

Adam Lutynski Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Adam Lutynski
Interviewer: Robert Klein
Date of Interview: September 5, 2009
Location of Interview: Boston, Massachusetts
Length: 48 pages

Biographical Note

Adam Lutynski served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1966 to 1968 on a rural community development project.

Access

Open.

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Suggested Citation

Adam Lutynski, recorded interview by Robert Klein, September 5, 2009, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

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Oral History Interview

with

Adam Lutynski

September 5, 2009
Boston, Massachusetts

By Robert Klein

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

KLEIN: [00:00:03] Today is September 5, 2009. This is Bob Klein, I'm interviewing Adam Lutynski, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia 1966 to '68 in a rural community development project. So let's go back to maybe a year before you joined.

LUTYNSKI: [00:00:30] A year before I joined, Bob, I was a graduate student in international relations at Georgetown University and living at the time in Washington, D.C. And at that time, I was I was trying to do a number of things. I was about to get married to a woman from Chicago, and she was living part time in Washington, D.C. And I was also trying to finish my master's degree, which required me to both take an oral comprehensive exam and to do a thesis. So what I was trying to do was to complete the thesis before taking the oral comprehensive exam. And it was a risky experiment. And unfortunately, the risk came true because I passed my comprehensive exam and I had my thesis done. I submitted it the next day

and the panel at the graduate school rejected the topic on which the thesis was done. And so I was finished in any event.

KLEIN: [00:01:45] Ok, let's go back just a little. Your undergraduate degree?

LUTYNSKI: [00:01:50] Undergraduate degree was in philosophy from Loyola University in Chicago.

KLEIN: [00:01:53] OK, and now let's go back a little further. You grew up in Chicago?

LUTYNSKI: [00:01:58] Grew up in Chicago. Absolutely. I was born in 1942.

KLEIN: [00:02:02] Large family?

LUTYNSKI: [00:02:03] No very small family. Just my brother and I. My my parents were the first born in the United States in their respective families that their parents were were all from Poland. And we actually lived in the very same building with my maternal grandparents.

KLEIN: [00:02:28] And so you grew up, went to parochial school.

LUTYNSKI: Absolutely.

KLEIN: Through high school?

LUTYNSKI: [00:02:33] Through high school, and went to the Jesuit High School in Chicago. St. Ignatius.

KLEIN: [00:02:39] Up through your high school graduation, had you done any extracurricular work, any volunteer work, any travel?

LUTYNSKI: [00:02:48] Up through high school, actually not.

KLEIN: [00:02:53] Did you have to work?

LUTYNSKI: [00:02:54] Oh, I worked. My first job started in the sixth grade and I worked at the at the bingo game at the local parochial, you know, that probably at the local parochial church. And I worked every Friday night at bingo and I earned, you know, maybe maybe ten dollars on a night working there. And I worked all through high school. I worked during during college. I was a commuter student at undergraduate school. So, you know, I really never went away. The first time I was really living away was was when I went to graduate school at Georgetown.

KLEIN: [00:03:36] But when you graduated high school, were you the first in the family to go into college?

LUTYNSKI: Yes.

KLEIN: And what was at that point? What kind of career goal did you have?

LUTYNSKI: [00:03:49] You know, I really didn't know what my career goals were at the time. I was in a liberal arts program at Loyola University, which meant that I had to study both Latin and Greek the word requirements at the time for an AB. And I just I really don't know.

KLEIN: [00:04:11] Was there any thought of becoming a priest?

LUTYNSKI: [00:04:13] Oh, yes, absolutely. In fact, after my I think it was after my first year in undergraduate school, I actually went off to a Jesuit seminary in Milford, Ohio, and I spent about a year and a half there and after being there for a year and a half, realized that it was not for me or came back and finished up my undergraduate degree at Loyola.

KLEIN: [00:04:38] Well, when you graduated Loyola, we had you your plan was immediately to go to graduate school?

LUTYNSKI: [00:04:46] It was in fact, ideally, my plan was to go to law school. And around the time of taking the law school admission test, my mother had

been ill and hospitalized. And I must say, I did a terrible job on the LSAT when I took it, and that was back in 1963, I think it was. And because I got such a terrible score on the LSAT, I just decided that I was not going to apply to law school and instead apply to graduate school in international studies at Georgetown.

KLEIN: [00:05:28] A couple of questions about as you were graduating or one, what was your relationship to the draft?

LUTYNSKI: [00:05:38] When I was graduating from first degree, from my first degree.

KLEIN: [00:05:42] Were you subject to being drafted?

LUTYNSKI: [00:05:43] You know, I assume I would have been I, I really I must say, I did not give it much of a thought at that time. And and I think if I'm not mistaken, I think that when I was in graduate school, I think I was still getting a deferral, but I'm not positive about that. Not positive about that.

KLEIN: [00:06:05] During your undergraduate years, a couple of questions. Had you heard about the Peace Corps? Did you know of anyone who joined the Peace Corps? What was your sense?

LUTYNSKI: [00:06:16] I, you know, I, I really did not in my undergraduate school years. I took one semester away and went to the I think it was called the oh, the Catholic University of Puerto Rico concept. And it was a language institute down there. And it was it was run by the Catholic Church. And it was really quite a good language school. And I lived with a Puerto Rican family in Ponce. And I think I did that in, let's say, September to December of 1963, I think it was. And I came back really being quite fluent in Spanish. The idea was that I was I was thinking about some sort of international work, even even back then. I just didn't know where. And this was an opportunity and I don't even remember who recommended it to me, but that's where I went.

KLEIN: [00:07:30] And so by the time you finished your first degree, you had already lived in a different environment. You had studied a language.

LUTYNSKI: [00:07:38] Absolutely. In fact, Bob, it's coming back to me now. Yeah. I believe that this training program was most of the people in the program were called I think the group was called PAVLA and it stood for Papal Volunteers to Latin America. Do you remember that name at all?

KLEIN: [00:07:58] I mean, I've heard of papal volunteers.

LUTYNSKI: [00:08:02] And it was made up of a group of there were nuns, there were priests and there were laypersons in the group. I was the only one who was not going down to be a volunteer in Latin America under the egis of PAVLA.

KLEIN: [00:08:15] But that was acceptable to them?

LUTYNSKI: [00:08:16] That was acceptable to them. Yes, I was I was just able to enroll.

KLEIN: [00:08:19] Come back to the question of knowing about the Peace Corps. I was certainly coming from a Catholic background. You must be keenly aware of Kennedy's presidency.

LUTYNSKI: [00:08:31] Yes, no question about it. And, I must say, I think my experience down in Puerto Rico confirmed in me that I did not want to be a papal volunteer in Latin America. I thought it was more a gut sense. It was it was a bit much too religious for me, OK? And I just didn't feel comfortable in that setting. And I also heard great things about the training that the Peace Corps was doing and that moved both Mary and me in the direction of the Peace Corps. So we applied separately and.

KLEIN: [00:09:14] Let's come back. OK, so after you finish your degree, you almost immediately go into graduate school, into Georgetown. And you were there for a year?

LUTYNSKI: [00:09:29] A year and a half, I think, for coursework.

KLEIN: [00:09:31] OK, right. But you were coming here. You must have been near the end of your program even though you had your thesis.

LUTYNSKI: [00:09:38] Oh, yes. Yes, absolutely. Very much.

KLEIN: [00:09:40] What was your plan at that point? Assuming you got the degree.

LUTYNSKI: [00:09:43] Probably to go on and get a Ph.D. OK, I think I think it was it was an academic track for me.

KLEIN: [00:09:50] And so you hadn't opened up any other alternatives, like, well, if I don't get my degree, I'll do this.

LUTYNSKI: [00:09:57] Well, Mary and I had talked about it, and we certainly. Were of the mind that we wanted to take a shot at the at the Peace Corps and and ultimately we did.

KLEIN: [00:10:10] So when did you marry, while you were in graduate school?

LUTYNSKI: [00:10:14] No, I was out of graduate school. In fact, I'll tell you what. Yeah, our wedding was, I think, the weekend before Peace Corps training began at the University of Washington in Seattle. That's what I was going to married in Chicago, you know. And we got on a plane. We went to San Francisco for a couple of days and then we got on a plane and went to Seattle and began Peace Corps training. That was our honeymoon.

KLEIN: [00:10:40] Oh, yeah. So at some point when you were in the graduate program, you made the decision to apply for the Peace Corps.

LUTYNSKI: [00:10:50] Absolutely. We both applied. I think we both got invitations to programs that were starting earlier than the time horizon I had for

completing my work had gone successfully. I think one invitation was to the Philippines and then the invitation to Bolivia came along. Right. And the timing looked very good. And we both.

KLEIN: [00:11:14] Had you expressed a preference on the application for assignment?

LUTYNSKI: [00:11:17] We did, yes, we did.

KLEIN: [00:11:20] What was the preference?

