

Gail B. Gall Oral History Interview
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Biographical Note

Gail B. Gall served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1969 to 1971 on a public health project.

Access

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Oral History Interview

with

Gail B. Gall

April 24, 2019

Carlisle, Massachusetts

By Judith Madden-Sturges

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

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:00:12] Today is April 24th, 2019. This is Judith Madden-Sturges. And I am interviewing Gail Gall, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, Central America, from September 3rd, 1969, to December 3rd, 1991 [1971]. And her role was, did I miss that?

GALL: [00:00:47] In public health.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:00:48] You worked in public health program of some type, right?

GALL: [00:00:52] Right.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:00:52] Okay, so we'll start. Can you please tell me, Gail, why did you join the Peace Corps?

GALL: [00:01:05] Well, that's a good place to start. I think, um, when I was four years younger, when I was deciding what I wanted to study in college, my parents were very clear that I needed to study something where I could always make my own independent living. And my mother had been a nurse, was still was nursing, and they thought that was a really good choice. And I didn't have any strong objection to that. I kind of thought I'd like to be a writer, but that was not a guaranteed way of making a living. So I applied to colleges with a nursing major and I went to study at Georgetown, and the years were 1965 to 1969, and it was a very tumultuous time in our country. And we witnessed the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the realm of Lyndon Baines Johnson and then the switch over to Nixon and the rise of the Vietnam War.

GALL: [00:02:15] So when I was in school, I became very interested in more liberal politics, and I still had growing in me a desire to travel. And as a graduating senior, I applied to things like the hospital ship, the Hope. I really wanted to go on that. My mom actually had been an army nurse, but her entire duty was on a hospital ship in the South Pacific. And lo and behold, Project Hope only took experienced nurses. I was 22. I didn't see why they wouldn't take a new graduate. Now that's very clear to me. But the Peace Corps was available. And when I first, in the spring of my senior year, when I thought about what I would do next, I filled out an application, but I requested the South Pacific because again, my mother had been there and I thought, if you're going to go away, go far, far away.

GALL: [00:03:16] And I think I was at something as mundane as a party when I met someone who'd been in the Peace Corps and said, oh, no, no, no, no. You don't want to go there. You should go to a country in Latin America. You'll learn Spanish and it'll be much better. So I thought about it a couple of days and I called the Peace Corps office and I changed my priority. And I think it was a very short time when I got an invitation to go to Honduras. So it was probably end of June, early July

1969. I had graduated, gotten my nursing license, and was working for the D.C. Health Department and probably just finished orientation when this invitation came. And I was ready to go. So I resigned.

GALL: [00:04:13] And I remember the supervisor who, you know, invested some time in training a new hire, wanted to know why I couldn't do something in the District of Columbia, why I felt I had to go to another country. But I was pretty determined. So it was a short turnaround between going from Washington home to New York. I think I had to get a dental checkup, that was mandatory. I don't think there was a physical checkup mandatory, but a dental checkup, and get everything in order and get on a plane on September, Labor Day weekend, the Monday of Labor Day, get on a plane from New York to San Juan for training.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:04:59] My goodness. Yeah. What was your life like before joining the Peace Corps, such as childhood, your education, and other experiences relevant to becoming a PCV?

GALL: [00:05:11] Well, I think we talked a little bit about. I grew up on Long Island. I was the only child. My parents had both served in World War II, and they had their adventures to talk about. So I think I felt like I deserved my adventures. I went to a pretty sheltered all girls Catholic high school from grade 7 to 12 and then to Georgetown. So I was pretty much encapsulated in a, you know, convent and parochial school education. And Georgetown had opened my eyes somewhat more because it was in the District of Columbia. And we spent a lot of time taking care of patients from all over. But it was the first time I was working with a majority minority population, and I found that challenging, but not in a, challenging, but also attractive, I guess.

GALL: [00:06:12] I spent a summer working in Manhattan in New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center. I met nurses who'd

worked and trained abroad. And, um, so I was, I felt ready. My classmates, two of my housemates were going off to the Navy. Others were getting married. I was not interested in getting married at 22 and I was ready to leave the District. I know I didn't want to stay in Washington.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:06:45] How did you hear about the Peace Corps and what made you decide to apply?

