] Your living allowance. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:26:03] Yeah. So we had \$150 a month.

NOBLE: [01:26:06] For the two of you.

HANLON: [01:26:06] Yeah, and that was a lot of money in Goascoran.

NOBLE: [01:26:09] You were able to live on less.

HANLON: [01:26:12] Yeah, that was a lot of money.

NOBLE: [01:26:14] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:26:15] Rent, beer, you know, electricity, gifts.

NOBLE: [01:26:19] Ah, you had to pay your own rent out of that money to the landlord?

HANLON: [01:26:22] Correct. But I think that was like maybe \$20 a month. \$15 a month. We had plenty of money to, and we could go into Tegucigalpa. We went on that vacation with my parents and I doubt if they helped us much. We, uh, so that was all. Then, concurrently with that, Peace Corps was saving the same amount for departure.

NOBLE: [01:26:49] Right.

HANLON: [01:26:49] So when we left, 150 times 12, that's 1,800, times 2. \$3,600 bucks. We had like almost \$4,000.

NOBLE: [01:27:02] Okay, and that back in 1966, that was more than it is now.

HANLON: [01:27:04] It was good. So we could like budget our going home.

NOBLE: [01:27:09] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:27:10] And sort of getting set up in, a little time in Peoria, and then getting an apartment in Chicago and so forth.

NOBLE: [01:27:17] Right. You had money for, uh, what do they call that? Security deposit on an apartment.

HANLON: [01:27:22] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:27:23] And then you went to, uh, you lived in Chicago and Hyde Park. You went to law school at U of C.

HANLON: [01:27:28] Student housing. You know, Beverly was pregnant.

NOBLE: [01:27:32] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [01:27:33] And that was another deferment. As we ended that, started another one. There was a pregnancy. That was good. Sarah was born in January, so, you know, when we were going home in September. Something that we weren't aware of was all the politics of the '68 convention.

NOBLE: [01:27:56] Oh, in Chicago. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:27:58] And I, you know, I don't. I don't know when I stopped listening to the radio or stopped reading my Newsweek. For a while, it was, I was into, I could, but by then I didn't know anything.

NOBLE: [01:28:10] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:28:11] And so, you know, we got there and it was a hotbed of lots of things, but I couldn't comprehend it really. Beverly quickly got a job as a clerk typist or something in the administration building.

NOBLE: [01:28:27] Of University of Chicago?

HANLON: [01:28:29] Yes. And that was nearby the law school. And I went over there and got my books, you know, and I'm studying. And there were a couple of other Peace Corps guys that were in my class and we all, you know, kind of.

NOBLE: [01:28:42] You find each other, yeah.

HANLON: [01:28:44] Got together. And it was a small class, I think 150 people. And in '68, the entering class, I believe it was 70 or 80 percent men.

NOBLE: [01:28:57] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:28:57] It's that old fashioned.

NOBLE: [01:28:59] Sure.

HANLON: [01:29:00] You know, nowadays it's half and half or I don't know. Very quickly, it became that. Maybe in those three years. It might be that the freshman class was, you know, a lot of. But anyway, my point is, is that there are lots of happening, things happening. And Beverly, within a couple of weeks of the start of her job, was locked out. The students took over the administration and for, I don't know, a week. And, you know, they were camping out in there and they were protesting and they were doing all this stuff. We're trying to figure out what's going on.

NOBLE: [01:29:36] Were you able to continue your studies as a lawyer in law school?

HANLON: [01:29:41] Oh, yeah.

NOBLE: [01:29:41] During all that?

HANLON: [01:29:42] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:29:42] So the administration building was locked down, but the classes went on.

HANLON: [01:29:45] The college or the university, it had to be a half mile. I don't know where it was, but it had nothing to do with the law school.

NOBLE: [01:29:51] We could do a whole interview just on being in Chicago in 1968.

HANLON: [01:29:57] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:29:58] But we've got about, um, four or 5 minutes in which to finish up the rest of your life. You were a kid who was, what, 23 or so when you came out of Peace Corps, and you are now, what, 70 or something?

HANLON: [01:30:15] Yeah, 71.

NOBLE: [01:30:16] In the intervening years, you've worked as a lawyer. Has, uh, and you've done other things as well. Do you think there's any, there was any effect of your experience in the Peace Corps on either the work that you did or on your view of the world?

HANLON: [01:30:36] It was a life changing event, a life changing experience. At the time, of course, you take it for granted and you don't appreciate it or you don't really even comprehend it. Like I just wanted to get on with my career and my life, which I didn't really know what it was. It's not that I had a big plan or anything, but I did feel that I was two years behind, so to speak. And so we did our things and we had our kids and they went to school and we had friends. And then and we moved to Florida like in the early eighties after a great time in Chicago. And but anyway, there was always this sort of bedrock knowledge about Honduras and the people that we knew there. And when you saw the news or you read the magazines, I felt a special kind of satisfaction in knowing something about the, uh, I don't know, I don't want to call it the undeveloped world. How the other half lives.

NOBLE: [01:31:48] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [01:31:48] How the other half without a lot of money and modern resources gets by, has full and complete lives, fairly healthy at times, certainly emotionally satisfied. Knowing that I, I took a deep sort of satisfaction in that and whenever I could I'd speak Spanish to people and that was always very satisfying, especially because I don't look, uh, and

my accent would be atypical, I guess. Or anyway, it was a distinction that I appreciated. And so I think it's been a foundational part of my experience and life changing. Bev and I refer to it. In some sense, living here in this small space is sort of a recreation.

NOBLE: [01:32:48] Ah.

HANLON: [01:32:49] This is 2,000 square feet and it's 20 by 50, and the kitchen's in the living room. And so we've kind of thought about that a couple of times, about how this is sort of like it, but with a flush toilet. So, I really appreciated this interview. Thank you.

NOBLE: [01:33:10] Good. Thank you, Joe.

[END OF INTERVIEW]