LUTYNSKI: [00:11:21] The preference, I think we could specify language preferences, if I'm not mistaken. And we both.

KLEIN: [00:11:30] Area and language competency.

LUTYNSKI: [00:11:34] Language competency we put down was Spanish. And that's why I think the Philippines invitation came along and then Bolivia was the second invitation. And that's the one we accepted.

KLEIN: [00:11:47] So you and Mary, you're now married, yet you applied at the invitation of Bolivia and you report to Washington University?

LUTYNSKI: [00:12:00] That's correct. Up in Seattle.

KLEIN: [00:12:01] And the program was described as?

LUTYNSKI: [00:12:05] Rural community development. And our training program was shared with university educators that were going to Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, if I'm not mistaken. So there were there were two side by side parallel track training programs.

KLEIN: [00:12:22] Well, let's let's talk about the components of training and your experience. And one of the main components of training is course is language training.

LUTYNSKI: Yes.

KLEIN: You want to describe that word?

LUTYNSKI: [00:12:35] Yes, I know. One of the things about the language training at Seattle was this. The Peace Corps had a couple of years of experience in Bolivia already, and the Peace Corps realized that training volunteers in Spanish only was not the way to go, particularly for rural community development. So the Peace Corps said it is essential for us to train people in Aymara, one of the Andean languages spoken in Bolivia. It would be Quechua if you went to Peru. But Aymara was the was the language in Bolivia. So we were told that our training program was going to be dual language, it was going to be Spanish and Aymara. And the way the program worked was this. Everyone had to get up to a certain level of competence in Spanish and then in effect, he would graduate to the Aymara, that's the way it went. And they weren't looking for deep, deep competence before moving on to Aymara, but just enough. I was able to test out of that because of my Puerto Rican training. And really moved right into Aymara, which was fascinating because it is not a written language. There is no literature. This was the first time the Peace Corps was attempting this with Aymara. And what they did was to bring a few informants are from Bolivia.

KLEIN: Native Aymara speakers.

LUTYNSKI: [00:14:15] Absolutely. In fact, I think to this day, tell them that Antonio Quispe, Q-U-I-S-P-E. I guess he was a I would say maybe a forty year old Bolivian from the Altiplano, and he was our principal instructor in Aymara.

KLEIN: How did they structure the language training?

LUTYNSKI: The language training was all based on the we are not going to speak Spanish. We're not going to speak English, are going to speak Aymara only.

KLEIN: How many hours a day?

LUTYNSKI: We probably spent eight hours a day.

KLEIN: [00:14:53] I'm curious, then, how many will one how many people were in the training group approximately?

LUTYNSKI: [00:15:01] I would say we were probably a group of I'm going to guess a little bit north of 20.

KLEIN: [00:15:07] Backing you up a little bit. You and Mary reported to training. And there were about 20 of you, all of whom were going to Bolivia. OK, you remember your reaction to the rest others in the group?

LUTYNSKI: [00:15:32] I you know, it's I'm very glad you asked that question. That was the very first time in my life I had been in a generally pluralistic learning setting. When you think about it, it's quite shocking, actually. But I really came from a Catholic ghetto, right. In terms of education, because I started with the nuns, went to the Jesuits in high school, Jesuits in undergraduate school, Jesuits in graduate school. So this was the very first time the people were absolutely delightful, absolutely delightful. There were, I think, four married couples in our group.

KLEIN: [00:16:13] That's high.

LUTYNSKI: [00:16:15] Very high because the Peace Corps, I think, was at that point just not quite certain whether they were keen on having married couples or not a little betwixt and between. But this group had four and we hit it off. Well, I had a we had a delightful group. And interestingly enough, we had a a modern type election for the president of this group. And believe it or not, I was elected, but we had to follow the cultural rules of the primary election. And the idea is you get up and give a speech about why the people should not elect you, because that is the that is the cultural norm. You would you would get up and explain. You can't elect me because of

this, this and the other thing. And I just did kind of a humorous take on that about why they should not. And lo and behold.

KLEIN: [00:17:16] I'm curious about the 20, how many immediately qualified in Spanish?

LUTYNSKI: [00:17:24] And I have a hard time recalling that. But I think many of the people came in with at least some knowledge in Spanish. For example, I never had any academic studies in in Spanish. Mine were only direct. I didn't know grammar rules at all. I just knew how to speak it. And many of the people there certainly knew the hard core grammar. They had a high school, maybe maybe college, and then they were picking up the linguistic side of it.

KLEIN: [00:17:58] You mentioned that you went straight into the Aymara stuff pretty quickly. How many other people were in that?

LUTYNSKI: [00:18:03] I would say at least a half dozen or so.

KLEIN: [00:18:06] Ok, so you fair of third of the group?

LUTYNSKI: [00:18:09] Yeah, OK. I would say a third of us did. And we sat in a semicircle with Mr. Quispe and he would just talk with us and he was really repeating what you hear and then trying to learn often. And of course language training consisted of working with the informant or the tutor for a while, working in the language lab before for another part of the day. So I would say this probably because it might have been for us maybe five hours a day with a live instructor and maybe three hours in our language lab.

KLEIN: [00:18:49] Was there any indication from the training staff that you had to get up to a certain level in the language or you might be deselected or not go?

LUTYNSKI: [00:19:01] I never felt any pressure at all in terms of getting to a level and this the deselection know a deselection issue. In fact, I believe at that time the Peace Corps was almost moving away from deselection to this sort of self selection, where there would be a kind of a guided counseling abroad about what you were, what your future prospects might be and how people responded to that. So I. I never you know, it was not one of these things that you hear about in medical school where they say, look to the right, look to the left, the only one of you is going to go back. It wasn't anything like that. They did not make it a boot camp type experience.

KLEIN: [00:19:48] Another component of training is area studies to learn about.

LUTYNSKI: Absolutely.

KLEIN: And any comments on that?

LUTYNSKI: [00:19:56] Utterly superb. I can see him and I'm sorry, I can't remember his name, but he was a professor at the University of Washington. I think his name was Bill Clark, if I'm not mistaken, just one of the foremost guys in the area. He was he was terrific. The the cultural studies. I remember every Wednesday, we used to have a dance class. We were taught the Aymara dances, the wyno, the cuenca. And that would be the day. Wednesday was also the day we always got our shots. So you would you would you would dance your shots off in the evening with these dance classes. But the cultural studies, the historical studies, the current political situations and so on, very, very well done.

KLEIN: [00:20:51] Oh, were there any, Peace Corps had been in Bolivia for a while?

LUTYNSKI: It had.

KLEIN: So, were there any returned volunteers?

LUTYNSKI: [00:20:59] There were excellent returned volunteers. And at one time during the training, I believe that the the regional director under which we were going to work, his name was Nicky Mel Reagan and came up to Seattle and visited with us before we went down. We were going to be the first group that was going to go down to Bolivia, not having been sworn in as volunteers yet. We were going to have a month in country training in Bolivia with our Bolivian counterparts. We went out to an agricultural extension station.

KLEIN: [00:21:40] We'll get there. Yeah, OK, good. So I don't know. I think by the sixth year time they may have given up. The third component of training needs to be what they call the American studies, world affairs and communism. Just to be sure that you were aware of the very global picture, as you know, if you were challenged as a volunteer?

LUTYNSKI: [00:22:04] I I think there was a component of that. I must say it does not stand out in my mind. And I couldn't even begin to tell you the name of the instructor. Sure. But I'm sure it was there because we certainly did encounter challenges as soon as we arrived in Bolivia. I work on the world scene really at that time it was it was all about Vietnam.

KLEIN: [00:22:29] Ok, yes, that was OK. So they so the most likely discussion in training about indeed India and particularly recall that I was saying, well, the proper way to deal with this is or was it just making you aware there's a difference?

LUTYNSKI: [00:22:48] Yes, there is. I must say, Bob, I don't have much of a recollection of that. And I think I would I if it had been an offensive approach, I think I might have recalled. So I don't it does not stick in my minds.

KLEIN: [00:23:04] Anything else about the training setting to the group of 20 must have become somewhat close.

LUTYNSKI: [00:23:12] Oh, we did. It's a small group. It's a it's a very small group. We really became close. We were the the Peace Corps was very kind. University of Washington was very kind. We, Mary and I were given very, very nice accommodations down there. I think it would have been like a faculty person at this residence hall, maybe the resident faculty advisor. So we had a very, very nice, very nice suite. But we we really hit it off well with the people who were in the group. One aspect of the training program that was interesting because we were all sent out to communities in Washington State. And the whole idea for us when we went out there was to do some of the communications study on how information travels in the communities to which we were sent. It was really it was an interesting experiment. Mary and I were separated and in fact, all the married couples who were separated for that for that exercise because they didn't want people to become too dependent on their spouses in that situation. And I was sent off with, I think, to other volunteers. We got on a Greyhound bus and we got out to a small community of Cle Elum, Washington. I think it's C-L-E, second word U-L-U-M [sic]. And when we got there, we were required to find our own housing. You know, nothing was arranged. Yes. In effect, it was a little bit like what we were going to experience when we went down to Bolivia, because I'll tell you. More about that later, but we had no place to stay. We we just got off the bus and then we had to make do and I think we were given a stipend.