GALL: [00:06:51] Um, I think, I mean, I think in the early sixties, people knew about the Peace Corps because it was brand new and it was celebrated when, um, in the president's inauguration speech. Ask not what you, what your country can do for you, what you can do for your country, and then followed up by Sargent Shriver and the organization of the Peace Corps. Um, I, there was probably somebody coming to campus about it, but I don't remember that particularly, like being recruited. And so I don't, nobody tapped me on the shoulder and said, why don't you do this?

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:07:30] Yeah. What was your reaction when you were accepted?

GALL: [00:07:37] Oh, I was ready to go. I think it was, it was July in the District. It was hot. It smelled. There used to be a glue factory down on the Potomac. And with the 98 percent humidity, that smell would just encapsulate everything. And there was very little air conditioning in the sixties.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:07:55] Yeah.

GALL: [00:07:57] And you know, July was the lunar landing. Woodstock was coming up. So it was a good time to take off.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:08:08] What did your friends and family think of your decision?

GALL: [00:08:12] I remember I think I called home on every Sunday, as you required to call home every Sunday evening. And I think I was suggesting that I'd like to go to the festival at Woodstock, and I dropped this little thing about then going to Honduras, and my parents said, you have to come home right now. And so I, you know, so I somehow, two people, someone had to come take my space in the house I was renting. And I packed my little Karmann Ghia and drove up 95 to Long Island and negotiated everything. I don't think they were particularly, they certainly weren't angry. I think they were permissive. I think they were a little bit worried.

GALL: [00:09:00] I had one friend who popped up. Tegucigalpa. He was the only person I knew who knew the capital of Honduras. I didn't even know the capital of Honduras. And my best friend from high school, her fiancée, was in Brazil, in the Peace Corps. So people knew about it. So I think overall, it was pretty much approval.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:09:27] It says, how did you prepare yourself and others for entering into two years of Peace Corps service? So I'm thinking of what I went through with my daughter went in the Peace Corps, and there was a whole bunch of things we had to buy and everything.

GALL: [00:09:41] Um, I don't, I mean, I think there were some things that we had to buy. I think we, I had a little suitcase for the plane and then my college luggage, which was that old, you know, the soft sided luggage that was a Scotch plaid on the outside and vinyl. But then we had a pack a trunk, so like a steamer trunk that would go later. And I think I put a couple of nursing uniforms and my nursing shoes, my uniform, my cap. I think there was something about there wouldn't be any sanitary supplies available. And, you know, I think tee, you know, T-shirts, shorts. I think I packed a very nice dress and maybe heels, my top siders, which molded in the humidity of Central America. That's, that's what I remember.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:10:46] Mm hmm. Is there any other area of preparation? Did you have very close friends that you had to say goodbye to, to travel to see, you know, before you left or?

GALL: [00:10:56] No, just, so my house, my housemates in, my housemates in D.C., and the people I met there and my family. I don't remember any big party or anything.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:11:11] You had said you wanted to be in Central or South America. What about Honduras? Is that a country that you already had in mind as part of that or it just?

GALL: [00:11:24] Well, not very much. I mean, I think the interesting thing is when I was in high school, I was on the debate team and we had, one of the years, the topic was, should there be a commonwealth of a common market among the states in Central America like there was in Europe. And so we went from school to school debating that topic. And sometimes you'd be on the positive side, sometimes on the negative. So I knew a little bit about Central America, but not very much.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:12:04] But you had been given that advice by someone to go there, right?

GALL: [00:12:08] Right. And, you know, unfortunately, when we were in college, we, our curriculum was so packed, we didn't have any language courses. But I had four years of Latin and two of French in high school. So I don't think I could have predicted how important learning Spanish would be for me and for health care.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:12:35] Where and how were you trained to prepare you for your assignment?

GALL: [00:12:39] So the training was, the first part of it was in Puerto Rico. So our first thing we all, we had to be in San Juan on

September 3rd. So I think there were, it was a pretty good sized training group. I think there might have been around 50 people. And we met at the Hotel Normandy, which was probably a pre-war hotel. It was built kind of as a replica of the cruise ship, the Normandy, and it was kind of a, uh, inside it was like being inside a cruise ship, but it was pretty rundown in the sixties. And if you compare it to the El Condado Beach or those that were very trendy then, people, you know, people were not going to the Normandy Hotel.

