

**Charles Kreiman Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Charles Kreiman  
**Interviewer:** Gloria Curtis  
**Date of Interview:** June 24, 2008  
**Location of Interview:** Denver, Colorado  
**Length:** 57 pages

**Biographical Note**

Charles (Chuck) Kreiman served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia from 1968 to 1970 as a teacher (Ethiopia X).

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed August 4, 2008, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. This interview is in the public domain.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

**Technical Note**

This transcript was created by Sonix software from the MP3 audio recording of the interview. The resulting text file was lightly edited and reformatted according to a standard template.

**Suggested Citation**

Charles Kreiman, recorded interview by Gloria Curtis, June 24, 2008, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

## DISCLAIMER

This transcript was generated automatically by Sonix software from the audio recording. The accuracy of the transcript cannot be guaranteed. Only the original audio recording constitutes the official record of this interview and should be used along with the transcript. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy or would like to recommend corrections, they are encouraged to contact the library reference staff.

Oral History Interview

with

Charles Kreiman

June 24, 2008  
Denver, Colorado

By Gloria Curtis

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

CURTIS: [00:00:02] [June] 24, 1980 [2008]. I'm interviewing Charles Kreiman, K-R-E-I-M-A-N, who was with the Ethiopia X group that trained at St. Thomas Virgin Islands, reporting in June 1968. OK, Chuck, I'll call you Chuck through the interview, so you start. How you began your Peace Corps life by deciding you are going to go and apply. So go ahead.

KREIMAN: [00:00:35] OK. I'm not sure if. The date is 2008. I'm not sure what date you mentioned. This is June 24, 2008. Just 40 years since I was applying for the Peace Corps. And as I prepared for this, one of the things that I was struggling with was to clarify how my memories and try and get everything in a reasonably sequential order. I do want to talk about at the end about how Peace Corps had a lasting relationship on my life. As to why I joined the Peace Corps. I was in graduate school in Washington, D.C., at George Washington University. I thought I wanted to be a Foreign Service officer and I was pursuing a course in international relations. And while I was

doing all this academic study, you know, you might recall that the spring of 1968 was a pretty momentous time.

KREIMAN: [00:01:40] One of the things, Martin Luther King was shot. Lyndon Johnson pulled out of the election. Robert Kennedy entered the election fray. I was actually working for Gene McCarthy at the time. And then Robert Kennedy's assassination. The Chicago convention occurred in August. So it was quite a tumultuous time. In my academic spheres I became quite restless. And I recall particularly one particular graduate school assignment that soured me and said I needed to get out of academia and get into the world. This, I was assigned to review and comment for a class on an article about local government and the statistical probability of its form of government in relation to its percentage of ethnic population. And of course, there were some definite definition of ethnic population.

CURTIS: [00:02:43] Yeah, especially in Washington, D.C.

KREIMAN: [00:02:44] Yeah. And so, you know, they tried to. It was coded by a political scientist in and a computer program. And I said, why in the world am I studying this? What relevance, what meaning does it have to the real world? So I said this was not for me, and I began looking for options. And I do have my Peace Corps confirmation letter acceptance back in April 9th, 1968. At the same time, I guess it was December, I went ahead and applied for the Foreign Service. I passed the exam, I took the oral examination. I flew back for the oral examination just a few days after Martin Luther King was assassinated. My home was Chicago, but I was living in the suburbs of D.C. going to school.

KREIMAN: [00:03:45] So I recall flying into Washington National Airport and seeing the fires burning, which I later learned was the Eighth Street corridor fires. I interviewed in front of a three-person panel, which included a career ambassador. I think his name was Timberlake. And I just blew terribly a question about what would I do if an American fishing vessel had been taken over by the Peruvian Navy? And I got indignant about protesting. And of course, that was entirely the wrong answer. As a Foreign Service officer, I was to look out for the interests of the crew and make sure they

were safe and obtain representation. But in any event, another of the panelists asked me, and this was again April of 1968, what was my minimum negotiating position on Vietnam?

CURTIS: [00:04:44] Oh wow.

KREIMAN: [00:04:45] So thinking quickly, I talked about some kind of cease fire or stand in place recognition of the Viet Cong as a political party and negotiations, et cetera, et cetera. Evidently, whatever I said was enough for me to pass. So I kept getting letters after that oral interview saying, you know, go ahead and come in for your physical and do some other scheduling things. And after ignoring a couple of those, I finally wrote in and said, sorry, I've made a choice to pursue the Peace Corps instead of the Foreign Service. So I see here, I recall, I didn't recall exactly, but I found in my archives, personal archives, the April 9th, 1968, letter from Jack Vaughn saying I was selected to train for Peace Corps service in Ethiopia as a teacher of English as a foreign language in a secondary school.

KREIMAN: [00:05:50] So we assembled in Philadelphia, it was June of 1968, and our group flew to St. Thomas for six weeks of orientation and training. Apparently, the University of the Virgin Islands was the official contractor, and staff was assembled and we went. I don't recall how we got there. But to an area in the north part of St. Thomas, or across the mountain ridge from Charlotte Amalie, a place called the state Mandahl. And we were housed in this sort of open-air rooms. There were like three sides open to one side along the cliff side facing the road. A few married couples and the staff got private rooms, so we're a little bit jealous of that. There was a central lavatory and shower facility that had solar heated water, which if you decided to take a shower in the afternoon after the day, the hot had heated up the water. You were fine. In the morning the showers are pretty cool.

KREIMAN: [00:07:01] This was July in St. Thomas, of course, so we followed the local custom and sort of had a siesta time from about 1:00 to 3:00 to miss the worst of the heat of the day. We were up one hillside and down to the main road and then up the other hillside and over another ridge to get to

the beach. I remember that first night we were all excited to go to the beach and as even as dusk approached, we started climbing up the other side of the hill and over the ridge, where there was a little motel which had a bar that served very good frozen margaritas or whatever else they served. And we walked down to the beach. We had to get into the Caribbean. Unfortunately, we didn't know that that beach was populated by many sea urchins, and a number of volunteers came back with a very painful urchin quills in their feet. I was fortunate to miss them. Any event, along with the very intense training being in St. Thomas, a very, uh.

CURTIS: [00:08:13] Tropical.

KREIMAN: [00:08:13] Tropical paradise, was quite interesting.

CURTIS: [00:08:18] Now how about your Ethiopian language trainers?

KREIMAN: [00:08:22] We'll get to that. I'll get to that. Now, as I began thinking about this, I began using words we and us and our group and referring to our St. Thomas group of volunteers. And I think this was a very deliberate strategy on the part of the, I think in the end were very skillful about forging group identity, forging group cohesiveness. At the same time, Peace Corps was trying to be sort of evolving in its training methods. And I think Gloria would find for some of the earlier groups that there was a very rigorous selection process.

CURTIS: [00:09:05] Yes, very academic.

KREIMAN: [00:09:05] And people were quote deselected, I think was the term.

CURTIS: [00:09:10] Very structured.

KREIMAN: [00:09:11] This group was part of a transition from that rigid approach to what they termed self-selection. Now they had a cadre of psychologists as well as other staff people working with us and observing us and interviewing us. But I think their approach was to sort of press people who they saw as unfit to deselect themselves rather than imposing a top-down approach.

CURTIS: [00:09:39] How large was your group?

KREIMAN: [00:09:41] I bet there were 60, 70 of us just on St. Thomas.

CURTIS: [00:09:46] Yes.

KREIMAN: [00:09:48] One of the aspects, I'll get to language training in a minute, was what were then called T groups or sensitivity training. They brought down a bunch of psychologists from some institute, I think it was in Maine, where one of the other groups was training. And we had sessions that, you know, were sort of trying to reveal and get at your inner feelings and so forth. I recall one session that ended very abruptly because the psychologist who was leading them was sort of losing it. And what I recall the discussion afterwards was that the psychologist had become very much infatuated with one of the trainees. It was very heavy, had great difficulty coping with his infatuation versus his professional role as a group leader.

CURTIS: [00:10:44] So did he select himself out?

KREIMAN: [00:10:46] Well, he just, that one. I just recall that one group session abruptly ending because he was just so conflicted about his duality there. Another training exercise I recall. We were assigned to two person teams and one of us was blindfolded. And we spent the morning with the sighted person and the blindfolded person going through various activities. What occurred and what I recall from this exercise is the blindfolded folks very quickly beginning to assert their own independence. They just resented being held and guided. And sort of, please, I'd rather do it myself, kind of attitude. And just the most normal, you know, anything dangerous or anything. You're on a hillside and they were little steps.

CURTIS: [00:11:52] Yes, fall off a cliff.

KREIMAN: [00:11:55] The lesson, I think, was that people can be helped only when they are willing to accept that help, but only to the extent that they're willing to accept that.

CURTIS: [00:12:06] Interesting.

KREIMAN: [00:12:06] So it was an exercise in the helping relationship. To prepare us for language training, and it was after several weeks that a group of Ethiopians were brought in from Ethiopia to be our language trainers. I don't know if they were university students or just or other teachers. But they brought in six, eight, 10 Ethiopians.

CURTIS: [00:12:31] Was their English good?

KREIMAN: [00:12:33] I don't recall. I think their English was well enough. But to prepare us, one of the trainers sat us down. We had a big dining hall. We were all assembled in there and we were, of course, going to use a technique, the oral technique of language training. As a matter of fact, unlike earlier groups, we were never taught the Ethiopian alphabet, which is not a Phoenician letter alphabet.

CURTIS: [00:13:00] Right, a script.

KREIMAN: [00:13:00] In a particular script. But they didn't want to divert our attention to that area. They just wanted us to be able to speak and converse and build vocabulary. So to convince us that we could acquire a language without using another language, this one teacher who knew Chinese got up in front of the group and proceeded to drill us in a Chinese phrase without using a single word of English. And I think it's something like [speaks Chinese] and got into the, uh.

CURTIS: [00:13:38] Intonation.

KREIMAN: [00:13:39] Intonation that's part of Chinese or something like that. Hello, how are you, or whatever. Probably a curse word, actually, but I'll never know. In any event, the group came over, and we had basically half the immersion. For a half of the day we would be in language training, we would speak nothing but Amharic. But then this also was interesting in that today in Ethiopia, there are many, still many issues about language. And at least in the sixties, however, the dominant group, the Shewa nobility

were trying to use Amharic as a unifying aspect of the country, which of course, has since split apart. Eritrea is now independent. There's a regional federational kind of government, the Oromo, where I was, who we called then the Galla.

KREIMAN: [00:14:40] In any event, part of Peace Corps was work hard, play hard. And I think it was mostly weekends we were able to take off and enjoy the beauty of St. Thomas. We soon found that the initial beach right across from our training site was paled in comparison to some of the world class beaches that existed along there. My all-time favorite and I've seen it on lists of top 10 beaches in the world is Magens Bay. It is a horseshoe bay with powder sugar sand, and at least before the hurricane decimated it some years ago, it was ringed by beautiful palm trees. I also remember fondly the greasy hamburgers that were served at the food stand and just, you know, maybe it was the time and the place, but I just remember them as just great.

KREIMAN: [00:15:41] A thing I recall about my time in St. Thomas is that I was not remembering any of my dreams. I know we all dream, but whether we remember the dream is.

CURTIS: [00:15:50] And can talk about it.

KREIMAN: [00:15:51] And can talk about it. And I typically remember my dreams, not, you know, the memory fades quickly, but I just went for days and days and weeks without any recollection of any of my dreams. And I was a little bit concerned, and I did speak to one of the staff psychologists.

CURTIS: [00:16:13] You were surrounded by psychologists?