KLEIN: And how long were you there?

LUTYNSKI: We were there for a long weekend, I think maybe three days or so.

KLEIN: [00:25:15] And you were simply to find out as much as you could?

LUTYNSKI: [00:25:19] Find out about the community, how information traveled in the. And I remember we we spent a good deal of time in one of the local bars, which was, you know, a very important meeting place in the community. And if you wanted to know what was going on, you had to spend some time at the bar. So it was it was a delightful experiment. And I thought it

was an excellent idea when we got to Bolivia. We were prepared. And I think that is a tribute to the training program.

KLEIN: [00:25:54] During training, you mentioned that the regional director came up to he or anyone else try to give you a sense of the work they are doing once he got to Bolivia?

LUTYNSKI: [00:26:07] Yes. In fact, they were they they were first preparing us for the in-country training. They were they were telling us a bit about what we were going to experience there. And then they were also telling us about another Peace Corps experiment, which was going to be site self selection. And we were not going to be assigned to a community and told this is where we were going to be and explained to us that we were going to be given about 30 days after we became volunteers to travel wherever the rural community development program was working. And wherever there were potential counterparts living. And we were to make our own deal, in essence, and we were to get them to invite us to stay and we were to commit to stay because the Peace Corps wanted to try to reduce the turnover in volunteers coming back into the capital and saying, gee, you know, it's just not working out and they don't like me. And it's an interesting approach. So the the regional director prepared us for all of that. What we had to look forward to once we went down.

KLEIN: [00:27:26] Let's just finish up training. Did anyone resign during the period when many people selected?

LUTYNSKI: [00:27:34] They think I think there there may have been one or two leaving during training, but I think the real fallout came once we got over here.

KLEIN: [00:27:49] And one last thing before you leave the states. What was your status at that point with the draft or?

LUTYNSKI: [00:27:59] You know, I was I was one a I think all the way along, I guess I had to notify the local board that I was going into the Peace Corps and I don't know what classification they gave me.

KLEIN: Deferment.

LUTYNSKI: Is that what it is? But, you know, I don't remember these letters and numbers. I was 1-A I know that in terms of health and so on all the time.

KLEIN: [00:28:23] And the assumption is your board was not required to, but they could give you a deferment for Peace Corps service and most boards did.

LUTYNSKI: [00:28:31] Ok, and I guess my board did as we went down.

KLEIN: [00:28:35] So that wasn't in your mind, particularly as as an issue?

LUTYNSKI: [00:28:37] It was not an issue at all. No. No.

KLEIN: Did you have home leave?

LUTYNSKI: We did. We had it we had a brief home leave to to get some gear together and so on. And then I think

KLEIN: Was Mary from Chicago?

LUTYNSKI: Yes, absolutely.

KLEIN: [00:28:50] Her parents were at the point when you're on home leave. What was the response of the families? Anyone say don't go?

LUTYNSKI: [00:28:59] But both families thought we were absolutely stone cold nuts for doing this. Mary was an only child, so her parents were particularly apprehensive about this. They thought it was just just wacko for us to be doing what we were doing. But while they would express their opinion, there was never any effort made to stop us. There was no bribery. There was no there were no threats. You know, if you go, we'll never speak again. You know, none of that stuff.

KLEIN: [00:29:35] And Mary was as committed to going as you were.

LUTYNSKI: Absolutely. Absolutely.

KLEIN: Because sometimes there's a.

LUTYNSKI: [00:29:40] Oh, no, no, no, no. She was she was very definitely. She was a very, very active volunteer in in Chicago youth programs during undergraduate school. She was you know, she was in fact, I I think if you had to take the temperature of the two of us, I would say that Mary was probably even more committed than I was to the idea of the Peace Corps.

KLEIN: [00:30:07] So farewells in Chicago.

LUTYNSKI: [00:30:10] Farewells in Chicago. One day blue, I think, with the group in Miami and we all get on a plane and go to La Paz.

KLEIN: [00:30:17] Ok, you want to talk about your initial you've never been to Bolivia. I never had to go get your initial response to being in the environment.

LUTYNSKI: [00:30:27] Initial response was superb because I think we wound up being the first volunteers getting off the plane and singing a song in Aymara in the airport. And I thought it was it was really very, very touching. The amazing thing was, Bob, that the Bolivians did not expect white faces to speak Aymara. I know it was an utter shock because you see, oh, although Aymara is one of the official languages and all those Spaniards I certainly speak it in Bolivia. No one owns up to being able to speak Aymara, no one who is mestizo, no one who is who is in the upper classes would even admit to that because it is almost as if it's a it's a badge of shame in a way. And here we were, singing a song, a folk song, at the airport and getting our photograph on the front page of the El Diario the following day.

KLEIN: [00:31:44] Now, let's talk briefly about the situation in Bolivia. Indigenous Aymara people in a distinctly subordinate role in the society?

LUTYNSKI: [00:32:01] Absolutely. Absolutely. Just no question about it.

KLEIN: [00:32:05] So you know, you're saying that in Aymara is even doubly shocking.

LUTYNSKI: [00:32:10] It is. Absolutely. And I can remember our first trips to the to the marketplace in La Paz. We just went there just to, you know, kind of check things out the open market, of course. And we would go in there, we would draw crowds because the word would travel through the market that there are white people here speaking Aymara. And, you know, for the most part, there may have been in and I don't mean to say that we were the first in the first because clearly I'll bet there were missionary groups ahead of us who have learned this. But nevertheless, it was it was unusual to see and hear non religiously affiliated people speaking about language.

KLEIN: [00:32:53] So the arriving arrival was kind of a high, I mean.

LUTYNSKI: [00:32:58] It was a complete high. Yeah. And we went off to the I think we spent maybe a night or two in La Paz and went off to the Ag station to begin our training with the ah with the rural community development workers from Bolivia who are our counterparts. We were going to join training with our counterparts.

KLEIN: [00:33:20] Ok, now let's talk about the structure of that training

LUTYNSKI: [00:33:27] I am weak on the structure of it, Bob. I think a bit of it was played by ear. Part of it was a getting to know. A lot of it had to do with very nuts and bolts things such as where on the Altiplano, these village level workers, which was the name given to these. And now all of these people were employees of the Bolivian government. Yeah, they were they were all paid employees of the Bolivian government.

KLEIN: [00:34:05] In the community development?

LUTYNSKI: [00:34:06] In the rural community development program. And that is correct. The department.

KLEIN: [00:34:12] What was their background? Were they high school trained, college trained?

LUTYNSKI: [00:34:18] It was it was all over the place. They were certainly Aymara. They were all they were agricultural. Yes, they were all Aymara. Every one of them, Aymara. They were all fluent in Aymara.

KLEIN: [00:34:33] And of that of that culture?

LUTYNSKI: [00:34:35] Of that culture, they came from, uh, from they were farmers essentially, and had maybe some some secondary education. I really don't know.

KLEIN: [00:34:49] Had they done any previous training and training development before they became your counterpart?

LUTYNSKI: [00:34:54] But I believe that the Bolivian National Community Development Program had a training program for them before our arrival. So how long that had been? I really don't remember.

KLEIN: [00:35:08] Let's back up just briefly. You know, if it with Peace Corps, if a group of people are in training to become teachers in the country, you know, at some point there usually a fair number of non teachers in the group, they'll do something to give you the team skills about teaching. Was there anything in training up to this point about community development, theoretically or specifically?

LUTYNSKI: [00:35:38] Well, there was there was no background. No background in it at all. There was some in at Seattle because you remember that field trip to Cle Elum, they all went on. That was all part of getting to get our feet wet in community development in terms of just trying to study communications networks within communities, because that was going to

be important on the Altiplano. We wound up with some substantive training in some of the coursework that we were going to be doing with. I guess I should back up. This is the first Peace Corps group, Bolivia 20, to work shoulder to shoulder with the community development program, the National Community Development Program. So they really did not know how it was going to how it was going to work. In connection with that, we were to, you know, we were essentially going to be the drummers or the barkers at the sideshow because we were going to be you used to go out and give short courses to communities that would invite us. And these short courses would be substantive in that they would cover things like human health improvement. But also they were really meant to promote some of the different activities that the community could get involved in with the community development program, the national program. And and the idea was that the local community would provide the sweat equity and the National Community Development Program would provide the pesos that were needed to buy some of the things that were going to be required by a specific project.

KLEIN: [00:37:43] Ok, let's go to the in-country training. You're living in our facility and there's an equivalent of an Aymara community development. Were you immediately paired off with someone?