GALL: [00:13:34] And but we all met there. And I don't think there were other people staying there and there. Our group for training, there were six or eight people that were going to what was then British Honduras. There were a dozen nurses. And so all the nurses were female, everyone else was male. The, uh, I think they were, they were pretty much divided into two groups. They were either going into agriculture cooperatives or finance co-ops. So if you had a B.A. or a B.S. in finance or economics, you were going to do that. And if you had any other degree at all, you did farming.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:14:16] Oh.

GALL: [00:14:19] And I think from the beginning, some of the training director, there was two, there were two people. One was, both named Bill. One had been a volunteer in Colombia, another one someplace else, but they were both Latin America veterans. And so we spent just a couple of days in San Juan. And then they told us we had to make our way, we had two days to make our way to the training camp, which was Camp Crozier, and it was between the towns of Arecibo and Utuado, which, so Puerto. If San Juan is on the eastern side of Puerto Rico, this would be almost to the western coast.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:15:06] Hmm.

GALL: [00:15:07] Well, how do you do that? We didn't speak any Spanish, so I think, I think I probably shared a room with two other nurses. One was from Brooklyn, the other one was from Connecticut. And we, um, there was a fellow in our group named Tex from Texas who was tall and lanky. I mean, he fit the picture completely, who spoke Spanish. So the four of us went together and I think we. We took something like a called a publica, which was like a shared taxi. And I think that's how we got to our first stop, which was about a third of the way there, maybe a little further. And I remember sitting down in a cafe and eating outside, and I remember the dogs. The dogs were everywhere. And they would just come and curl up under your table. They weren't aggressive, but they were pretty much omnipresent. I don't think I'd ever eaten in a restaurant where there were dogs.

GALL: [00:16:11] And so we got ourselves to camp the next day and I think we took a bus to Arecibo. And then we, we took another taxi to Camp Crozier, which was up in the mountains. So we went up this incredibly twisty, tiny little mountain road. And there had been so many accidents that the driver would just blow the horn every curve so you, I don't know what would happen if. Nothing bad ever happened. So we landed on time. We arrived at the camp and it was definitely tropical jungle. Like, I mean, the plants that you'd have in your house, the little kind of things that your mother might have taken care of, were just huge. They were trees.

GALL: [00:17:02] And the camp had a, uh, a series of buildings that were sort of like barracks, maybe that were tin roofed. There was screening on all four sides and then just plywood from maybe shoulder height down and raised from the ground about four or five feet. Uh, screen door. And there were military like barracks, you know, there were bunk beds. So I think there were two. I think the girls might have been in one or two cabins and the guys had the rest. There were, there were probably four or six married couples. And I can't recall

exactly what their accommodations were. And there was a *comedor*, which is a dining room, where we went for food. And the food was prepared, I think, by the Navy.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:18:09] Hmm.

GALL: [00:18:10] And we had like stainless steel trays or aluminum trays we'd get. We were well fed. We'd get fed three times a day. But you went through the line, you plopped your food down, you sat at a bench, ate, and then you rinsed your tray off in a big, um, barrel, you know, a steel barrel of hot water. And that was the food part. There was a beautiful pool, a nice sized pool. There was a volleyball court. And it was pretty isolated. I mean, there was a road that went down to Arecibo and some into Utuado, but then it didn't go all the way to the southern part of the island. It just went into the woods. And I'm not sure that the observatory was even built then. There's a big observatory in Arecibo now.

GALL: [00:19:11] There was a little store outside the camp called the *tienda*, and about halfway down the hill there was another store. So at night we would go to the *tienda* and we could, uh, we could dance. We danced a lot and we had a lot of music and probably a good amount of *cerveza* and, um, and the, our schedule for the day. I think first we went through, I think we might have gone to this in San Juan, was sort of a language assessment. And I remember going into an office all by myself. People asked me why I wanted to join the Peace Corps and did I have a boyfriend? And was, you know, they didn't say, what are you running away from? But it was sort of implying like, what would make you do this? And then so that was one.