KREIMAN: [00:16:15] Yes. And this woman opined that the reason I wasn't remembering my dreams because I was very much focused on the present and what was going on in the present and dreams are reflective kind of exercise, and so reflection didn't matter. It was, you know, I sort of suppressed my dreams or didn't remember because I was so focused on the present. And I was greatly relieved that, you know, it wasn't anything, you know, dangerous and in any danger of being deselected. Because I

literally had a very disastrous experience in graduate school and I was really anxious to do something and succeed. And what was going on at the same time is one of the fellows that I was friendly with, who actually was from the same neighborhood that I was in Chicago, was being pressured to deselect, and he ultimately did not go to Ethiopia.

CURTIS: [00:17:11] Were you sleeping well?

KREIMAN: [00:17:13] I think I slept pretty well.

CURTIS: [00:17:15] Oh, good.

KREIMAN: [00:17:16] So I made it through training and then we were scheduled then to proceed for an additional five weeks of training in-country. And I recall going from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico first, had a couple of days off. Prinair, Puerto Rican International Airline, which has long ceased to exist. But I recall at the airport not only being asked to have my luggage weighed, but being asked how much I weighed.

CURTIS: [00:17:45] Well, this is going to happen in the future apparently.

KREIMAN: [00:17:50] But this little four engine prop jet just seemed like it just skimmed over the water.

CURTIS: [00:17:55] That prepared you for Ethiopian Airlines.

KREIMAN: [00:18:00] Yeah. I bet I lost some weight anyway. But I stopped in Puerto Rico for a day or two. I have almost no recollection of that. Met my parents. We went together to New York for us to be the charter flight from New York, a KLM charter I believe, to Addis Ababa. So we got to the charter terminal. It was very chaotic. There'd been a bomb threat called in, and the rumor was, I don't know if it was later that I heard it, that somebody who was running late and was afraid they were going to miss the plane called in a bomb threat so there'd be a delay. So we waited around and they finally said that it was safe to board the plane. There was one couple who I didn't know, I think they were from the main training group or one of the other training groups, I didn't know them well. We all

gathered for that charter together. They were just still too nervous to board the plane.

KREIMAN: [00:18:58] So Peace Corps asked them to go down to Washington, D.C., to be interviewed by staff to decide their fate. I was not permitted to board the plane because they couldn't find my passport.

CURTIS: [00:19:11] Peace Corps issued passport.

KREIMAN: [00:19:13] Peace Corps arranged for a special series of passports. What turned out that I had blocked printed my last name K-R-E-I-M-A-N. And somebody had mistaken a black R for an A. So it had been misfiled. In any event, the couple decided they were going to go ahead. I got called somewhere. I got put up in a hotel in New York somewhere overnight. I got some information somehow to meet this couple at the TWA terminal the next evening. They had found my passport. They had issued me a commercial ticket. And we got on a TWA nonstop flight to Athens.

CURTIS: [00:19:57] Oh.

KREIMAN: [00:19:58] So it was set. The three of us were together for that. I recall having three seats to myself in a Boeing 707, having steak served in the coach dinner and buying a small bottle of champagne to go with it. And I tried to get some sleep because I knew I was, it was my first trip overseas. I was really excited. We got to Athens and we had until 2:00 a.m. the next morning. They gave us a hotel room and we probably napped for all of an hour and a half, and we immediately embarked on a whirlwind tour of Athens. And in those days before the restoration efforts, we not only got to climb to the top of the Acropolis, but we actually walked through the Parthenon, which a short time thereafter, it was roped off and sealed as they went through an extensive restoration.

CURTIS: [00:20:53] Yes.

KREIMAN: [00:20:53] But we did a whole series of, I think we visited the National Museum. We went to the Acropolis, a few other things. And then we had to get up around 11:00 or 12:00 and go out to the airport to meet an

Ethiopian Airlines plane that was supposed to depart around 2:00 a.m. and had come from Frankfurt, stopped in Athens. I think it stopped in Alexandria or Cairo and maybe Asmara as well. And then was scheduled to land in Addis Ababa at daybreak. Because they couldn't land sooner because there were no landing lights.

CURTIS: [00:21:28] There's no lights. Right, I remember that.

KREIMAN: [00:21:30] At the national airport. So we got, I got to Addis Ababa. I had missed the charter flight, but I was soon joined up.

CURTIS: [00:21:41] Reunited with your group.

KREIMAN: [00:21:42] With the group. We were put up at a hotel across the street from what was then Peace Corps headquarters, the area known as Arat Kilo. I think that means it was like four kilometers from some landmark, maybe city hall or something.

CURTIS: [00:21:57] The palace or?

KREIMAN: [00:21:59] Whatever. A place called the International Hotel. Served pretty good cappuccino.

CURTIS: [00:22:07] At the bar.

KREIMAN: [00:22:10] So, um. What happened next?

CURTIS: [00:22:17] Well, let me just ask one question. I think it's so unusual that your Ethiopia X group was split into three subsections, trained separately, and then you all met in Addis Ababa. Is that it? And yet you were supposed to bond as a group and have some feeling.

KREIMAN: [00:22:33] Well, you know, I think there was. The St. Thomas people bonded with St. Thomas people more than they did with the St. Croix or the Maine people.

CURTIS: [00:22:42] Yes.

KREIMAN: [00:22:42] I think there was subgroup identities forged among the people who trained together for that initial seven-week period.

CURTIS: [00:22:50] Right. I find that unusual. Now how did that work out when you got your assignments?

KREIMAN: [00:22:54] I think it was just. Well, you know, the people, then you began, the issue was the people in your own town.

CURTIS: [00:22:59] Yes.

KREIMAN: [00:23:01] So that became a whole different bonding process.

CURTIS: [00:23:06] Right.

KREIMAN: [00:23:06] A little bit more about the training. They apparently found some students who were willing to come to summer school and they had us do practice teaching. So we started some teacher exercises and I think we were observed and given additional guidance and pedagogical approaches to teaching English as a second language. I think one of the things I recall being struck by was the physical demands of being up in front of a classroom for several periods a day. I remember the first day just feeling physically wiped out. It was just incredible. You know, after a while, you sort of got into shape and you were able to handle, I think by the end, by Asella, I was handling five, even six periods a day of teaching.

CURTIS: [00:23:57] As part of your training, was any physical conditioning like running around the track or doing jumping jacks, part of it?

KREIMAN: [00:24:03] We had sports down in, uh.

CURTIS: [00:24:06] Soccer?

KREIMAN: [00:24:06] Yeah, there was some volleyball and some other stuff, but I think we just did a lot of walking and a lot of, uh, we did not have any organized physical training, unlike earlier sessions.

CURTIS: [00:24:17] Because of the altitude of Addis Ababa?

KREIMAN: [00:24:20] But even in the Virgin Islands, we played games, so we had some. But not, you know, I think I heard about earlier groups. Everybody up for calisthenics, jumping jacks, or whatever. I recall an exercise we had where two of us were put together and we were given the name of a place somewhere in Addis Ababa. They said, find it and come back and report.

CURTIS: [00:24:47] Oh, OK.

KREIMAN: [00:24:49] So we went trudging off looking for a place I don't recall the name of. But I do recall it was a neighborhood where there was a prison located. And we trudded off, it was a sprawling place. Even in 1968, I mean, it's even worse, 10 times worse now, more sprawling and crowded. But we ran into a couple of, I would say, young teenage students who saw these foreigners, and I think they probably understood it was Peace Corps walking around.

CURTIS: [00:25:21] Looking lost.

KREIMAN: [00:25:22] And they took us in tow. And from their point of view, they wanted to practice their English. So they wanted to speak to us. And because they have been gone most of the summer, probably speaking no English, and they were going to pick up. This was August, school's getting on the horizon. And they led us to the place that we had to find through the, you know, it was part of the exercise too, was making contact and so forth. It was a long walk and I remember they're showing us, oh, not much farther, sir, not much farther. And it was a long several hours of hiking through Addis Ababa. Yeah. There was some theaters. At least one theater I know was in the city hall, a movie theater that played current theaters, and I do remember strange smells wafting through the air. There was quite a lot of special plant material available to those who chose to use it.

KREIMAN: [00:26:22] Our language training continued. We were drilled for what was set to be the Foreign Service language test.

CURTIS: [00:26:32] Oh, interesting.

KREIMAN: [00:26:33] We were given a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 rating according to the oral exam, and we drilled and drilled and drilled and, you know, the drilling was more beyond our true language ability. And I think I got 2 or 2.5, something. I mean, I passed. I think the teachers were angling for a bonus because if they could get the students up to a higher. My Amharic was only fair. I mean, I knew some vocabulary and I could ask for directions, you know, where's the bathroom? But, uh. It's funny how I still retain a few things, just a little aside. I was riding home from the airport after a business trip in a Super Shuttle van, and the driver was Ethiopian.

CURTIS: [00:27:28] Recently?

KREIMAN: [00:27:28] Just a month ago, two months ago. Playing Ethiopian music on his CD in the van and one of the other passengers was commenting about how he, oh yeah, that's Ethiopian music. I enjoy Ethiopian food. So I turned to the driver at one of the stops he was making and I said, [speaks Amharic], which roughly is, where's a good Ethiopian restaurant?

CURTIS: [00:27:54] Yeah, where can you eat?

KREIMAN: [00:27:54] And he was shocked to see somebody speaking even a crude Amharic that I was exhibiting. But some of it has still stuck with me.

CURTIS: [00:28:04] Yeah, yeah.

KREIMAN: [00:28:05] So we passed the training. I guess at some point we were formally sworn-in as volunteers. Because actually, until you were completed training, you were not a volunteer. And when you get your calculation of how many months of service, you know, it ended up being 21 months of Peace Corps service, which had an impact on me later that I'll talk about. So I guess, it was like September officially that we were sworn-in, through June or early July two years later. So it was 21 months. I was assigned to Asella. I took a bus down there, sort of a pre-trip and

met. All the volunteers were not back. There were three volunteers who were extending for the third year in Asella.

CURTIS: [00:28:55] Interesting.

KREIMAN: [00:28:56] So they had had a free trip home over the summer.

CURTIS: [00:28:59] Oh, yes. Forgot that.

KREIMAN: [00:28:59] That's what they did for people who extended for the third year. So there was just one or two people, volunteers, there. My understanding of Asella, it had one high school for the entire province.

CURTIS: [00:29:12] Typical of that time.

KREIMAN: [00:29:15] And previous, some years prior, no one from that school had ever passed the 12th grade leaving exam. This was a very British model. Elementary, secondary education where you had leaving exams at each stage at eighth grade, twelfth grade. And I was told by these other volunteers, and I'm not sure if it's totally true, that a whole cadre of Peace Corps volunteers were assigned to the secondary school in an attempt to upgrade and see what they could accomplish. The end of the previous year, the year just before I came, they claimed that this secondary school. It was named Ras Darge [inaudible Amharic], Ras Darge Secondary School. And we'll talk about who Ras Darge was. Had the highest pass rate of any high school outside of Addis Ababa and Asmara, the two major cities.

CURTIS: [00:30:18] Oh, yes.

KREIMAN: [00:30:19] And they had science teachers and math teachers and English teachers who were all Americans. They had like seven Peace Corps volunteers at this one high school.

CURTIS: [00:30:31] Oh, interesting.