LUTYNSKI: [00:37:55] No, absolutely not. Two groups. And no, it's it's not that we were paired off with specific Bolivians. The whole idea was that all of us were to kind of mingle together because this was the beginning of the feeling out process where you want it to work. And the idea was that the Peace Corps was hoping that some village level workers would hit it off with us. We would hit it off with specific village level workers. And lo and behold, maybe during that 30 day period we had to select a site. We'd be going out to their particular communities and wanting to.

KLEIN: [00:38:35] So each of them had already came with a community identity.

LUTYNSKI: [00:38:39] That is correct. That is correct.

KLEIN: [00:38:41] It was extremely unlikely that they would choose to go outside of the area to work.

LUTYNSKI: [00:38:48] Oh, most definitely not. They were they were pretty much anchored in an area.

KLEIN: [00:38:53] What kind of competition that would emerge? I mean, if I were one of the Bolivian workers, I'd say, well, I want to get that guy to come to my village because he's, you know, great.

LUTYNSKI: [00:39:06] Absolutely. There's no question about it. In fact, one of the one of the one with the fellows in in our group was a fellow by the name of Corey Schuss. And I believe Corey was from, was born either in Sweden or Norway, just as handsome as could be, probably six feet tall. This is fair Nordic skin and kind of the silver blond hair. I mean, the guy was a knockout. He came right from central casting. Well, let me tell you, because he was tall and because he was this handsome white man. There was a lot of competition for Corey. Corey never was never was at a loss for having a place. Let me tell you. Yes, there was competition.

KLEIN: [00:40:00] Let's talk about what happened during the in-country training.

LUTYNSKI: [00:40:03] In-country training again, was we we learned and were taught a number of things like building a baking oven out of a five gallon alcohol can that could be balanced on top of a kerosene stove in which you could bake bread and and as a consequence, you'd be able to bake it. The the only real fuel on the Altiplano is essentially animal dung. All of the fires, all of the cook stoves in homes, that would just be a pile of animal dung on the floor. And this would be llamas and alpacas, essentially, and sheep excuse me, all three of those. And that would be it. Yeah. And the fumes from those fires are probably not the most healthful in the world, particularly when they're in a confined area. And as a consequence, the idea of baking on a on a little kerosene stove and being able to do it in this in these cans that were ultimately discards was really a treat. And one of the things we used to do in the courses was actually to bake bread while

we were we were out in the course. And we were also introduced to the the program in cooperatives that the rural community development program had. We were introduced to things like the design of sheep and alpaca dips where animals would run down a ramp, run through a bath, and run up the other ramp to get rid of all of the insects and so on that were cheapening the wool.

KLEIN: [00:41:44] Now these these things you were learning would be new to the Bolivians as well?

LUTYNSKI: [00:41:48] No, I didn't. I think in some ways they may have been new, but I couldn't say that for certain. I just don't know.

KLEIN: [00:42:00] Had had Peace Corps been working in community development before you came?

LUTYNSKI: [00:42:06] They may have been working in community development, but I don't know if the shoulder to shoulder affiliation with the National Rural Community Development Program was as close as it was going to be with this group.

KLEIN: [00:42:24] So you were kind of going from square one?

LUTYNSKI: We were, yes.

KLEIN: Was it likely you would be going end up in a village where a Peace Corps volunteer had already been?

LUTYNSKI: [00:42:34] Well, there were no no, there was no likelihood of that.

KLEIN: [00:42:39] Well, that's any likelihood as you're in the middle of this. What's your feeling? I mean, you've joined you've been suddenly in Bolivia.

LUTYNSKI: [00:42:49] And, you know, it was it was it was a it was a bit of a jar, but we were so busy and so active we were that we paid much attention to it. The

one thing that was a bit shocking was to think that you were almost on the equator. And yet because of the altitude. Right. It was really chilly. You know, when you would get into the shade, it was chilly. And what altitude were you working? We were working pretty much in the depending upon where you were in probably 11,500 to 13,000 feet.

KLEIN: [00:43:26] So, when you first got there, there must have been a real adjustment?

LUTYNSKI: [00:43:30] There was we were we were in La Paz for a few days. We were given some pretty specific instructions about what to do and not do during that time. Yeah, one of the things was, oh, look, don't try to run up and down these streets because you're really going to it's going to be taxing go very easy on beer and wine or any kind of alcohol because you're going to get lightheaded very, very quickly.

KLEIN: Were you a smoker back then?

LUTYNSKI: No, no, no, no. So that was not an issue for me, but for other volunteers it was. And, you know, we all kind of paced ourselves.

KLEIN: [00:44:04] For yourself, you remember there was an adjustment.

LUTYNSKI: Oh, sure.

KLEIN: But it wasn't a major problem?

LUTYNSKI: [00:44:12] Not significant. No, no, no.

KLEIN: [00:44:14] So talk, what is it? Four week in-country training?

LUTYNSKI: [00:44:17] Four week in-country training.

KLEIN: [00:44:19] Talk about generally how it went and what what was the outcome?

LUTYNSKI: [00:44:22] I think it went I think it went on balance very positively. There were a couple of volunteers for whom it became very clear that that Bolivia was not for them. And they essentially self selected out of the program. Right. And they were gone. So we we all made it through. It was it was an adjustment. And we still knew that we had an adjustment ahead of us because we had to go out and find our priorities.

KLEIN: [00:44:56] Now, during this period, were you working in any given day, mostly in Spanish or Aymara?

LUTYNSKI: [00:45:05] A little combination of both.

KLEIN: [00:45:06] So you had a chance to phase into using Aymara?

LUTYNSKI: We did. We did, yes.

KLEIN: Not everyone had as much Aymara training as you do?

LUTYNSKI: [00:45:13] Probably not. Yeah, but it is difficult because it has it has some glottal stops in it. You do things. There are a few click kind of sounds in it. And, you know, it's it's tricky, but we certainly had the basics to get along.

KLEIN: [00:45:38] But at any given site, you would likely find people who spoke, their first language might be Aymara, but there would be some Spanish?

LUTYNSKI: [00:45:46] Absolutely.

KLEIN: How about English?

LUTYNSKI: No, no English at all.

KLEIN: [00:45:50] So someone who had not picked up on either of the languages terribly well would have a difficult time.

LUTYNSKI: [00:45:57] I think quite difficult, yes. Yes. I should backtrack for a moment when I said no English and I'm going to get ahead of myself just for a moment. But ultimately, the work location that we chose was headed by a provincial director, a Bolivian who did speak some English. It was it was halting, but he did speak some English from his background.

KLEIN: [00:46:28] Was your Spanish was pretty good?

LUTYNSKI: Oh, yeah.

KLEIN: Aymara as well.

LUTYNSKI: [00:46:31] Absolutely. Absolutely.

KLEIN: [00:46:33] Ok, let's during the course of training would emerge as far as. What you were going to be doing, where you were going to be doing it and with whom?

LUTYNSKI: [00:46:42] Well, we knew pretty much what we were going to be doing and what it was this we were in conjunction with village level workers. We were going to be designing a let's say, a two or a three day course that we could take on the road and go to a community, present the program and introduce to that community the National Community Development Program and what it could do with and for them. Yeah, that's really what we were so to do.

KLEIN: [00:47:20] Who did you finally pick or who finally picked you?

LUTYNSKI: [00:47:24] Well, when we first of all, our training ended at the with the with our Bolivian counterparts, we were we were brought back to La Paz. There was a little ceremony at the hotel in La Paz. We was sworn in and I think it was maybe the next day or two we were on the road and we started to travel to about three or four communities. And that would mean going down either to the bus station or, the big means of transportation on the Altiplano is truck, get onto these huge International Harvester stake

bed trucks and so on, that we're hauling all sorts of produce and so on, or by train. And I think we probably visited three or four communities

KLEIN: [00:48:19] At this point, your counterparts are back in their village?

LUTYNSKI: [00:48:22] They're back in their villages. We make arrangements. And of course, you know, communication is is not is not very you know, it's not as sophisticated as it is today. So we had some challenges. We were doing things by telegram to get messages out. But I think we visited about three or four sites. But one of the things that was interesting before we left our in country, public health director Dave Danielsson, remember his name to this day, got us together and he said, now look, I will give a prize to the volunteer who comes back and confirms the oldest child still being nursed by its mother. We all thought, how gross, why are we doing this? He said, look, I'll tell you when you get back. But the idea is you do the interview and the oldest, you know, will get a prize. In any event, we went out and I'll come back to this to finish up the story that we went out. We did about three or four visits. And what ultimately happened is this Mary and I and two young men, John Smith from San Francisco and Steve Jeffries from East Tennessee, all decided on the very same community, which was Calacoto, C-A-L-A-C-O-T-O in the province of Pacajes, P-A-C-A-J-E-S on the Altiplano. It was a train stop on the international train line that ran down to Antofagasta, Chile, almost on the Chile-Argentina border. And the reason, you know, you may say, four in one community? What is going on? Well, the fact is that the provincial head of the community development program lived in Calacoto and he lobbied us pretty heavily to live in Calacoto. He had transport. We all had a bicycles. So we were all issued bicycles. But he had transport to be able to take us to the communities that would invite us to give these courses for two or three days.