GALL: [00:20:04] And then, and there were a few of the, uh, I think there were one of the language teachers that would, we would continue to have in Honduras was there. Another trainer was Don Carlos from Costa Rica, and then two or three lovely

Latinas. They were Puerto Rican women who were language teachers. And we were, I was interviewed and I didn't know any Spanish. So the best, the most I could do would be the fellow would say something in Spanish like, *ye abo per telefono*, and I would just say telephone. And he said, no, no, no, you're supposed to answer me in Spanish. Well, I couldn't. So that went on for about a half an hour. So I was good at guessing, but I wasn't, I couldn't deliver.

GALL: [00:21:00] And then by the time we got, then when we got to camp, we were all assigned little language groups. So some of the people in our group had either lived in Latin America growing up or had a junior year abroad or majored in Spanish. They were, they were at a completely different level, and if I'm right, we were expected to pass a language test at the end of training. And it was a Foreign Service kind of ranking, one through five or something like that. And I think there was an expectation that we get two and above, but it seems to me there was something like that. So we had two two-hour sessions of Spanish every day, and the classrooms were really small decks with a tin roof. I think they were open sided. They were aulas, A-U-L-A-S, was the word for classroom.

GALL: [00:21:57] And we would sit with our, whoever our professor was, and it was all oral learning. There wasn't anything written. And so we, it was immersion, I guess would be the way you would call it. So we have 2 hours in the morning of that and then we would have 2 hours at some point in the day of sort of cultural information exchanged about, you know, what the country's like, geography, political stuff, food. And then we would have 2 hours in the afternoon of language. So we had 6 hours of classroom time every day. And in between we ate. We swam a lot. We played a lot of volleyball. And I think that kept us pretty busy. So that went on for three months.

GALL: [00:22:55] And somewhere in the middle of those three months, the, um, the lottery was, came out for the draft.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:23:05] Oh.

GALL: [00:23:06] And I, I'm pretty sure about this. And I remember sitting in the *comedor* at night when, and listening to the radio, and we were all in there. And, you know, they read off like what your number was by your birthday. So January 1, your number was not 1 out of 365. It was any number that they picked for that. And just the, um, it was merciless. There were people who, uh, there was one fellow who got his number was number 310, and he got up and said, I'm out of here. He was gone the next day. He didn't have to worry about the draft. He wasn't going to be in the Peace Corps. There was there were people who had numbers like 4 and 10. And some of them some of the fellows extended the tour of duty to a third year and still were drafted at the end of that time.

GALL: [00:24:06] And so it gave a sense of the seriousness about what we were doing more. You know, I mean, here we were in this camp and that we were kind of isolated and getting, and most of us were young. Many of us had just finished school or were in our early to mid twenties. So this brought home what the world was like, which wasn't too nice.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:24:38] Right.

GALL: [00:24:40] Um. And then. And I think for those, for those of us who are women, we realize it didn't apply to us, but it kind of stimulated some empathy for those who were affected by it. So, so in the middle of training. So I think we were there about four weeks when we learned that we were going to go and spend one or two weeks in a town in Puerto Rico on our own. And I was assigned to go to the town of San Germán and to a little public health, little public health hospital. And I had to get there and I had to introduce myself. I had to sort of go with the program.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:25:41] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:25:41] And so we all got to Arecibo and we got on the right busses to go. And San Germán is down on the southwestern part of the island. And it's actually a beautiful, beautiful little town that was one of the first colonies the Spanish established in Puerto Rico. And I, the people were so friendly. So at this point, four weeks of 4 hours a day of Spanish, there was some language there, but not that much. And I remember being given a room in the hospital and, um, getting. They'd knock on the door every morning. And it took me a while to figure out, you know, wake up in the fog and what *desayuno* meant breakfast and get, you know, they weren't rude in any way. And then they kind of had a program for me.