KREIMAN: [00:30:32] As a way of upgrading. And apparently it paid off, and they had also assigned an extremely knowledgeable, intelligent school director. His name was Gabahut Bely. He was a graduate not only of Haile Selassie University, but he was a graduate of Orde Wingate High School. Now, if you'll indulge my historical, I'm a historian by training. Orde Wingate was the British general that led a group of irregular forces from British East Africa, along with Ethiopian rebels, to dislodge the Italians in 1941. And Wingate was sort of a legend in Ethiopia, and in the years right after the Second World War, they established a sort of an elite high school and named it for Orde Wingate. And this is where all the best students went.

CURTIS: [00:31:32] In Addis Ababa?

KREIMAN: [00:31:33] In Addis Ababa. And Gabahut Bely was one of the elite students who graduated from Orde Wingate School. And it was kind of interesting. [tape break] Yes, the assignment of Gabahut Bely to a provincial school like Ras Garde was another aspect of the effort to try to upgrade the instruction. The faculty was, there were some Ethiopians. Otto George Tesema was a math teacher. Otto Mehari Mesfin was, we believed, from the Falasha tribe. He was an industrial arts teacher. He was a graduate of the agricultural school somewhere out west. I can't remember where the agricultural school or the name of the.

CURTIS: [00:32:28] That's the Russian based one?

KREIMAN: [00:32:31] Not sure.

CURTIS: [00:32:32] OK.

KREIMAN: [00:32:34] We had Indian contract teachers from the country of India. They were paid rather well. They lived rather well. I found many of them to be very congenial. But also many of us Americans found it a little concerning about their attitudes towards the Ethiopians. I think there's, uh, the psychologist would say that having been the victims of British colonialization and the British haughty condescension to India. And yet the Indians with the pride in their own history and culture, having come to Ethiopia, they sort of were a bit haughty towards the Ethiopians. And

some of them at least didn't treat them very well. We got very friendly with one of the French teachers, Eric d'Ecole, and the other two were pretty standoffish. They had a car and they would go into Addis Ababa every week, and they just didn't deal with us very well.

KREIMAN: [00:33:41] We also had university students. At the time, Ethiopian university students between the third and fourth year had to spend a year of service.

CURTIS: [00:33:51] I remember that, national service.

KREIMAN: [00:33:53] And so there were five or six students at our high school.

CURTIS: [00:33:58] In teacher training?

KREIMAN: [00:33:59] Well, they were just assigned as teachers. They just took classroom assignment. And I remember one of them, Mulegeta, helped me negotiate my lease for my house. As for the Peace Corps contingent in this provincial place there, in addition to myself, there was Bob Bass, a math teacher in his third year. His wife, Betty Bass, who was a science teacher. Arthur Hall, who was a math teacher, also in his third year. Jack Hamilton, who was a science teacher in the second year. Elizabeth Rogers, I think she taught English in her second year. And then the new teachers, in addition to myself, were Loretta Huber, now Loretta Huber Davis, who as we speak is in Ethiopia, in Shashamane. Tom Scully and his wife, Andrea Scully. And I can't quite recall what subjects they taught.

KREIMAN: [00:34:52] A moment about one of the Ethiopian teachers, the university students. His name was Johannes Sabatu. As I understand it, that would mean Johannes the Seventh. There is an emperor in Ethiopian history, if you read *The Blue Nile* by Alan Moorehead, Johannes the Fourth. I have, I don't know recall who may have told me that he was a descendant of this Ethiopian emperor. He was also, as many young Ethiopians were, very much against the monarchy, very much communist, socialist, radical. He and some of the other teachers later on were said to be the precipitators of some student unrest that I'll get into in a minute.

KREIMAN: [00:35:44] A minute about, a moment about my house, the house I moved into after living with one of the other volunteers for a while. The houses were built on a foundation, I think usually of cement or sort of.

CURTIS: [00:35:56] Of stones?

KREIMAN: [00:35:58] Stone or something, a slab. And then the walls were built of rough wood lattice tied together with a mud adobe kind of finish.

CURTIS: [00:36:12] Cheekabay.

KREIMAN: [00:36:13] Cheekachamin, yeah. So cheekabay, the mud walls. We had glass windows. We had a metal corrugated roof.

CURTIS: [00:36:23] Was it square or round?

KREIMAN: [00:36:25] It was square. It was a foreign style. It was in a modern style, not the round, but it was, you know.

CURTIS: [00:36:33] With the metal corrugated roof?

KREIMAN: [00:36:34] Metal corrugated roof, which made lots of noise in the rainy season but facilitated gathering water for getting into a water barrel. We do not have running water. We did have 24 hour, pretty much 24 hour electricity. There was a generator that ran when it was offline occasionally, but we did have an occasional interruptions. But we typically gathered rainwater and had a big 50 gallon barrel to gather rainwater. In the dry season, men came around on donkey with casks of water that you bought to replenish your water supply. For cooking, we had a gas stove with propane tanks to cook on.

CURTIS: [00:37:27] Oh, modern.

KREIMAN: [00:37:27] The tanks were sent back and forth from a dealer. We didn't have a dealer in town. They had to be sent from Addis Ababa, so we had to arrange to put the empty tanks on the big bus that went. We had two busses a day that were through busses directly from Addis Ababa. They

were big slow busses that stopped everywhere. But we would arrange to have things shipped on the busses and they would be returning empty gas tanks and they would deliver new gas tanks for us. The other was a much more modern small busses, which went from Asella to Nazreth [now called Adama], which was a junction town about, it's about a two-hour bus ride from Asella to Nazreth. There we would change busses and take a bus to Addis Ababa, and the total trip was about five hours. And these busses did not go on schedule. They would wait until they had a full load. You'd be directed to the next bus, and they would only leave, because petrol was expensive and they had to have a full load in order to leave. So whenever the last person was waiting, they squeezed everybody on and they took off. So you never quite knew when you'd leave.

KREIMAN: [00:38:42] Let me quickly describe taking a shower, which I did maybe two or three times a week because it was quite an ordeal. It has to, I'll start with the water. We had to boil our water and then filter it. We had a two-stage filter and the tap container had some ceramic cartridges, which acted as filters. So we took the boiled water, poured in the tap. The water drained through these ceramic filters into a bottom level container that had a spigot on it. So when it came time for a shower, I would take the bottom part of the water filter and I'd fill that with warm water. Then I would take some bed slats out of my bed and put them half on, half off of my cupboard, my clothes cupboard. I'd take another bucket and put it on top of the cupboard to weight down the bed slats.

KREIMAN: [00:39:41] Take the bottom part of my water filter with the spigot and put it out over the edge of the bed slats. Put a big wash bin on the floor and step in the wash bin and then turn on the spigot, since the spigot was above my head at that point. It was a tall cupboard. And I would stand under the spigot to shower.

CURTIS: [00:40:02] Inside your house.

KREIMAN: [00:40:03] Inside my house. So that's how I did that, did my showers.

CURTIS: [00:40:06] So you didn't do any of the solar hot water heaters that the Peace Corps had given some of the early volunteers, those black plastic bags that hang in a tree?

KREIMAN: [00:40:16] No, we didn't have any of those. Mentioned our area director, who later became country director of Peace Corps, was a fellow named Andy Andrews. It was Julio actually, he and his wife, Eve, had previously served in West Africa, I think Liberia. Later served in Thailand, and my latest information was that he had been working for the Asia Foundation as a country director somewhere in Thailand perhaps. In any event, but he had a career overseas, and he had two children who went to the American school. Had a very nice life in Addis Ababa, although I'm sure he was very busy. We kept him busy with all kinds of questions and issues. The call was a very famous Ethiopian artist named Skunder Boghossian. He was Ethiopian. I'm not sure who was.

CURTIS: [00:41:17] Boghossian sounds Middle Eastern.

KREIMAN: [00:41:18] Well, he's Armenian. One of his parents was Armenian. One of his parents was Ethiopian, but he was an artist who was an artist, later became an artist in residence at Howard University. He's very famous as a modern artist. And they had several original Skunders as they were known, and very easily could have financed their retirement because they're worth quite a bit. We did go to Addis Ababa periodically just to get away and R&R. And then there was a place near, just before getting to Nazareth, in a hot springs resort called Sodere. You ever heard of that, Gloria?

CURTIS: [00:42:06] Yes.

KREIMAN: [00:42:06] But we'd go there occasionally and stay there for a night and the decent food, cold beer, hot springs pool was just a way to get away and relax. So I arrived in town and stayed with one of the other volunteers for a while just to get oriented. But for whatever reason, the custom was not to share houses, except for the married couples of course. Everybody had their own place. I guess there's a, it sort of followed the norm, what had gone on in the town previously. I had help negotiating a lease. And I

was given advice that my outhouse, and this is one of the selling points of this house, had a very good outhouse. It had a very good draining hole and very.

CURTIS: [00:43:00] Well built.

KREIMAN: [00:43:01] Well built.

CURTIS: [00:43:01] Private.

KREIMAN: [00:43:01] And it was very functional. Just before, I'll mention that since this was the only high school in the province, students who were from other towns had to find a way to live in the town in order to continue their education. So the custom that I was told was to bring in some students to live with you, to work for you, paid them a small salary. They did chores for you. And usually one of the outbuildings was sufficient for their housing. So I had two students with me. One of them changed after a while. But the first year was Solomon Ashektu and Abate Moconan. And we came home from school one day, this is one of the tales. I went outside and one of the things that was required to keep the smell down was powdered lime.

CURTIS: [00:43:58] Right, big sacks.

KREIMAN: [00:44:00] Big sacks of lime. So I bought a sack of powdered lime for my outhouse, and I came in and it was gone. And we started walking with Solomon and Abate, we started walking and there was a trail of powder going across my compound to the fence, every house had a.

CURTIS: [00:44:18] A hole in your fence.

KREIMAN: [00:44:22] There's a hole in the fence. And we looked through, got through, it was a fairly large hole. And there at our next door neighbor's was one of their buildings. And there are several buildings in their compound, freshly painted. Well, that was powdered lime, when mixed with water is used.

CURTIS: [00:44:37] The whitewash.

KREIMAN: [00:44:37] As a whitewash. Yeah. And here was this freshly painted, you know, ample evidence that they had come in and stolen my lime and used it to paint the buildings. I was torn. I was first of all, I was angry that it had been stolen, and I tried to use whatever abhorrent words that I knew to, *leba*, which is a thief. *Mini ayineti sewi*, you know, what kind of person are you?

CURTIS: [00:45:10] Were your students helping you?

KREIMAN: [00:45:11] The students were helping, yeah. In any event, but we got no satisfaction from this, and we just sort of left in disgust.

CURTIS: [00:45:20] They didn't offer you a chicken?

KREIMAN: [00:45:21] No, they sort of were denying everything. And I guess they just swapped out, the rich foreigner moved in, it's OK to take whatever's available. So after I threw whatever insults I could recall from my language training, we got the fence fixed. We got a bag of lime, another bag of lime. And then I turned to Abate who was from a nearby town, Iteya, and I said, Abate, do you know anybody who has a dog that they'd like to sell? So Abate went home the next weekend at my expense and brought back initially a puppy and he became my guard dog. So we don't have any more.

CURTIS: [00:46:07] OK. That was rare, wasn't it, to have a dog?

KREIMAN: [00:46:10] No, a lot of people had dogs.

CURTIS: [00:46:12] Had dogs in their compound?

KREIMAN: [00:46:12] Yes. So we fixed the hole and got a bag of lime and got a guard dog. And that's how we solved that problem. Raising the dog and trying to house train or, he was too much, had a run of the place. I was, I'd never had a pet, I'd always lived growing up in apartments. We never had animals like dogs. We had a parakeet. But the dog had an accident in the

house, and I was told, oh, you're supposed to rub his nose in it and tap him on the nose to discipline the dog. Well, the dog decided to open his mouth and kind of scream a little bit and on his very baby sharp teeth I split open, I can still see a little bit of a scar.