KLEIN: [00:51:05] So this is like a regional headquarters. We've got a much larger area.

LUTYNSKI: [00:51:10] Exactly, Bob. Pacajes was a large, large province. And it was, the population was dispersed. The Aymara lived in some communities, but they are also pretty widely dispersed in the Altiplano. So you had this combination of things, but he lobbied us and we decided that the four of us know what the living arrangements that we ultimately worked out was that Mary and I and John lived together and Steve lived down the street at another place. He just had a single room for himself, but he came over and took most of his meals with us.

KLEIN: [00:51:54] Who provided the housing?

LUTYNSKI: [00:51:56] Well, no one provided the housing. We were renters. We actually negotiated and paid rent.

KLEIN: [00:52:03] Well, let's you make the decision to go to this town, right. And you pack it up in La Paz and then go out with everything and start looking?

LUTYNSKI: [00:52:13] No, we don't. What we do is we first get a place to live. And we worked with Clemente Alcon, who was the head of the community development program. And he put us in touch with a woman who owned some buildings right on the town square. And we negotiated and he it was a compound actually around an open patio. And the family that lived in La Paz and owned this building on this came out from time to time. But for the most part, we had the run of the patio. There was a well in the patio, which was nice and important for us. Yeah, it was also a latrine outback that we were able to use after modifying it in, enhancing it a little bit. So it was it was going to be really quite comfortable for us. And also in this province, there were there were let me count the other volunteers that were three other volunteers that selected this province but lived in different communities within the province.

KLEIN: [00:53:25] Was the province subdivided into districts?

LUTYNSKI: [00:53:28] Not that we were aware of or that was particularly noteworthy.

KLEIN: [00:53:33] What was the background of the the regional director who you went to work for?

LUTYNSKI: [00:53:39] The regional director was an interesting guy. He actually he was a Bolivian who spent a lot of time in the Yungas, which are the the valleys as you go down into the lowlands of Bolivia. But they are they are at a high enough altitude to be very pleasant from a temperature standpoint. Coffee is grown down in this area. But he was very active politically. He had been he had gotten some of these scarves along the way, but he had been quite an activist.

KLEIN: [00:54:19] Just generally, what was the political situation in Bolivia while you were there?

LUTYNSKI: [00:54:25] Political situation in Bolivia was relatively quiet when we arrived. I believe the president at the time was General Rene Barrientos. And the interesting thing about Barrientos is that he was an Indian and that was an unusual thing. And in Latin America, the rule generally is that there are there are two paths for an Indian to upward mobility. One of them is the military, of course. And General Barrientos became a general in the Air Force. And, of course, that is that's the cream of the crop. You know, that's cutting edge. And these people fly planes. My God. You know, no one in Bolivia has been on a plane or very few have, right, so it's a position of prominence. And the other way to to achieve upward mobility, if you're an Indian, is to do it through the clergy. You go off to a seminary and maybe you become a bishop or something of that later. But those are two definite paths to upward mobility. He was the president when we arrived.

KLEIN: [00:55:37] So it was relatively stable and tended to be pro-American or neutral?

LUTYNSKI: [00:55:42] Or I think it was it was cautiously pro-American, but not fawning. So they weren't they weren't bending over backwards. But they I think what they were doing, they knew that there were some advantages

economically, politically to to at least being non inimical to the to the states. And they were now Bolivia is a country with a very, very checkered history. And the statistic when we arrived was this, there have been more presidents of Bolivia than years of independence of Bolivia since it became a republic. You know, a very, very tumultuous place.

KLEIN: [00:56:36] Let's get you to work, though. You you've settled in. You have a place to stay. Talk about the, after that at that for the first few weeks.

LUTYNSKI: [00:56:49] Ok, first few weeks, you know, we kind of get ourselves settled in.

KLEIN: Was it an office you go to?

LUTYNSKI: No, no, no. Absolutely not. There is no, because Clemente worked out of his home. There really is not, there's no formal.

KLEIN: There's no fancy ministry office?

LUTYNSKI: Oh, absolutely not. No, no, no. Calacoto was really pretty down and out. Calacoto did have a very large church. And there was a priest from Spain who resided in the town.

KLEIN: [00:57:15] In the town, were there are other non Bolivians?

LUTYNSKI: [00:57:20] So maybe other than the priest, you know, just the people in the in the town, there were maybe two little grocery stores we went around to, you know, introduce ourselves, get ourselves known.

KLEIN: What could you buy at the grocery store?

LUTYNSKI: You could buy rice. You could buy breads that were with that were baked locally. You could buy beer, you could buy things like shampoo, some personal needs. But they were very, very small shops, tiny places. So we got to know them. And then Clemente, we would get into his his truck and

he took us around to some communities. All four of you. All four of us. That's right. Now, Steve Jeffries, who did not live with with Mary, John and me. Steve was the baby of the group. He was nineteen years old, but he was a farm boy from East Tennessee. So believe it or not, Steve was the only one who really knew his way around because John was from San Francisco. Liberal education, Mary and I, both from Chicago. What do we know about farming? Yeah, nothing at all. So, Clemente kind of takes us around and shows us how, you know, the newly arrived gringos, kind of explains to local communities what we could do. And pretty quickly, invitations start to roll in to us, come out to our community and give one of your courses.

KLEIN: [00:58:52] Now, where is your counterpart or is Clemente your counterpart?

LUTYNSKI: [00:58:57] You know, Clemente is really our counterpart reporting directly to him near the village level, workers with whom we had our in-country training. So we are actually dealing kind of at one level above the village level work. Right. But the idea was we did that not for any kind of prestige, but for our ability to be able to get to all of the different communities, because the village level workers, they competed among themselves, of course, and they'd be knocking on Clemente's door saying, Clemente, come on, send the gringos out to us.

KLEIN: [00:59:40] Now, as he went out to these villages, did you encounter village level workers with whom you had done that in country training?

LUTYNSKI: [00:59:48] Absolutely. Absolutely. We most certainly did.

KLEIN: [00:59:51] There were some connections there already?

LUTYNSKI: [00:59:52] Absolutely. And they were they were

KLEIN: [00:59:54] Talk about your first trip. Did you and Mary do work together all the time?

LUTYNSKI: [01:00:00] We did. Actually, Mary, John, Steve, and I would go out. The four of us would go out.

KLEIN: [01:00:06] And it would always be the four of you?

LUTYNSKI: [01:00:07] It would always be the four of us. And here's what here's what the deal was. We essentially had to pack up everything to sustain life during those three or four days because we were usually given the local school in which to live. Or some abandoned building somewhere in the community. So we would bring everything. We would bring food. We would bring we would bring our sleeping bags. We would bring maybe inflatable mattresses to to put on the floor. But we essentially moved our household out there and we lived in that community for the time we were there.

KLEIN: [01:00:51] Can you describe one of the early visits to a community where you stayed for a couple of days?

LUTYNSKI: [01:00:58] Absolutely.

KLEIN: [01:01:00] From your point of view, right.

LUTYNSKI: [01:01:02] I mean, we would we would go out there and the first time it happened, I guess it was a little it was a little challenging because we unloaded our stuff from the from Clemente's truck and we moved in to the to the schoolhouse or whatever the abandoned building was.

KLEIN: [01:01:21] You remember what village it was?

LUTYNSKI: [01:01:24] Oh, I really do not. I'm sorry. I just do not think and and it would then say to us, hey, I'll be back here on Sunday by 12:00 noon or so and I'll pick you up. And there we were. And that's what we had no means of communication. There was nothing. We are really on our own. We had our Peace Corps medical kits. Of course, they were all assigned, but we were

nowhere. There were there were no telephones, no communication whatsoever. So we would get ourselves settled in the village level. Worker would often come over and just see that we were OK. One of the things one of the big lessons of Peace Corps for all of us was this. You've got to have somewhere a decent supply of water. So that was really the only question that we would have when we arrived. And I will tell you that the quality of water very dramatically up on the Altiplano and most of the time when we traveled the water was really pretty bad. And but, hey, we made do. We had iodine tablets and our plastic bottles. We did that. We would boil some water for making tea or coffee, the usual things, and then we would arrange with the village level work where we were going to be doing the little presentations. We had a motorcycle battery that we always traveled with that powered a little 35 millimeter slide projector and we did a manual slide show.

KLEIN: [01:02:58] Tell me what kind of presentations you were making.

LUTYNSKI: [01:03:02] We were doing presentations on how communities would put together a sheet dip, for example, or an alpaca dip.

KLEIN: [01:03:17] How would you know, say to make a presentation on sheep dip? How did you know that there was a need in the community?