GALL: [00:26:33] And I went to, I went to see the inspection of the cockfighting ring because cockfighting is legal there. I went to the abattoir where the cattle and sheep were slaughtered because the public health officer looked at that. I was included on visits with patients, and I clearly remember a young woman being told by her doctor, and I think the doctor explained to me in English what he was going to say, but that she had had a miscarriage and that she would not be able to have children. And that was it. There wasn't a whole lot of empathy for that. And for, you know, that was a dreadful, dreadful sentence to get.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:27:21] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:27:22] I remember the nurses were very nice to me. They had to write some of their notes in English. So they had some. So it was helpful. They had some English, but they also helped me learn the technical words. And one of them then invited me to spend a weekend with her family at their little cottage down near the phosphorescent bay, which was just like people here going, you know, to a cottage down on the Cape or, you know, small getaway place. And I remember

learning, being in a town and people, somebody would go around on a cart and they would, oh, they would sell their wares. So they would say what, you know, they'd call out if they was selling fish. And I remember them calling out mondongo. And I was like, well, what's mondongo? And they said, it's intestines. You wouldn't eat that, Gail. I said, oh sure, I'll eat anything. Oh my goodness. I did not enjoy that.

GALL: [00:28:24] But people played dominoes in the, in the, on Saturdays and Sundays. And you could hear the clack, clack, clack of the tiles in the, in the little alleys. We went to the beach. We went out at night on the phosphorescent bay, and you could see the phosphorescence and the trail of the motor. And I recall thinking, you know, in Long Island, in New York, people didn't have a high opinion of Puerto Rican immigrants. They were kind of looked down on. And here these folks could not have been nicer and more hospitable. So that was a big, I think that was a bigger lesson to learn than all my vocabulary and what I liked for food and didn't like.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:29:12] Uh huh.

GALL: [00:29:12] And then we went back to camp for four more weeks. I remember writing. I used to send a tape home once a week to my parents, a cassette tape, and they would send one back to me and I would record the sounds of the local, uh, the little tree frogs that used to peep all night. So it was never quiet there at night. And when it rained, it rained like cats and dogs. It was ferocious. We were there during the sort of the wet season, which we were not touched by a hurricane. But I think Camp Crozier, when I look online and see the western part of Puerto Rico, I think is still pretty badly off in the recovery process.

GALL: [00:29:58] We went to the beach a lot. Our friendship solidified. I think some romances started. And then we were ready to leave. So our final training was in-country in

Honduras. So we were flown from San Juan to Miami in, uh, towards the end of November. Maybe it was around Thanksgiving time. And I remember the pilot said on the plane, announced that we were all going to be going in the Peace Corps, that, you know, and people were very nice and that we erupted in song, The Beatles' Back in the USSR.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:30:49] Oh yeah, I remember that.

GALL: [00:30:53] That was the year of The White Album. And my parents had come down to Miami and we spent the weekend together and they were kind of surprised at how much I changed. And I, I think it was because it was an issue of carrying my trunk downstairs or something. And my father said that I would do, or he would do it. And I said, no, no, no, no, there are bellhops. So I just went over and picked up the phone and said, could somebody come take my things? He said, you did that all by yourself. And I was like, well, yeah. So and I think that was, uh, we had a nice time together and I wouldn't see them again for another year. So that was, uh, that was a pretty serious, you know, saying goodbye.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:31:48] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:31:48] And then we went to Honduras and had four more weeks of training. Or maybe three. And because we did, we did a little bit of, uh, we went to, I think Comayagua and we, I just remember the colors, the white stucco and the red tiles and the poinsettias were blooming. And the poinsettias, bright, bright red. And they grew up and over the roofs like vines. And I, who knew? I mean, a pot of poinsettia was like 12 inches high, right? And it was incredibly beautiful. And then again, we were sent for a time out. So there was a lot of get out into the community. And we went, my, um, Joanne and I, my friend, we were sent to go to a town called Yoro, which was, um.

GALL: [00:32:49] Did we go to Yoro? Yeah, I think we went to Yoro together, so we had to fly there. So that was my first experience on a DC-3. The planes were left over war surplus planes and I think the Honduran airline was, um, SAHSA. Servicio Aéreo de Honduras S.A., like corporation. And we all called it, or people told us it was stood for "stay at home stay alive." So we flew to Yoro and there I found out that the couple that were hosting us, that she was a blond, pale, pale blond with green eyes. And their Spanish was absolutely perfect. He was Mexican American, and she had grown up in Puerto Rico. And I, I, their name, their last name was Latino. And finally I said, are you Donna Palmer? And she said, yes. And we had gone to high school together.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:33:56] Oh my goodness.