CURTIS: [00:47:02] There's a scar, oh.

KREIMAN: [00:47:02] So this brings up the point that our hospital, we had sort of a crude hospital in Asella, it was a provincial capital, and it was staffed by Bulgarian doctors. Two Bulgarian doctors.

CURTIS: [00:47:14] Very famous.

KREIMAN: [00:47:16] And you know, Haile Selassie was very pro-Western, but he was not averse to taking aid from wherever he could get it. So communist Bulgaria at that time sent some doctors and they staffed our hospital. The other thing that was going on in our hospital was the training of what were called dressers. These were sort of, uh.

CURTIS: [00:47:38] Nurses' aides.

KREIMAN: [00:47:39] Nurses' aides, you know, not nowhere near paramedics of any sort, but elementary kind of health care providers that were being trained to staff clinics when there were no other health services were available. And I recall the Bulgarian doctor looking at my thumb and in his Bulgarian accented English, oh yes, I see the saliva in there. And he's cleaning out my thumb.

CURTIS: [00:48:05] Did they mention the R word, rabies?

KREIMAN: [00:48:09] No, the dog was pretty, uh. Sorry, I didn't. I think I maybe have my health card in there, but you may have had a rabies shot as a precaution. Yeah. I think we had tetanus. But one of the things I did at the dresser school was I helped teach English. So in addition to my workload at the secondary school, about twice a week I had English language training for the dresser students who were, whose main medical training was under the direction of American nurses.

CURTIS: [00:48:47] Oh. And their manuals were in English also.

KREIMAN: [00:48:53] So, um. The nurses. So one of my good friends was Susie West, now Susie West McHugh, was one of the nurses. Marge Power, who is now married to another Peace Corps volunteer. Both of them married other Peace Corps volunteers. But we had two new nurses come in, and I can't remember what time this was, but in any event, I'll relate the story. And I won't use their real names because of what I'm going to tell you about. We'll call one of them Lisa. And they're in training. And Susie, I think Marge may have left already. I think Susie was our main trainer. And they took off one afternoon and Lisa went for a hike to explore. And sometime around after dinner, I got word she hadn't come back. It was getting dark.

CURTIS: [00:49:52] And she was alone?

KREIMAN: [00:49:53] On her own. Well, I'm not sure where we had a phone because there were only about maybe 10 or 12 phones in the whole town. Maybe the school, maybe Gabahut had a phone, or maybe we went down to the to. The post office wasn't open by then I think. Anyway, we got a phone call to Addis Ababa. Somebody contacted Peace Corps and our area director Andy drove down that night and apparently had coordinated with the military. We had arranged to have a helicopter come at daylight.

CURTIS: [00:50:25] Oh no.

KREIMAN: [00:50:25] And we all gathered, I think was at the Bass' house, Bob and Betty Bass' house, and about all of the Peace Corps volunteers and Andy, each of us with an Ethiopian student. We brought our students, the students that lived with us came along, and we devised this search plan where we were going to go out, a Peace Corps volunteer and an Ethiopian were going to go up. Start about 3:00 in the morning so that we could go up towards the top of the mountain and at daybreak then we could start clearing out and start combing the area for this missing Peace Corps volunteer. So I recall shortly after starting off with, probably was with Solomon Ashektu, somebody came running towards us. They found her,

they found her! And what the story that came out later is that walking down, she came past a farm where one of the children, 8, 10 years old, had been going to elementary school and knew a little English, because he was beginning to learn English, and explained to her that she couldn't get to town before nightfall. And it was dangerous to be walking.

CURTIS: [00:51:38] Late at night in the dark.

KREIMAN: [00:51:40] Late at night. There were hyenas. There were probably bandits. And was able to convince her to stay with him and his family in whatever kind of house it was until morning. At daybreak, they started down and were found by the search party. Now we had a lot of cultural sensitivity training, but obviously this particular person hadn't taken to all that cultural sensitivity because the idea of a single, young, and she was fairly attractive as well, woman wandering up this mountain. We were at the foot of a place called Mount Chilalo, which goes up over 12,000 feet. This single young woman wandering the mountainside alone was just so outside the norm of Ethiopian culture that she was immediately reassigned. She had no, nobody would listen to her or would be willing to be treated by her, to be instructed by her, given this reputation.

CURTIS: [00:52:45] Experience, yes.

KREIMAN: [00:52:48] And this experience. Apparently this person, when I looked up the roster on the website of the current group of returned Ethiopia and Eritrea, returned Peace Corps volunteers. She married another Peace Corps volunteer because her name linked up with one of the other names of another volunteer in the same town and had a successful period as a.

CURTIS: [00:53:08] Good. Well, good for her. Maybe she learned her lesson.

KREIMAN: [00:53:10] But she certainly ruined her career in Asella very quickly.

CURTIS: [00:53:14] Unfortunate. Oh, we're fine.

KREIMAN: [00:53:19] The spring of '69, I recall a number of things. We had a Passover celebration, in my house as a matter of fact. There were several

Jewish volunteers. And we had just an international seder. We had the French, we had the Indians. We had Ethiopians. And Andrews came down from Addis Ababa, and I think he brought matzo provided by the Israeli Embassy.

CURTIS: [00:53:51] Oh. Exciting.

KREIMAN: [00:53:53] So we had a full blown Passover Seder. I think about 20 people. I think three or four of them were Jewish. So. And we stressed, and actually I recall and I've since adapted that Passover Seder to some of the things I've written myself. But interesting that the Ethiopian word for Easter, which is the concomitant *fasika*, which is the concomitant holiday to Passover, really has the same letter origin, that Passover in Hebrew is very similar to *fasika* or Easter in Amharic, which is an indication of the Semitic relationship between Hebrew and Amharic and is the older origin language.

KREIMAN: [00:54:57] So another event that year was, I think that's when there was the bombing of Cambodia in Vietnam. And we were constantly being asked by Ethiopians, by especially the Ethiopian students, you know, what about Vietnam? What about your government's policy? And isn't this terrible?

CURTIS: [00:55:13] It must have been difficult.

KREIMAN: [00:55:16] And we demurred and we said, you know, we're here to teach. We just sort of didn't get too deeply into political discussion. But we did somehow, I don't know how we got the word around, decide to have a protest against the government policy. And we figured out, that being culturally sensitive, that we would not go parading through Addis Ababa. That would be, you know, you don't start protesting your own country in a public way. And we thought and we came up with, and I think got permission, and we actually went on the embassy grounds. We were permitted a group, I think 20 or 30 of us from around the country. There were many volunteers in Addis Ababa, but many of us came from, you know, I took my five-hour bus ride. And we entered the grounds and a representative from the embassy came out and spoke to us.

KREIMAN: [00:56:15] And we, I didn't speak, but we had people saying that, you know, this is really inhibiting our ability to be effective Peace Corps volunteers.

CURTIS: [00:56:26] Good for you.

KREIMAN: [00:56:27] The local people are resentful of this.

CURTIS: [00:56:30] Questioning constantly.

KREIMAN: [00:56:30] And that made them question us as teacher. So it just made our job more difficult. And we thought that we were very appropriate in doing this inside the embassy compound and not making a public display of this. Apparently it went on all right.

KREIMAN: [00:56:47] But the most momentous event of that year was my arrest, and it started with some student demonstrations in Addis Ababa. I don't know if students were killed or injured or both, but word got down to Asella about this. There was some kind of grapevine, it was pretty good at getting the word around. And our students got out and protested and marched and the local police, militia, whatever. They were arrested, some of the students. And that really angered the students. And at that point then they got really angry and they went on strike. And they all marched off to some meadow on the edge of town and refused to go back to school. So here we were, and there was a sound truck that went through the town announcing what we later learned was curfew, and my Amharic wasn't good enough to pick that up.

KREIMAN: [00:57:50] In any event, we assembled that evening, around dinnertime I guess it was, and realized that the students had their wraps, their *gabis*, to keep them warm, but they had no food.

CURTIS: [00:58:03] And they were going to stay overnight?

KREIMAN: [00:58:05] They were just camped out there in the field. So each of the volunteers, I think I had to go to the bank and get some money. We went

to every bakery in town and bought every loaf of bread we could find. And about 8:00 at night, we set out to bring the bread out to the students camped on the edge of town. And we got there and we distributed the bread and we started walking back through a wooded area and then came up to the first light, the streetlights, the town had street lights. And we heard a click of an M1 carbine. It was the rifle of the local militia or police, and we were promptly marched down to the police station. We were separated. There were some Ethiopian students with us who were our, students who were guys, and we were concerned about their being beaten or harmed or roughed up.

KREIMAN: [00:59:00] But the police major, some police official, who spoke reasonably good English, asked us what we were doing, and we told them what we're doing. He said, hadn't you heard about the curfew? And I said, oh, Amharic is just, [speaks Amharic]. I only know a little bit of Amharic. And he smiled. We smiled. And we were marched back to our individual houses and a guard was placed in front of the house. We were in effect put under house arrest.

CURTIS: [00:59:37] So you couldn't be helping, officially helping the students.

KREIMAN: [00:59:41] Right. Now, the strike ended in a very interesting way. The students' demands were that the students who had been arrested had to be released. But apparently one of, these landowners are pretty conservative people. But a landowner who had enough money put up bail for the students because he wanted the school to get back in order.

CURTIS: [01:00:08] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:00:09] And one of the local landowners put up bail and got the students released and the strike was ended.

CURTIS: [01:00:17] Interesting.

KREIMAN: [01:00:19] Subsequent to that, the governor ordered guards to be placed in the school compound, and that got to be very problematical. And so one of the, I think it was Bob Bass. But we asked for a meeting with the

governor, and the arrogance, this impudence of these Peace Corps volunteers to ask for a meeting with the [Amharic phrase], who was apparently related to the prime minister of Ethiopia, Aklilu Habte-Wold, at that time. So we met with the governor and we explained that the guards were very distracting. The students couldn't learn well, and eventually after a day or so, the students were, the guards were withdrawn.

KREIMAN: [01:01:06] Later on, some years after Peace Corps, I recall reading an article in the New York Times about the revolutionaries who had deposed the emperor had had a show trial for Aklilu Habte-Wold and other imperial government officials, including [inaudible name]. And he was on the list of people who had been executed by what was called the Derg, the revolutionary council that had taken over the government. So it's kind of an odd feeling.

CURTIS: [01:01:41] This would be early '70s?

KREIMAN: [01:01:42] Yes, '74, about '73 to '74. It was an odd feeling seeing the name of someone who I knew and met was among people who had been executed by Ethiopian revolutionaries. So my children have heard this story of my arrest, and they find it quite entertaining.

CURTIS: [01:02:03] Do not do what daddy did.

KREIMAN: [01:02:04] Yeah. One of the upshots of this was that the Ethiopian university students at our school were noted as the instigators of the student unrest, which they probably were, and they were expelled from the province. So we came back from the strike with seven fewer, six or seven fewer teachers. And we had to rework the entire school schedule.

CURTIS: [01:02:31] I'm sure you took on a heavier load then.

KREIMAN: [01:02:33] Well, instead of teaching English, I took over 10th grade history. I taught seven sections of 10th grade history for the whole 10th grade, and there were seven. It was over 200, I think. And the interesting thing. I remember going into one of the first classes and they were following the official ministry curriculum in a way. Talking about ancient Greece, that's

where I think is where I picked up. And immediately when I heard the students describing what they had learned, I was asking, you know, where they were in the curriculum. And you heard all this Marxist about, you know, the oppressed people and the slavery and the whole thing. Which in effect is true, but it was a very Marxist slant on Athens and ancient Greece.