LUTYNSKI: [01:03:25] Here's the way we did. We essentially had a kind of a set format. And what it what we were doing with these courses, remember, was trying to introduce the people to the National Community Development Program in Bolivia because it was essentially new to to the people that we were visiting. So what we were doing was trying to excite some interest in the community by indicating the kinds of projects that the community would begin if they so chose. So in effect, what we were doing was almost presenting a menu of some possibilities that the community could do while also doing things. John, Steve, for example, Steve Jefferies, our farm boy from East Tennessee, would be the one who would talk about the use of fertilizers and would have some slides on showing results in how the crops changed and so on. And comparative examples.

KLEIN: [01:04:39] There was all this going on in Aymara?

LUTYNSKI: [01:04:40] This is going on in a combination, but I would have to say it was mostly Spanish and there were times in a lot of it had to depend on the audience. The audience would be fluent in Spanish in some communities, and so we and others and oftentimes the community would like to speak Spanish because it helped them in other areas within their life in the country. So they weren't concerned about that. But in communities excuse me, where my motto was really the norm, what we would do is we would do Spanish and then the village level worker would very often do a translation into Aymara.

KLEIN: [01:05:33] Now it was the village level worker who got the crowd together.

LUTYNSKI: Correct.

KLEIN: What did he say to people to identify the four of you? Who do people think you were?

LUTYNSKI: [01:05:46] People all knew that we were members of the Peace Corps. We were *Voluntarios del Cuerpo de Paz*. That's what we were introduced and we were introduced as Peace Corps volunteers working with the National Community Development Program. It's not as if they dressed us up as being Bolivians who were working with the community. No, we were clearly we were from the United States and we were.

KLEIN: [01:06:19] But then in some ways it almost seems like your appearance in the presentations it's holding up, you know, the stick and the carrot that if people agreed with you, then money might come from the government.

LUTYNSKI: [01:06:36] Well, first of all, as you were pointing out earlier, so you do a slide presentation on sheep dip. What if they didn't want a sheep dip? If they didn't want a sheep dip, that they wouldn't build the sheep dip. But again, the Peace Corps turned back at that time was really identifying the

felt needs of the community. And really, it was part of that was the village level workers' task, to identify what do we want to organize around? What is it? Is it that we've got to put a new roof on the school? Is it that we want to build a sheep dip?

KLEIN: [01:07:16] But who's doing the needs assessment?

LUTYNSKI: [01:07:20] Well, that's being done apart from us. That's really being done with the village of a worker and the and the community. What we are doing is essentially saying to the community, these are some of the things that can be done with the with the program.

KLEIN: [01:07:38] So, I mean, and how many villages in the course of the first six months that you visit?

LUTYNSKI: [01:07:44] I would say that within the first six months, we probably did. I bet we probably did, we probably did 12, 13, something like that. I mean, we were on the road a lot.

KLEIN: [01:08:00] And I would think your reception would vary based on the competence or the zealousness of the village level worker.

LUTYNSKI: [01:08:12] Absolutely.

KLEIN: [01:08:15] Ok, let's let's set that aside for a moment to come back to where you're living. You must have had some free time.

LUTYNSKI: [01:08:28] Oh, yes, yes, absolutely was.

KLEIN: [01:08:31] What did you do with your free time?

LUTYNSKI: [01:08:32] Free time? A couple of things done. Mary tried to start a garden in in the soil. Now, mind you, this is this is very high in altitude. It is very cold at night. And among the few things that grow well on the Altiplano are tubers. They have to be in the ground. Right, because that's the only way

they're going to survive. So it's it's a kind of potato crop. There are so many varieties of potato. It's potato in Bolivia is a little bit like snow to the Eskimo because, you know, what do they say? There's like 75 different words to describe different kinds of snow. And will be about 75 different kinds of potatoes. They went from almost black, purple to pure white and red and yellows and everything in between. So that was that was one of the things. Another thing we did was we actually I mentioned there were three other volunteers in the same province. That we were we would we would travel back and forth by bicycle. And it was it would be a several mile trip. But one of the volunteers was an architect, Harvard trained architect, in fact. And he came down and spent a couple of days with us. And what we did was we actually improved our living situation somewhat. He actually, he liked Mary very much. And he he set up a water tank where Mary actually had a sink with a spigot of water inside because we put a water tank up close to the roof and on. And he had the I mean, it was just a simple gravity system. We have to carry buckets up there who we remember his name. His name was Ray Warburton. And we see Ray to this very day, to 2009.

KLEIN: [01:10:42] As the three plus one of you were living. Did Mary inevitably become the cook?

LUTYNSKI: [01:10:50] You know, Mary did inevitably become the cook. But interestingly enough, again, our our baby, Steve Jeffries from East Tennessee, who was, knew a little bit about cooking. And he did he did a fairly good good job at it. Let me just mention this. How did you get some of our food? Word travels very quickly that there are new people in town. We would get knocks on our doors and regularly we would have some women come over and bring eggs for sale to us. And sometimes they would even bring a chicken along and wonder if we wanted a chicken. Yeah, well, the first time I chicken came over, we said, yeah, we thought, that's terrific, let's do it. And in fact, I think Ray Warburton was down visiting with us at that time and we thought, oh, my God, we're going to have a really nice meal with this chicken. So we negotiated the price. We paid the woman and we had some eggs and well, this chicken had to be

four hundred years old because here's the rule. If you don't sell a chicken on the Altiplano until it has made its very last egg. Because it's an income producer in the meantime. Well, Ray had the damndest, most difficult time killing this chicken because, you know, we were taught to spin him around in a circle, grab 'em by the neck. Well, you know, this thing this meat was so tough and so old. And so we had pressure cookers. And I mean, this meat was almost purple, it was so old, I think we ate it nevertheless. Other people that used to come along were some young boys would fish by hand in a local river. When I say by hand, they used to do what bears do, a kind of lie along the bank of the river fish would come in the sea close to the bank and they would just scoop them out of the water and flip them onto the land. And they would they would have the fish and they would bring them over to us.

KLEIN: [01:13:06] Had you learned how to kill a chicken in training?

LUTYNSKI: [01:13:11] We did up at the at the egg center in in Bolivia. That was part of our in-country training. Oh, yes.

KLEIN: [01:13:26] A couple questions during the first six months. Did anyone from Peace Corps staff come to visit or did you all get together?

LUTYNSKI: [01:13:34] Most definitely visits. Dave Danielson, and I want to go back to tell the completion of the Dave Danielson story. Dave was the was the health director for the Peace Corps and public health director. Excuse me. He was not a medical doctor, but he was an MP from I think from Harvard, if I'm not mistaken. Yeah. Wonderful guy. He came out to visit because what the Peace Corps wanted to do is to see that we weren't living in a hovel. They wanted to make sure that we were keeping some standards right and wanted to see what our water supply was, whether it was a good supply and so on. Well, I just want to finish up the story. Danielson was the one who told us to look for the oldest at the mother's breast. Yeah, well, when we got back, I forget who got the award, but it was it was something like a four and a half year old, I think. Something like that. And Danielson gave the award and then someone said, well, so what's the

lesson here? Danielson and Danielson said, you have just seen Bolivian birth control. And he said, look, the lesson is this. When a woman is lactating, she generally does not ovulate.

KLEIN: [01:14:52] Right.

LUTYNSKI: [01:14:55] And the Bolivian women know this. Yes. And you keep an infant at the breast even when the fluid coming out of the breast is utterly, utterly, almost barren in useless. But you want to keep the child repressed because the hope is that you will not become pregnant while you are nursing. So that was our introduction to family planning, Altiplano style. The family planning was it was a sensitive topic in Bolivia because particularly with the Aymara, there was concern that the dominant community was trying to extinguish the regulation. Right. And family planning. We we never got involved in any family planning work on the Altiplano at all because there was this sensitivity. The Peace Corps gave it a wide berth during that time. And frankly, we were not we were not trained or competent enough. I think you'd need a group with RNs and so on. But in any event, to answer your question about Peace Corps visits. Yes, regional director Micky Nel Reagan would come out. I think he probably spent overnight with us. Dave Danielson, look down our well. And we actually could, down in the bottom of the well. There were some old auto parts that the water was very clear. It came in from the sides, very clear. But there were some old auto parts down there like like a starter from a truck or something. And Danielson said, leave it in there. It'll give you some iron, don't worry about it, just leave it there. But, you know, they were very casual about those things. But, yes, we did have visitors.

KLEIN: [01:16:42] And during the first six months, did you get a chance to travel out to any place other than the village you were in?

LUTYNSKI: [01:16:51] Oh, yes. During the first six months, we were on the road. Yes.

KLEIN: [01:16:54] I mean, recreationally.

LUTYNSKI: [01:16:57] No, no. The deal was this with our Peace Corps group, every month we got to come in to La Paz. We picked up our pay and we got to shop. Because the Altiplano was really thin, with respect to food supplies. So we would we would go into La Paz, we'd stop at the Peace Corps office. We pick up our pay. We would we would maybe spend two days in La Paz each month. And if we needed to do anything with the Peace Corps, we pick up mail also. That was the only way we got any mail.