GALL: [00:33:56] Which was a small high school. And I remembered her name from, she would be called to the office. So, um, and they taught us a lot too, about, they had been there about a year and a half then. Because they both spoke so well, they were deeply involved in the community, they were doing a great job. Joe took us around to the fincas and we saw the coffee beans being roasted and we went to the hospital and we came back, finished up. We were sworn in in Tegucigalpa. And I think that was the last time any of us wore our dresses or the guys wore their sport shirts and ties. That was sort of the end of those clothes. And then and then we got our assignments. And Joanne and I were assigned to gather to be in San Pedro Sula, which is a city in the north. For a long time was, in the last couple of decades, has been the highest rated murder city in the world.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:34:59] Oh, gee.

GALL: [00:35:00] But it wasn't then.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:35:03] Oh, okay. Yeah. Um, so let me ask you some questions. Did you think the language training was adequate?

GALL: [00:35:14] Oh, yeah, that was really intensive. I mean, I think one of the things was we couldn't figure out, like we didn't see anything written. And so unlike French or some of the other languages, it's all phonetic. But we had to be told it was, I had to be told it was phonetic. Don't worry about, you know, reading it.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:35:36] Yeah. Interesting. And so in general, what would you say the strengths and weaknesses were of your training?

GALL: [00:35:47] Um, you know, the big thing now is interprofessional team development and working in teams and team cohesion and that. I think we learned that there in a way that was partially may have been unplanned, but then I don't have a training manual, in that because we were isolated, right? We were taken away from all other inputs. We didn't have cell phones. We didn't have, there was no TV. I don't know that the radio was on that much, but we all must, I think we all must have had transistor radios. But then we couldn't speak the language, so we wouldn't know, you know, what they were saying. And so that was part of it. We were put into small groups, but we, I think there were people that were training to go to Bolivia and training to go to Panama.

GALL: [00:36:40] There was some snideness, like, oh, you should go to a real country. Honduras is not that big a place or. And so we became proud that we were going to Honduras. There was enough pushing and pulling to, um, we formed a very tightly knit group that ended up supporting each other and staying in touch 50 years.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:36:59] Yeah, that is amazing. Were people deactivated [deselected], as they sometimes say, or asked to leave the training process?

GALL: [00:37:11] I don't remember that. In, um, in, uh, as part of the training process. I think that was kind of hung out there like you could be deactivated was, when I read that word, I thought, oh yes, I remember that word. Nobody said you could get kicked out but, you know, deactivated wasn't something that you wanted to do.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:37:39] So it talks again about the initial entry into the country. I think you've explained some of that. But if there's any other thoughts. Initial reactions to people, the physical environment, the town where you were assigned, your coworkers. I'm wondering in all of this myself, did you have partners or coworkers that were Honduran in the health care?

GALL: [00:38:01] So we in, not in training except for the nurse that gave out all the immunizations, because that was a big part of training. I have, you know, we had to go through all of those shots. But, and I don't think that we. I don't recall that we got a whole lot of technical assistance about health care delivery in Latin America per se, or in Honduras specifically. So that the oldest person in our nursing group was probably in, she seemed very mature, but she was probably around 35 and she was actually a nursing professor. So she became someone that I think we respected a lot.

GALL: [00:38:52] When we got to country in San Pedro Sula, Joanne was assigned to a public health health center and I was assigned to a teaching program for what would basically be medical assistants, like a one year training program. There was no orientation to that. There was a nurse in that hospital already who was a volunteer. And so it was just what you would do on your own.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:39:25] Mm hmm. What was the specific, specifics of the job to which you were assigned?

GALL: [00:39:35] So the first job I was assigned to was to be a teacher in this nursing program. And there was a director and two other nursing teachers. The one I remember the best was very nice and very, very outgoing. And she was Costa Rican and she was there as part of a mission. So that was, uh. And we were at, the hospital was the Hospital Leonardo Martinez. And it was a big open pavilion. Like one story, stucco red roof, or tin roof probably, and that overhang. And the patients would line up early in the morning for. Nobody had appointments. You know, they kind of got in line.