CURTIS: [01:03:22] It wasn't the old British curriculum.

KREIMAN: [01:03:24] No. And I think it was. [tape break] Another story, which I can't verify, that I heard later on, was that as a result of our arrest, the police ministry, the Ministry of Interior, had decided that the four or five of us that had been arrested were to be deported. We were thrown out of the country. And the story was that the orders were supposed to go from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Education, because technically although we were Peace Corps volunteers.

CURTIS: [01:04:03] That's who your employer was, yeah.

KREIMAN: [01:04:03] Our employer was the Ministry of Education. Apparently, the paperwork never found its way through proper channels, and I don't know if it got, some sympathetic person buried on his or her, his desk, I'm sure it was a he. Or for whatever reason, or whether it was ever true that we were ordered to be deported, but there was. It's an interesting thought. It was shortly after the strikes and the disturbance that the regional director for Africa visited Ethiopia. It was a man named C. Payne Lucas. I don't know if you.

CURTIS: [01:04:36] I met him in Washington.

KREIMAN: [01:04:38] And I've met him. He was in my house, and we all gathered together. I had one of the bigger houses among the volunteers. So when Andy Andrews brought C. Payne Lucas down to meet with us, discuss things, we met at my house. And I just have the vaguest recollection of a discussion of what about this traditional academic secondary education and how it met Ethiopia's needs when the economy was so limited, health care was needed, the sanitation was problematic. And here we were,

teaching British curriculum subjects, history, and English and math and science and biology and so forth. What were we training these kids to do? So we all wondered.

CURTIS: [01:05:33] Wondered, didn't we? We all wondered. You were the 10th group. Believe me, Ethiopia I said the same thing.

KREIMAN: [01:05:41] Another interesting event. My niece was born that spring, and an official Ethiopian, imperial Ethiopian telegraph stationery, got a telegram from her older brothers that my niece had been born. That was an exciting thing. There was a volunteer in the next town towards Nazreth, little town, bump in the road pretty much, called Iteya. It was on the town road between Nazreth and Asella, and there was a volunteer named John Nelson, and he was an interesting. He enjoyed the solitude. Whereas we had eight, nine volunteers in Asella, he was there by himself teaching at an elementary school. And he sort of became a local celebrity actually, sort of really got into.

CURTIS: [01:06:33] His language skills?

KREIMAN: [01:06:34] His language skills and his relationships with the locals. He was the only foreigner there. We associated with other teachers, including the Ethiopian teachers, but we didn't have a great deal of contact with.

CURTIS: [01:06:45] The parents of the students.

KREIMAN: [01:06:46] The parents and the other folks. But John got invited to a wedding. Maybe this was the second year when I was one of the last volunteers around, but Susan West and I, Susie West McHugh, got invited also. So we took the bus and got off at Iteya and went with John to this wedding. And apparently this was a fairly well-to-do farming family. They had some vehicles, they had a fairly nice house. And they went through the muck, in the old days apparently, the groom in his retinue would go and kidnap the bride. And they went, this was not done, it was not a kidnaping per se, this was.

CURTIS: [01:07:30] Traditional.

KREIMAN: [01:07:31] Traditional. They went through the motions of going through this tradition. They came riding in with the bride and they slaughtered a sheep across the threshold, supposed to be good luck. I remember this as being just before summer vacation because we were drinking and eating, and I think it was whatever I drank and ate.

CURTIS: [01:07:54] The homemade brew?

KREIMAN: [01:07:56] Yeah. And I came down with a combination of dysentery and typhoid fever.

CURTIS: [01:08:04] Oh my.

KREIMAN: [01:08:05] Now, Peace Corps health care was pretty limited. I didn't go to the hospital in, uh.

CURTIS: [01:08:12] Addis Ababa?

KREIMAN: [01:08:12] In Asella. I took a bus. I was just doggedly sick. So after the year of the school ended, I was supposed to be doing my summer project. Supposed to be working on getting the library in shape. We had a bunch of donated books and then one of the buildings. But I struggled to get myself into Addis Ababa. I stayed at the International. They took a blood test. Next day, they came back and said, yeah, you have typhoid fever. I think they handed me a bottle of tetracycline. I asked my wife, did they have tetracycline in 1968? And she said, yes they did.

CURTIS: [01:08:47] Yes, they did.

KREIMAN: [01:08:50] So they handed me a bottle of tetracycline, said take four a day and go back home. And that was my treatment for typhoid fever.

CURTIS: [01:08:56] Oh my.

KREIMAN: [01:08:57] And the dysentery took care of itself, pretty much. But I was pretty sick and I lost a lot of weight and I didn't do much of my library work.

But we did have a chance to go on vacation and there arose of a tradition among Ethiopia volunteers that they would go to someplace nice and have some R&R. And so the tradition was to go down to Kenya, to fly down to Nairobi. And so the fellow who, he had come to Asella and was staying at my house to do his summer project. We ended up going and teaming up to travel through East Africa. And we flew into Nairobi. We had drinks at the voluntary bar at the new Stanley Hotel, and at the Lord Delamere Room of the Norfolk, all the famous colonial places. Tried hitchhiking to Kampala, Uganda, didn't make it, so we ended up getting on the train that went between Nairobi and Kampala. Somewhere there's a picture of me crossing the equator on the Nakuru Eldoret Road. And I remember in Kampala seeing the sign, zebra crossing.

CURTIS: [01:10:15] Oh yes.

KREIMAN: [01:10:18] And I tried to think, this is Kampala. It's a pretty booked up town. What are the zebras doing in Kampala? And I looked down and realized on the black tarmac were the white stripes for a pedestrian crossing. And that's what they labeled this pedestrian crossing, like a zebra crossing. And I realized it was not to warn me of zebras in the middle of Kampala. But I continued travels through on the boat on Lake Victoria to Mwanza at the southern end of Lake Victoria, on a train to Dar es Salaam for two days, visiting Arusha.

CURTIS: [01:10:54] Did you climb Kilimanjaro?

KREIMAN: [01:10:55] I did not. I did go to Ngorongoro Crater and Olduvai Gorge.

CURTIS: [01:10:59] Oh, excellent.

KREIMAN: [01:11:01] Fascinating tour of Olduvai Gorge and the Leakey discoveries there. Also went to Zanzibar. At that time, Zanzibar, although, you know, united with the mainland, formerly Tanganyika to become Tanzania, was sort of independent and the Sultan had just been overthrown by a native group who were pretty radical. The red Chinese were there, the People's Republic was there. They had a Mao bookstore.

CURTIS: [01:11:33] Oh wow.

KREIMAN: [01:11:33] And I did purchase the book of Mao sayings, the red book, if you recall from the sixties. I recall sitting in the bar with a West German who was pointing out to me the East Germans that were in bar. We had stayed an extra night because our plane, we were overbooked and we couldn't get back to the mainland. So the airline put us up for an extra night at a nice hotel. I'd been staying at the hostel. And going around and watching, you know.

CURTIS: [01:12:05] Did you go fishing?

KREIMAN: [01:12:07] No. But we went to a coconut harvesting exhibition. I climbed the tree, cut down the coconut, opened it up, and we drink the coconut water. So we had quite an adventure in Mombasa and Malindi. Almost got stranded in the middle of Kenya, but somehow made it through and here to tell about it. When I returned, I returned to have a visit from my parents. My parents had combined a trip to the Middle East and they added on Ethiopia, and they were pretty shocked to see me. I was down about 40 pounds from when they had last seen me. I had grown a beard. And my mother talks about being horrified at seeing me.

CURTIS: [01:12:56] Her son, her baby.

KREIMAN: [01:12:57] Yeah, I am the youngest of two. But I guess we arranged, we rented a car and drove down to Asella. All of my students were so thrilled to see Mr. Kreiman's parents came to visit all the way from America. And I'm not sure how we protected the car from some bandits, but we did. But my mother, realizing I served, I think I made something like a meatloaf, but we didn't have any refrigeration, but I bought fresh meat just, you know, I told my students to get fresh meat that day. And I had a hand-crank grinder and I ground up the meat and made meatloaf. I was my own cook, unlike some who hired a cook. But I remember the look on my mother's face.

KREIMAN: [01:13:46] I had hooked up to my outhouse, which was about 10 feet outside the back door. It was a separate building with my latrine. I just

strung lamp cord out to the outhouse and had put a light bulb in it and a switch so they could have a lighted outhouse. But my mother dutifully, we spent one night, they spent at my house in Asella. And if I could have captured the look on her face when she returned from the latrine, it would have been. Mother was, let's see. She was 52, 53, but she was very game.

CURTIS: [01:14:21] It was more culture shock than age.

KREIMAN: [01:14:24] Yes, yes. She was still pretty able to get around. Another thing I recall, I guess it was the summer of '69 when the astronauts landed on the moon.

CURTIS: [01:14:34] Oh yes, exciting.

KREIMAN: [01:14:36] And one of our favorite hangouts in Addis Ababa was a China Bar restaurant.

CURTIS: [01:14:41] I remember that from my days. The famous China Bar.

KREIMAN: [01:14:45] And it so happened that I think Suzy and I were in the China Bar on the day the astronauts landed on the moon. And there were Americans in the China Bar, and they had a shortwave radio on their dining table, blaring out the, you know, blow by blow account of the landing. Susie and I were all in the corner and we just cringed. We just thought, here you are in a public restaurant. How crude, how culturally insensitive to have this radio blaring. I'm sure you're proud that your country has the first Earthlings to land on the moon, but to do it in a public place. I guess we just sort of didn't want to be seen with it with these. I think they were military people or somebody. But we just were very embarrassed by their crude, what we saw as crude behavior.

CURTIS: [01:15:43] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:15:46] So I moved to a house the second year that had a compound with three houses. The owner was a retired police lieutenant who had been given a land grant by the emperor as a retirement bonus. The

second house was occupied by the music teacher at our secondary school, and I had third house. And it made for quite safety, I mean, nobody was going to mess with a police lieutenant's compound, so I didn't have to worry about anybody stealing the lime from the outhouse.

CURTIS: [01:16:23] Did you keep your dog?

KREIMAN: [01:16:25] But I kept my dog, and that leads to the next. I tried to keep my dog corralled on my part of the compound, but he got loose one day and the owner had brought in some sheep from some, not sheep, they were lambs, sheep from his farm. And my dog Moxie got hold of one of the sheep and had him by the throat. I mean, he was ready to bring it down. And they came out and they got him off the sheep. But he had punctures on the side of his neck from my dog. So to make amends, I had to buy the sheep.

CURTIS: [01:17:06] That was very diplomatic.

KREIMAN: [01:17:08] I had the sheep brought to another volunteer's compound. We had fed them for a few days and then we had them slaughtered and sold the sheep skin to recoup some of the cost. And I invited everybody in for leg of lamb for a couple of days.

CURTIS: [01:17:26] Oh, good for you.

KREIMAN: [01:17:27] So it was great, but not particularly good leg of lamb, it was pretty tough, but in any event. The second year got pretty interesting. Gabahut Bely left for another assignment. A new school director came in. He was sort of a tinpot dictator who sort of, didn't, he was very much impressed with himself.

CURTIS: [01:17:51] With his position.

KREIMAN: [01:17:52] Yes, as I recall. And he wasn't the congenial, effective leader that Gabahut Bely had been. We also had a bunch of new teachers. Running out of Indians and Peace Corps volunteers, they began contracting with the Philippines to bring in teachers.

CURTIS: [01:18:13] Oh, unusual.