KLEIN: [01:17:34] But no formal training or anything?

LUTYNSKI: [01:17:36] No no formal training. We had, I think one in-country training program, took place down in Cochabamba. I think maybe after our first year I could it was a year in. We got booster shots for all of our different things. And that was the only.

KLEIN: [01:17:54] Mid-service?

LUTYNSKI: [01:17:55] Mid-service, right. Something like that. But we would be into La Paz every month. And we are, as I say, what we learned to do in the marketplace is, we would buy a single integral and by integral, I mean, non-sliced hunk of beef, let's say, because that was you would just let it dry on the outside, which acted as kind of a preservative, and we would carry that out. We had a little darkroom where we could just let it sit on a piece of wood and it would dry. But, you know, eventually, by the time the end of the month would come, we were we were our food supply was usually pretty thin because we only had enough canned goods, maybe to last a month and we'd be recycling back into the into the city.

KLEIN: [01:18:48] Generally speaking, how was your health during the first year?

LUTYNSKI: [01:18:50] You know, our health was terrific. The only time we had a setback was when Jack Hood Vaughn, the then director of the Peace Corps, he succeeded Sargent Shriver as director of the Peace Corps. Jack Hood Vaughn came down to visit and there was going to be a meeting with Vaughn and one of the agricultural stations on the Altiplano.

And of course, all the volunteers wanted to go. So among our group, we had to draw straws about who was going to go. And I got the short straw and I didn't get to go because I was going somewhere with Clemente, I believe, on another mission. Well, everyone came back and I think the very next day we were all quite ill. And I think and that was the two volunteers who lived together in the province, Ray Warburton. And I was kind of the nursemaid for everyone. And what I had to do was the first time we did it. But the Peace Corps told us that when you were seriously ill, one of the things you wanted to do with diarrhea was to watch the blood content. So we did not use our latrine because you could not see down into the latrine. So I found a place where I could dig a slit trench for the volunteers, for everyone who was sick, and they would use that so they could examine to see if they were bleeding at that point. And then, of course, we would just cover over the trench. I would continue to extend it out as long as we would needed, but we ultimately had to pack them up and send them to the city because the poly mag and other things just didn't do it. They picked up quite a bit. But apart from that, you know, the Altiplano is actually a very healthy place to live because of the temperature getting so cold every night.

KLEIN: [01:20:49] Ok, let's go through the during the first year, were you able to establish any kind of friendships with people in the neighborhood you lived in going to church or not?

LUTYNSKI: [01:21:07] You know, our our real friendship was with Clemente Alcon, who was the province chief of the community development program. I mean, we spent a good deal of time with him and with his older son, Tocio. And Tocio at that point was probably maybe nine years old or something like that. And Clemente's first wife, that is Tocio's mother, had died. She became ill and died. Clemente remarried and had two sons by his second wife. So it was a blended family and they lived just about two or three doors down from us. And he was really our principal source of information about the community development program, how we were scheduling our trips and so on. I mean, it was really fun.

KLEIN: [01:22:04] But on a weekend, did you go out to a nightclub, a bar?

LUTYNSKI: [01:22:09] There were no bars. There were no nightclubs. There was nothing. I mean, a population of this town, just to put it into perspective, Bob, was. You know, if there were if there were 50 people and you were talking a lot, but when festival time would come apart, that while they would come out of the woodwork from everywhere, they would travel from other parts of the country to come back to the Altiplano. But many people, you know, the Altiplano was abandoned in many ways because farmers especially wanted to go to the Yungas where the rain was more fertile, the climate was much more hospitable, and they just wanted to get away from the Altiplano because prospects there were not very, very good.

KLEIN: [01:23:00] So it was a population that was diminishing?

LUTYNSKI: Oh, most definitely. Most definitely.

KLEIN: And yet you were still doing the community development up there?

LUTYNSKI: [01:23:08] Yes. Yes. Actually, it was it still wanted to be done because, look, there were still going to be shepherds who were going to raise alpaca and sheep. That was a that was a big food source in Bolivia. So it wasn't important. It was an important aspect, although not a huge aspect to the economy. It was still important

KLEIN: [01:23:31] As you come to the end of the first year. Was there any break between first and second year? Did you take vacation?

LUTYNSKI: [01:23:39] You know, we did. We went to.

KLEIN: [01:23:40] You and Mary?

LUTYNSKI: [01:23:43] No, we actually we would go as a group. We traveled. We were really very, very close. And we were very close with these with the other volunteers. But we traveled all the way down to the Lake District in Chile.

We went to Santiago, of course, and then we went to Santiago south to Puerto Montt, right on the coast of Chile. And then we went up into the lake region, crossing into Argentina. And then we took one of the longest bus rides we ever took. And that is from almost southern Argentina all the way up to Buenos Aires. I don't know how many hours it was. But when we arrived in Buenos Aires, you couldn't see our ankles. We were just swollen as could be.

KLEIN: [01:24:27] Yeah. And there was the mid-year conference.

LUTYNSKI: [01:24:33] Mid-year conference, yes. In Cochabamba.

KLEIN: [01:24:36] Any startling anything come out of that?

LUTYNSKI: No, not really.

KLEIN: Were other people in the group having tended to have the same experience as you?

LUTYNSKI: [01:24:47] You know, they were although some of them had some health problems had developed. That young man Corey I told you about before, the handsome Scandinavian. I think, Corey, I think the rule was that if you if you had a double attack of hepatitis, I think you were excused at that point because your system was so compromised. I think Corey may have come down with a second bout of hepatitis, but he was he was really he was unfortunate in that. But, you know, for the most part, we stayed healthy.

KLEIN: [01:25:25] We are OK now when you're going into your second year, you know, and at that point you can see that your tour is going to come. And one of the things I wondered whether you had any measure by which you could have some sense of achievement or closure. I mean, you've just described the process going out to the villages, making the presentations. But at some point you want to build a latrine or you want to.

LUTYNSKI: [01:25:59] Exactly. But you know what Bob? That's the interesting thing about being the first in. We were told that we were really not going to see and we were not expecting to see any of quote our pet projects go anywhere. Compared to Ray Warburton, who was up in a community north of us, and his community, they got together and they built a school.

KLEIN: [01:26:27] Yes.

LUTYNSKI: [01:26:29] You know, but but Ray was not on the road as we were, right? Because we were we were essentially the shills. You know, we were the ones who passed out the leaflets in a way.

KLEIN: [01:26:39] So your second year was pretty much the same pattern?

LUTYNSKI: [01:26:42] Doing the same thing, yes.

KLEIN: [01:26:43] Was there any sense of frustration that, you know, well, I'm leaving and where's my monument?

LUTYNSKI: [01:26:49] Well, you know, the Peace Corps was pretty clear in telling us you weren't leaving monuments. You were here to be able to plow the ground for your successors because the plan was that our successors were going to be those who were more skilled and more skilled in animal husbandry, more skilled in co-ops and so on to be able to do all of those things to deepen the work. That's where the monuments might have gone.

KLEIN: [01:27:19] Was there any sense in trying to train the Bolivians to be doing what you were doing, not the village level work, but the kind of, you know, planting of seeds or whatever you want?

LUTYNSKI: [01:27:32] Oh, absolutely, absolutely. And and that was that was some of the that was some of the work the village level workers to working with. They were always looking for rising stars in the community, young men or young women who were going to.

KLEIN: [01:27:46] But you didn't specifically have someone, a Bolivian, who might accompany the four of you just to see what you were doing?

LUTYNSKI: [01:27:54] We did not, no. We did not. But one other aspect, just on a personal level of the second year was planning what do we do when we go back to the states where this happens? And guess what? I wound up taking the graduate record examination. That's what it was called way back then. The Foreign Service Officers qualifying exam. I took the law school admission test because more than five years had passed since I had taken it before. I must tell you that for the law school admission test, I was a testing center of one in La Paz, Bolivia. I was at the U.S. Information Service Library in La Paz. I went in there. I walked down to the train station. It was a day when the train was not scheduled to run, but freight trains ran. So I went down to the to the train station. And lo and behold, one of these a little electric cars, not electric cars. They were because this was not electrified. They were gasoline powered, but they were they were almost a little we-fix-the-rail cars. And the the Bolivian driver said he I mean, he knew I was a gringo. I was kind of washed up because I was going into the city. He said, where are you going? And I said, well, I'm waiting.

LUTYNSKI: [01:29:19] I'm going to try to flip a freight train and go into La Paz. He said, I'm going to La Paz, come on with me. I was in La Paz in about two hours. That trip would normally take eight by train. And I got in. I took the law school admission test. I ultimately, it's a long story, but I got an exceptionally good grade. But they sent the grade by surface mail. I didn't know about it until I was almost ready to leave. In the meantime, I got a graduate record score back and it was a good one. And I was headed to the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania to the Fels Institute of Local and State Government, because I was going to be kind of a government guy somehow. And I once I got back, I, I shifted because I my law school grade caught up with me, the law school admission test grade, and I sent it quickly to Northwestern and to the University of Chicago in Chicago. And I, I believe it or not, got a I got an interview at the University of Chicago. For some reason I hit it off with the director of

admissions. He liked this idea of someone coming back from the Peace Corps, someone a little older and bingo. I was I was in school.