GALL: [00:40:34] People were afraid that if you went to the hospital, you would die, which was a legitimate fear. The wards were big. They probably had about 50 beds in them. There were just iron cots. Many parts of that I found quite dreadful. The, um, the. But as far as the teaching went, I was so unprepared in a way. I mean, even though my language skills were good for my training group, they weren't. They were like third grade English would be. And you know how we don't treat people with third grade English very well? Well, their skepticism on my third grade Spanish was justified.

GALL: [00:41:24] And there would be things, cultural things, that I couldn't get. Like I told the students they had to carry a pencil with them to write down things like vital signs, like blood pressure and stuff. And the other teachers said, why? In the hospital, not the teachers, and our students weren't taught this, but if a patient couldn't eat, the staff ate their food. So if the family had to be there. And it really helped me understand why in the city hospitals that I'd worked in, we were very, very, you know, there was very strict rules about visiting hours. And certainly nobody could stay overnight or camp out next to their family member, which has all changed, gladly.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:42:12] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:42:12] But I never understood why people would do that. Well, a lot of it was out of fear, that they had to be the ones taking care of their family members.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:42:21] Yes, overseeing it. Yeah.

GALL: [00:42:23] I want to mention one of the better things that happened there was there were a group of doctors from Duke who started coming down regularly, like annually, to do cleft lip to palate repair. And it turned out cleft lip to palate, I don't know that I'd ever seen one previously, but in some of the small cities, they were kind of, they were very prevalent because people kind of married people who lived in their community. And there were children who had, um, who looked like the posters you see when you see send money to these kids. They had open gaps in their faces. Their palates had never healed. Whereas even in the late sixties in this country, people, babies were put through a step process like one, two, three, for repair. So those doctors came and did incredible work.

GALL: [00:43:24] But I remember going into the pediatric ward at night, into the utility room and turning on a light. And the cockroaches were, they were very big. They were like an inch and a half long, and they were wall to wall all over the place. And all I, I was so worried about the children and diarrhea and amoebas and how they could have surgery and have their guts be infected. And how could we give them clean water? Because the water in the hospital wasn't boiled. Like I got caught up in that kind of stuff.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:43:54] Well, for good reason.

GALL: [00:43:55] Yeah, but it sort of kind of stopped me from doing things, so I switched jobs into a public health assignment with Caritas.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:44:04] Oh, okay.

GALL: [00:44:05] So that was the, um, we had a wonderful, wonderful local director. We were called the north coast, that region of Honduras. And Andy Ruby was Honduran. He was completely bilingual. He had a lovely family. And he, uh, he, when I told him how unhappy I was, he helped me get an assignment with Caritas. And that was the Latin American version of Catholic Relief Services. They were largely funded by the Christian Democrats in Europe. And they were, they were trying to make the organization of religion take care of people and bring food to them and bring health care to them and literacy, more than previous missionary experiences.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:45:05] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:45:06] So they had a program where they had community health workers who went from town to town, very organized, like a network. I mean, they were growing a network. It was very well obviously being established of, um, of delivering surplus food, like the, remember the CARE posters? You know, food that came from CARE, and we would go out into the communities and we would deliver that. The community health workers would teach the moms how to cook with that food, the cereals and grains and stuff like that. They would do what they called *charlas*, which are little talks about health. We had, I think, three Mickey Mouse movies about vaccinations and clean water and washing that we would show outside at night, you know, on a reel with a generator, because those towns usually turned off their electricity at night.

GALL: [00:46:12] So I really, I really, really liked that. I liked going out into what we call the campo and visiting different towns. I've got to go all the way out to the Mosquitia and the coast along the, towards the Nicaraguan border. And there were nuns and priests that came from Spain and spent their entire lives there. And that's what they did.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:46:38] Yeah. Now, this was still under the Peace Corps umbrella?