KREIMAN: [01:18:15] The Filipinos had not had very much cultural training, if at all. I recall that soon after they arrived, stories of their having left laundry out overnight and having it stolen. Of inappropriate contacts between the Filipinos and Ethiopians. It was just, it didn't.

CURTIS: [01:18:41] Didn't set well.

KREIMAN: [01:18:43] Didn't set too well.

CURTIS: [01:18:43] Now were the Peace Corps volunteers not replaced, even though you had a good reputation?

KREIMAN: [01:18:48] Well, five volunteers left by finishing their term. Jack Hamilton and Elizabeth Rogers completed their second year. Art Hall, Bob and Betty Bess completed the third year. So the five were not replaced that left. So the starting the second year, it was just myself, Loretta Huber, Loretta Huber Davis now, and Tom and Andrea Scully. There were only four Peace Corps volunteer teachers at the high school at that point.

CURTIS: [01:19:20] Wow. So were you taking on an extra role?

KREIMAN: [01:19:23] I took, yeah, we had, the Filipinos came in and picked up some of the slack. What happened later in, I believe it was in Adwa, two Peace Corps teachers were assaulted by students. And I have the letter that they wrote to their fellow volunteers, which indicated it had been an anti-American, anti-government effort aimed at, you know, they associated Peace Corps with support of the emperor. They were against the emperor, at least these university students who fomented this, apparently, and it was their effort to try and push out one of the emperor's supporters, the American presence. There was a great deal of back and forth. There was a meeting of some sort, which I don't recall attending. In any event, the general rule was that if you left early, you had to pay for your own ticket home. That rule was waived in Ethiopia and because of the unrest, because of the assault on the teachers, anyone who felt that their position

was not tenable, had the option to return early and have their way paid by Peace Corps. What they'd do, they would deduct it from your readjustment allowance, the portion of your tickets.

CURTIS: [01:20:53] Yes. Were you asked to go to a different country like Kenya or?

KREIMAN: [01:20:57] No, I think they were. It was, they were. This was like December, November, December of our second year. So we had one semester left. And I think they thought that relocating for one semester was not worthwhile particularly. So as I recall, Loretta Huber Davis and the Scullys both left after the first semester, and I was the last American teacher at that school.

CURTIS: [01:21:25] Wow.

KREIMAN: [01:21:25] So I went through my own justification. The students were willing to attend class. They came and they worked. And I said, if they're willing to work, I'm willing to teach. And if they're willing to come to class. And I think the assault up in Tigray, much more political up there.

CURTIS: [01:21:48] Well, it was near the Eritrea border.

KREIMAN: [01:21:50] Near Eritrea, and I think the Tigrayans. Of course, the current government is dominated by Tigrays and for the historians, uh, although Haile Selassie was the emperor, the ras of Tigray, Ras Mengesha Seyoum at the time, probably had as good or better a claim to be the emperor as Haile Selassie, Ras Tafari Makonnen, who had been. He and his family basically was usurpers. They were related to the first modern consolidating emperor, Menelik II, who was emperor around the turn of the century. But they did not have a clear, dominant. His father was Ras Tafari, Ras Makonnen, because your second name was your father's first name.

CURTIS: [01:22:51] Yes, right.

KREIMAN: [01:22:52] In Ethiopian, so it's hard to trace family lineage, was related to Menelik II but was not a direct in line descendant. So Tigray was much

more political, less. And as I read recently, Ras Mengesha Seyoum was very much deferred to by Haile. I mean, he did not clamp down on Tigray as much as he did in other areas. The area I was in, Arsi Province, which was then, had been inhabited predominantly by what we called then Galla, which are now Oromo, is the more correct term. As I understand, had been conquered by Menelik II's uncle Ras Darge, and to sort of rub it in the face of the local population, they named the high school after the conqueror, who I understand had been pretty brutal in his conquest of the area.

KREIMAN: [01:23:51] And I've been told also now there's a second high school in the town now, I forgot what it's called. I'll have to check. But Loretta Huber Davis, who has, um.

CURTIS: [01:24:05] She's returned.

KREIMAN: [01:24:06] Returned and she is there as we speak, doing training of elementary teachers in Shashamane, has picked up some information about what's going on in Asella. So I stuck it out, for better or for worse. I ended up being responsible for selling off huge amounts of furniture that Peace Corps had bought. We had gone from a town of, I think, eight or nine volunteers to two volunteers.

CURTIS: [01:24:37] And they left their households?

KREIMAN: [01:24:39] And they left their households, so a Peace Corps instructed me just to sell off all the furniture. So we had a big yard sale. Ethiopian garage sale. You know, chairs and tables and couches, beds and cupboards and everything. Hundreds of Ethiopian dollars' worth of stuff that I turned over to the Peace Corps. Sold a few of my own personal things to build up a stash for traveling plans. I recall making a trip to Addis Ababa just before I left, and we had to get an exit visa. It was a document that had to be signed by a number of different ministries. And I recall going between, there's a music store between the International Hotel at Arat Kilo and a place called the Piazza, which is in the circle near the city hall, if you recall that.

CURTIS: [01:25:36] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:25:37] And the music stores have the song music blaring on a loudspeaker. And what of all songs did they play? It was a song by a group called Eric Burdon and the Animals, and the song was.

CURTIS: [01:25:51] Not the Beatles?

KREIMAN: [01:25:53] "We gotta get out of this place if it's the last thing we ever do." As I was trying to get my exit visa processed. The other incident as I was leaving, I was draft age. I was deferred while I was in the Peace Corps. But once my Peace Corps service completed, I was subject to draft. This was the days of the lottery and initially I thought, oh well, I got a lottery number. I was 37. Oh, I'll wait, next year I'll get another. No. I was told once you get a lottery number, it's yours forever. So here I was, finishing up my service with lottery number 37, sure to be inducted as soon as I left.

CURTIS: [01:26:39] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:26:40] Or shortly after. However, the American Friends Service Committee, to whom I am grateful for it, sent representatives to Addis Ababa at the end of the school year to counsel all of the men about the draft. And one of the things they counsel us about was how to obtain a proper medical deferment. They came with a big, thick Army medical manual. They helped us search for conditions that we might have that disqualified us. They advised us not to wait to be called up and going through the traditional Army physical, which they just shuffle people right on through. But they said, every board has a medical advisor. You make an appointment with the medical advisor, you bring your documentation, and you ask them to make a determination, which I did. I actually had to find the spot in the manual that showed the condition that I brought documentation from my personal physician that I had. He filled out a form, stuck it in an envelope, and handed it to me and I was to be medically deferred.

CURTIS: [01:27:52] Wow.

KREIMAN: [01:27:52] And gave it to me to mail myself, and I asked him, does the board follow your recommendations? He says, well, they have all the time so far. So I stuck it in the mailbox downstairs from his office and his office was up in a little office building that on the ground floor housed a liquor store. So I went in and bought a bottle of what has since been my favorite champagne, Korbel Brut, and celebrated. And I received in a few weeks a 1-Y classification, which at that time was sort a, that only in an extreme emergency. When they're scraping the bottom of the barrel, so to speak. Because I had to deal with the draft, I had a limited amount of time to travel home. Others spent months. If I had had a high draft lottery number, I could have been more comfortable. Some traveled east and concluded around the world.

CURTIS: [01:28:49] Which I did, which was fabulous.

KREIMAN: [01:28:51] I'm sure.

CURTIS: [01:28:51] I recommend it.

KREIMAN: [01:28:53] But I raced through a few key spots that I wanted to visit. I first went back to Nairobi and from Nairobi to Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv to Zurich, Zurich to London, and London to Washington, D.C. And I remember coming through customs in Washington, D.C. And how long have you been away from the United States? Two years? And here is this scraggly, bearded 24, 25 year old, and they started rifling through. And I, honestly, I had bought a camera in Kenya, a Pentax Spotmatic, and I declared it. And I think I paid like nine dollars duty on my Pentax camera. And they were searching for drugs. They were sure I had drugs in my suitcase, and I was not foolish enough to carry drugs in my suitcase, of course. But I came back and I took care of my draft issue.

KREIMAN: [01:29:46] C. Payne Lucas comes into this story again by this time. C. Payne Lucas was head of Returned Volunteer Services group, and he started something called the Transition Center program, and they contracted with a Washington consulting firm, a firm called TransCentury Corporation, to run a week-long readjustment effort for returned Peace Corps volunteers. And you had to apply and you had to write an essay,

which I still have. And so I was selected and I came back to Washington, D.C., for the Transition Center program.

CURTIS: [01:30:33] I hope you met Dick Irish.

KREIMAN: [01:30:34] I met Dick Irish, he ran the program. Well, Dick Irish was an interesting character. But he revealed to me when I chatted with him about my having worked on the McCarthy campaign in the spring of 1968, that it was he who supplied the mailing list of Peace Corps to the McCarthy campaign for getting the mailing. And it was I, as a volunteer, who had copied the insert and stuffed envelopes and put the labels on that mailing to the Peace Corps.

CURTIS: [01:31:09] Yeah, he was very political.

KREIMAN: [01:31:11] And Dick Irish and a fellow named William "Buddy" Blakey, he was an attorney, were running the program.

CURTIS: [01:31:20] TransCentury?

KREIMAN: [01:31:20] TransCentury Corporation. Buddy is now, uh, he worked. I just looked at his website. I looked him up on the website. He has a law firm now, William A. Blakey and Associates. But he had worked for the United Negro College Fund or did something and had won some award from one of those type organizations. He was an African American attorney, which was still fairly rare in 1970.

CURTIS: [01:31:59] Yes, it was.

KREIMAN: [01:31:59] So the transition. So I'm forever grateful to C. Payne Lucas for this because it got me started on the rest of my career. And I'll just mention a couple, two stories. One, one night we were all stationed at a very, our sleeping quarters was the basement of a very liberal Episcopal church in Washington, D.C. called St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church. And this was a church that had a very traditional Episcopal service at 9:00 and then at 10:00 had its rockin' revival Episcopal from this very liberal white priest in the local, serving the local

community where this church was located. So we were all on cots in the basement of the. William Wendt I think was his name, and he was a very liberal Episcopal minister there.

KREIMAN: [01:32:56] So we were, had cots in the basement of this church where we slept. I think we had food there also. And then we, our meetings and things were done at TransCentury offices. So one night a fellow who had a dog with him said, oh, we need to go exercise the dog. So seven of us got in my VW Beetle with a big dog and went down to the Mall to let the dog get some exercise. And we came back and I approached the traffic circle and I thought I saw a green arrow that gave me permission to go into the traffic circle. Gunned the car through it, it was a stick shift, and got immediately got pulled over. Apparently, I gone through a red light. The green arrow wasn't my green arrow, whatever. So we hauled to a police station.

CURTIS: [01:33:49] With the dog?

KREIMAN: [01:33:50] With the dog, about 10:00 at night. And all we knew was to call Buddy. And so he came down to the police station late at night and somehow got us out. I don't know. I didn't have the ownership papers for the car, because it was my brother-in-law's car, they had driven to D.C. in it. But years later, after I retired from my career at HUD, I contacted Buddy Blakey, William Blakey, and thanked him for getting me out of jail because he had been instrumental in saving us. It was appreciated.

KREIMAN: [01:34:27] Among the people at this Transition Center were, they brought in. They brought in Saul Alinsky, the radical organizer from Chicago, and he regaled us with his stories of dealing with Mayor Daley. One story he told trying to get Mayor Daley to come to the. Richard J. Daley, not the young son. This was the old man. Trying to get him to even negotiate with them about some whatever issue they wanted to negotiate. He made a very interesting threat. He says to the mayor, he said, I have enough people where we can go up to O'Hare Airport and occupy every toilet and urinal at O'Hare Airport and just stand there. [tape break] So Saul Alinsky used that tactic, and he hoped to enlist us in causes that he thought typical of returned Peace Corps volunteers on the domestic side.