KLEIN: [01:30:45] That's great. Let's finish up the service. As you're ending up the second year, was there a plan to replace you, were other Peace Corps volunteers in training?

LUTYNSKI: [01:31:00] You know, there there was a plan to replace us. Whether that replacement was going to be in this community or not was an open question. That we didn't know.

KLEIN: [01:31:13] Were their political problems during the two years?

LUTYNSKI: [01:31:18] The only political problem was this. And it was it was really very, very interesting. Che Guevara. Who was the leader of the revolution in Cuba with Fidel, Che Guevara was discovered in the lowlands of Bolivia, and that, of course, set up the alarms because the thought was that Che was going down because he got bored with the administration of the revolution in Cuba. It was all because that was '59, wasn't it? I think '59, and that Che wanted some excitement in his life and wanted to be working. And he had he had been traced into Argentina and into Bolivia. And ultimately he was killed by Bolivian rangers in Bolivia. And, you know, there are so many different interpretations of that of that story, because Che was a medical doctor himself, who was actually trained as a medical doctor. And he had a very bad case of asthma, apparently. And some say that it was almost a kind of a farewell or suicide mission for him, that he would not have gone to these lowlands, which would so compromise his asthmatic condition. In any event, the Bolivian rangers were almost heroes at that point. But the, and the government really paraded, I think they removed his thumbs, if I'm not mistaken, and they were, you know, in the newspaper.

KLEIN: [01:32:57] And so what impact did it have on, you know, really?

LUTYNSKI: [01:33:02] Not really. There was there was not much other than there was there was some heightened military activity because no one really knew where he was in the country. But not much goes on on the Altiplano.

KLEIN: [01:33:16] And usually at the end of the two years, there's a termination conference where the group gets together and discusses their experience. You know, not every place does it occur.

LUTYNSKI: [01:33:29] I'll tell you what, Bob, I. I was excused about three weeks early to begin a summer program at that Wharton School. And I, I missed it. Mary stayed on. And she would have been at the termination conference, I believe there was one, but I was excused early to be able to go up and try to start this program at Wharton. And as it turned out, I switched horses because of the law school thing.

KLEIN: [01:34:03] Well, let's follow your story. Do you remember your feeling as you were leaving the country? I mean, you had joined the Peace Corps. You had been trained. You spent the two years sense of achievements and failures. And so was it worth doing?

LUTYNSKI: [01:34:22] The sense on leaving was this. That we had learned, I think all of us, we had learned much more than we had taught. We had gotten much more than we had given and that it was. It was a major, major life experience, and I think when I came back to the States, I felt I can do almost anything. That we wanted to, you know, so despite the fact and moreover, the other thing is that I didn't mention is Clemente's son, Tocio, left Bolivia with my brother halfway through and he was living with my family. So when I got back home to Bolivia or, excuse me, back home to Chicago, yeah, that was the Bolivian face living with my parents. So your brother had visited you during service?

LUTYNSKI: Yes.

KLEIN: [01:35:28] What was that like? Was he a world traveler?

LUTYNSKI: [01:35:32] No, no. Tom was definitely not a world traveler. He was built for comfort, not for speed.

KLEIN: And he is your older brother?

LUTYNSKI: No, he's a younger brother, six years younger than I. He was in undergraduate's. No, no. Let's see. Where was he? He may have been an undergraduate school at Holy Cross at that time out in Worcester, Massachusetts, but he came down because a complicated story. We had worked things out so that Clemente wanted Tocio to get an education in the United States. My parents were willing to do it and arrangements. We made all the arrangements for Tocio to go back up. And when Tom came down, he was going to be the one who was going to accompany Tocio back to the States. And he did. Yeah, he traveled through immigration with him.

KLEIN: Howl old was Tocio then?

LUTYNSKI: Toshio was probably about, I'm going to say about ten. I think he was maybe around nine, although believe it or not, I don't know that there is even a birth certificate for Tocio. And the custom in Bolivia is that you do not count a child as a member of the family until the child achieves his fifth birthday because infant mortality is so great.

KLEIN: [01:36:56] So Tocio came up not to go to college, but school?

LUTYNSKI: [01:36:59] No, not to go to college. He went to grammar school and, you know, he was speaking no English at all. When he arrived, he and my parents worked out of a dictionary. He was enrolled in the local public school. It was a, you know, a very positive experience for him. I think he he managed to do very well. He did well in his studies. He he mastered the language.

KLEIN: [01:37:27] Are you still in touch with him?

LUTYNSKI: [01:37:29] Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. He lives in Oregon. In fact, when my mother died about five years ago, she was in a nursing home. But before that time, she she was living in a home thgat that they owned and she had a room with them. So they were they were, in essence, taking care of her. That is Tocio and his wife, who is a Filipino woman who was a nurse and their adopted daughter from the Philippines.

KLEIN: [01:38:08] So they became family.

LUTYNSKI: [01:38:10] Absolutely. They became family. Yes, indeed.

KLEIN: [01:38:13] So, again, your sense of what two years meant in terms of, let's say in terms of Bolivarian development and then in terms of, you know, what did you bring back to the U.S.?

LUTYNSKI: [01:38:26] You know, Bolivian development. Bolivia is the poorest country in South America. It has. The only time it wasn't the poorest country was when the deep tin mining was going on and the Hochschild and Patino families were ruling the country essentially and almost owning it because there was extraordinary wealth in Bolivia. But when tin became shallow mined and strip mined in Southeast Asia later, it no longer was economic to remove tin from deep shaft mines. And Bolivia is a poor country. Bolivia has huge challenges geographically, it is as large as Texas and California put together. It goes from mountains that are almost as tall as Everest to Amazon jungle. And it does that within a relatively small space, even though it's Texas and California and it only has the population of maybe four million people, something like that. So it is terribly, terribly challenging just geographically. I mean, it's Hannibal crossing the Alps. It's a very, very daunting country to get around it. Very difficult. I have great, great affection. I have not been back to South America at all. I've not been back to Bolivia. Our friend Ray has been back to Peru and also back to Bolivia, went back to his community, but again, you see where he had roots in that community because he lived there and did projects with him. We were essentially nomads when we were there. We really didn't sink roots in our

community. We were we were the traveling side show, you know, and that's why we didn't have that.

KLEIN: It was a role.

LUTYNSKI: It was a role. And the Peace Corps told us it was going to be a role. And we accepted that role as we were expected to.

KLEIN: [01:40:32] So on that score. You know, you achieved pretty much what you set out to do.

LUTYNSKI: [01:40:38] I think we achieved, although there's certainly, you know, every time you use the word achievement, someone says, well, how do you measure it? What are you measurable here? Well, and and I can't tell you what the measurable goals are. I don't even know today how many volunteers there are in in Bolivia. Bolivia is going through a lot of challenges economically. You know, they've had a lot of upheaval because of ethnic problems with challenges. I know that that Clemente, our former boss, is still very active politically. He lives down in the Yungas now.

KLEIN: [01:41:17] But in some ways, I mean, with many Peace Corps project people, the measure is in terms of someone like Tocio more in the number of schools we built or.

LUTYNSKI: [01:41:29] Yes. Yes, it could be. It could be. On the other hand, you know, I always wonder what would have happened to Tocio had had he not left Bolivia. I think clearly he would have run away from home. But he may have he may have been he may have made a very sound contribution to his own country. I'm just not sure it's one of those things we'll never know. Unfortunately.

KLEIN: [01:41:53] Anything else about your Peace Corps service?

LUTYNSKI: [01:41:57] Clearly, the most positive experience that I have had in life. It was it was utterly remarkable because it gave us the opportunity to be self-sufficient in a way that carries on to this day. I mean, even when you hear discussions about medical care and health care in the United States, I mean, the Peace Corps gave us a little gray box. It was a metal box. You know, you probably have the same box and it was just a Peace Corps medical care. It had prescription drugs in it. And they just gave it to us and they said, hey, you got to take care of yourself because there isn't someone to. Yeah, you know, we were we were miles away from any kind of medical care. So it gave a great sense of self-sufficiency, which I think is. I'm not sure how you get it, other than going through that very experience, so positive in every single way, I just have I have no negative recollections about the Peace Corps at all. There were tough times. I mean, the hotel, when Peace Corps was cutting back on expenses, we moved to a hotel where the shower was down the hall. And the way you got warm water was to throw a light switch on the wall while you were standing in the shower. That ignited an analogical heating element in the shower head came down. So, no, we you know, it gives you the sense that you can survive almost anywhere. And that is an irreplaceable characteristic that I think that volunteers walk away with.

[END OF INTERVIEW]