KREIMAN: [01:35:34] Another of the people that he brought in to talk to us was a man named Frank Davis, who at that time turned out to be the head of the HUD, Housing and Urban Development, urban intern program, which was the management training program for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. That seemed interesting, and I talked to Frank and he gave me the name of the person to contact in Chicago when I returned back. I interviewed. I was hired in June of 1971 then to start a career with HUD, which lasted until December of 2003.

CURTIS: [01:36:13] Oh, wonderful.

KREIMAN: [01:36:14] So with the help of C. Payne Lucas and Dick Irish and Buddy Blakey and Frank Davis, who I later met in my career. He was my supervisor's supervisor on my first assignment in Washington, D.C., which was part of my HUD career. And so we reminisced about those times.

CURTIS: [01:36:39] And wasn't Shriver also involved with HUD at some point, the urban program?

KREIMAN: [01:36:46] Uh, he ran the War on Poverty, the Office of Economic Opportunity, but I don't know if he was directly involved with HUD. Additional, uh, before I got hired by HUD, one of the things that I do and I don't know how I made contact with them. Maybe it was TransCentury and the Transition, uh. The returned volunteer office asked me to help with the recruitment of the next and one of the last classes at that stage for Peace Corps volunteers. And they were doing what was called a pre-invitational staging where they had invited a group of people who were potential.

CURTIS: [01:37:28] Applicants?

KREIMAN: [01:37:30] Applicants, who had applied and were potential for selection to Ethiopia. And they hired me to be an adviser on the Peace Corps experience. And I was flown down to Kansas City and in a meeting room of 25, 30, 35, potential Ethiopia volunteers, I was asked to describe my experience and what it was like. And I think on reflection, I think, you know, it's sort of a roller coaster experience. And I recall just a couple of

stories of teaching that I have and I wanted to share with you. When I began teaching history, I got, following the curriculum, I got to the point of the Roman Empire and I had a segment on Antony and Cleopatra and Caesar and the machinations in Rome and how Antony and Cleopatra united forces to try and defeat Caesar.

KREIMAN: [01:38:32] And I described all this and how Antony and Cleopatra had been defeated by Caesar's forces. How Cleopatra was just, could woo any man, exceedingly attractive, maybe just she had power, but in any event, the legend was that she was exceedingly attractive. And there was a room, classroom full of, and this was 10th grade, but they started late and they were probably 16, 17 years old in the 10th grade. And there's some smattering of young women. We did have coed classes.

CURTIS: [01:39:06] There were a few.

KREIMAN: [01:39:07] But I think it's probably 10 percent or less were females.

CURTIS: [01:39:09] Yes. Did you get the Queen of Sheba allegory?

KREIMAN: [01:39:14] Oh yeah. And I actually mentioned something about that, but as well. But I went through this lecture and I timed it just right and spoke, you know, as word got that their forces had been defeated, that the legend was that Cleopatra took the poisonous snake from the basket, clutched it to her chest, and died. And that very second, the bell went off for the end of the period, and the students gave me a round of applause. One of my all time.

CURTIS: [01:39:51] One of the highlights of your drama.

KREIMAN: [01:39:56] I had done some research. Gloria mentioned Sadar Sheba. And what I told my students about my understanding now Ethiopian legend was that the Queen of Sheba went to Jerusalem to visit Solomon and that the offspring of that visit became Menelik I. My take on that story was that Sheba was not Ethiopian. Sheba was Yemeni.

CURTIS: [01:40:26] That's right.

KREIMAN: [01:40:27] She was from Saba, which was the term of Yemen, and that the history of the early part of the Ethiopian Empire. The first Ethiopian empire that came up to Axum was there had been a mixture of Yemeni immigrants across the Red Sea and indigenous populations. So my theory to them was that this legend of Solomon and Sheba came across with the Yemenis who had emigrated into the highlands of northern Ethiopia.

CURTIS: [01:40:59] The Red Sea was much smaller than we were taught.

KREIMAN: [01:41:03] There was traffic across and there was evidence of emigration across from the Yemenis so that the legend of Solomon and Sheba, I had prophesied to the students, was one that had been brought by the Yemenis and there was not an accurate historical rendition.

CURTIS: [01:41:23] But it's tied in with the Ark of the Covenant also. So did you get in trouble with your changing of history?

KREIMAN: [01:41:31] No. Uh, I said that more privately than publicly. The other story I thought I'd relate. We got, again following the curriculum for history, we got to the Middle Ages in Europe and talked about the Middle Ages in Western Europe and about the feudal system, about the nobles and the land tenure system and power of the church. And I had the greatest student in my class, was not from the local area. I'm not sure what his name. His name is Lackay Temechache. And he was definitely the sharpest. And I had students who were good, who could pick up the material and, you know, sort of regurgitate it back to you, you know, were good memorizers and good. And they were reasonably successful. But Lackay had insight. And as we were finishing up a section on feudalism, he raised his hand and said, sir? And they called you sir.

CURTIS: [01:42:41] Yeah.

KREIMAN: [01:42:42] Do we have feudalism in Ethiopia? And I looked around and I knew that somewhere in the class was somebody who was supposed to report back to the police if there was any.

CURTIS: [01:42:54] If you said anything.

KREIMAN: [01:42:54] Out of line.

CURTIS: [01:42:57] There was always a monitor.

KREIMAN: [01:42:58] So I came up with a strategy. I said, Lackay, I'm a guest in your country. I've learned a lot about Ethiopia, but you know, I still only know so much. You all are from Ethiopia, you know your country, you know your society. And let's just go through the definition of feudalism and you just make up your own mind. And so we repeated the definition of the nobility, the land tenure system, the peasants who were providing their crops to the landlords, and the role of the church and the power of the land holdings of the church. And he just smiled at me. He had a big, bright, excellent kind of bright smile. He said, thank you, sir. And that's.

CURTIS: [01:43:43] Interesting.

KREIMAN: [01:43:44] That's the way I handled that. When I gave the final exams the last year, as a prize to the student who got the highest score on the final exam, I gave him my history books. I had some history books sent over by my family, some references and some other things.

CURTIS: [01:44:07] Oh yes, those treasured books.

KREIMAN: [01:44:08] So Lackay Temechache got my history books.

CURTIS: [01:44:11] Well, good for him. I'm sure he went on to the university.

KREIMAN: [01:44:14] Yeah, well, and this. We questioned the purpose of providing this kind of academic education given the economic and social situation there.

CURTIS: [01:44:28] Certainly.

KREIMAN: [01:44:29] And part of my thinking was, you know, what can I do to help students? And I saw a distinction between the very top students who were

potentially university material. And maybe this was arrogant, but I made a judgment. And students who were good to above average students but in my judgment at the time, they would really have a struggle making it to university, passing the 12th grade exam and getting into university. At that point, the structure was that if you finished 10th grade, you have the option of applying for what were called teacher training institutes, TTI.

CURTIS: [01:45:16] Yes, I heard that.

KREIMAN: [01:45:16] And they put you through a one-year training program. And you were then assigned as elementary teachers. You taught first through sixth grade.

CURTIS: [01:45:25] Right.

KREIMAN: [01:45:26] So I thought it would be beneficial to students who weren't likely to be successful university students, but who would be decent elementary school students to go through this TTI and get a decent job as an elementary teacher.

CURTIS: [01:45:45] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:45:45] So I cajoled my way to the good graces of the director and said I want to be in charge of the committee that selects the applicants for teacher training. There was a formal process every spring as we completed each year. And so I found a couple, I found myself on the committee and was able to steer certain students who I thought would be best served by going in this direction to go into teacher training. And one of them was the student that lived with me the second year.

CURTIS: [01:46:24] Solomon?

KREIMAN: [01:46:24] No, this was another student who after Solomon left, Amenaza Hall, and I still have a couple of letters from Amenaza Hall. Unfortunately, as a southerner, he was sent to Asmara for teacher training. He was very unhappy. He was treated very badly. He was looked down upon by the Eritreans, but he made it and he came back to the rural parts of Arsi

Province to be an elementary teacher. But he, and I lost track of him, letters came back without an address. You know, I didn't hear anymore. But the letters I do have told about the difficult time he had had in Asmara at teacher training institute. And then coming back and, you know, getting a job, but still not being totally comfortable about it.

CURTIS: [01:47:22] Well, the thing that I didn't realize is that making the transition between Tigrinya and Amharic was extremely difficult for the Ethiopians.

KREIMAN: [01:47:33] For the northerners.

CURTIS: [01:47:34] Right.

KREIMAN: [01:47:36] So my students were Oromo. They spoke what we then called Gallinya. We were very much discouraged from learning anything other than Amharic. And I don't know if in the north?

CURTIS: [01:47:47] Yes, well see, the model for that was when India chose Hindi as their prime language along with English, even though they have a thousand languages. And Emperor Haile Selassie was convinced that that was the way to go in Ethiopia, one unifying.

KREIMAN: [01:48:02] It was thought to be a unifying force. So, you know, that's. I got some teachers into, some boys into teacher training.

CURTIS: [01:48:13] Good for you.

KREIMAN: [01:48:14] I thought that was serving them well.

CURTIS: [01:48:16] They had a career. Because for many, it was a stepping stone into government service and other things.

KREIMAN: [01:48:24] In reflecting back on those years, I mean, there were the highs of, you know, the kind of question I got from Lackay Temechache about his insightfulness to the analogy between the feudalism described in Europe and his own society. The sort of playing to the crowd I did with the story of Antony and Cleopatra. And I'm sure the youngsters, there were

youngsters everywhere, teenagers, they were all this talk of this beautiful woman sort of got them on the edge of their seats. And they burst into applause, was some of the highs. In our interactions with our fellow teachers, and I think more the Ethiopians. There were a few of the Indians who were more congenial than others.

CURTIS: [01:49:13] It sounded like you had an international group there with the Frenchmen and the Filipinos.

KREIMAN: [01:49:20] The French and later. The Filipinos were kind of standoffish, kept among themselves. The single Indian men were much more congenial, interactive with the Peace Corps volunteers than were the married couples. And there were two or three. One of them, I recall, one of them was from Goa.

CURTIS: [01:49:46] A Portuguese colony.

KREIMAN: [01:49:48] Portuguese colony. And I think it was, I don't recall the timing, but of course, Goa, which had been a Portuguese colony well into the sixties and when India had been independent and at some point, India just simply marched into Goa and took it over.

CURTIS: [01:50:03] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:50:03] And he was a Goanese and was still resentful of the takeover by India.

CURTIS: [01:50:10] Of course.

KREIMAN: [01:50:11] Not that they enjoyed Portuguese hegemony. But I'm sure they wanted their own independent state.

CURTIS: [01:50:17] Yeah, they wanted an independent state. And the other thing, the Indians had been treated so badly by Idi Amin in Uganda also.

KREIMAN: [01:50:24] This is before that occurred. Idi Amin occurred later.

CURTIS: [01:50:30] Oh, OK.

KREIMAN: [01:50:31] The other, uh, there was a Sikh among the Indian teachers and he was a math teacher, as I recall. Ranganathan, but he was an outgoing kind of person, very friendly. But he recalled that he had been in the Indian Army, in the commissary corps, and he told us stories about the challenges of the commissary corps of the Indian Army trying to accommodate the wide variety of dietary requirements from, I guess, the Sikhs have certain dietary requirements.

CURTIS: [01:51:10] And the Muslims.

KREIMAN: [01:51:10] And the Muslims and the Hindus. And there was, so that.

CURTIS: [01:51:14] So he wasn't a cook, he was in the commissary corps?

KREIMAN: [01:51:16] He did something. Yeah, yeah. But whatever he did during his service in the Indian Army, but he was now, he had been in '68 to '70, was a mathematician, a math major anyway, teaching math in them, uh.

CURTIS: [01:51:32] Asella.

KREIMAN: [01:51:32] In a high school in Ethiopia. I don't know, there are given a number of lows. I mean, there are the days where, quite frankly, I just couldn't get up and face going to school. Being lonely, depressed. It's just, I don't know if it was anything medical. Some days I remember feeling vertigo when I tried to get up in the morning. We were up over seven thousand feet in altitude, so the air was pretty nice. Smoked cigarettes at the time. But I remember a few days, occasional days, when I just told Abate to tell him I am sick, I can't come to school today. He ran off to inform the headmaster. So it was a roller coaster of highs and lows. Hopefully more highs than lows.

KREIMAN: [01:52:26] And more reasonable education. And again, education for what? I hope they got something from it more than being educated street boys as they may have ended up to be. If I were to advocate for people who are going through this kind of work, whether through Peace Corps or

other kinds of international voluntary service, I'd be very careful about sending single males. I think it's very challenging for a single male to maintain, a young, single male, to maintain an equilibrium being thrown into a strange, exotic milieu. There's a story. We were told in our initial training in Addis Ababa about a fellow who had gone off to some very remote place to teach and came back at Christmas break and took three or four hours on a mule and then day on a bus to get to Addis Ababa.

KREIMAN: [01:53:33] And he was at one of the holiday parties and somebody came up to him, here John, have a beer. And his response was, the beer? [inaudible] He was immediately evacuated to the military hospital in Frankfurt, Germany, for psychiatric evaluation. He had just gone sort of incoherent.

CURTIS: [01:53:55] Well, you hear the same thing about women though, single women, saying that in many of the cultures, it was very difficult.

KREIMAN: [01:54:01] Well, I can speak to the single male experience myself. And I wonder what, I'm sure some single women have similar, but perhaps different, challenges as well. The couples, the stable couples, seemed to be very successful.

CURTIS: [01:54:13] Yes.

KREIMAN: [01:54:15] Or more successful. I think a dysfunctional couple would be even worse than a single male.

CURTIS: [01:54:21] Yes. And there were some divorces in the beginning.

KREIMAN: [01:54:25] And as I may have noted earlier, there were some matings that occurred that it seemed sort of the odd couples. One of the fellows who was attacked by his students in Adwa, married another woman who was stationed in Adwa, and they had seemed like the oddest of odd couple. She was a perky redhead kind of life of the party, come on let's dance, kind of young woman. And he was the speckled, bespeckled, studious, you know, intellectual type. And I never quite understood how Craig

Johnson and Deborah Kendall Johnson ended up as a couple, but they did, and that's how they're listed in the, um.

CURTIS: [01:55:19] Well, that's wonderful. There's odd couples in the United States, too, that they don't need the Peace Corps experience.

KREIMAN: [01:55:26] And you know, two of the other volunteers in our town ended up marrying Peace Corps volunteers. The other nurse that was in the town initially, Marge, married her husband doing something in Addis Ababa. They kept going back and forth, they were courting at the time. So she was either in Addis Ababa or Norm came down to Asella. So they spent a lot of time together and later married. So it's something that brought people together, the Peace Corps experience was an entree. I mean, the other thing I would say is that wherever I went, whether it was access into HUD through the Transition Center. It also helped me because as a Peace Corps volunteer, I had a noncompetitive access into the civil service for about 12 months. And that was within three weeks of finishing up that 12 months of noncompetitive access when I was actually hired.

KREIMAN: [01:56:26] And it was always, you know, a point of discussion when you meet people, it's sort of labeled you.

CURTIS: [01:56:33] Oh, it's wonderful.

KREIMAN: [01:56:33] But at the same time, it was an entrée.

CURTIS: [01:56:35] Yes, I agree.

KREIMAN: [01:56:36] I think I got along with the man who was assistant general counsel at HUD, who I worked with on program rules and regulations, who had been a Colombia volunteer. And he became a major attorney at HUD. Brilliant, just, Harvard Law and one of the most brilliant minds that I ever ran across.

CURTIS: [01:57:03] How did you come to Denver?

KREIMAN: [01:57:05] I came to Denver because I wanted to get out of Washington in the worst way and through fortuitous circumstances, found somebody in Denver who was anxious to get to Washington, D.C.

CURTIS: [01:57:21] Oh, neat.

KREIMAN: [01:57:22] And we ended up switching jobs. I was assigned to his job in Denver and he took my position in Washington. And that was the spring of 1984 and I've been here ever since.

CURTIS: [01:57:35] That's great.

KREIMAN: [01:57:38] I retired here in December of '83, '03, December of '03. Continue doing consulting work on HUD programs, doing what I know, doing that occasionally. Joining the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Colorado group. I frankly have been so wrapped up in my own life I haven't done a lot of things with the group. Seeing the article about this oral history project was what got me going. I'll mention also that coincidentally, in the newsletter of the Ethiopia and Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteer group, the national group of Ethiopia volunteers, it's affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association. An article that just arrived a few weeks ago was from someone who was in our town, in my town. Loretta Huber Davis is the woman I have mentioned previously who was back in Asella. She is now in Shashamane teaching elementary school teachers English. It included her email address. So I've been emailing between.

CURTIS: [01:58:55] That's great.

KREIMAN: [01:58:57] And we've also found Jack Hamilton, or we think we have a lead, who ended up residing in La Paz, Bolivia. One other story about one of the other things I acquired in Ethiopia. In the early years, and maybe you may have been involved in this Gloria, there was a need for culturally appropriate reading material in elementary language, and a fellow named Shlomo Bachrach and some volunteers assembled a group of stories and published them through the Oxford Press called Ethiopian Folktales.

CURTIS: [01:59:33] Yes. And Wolf, Dr. Wolf Laszlo, who is deceased now, who was our language instructor in school at UCLA, helped Shlomo with that project.

KREIMAN: [01:59:43] OK. Shlomo was listed as the editor with one with a couple of other volunteers. I think they may have mentioned Wolf Laszlo as the, who was a renowned Ethiopian scholar at the UCLA center there. In any event, I've yet to be able to find the original edition. I did obtain a copy of the second edition, but it does not have any illustrations. But I was told that the woodcut that I had purchased in Addis Ababa had been used as illustrations for this Ethiopian Folktales book. And they had commissioned Ethiopian artists, and this artist was named Folaca Arnida Munir, who you can find on the internet and who is a very, relatively famous artist today.

CURTIS: [02:00:35] Did he design the postage stamps in Ethiopia?

KREIMAN: [02:00:37] Well, he did this woodcut of a woman with a jug on her shoulder.

CURTIS: [02:00:43] Famous.

KREIMAN: [02:00:43] And I have number 3 of 40 in my, uh, sitting in my dining room. I've attempted to get, and I've asked Loretta to look for copies of the original edition with the illustrations. I could not part with this memento of my Ethiopia years, but I would be willing to loan it to the Denver Art Museum. And interestingly enough, one of the local prominent bankers was a man named Daniel Yohannes.

CURTIS: [02:01:14] Yes.

KREIMAN: [02:01:15] He was a regional executive officer of some sort.

CURTIS: [02:01:19] With U.S. Bank in Denver.

KREIMAN: [02:01:20] U.S. Bank. And he recently retired and he has gone on to the board of the Denver Art Museum. And the article that I recall reading

about announcing his appointment to the board of the museum is that he'd like to enhance the African exhibits.

CURTIS: [02:01:37] Some of his pieces are on loan.

KREIMAN: [02:01:39] Well, once I am able to authenticate it, what I would like to be able to do is have a copy of Ethiopian Folktales with the illustration. I would be, my purchase is the second edition of 1969. My understanding from my email to Folaca Arnida Munir is that the first edition had the illustrations, but they didn't include them in the second edition.

CURTIS: [02:02:06] For the cost of printing probably.

KREIMAN: [02:02:07] Or whatever, yeah. So if I'm able to document that and have so called the provenance clear, my plan is to contact Daniel Yohannes and offer my painting for whatever appropriate exhibits. On loan.

CURTIS: [02:02:23] Yes. On loan, yeah.

KREIMAN: [02:02:31] Any other reflections that I missed? So, you know, I think on the whole, despite the ups and downs, my Peace Corps experience was successful for me. I stuck it out and I stayed two years where many of the volunteers did not. I was the last American teacher at the secondary school in Asella. And they moved, they built a new school in a different part of town just, that opened just after I left. I understand they were about to put in running water into the town that following year.

CURTIS: [02:03:17] Yeah, fabulous.

KREIMAN: [02:03:19] Apparently they have real hotels instead of just the little hotel bates. And so apparently the town has grown up quite a bit.

CURTIS: [02:03:28] Oh, it must have. The population has just ballooned in size

KREIMAN: [02:03:30] It just exploded. Going back is one of the pieces of my dream trip. Sometimes dreams come true, sometimes they don't. I may have mentioned, although I'm 62 now, I have still have teenagers at home. I

started a family late, so responsibilities there prevent just bopping off and heading out for a tour of places I'd like to go, everything from South Africa. I mentioned that in 1970 when I was leaving, I was considering traveling to South Africa and I have relatives in South Africa who are second generation South Africans. And was advised that because of my Peace Corps passport, that I would not be permitted to enter the apartheid regime of South Africa. But they had obtained all of the numbers, were able to recognize all Peace Corps passports and would refuse admittance to any of the liberal Peace Corps people types that, uh.

KREIMAN: [02:04:38] So I avoided that, but that would be something I'd like to do. Go back to Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia, of course. See what Asella is like. They have this, I have a little, on my computer at home I have a folder in my favorites section called Dream Trips.

CURTIS: [02:04:58] Oh, OK.

KREIMAN: [02:04:59] And I've actually priced the ticket, what I would.

CURTIS: [02:05:02] It's expensive, but it's worth it. Cause I went '95 for our 30th with a group.

KREIMAN: [02:05:07] Oh, well, this trip probably would be three months or more in duration and about a year or two ago was priced at somewhere in the neighborhood of \$4,000.

CURTIS: [02:05:20] It may be double now.

KREIMAN: [02:05:20] I'm sure. So if I have to remortgage my house, so what. Um, so, um, here's my passport. Here's, uh, I can see that my name was misspelled with an A instead of an R. Got it amended. The person who amended this, it is a stamp. It's amended. I may have mentioned the beginning that I decided to go into the Peace Corps instead of the Foreign Service. The gentleman who I went to in the consular section to amend my passport, we got to talking and he was a graduate of the Woodrow Wilson School of International Politics and had a master's in international affairs. And I had applied to the Woodrow Wilson School at the same time

I applied to George Washington. I was not admitted to the Woodrow Wilson School, but I did.

CURTIS: [02:06:15] Were you impressed?

KREIMAN: [02:06:16] You know, my thought was, gee, here I am doing the stuff, and here's this guy who actually went through and got his master's degree, and now they have him doing the stamping passports. You know, I've also been advised that, you know, for at least six years that Foreign Service officers had very routine, very non-substantive work as part of their assignments, and they were just sort of being going through the motions. And only much later in your career did you have any chance of doing anything of real substance. So that experience in talking to that gentleman sort of confirmed in my own.

[END OF INTERVIEW]