GALL: [00:46:41] It was still under the Peace Corps. But, you know, these folks were very, very liberal. I mean, I remember being in one small town and along the coast of, the north coast of Honduras, the ethnic group is, uh, is mostly Black people who escaped slavery, either in Jamaica or some of the Caribbean islands. It's called Garifuna. And they have their own language and their own culture. They have some English and there most of the men worked in the shipping. Don't forget, it was a banana republic and the north coast was where the ships used to dock. And so the priest actually asked me if I would talk to a group of the women one night about birth control.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:47:27] Hmm.

GALL: [00:47:27] Now, in 1970, there weren't as many options as there are today. And these poor women really didn't have any options. I mean, we could talk about, you know, rhythm.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:47:42] Mm hmm.

GALL: [00:47:43] But they didn't have access to diaphragms. They didn't have access to oral pills. I think, and actually, one of the community health workers told me that in El Salvador, they were testing this shot that would last for three months. Well, that turned out to be the early research on Depo-Provera, which became a very common type of birth control that we used in the United States for a long time. It was one of the first long acting birth control. But who knew that probably unaware people were being tested in Latin America?

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:48:19] Hmm. Yeah. I've always wondered about that. What were your living arrangements through this?

GALL: [00:48:30] So when we first got to San Pedro, it was by word of mouth. We'd find a place and people recommended that I go to, um, visit a family called Cisneros, who lived near one of the public schools and in a nice neighborhood, but not a fancy neighborhood. And Beatrice Cisneros was probably in her late fifties, early sixties, and she was called Dona Ticha. And she had, she lived there with her son and his wife and granddaughter. She had another son or two who had emigrated to New Orleans. A lot of people went to New Orleans from San Pedro. And she had a two story house. And upstairs they, um, they rented me a bedroom that had a separate entrance and a set of stairs.

GALL: [00:49:25] I can't remember what my rent was, but I, it included two meals a day or two or three meals a day. So I think I gained about 10 pounds or more because I loved the food and the sour cream that, the crema went on everything and the tortillas were all handmade and it was very good. There was a single bathroom downstairs and it sort of had been retrofitted into the house. So it was like wood, like scrap wood, and there were chinks in it. And I'd go and there was a pile of newspaper squares to use for toilet paper. And I remember the little girl, she must have been about nine. She would peep through and try and watch me, like how does the gringa go to the bathroom? And her prior tenants had been Mormon missionaries, so she wasn't used to my going out as much as, because the missionaries didn't go out at night.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:50:27] Didn't go out at all.

GALL: [00:50:27] They did everything two by two. But she was lovely and my mother actually wrote a letter and had a friend translate it and wrote to Dona Ticha saying how much she appreciated her taking me in.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:50:40] Oh, isn't that cute?

GALL: [00:50:41] Isn't that nice?

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:50:42] That's very nice. Yeah. And your typical workday and leisure day?

GALL: [00:50:52] Well, I think the typical workday was somewhat different from the U.S., where we went to work from 7:00 to 3:00 or 8:00 to 4:00, because the day was definitely divided into parts and most people went to work for 4 hours, then came home and had their main meal and siesta time, and then went back 2 or 3 hours later. So that was a whole different thing to get used to. It was a long way to go to work, when I worked for Caritas, it was on the other side of the city, so it was a couple of bus rides or spending my money on a taxi to go back and forth that distance.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:51:31] You had to go back to your place where you were living?

GALL: [00:51:32] Well, no, but there was no place to eat there. And everybody else went home. Yeah.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:51:40] And your relationship with country nationals and other PCs or PC staff?

GALL: [00:51:45] Well, I think the country people I met, like the fellow who was head of Caritas, was an incredibly, um, spiritually minded gentleman who was trying to get something done in a very nice way. He was very kind to me. And but I mean, we respected him, you know, he was, I can't remember his, but it would be like Don Jose or whatever. Everyone got called Don or Dona. And we understood that the, you know, the politeness of that and the respect of that. The thing about the community health workers is they were both, of course, Honduran, and they had, one had come from a family that was emigrated from El Salvador. So this was after the Honduras Salvador War. So she was very cautious about her last name.

She would only use her husband's last name. And usually people there use both their maiden name and their husband's name. And because she did not want to be identified as *salvadoreño*, you know, because there was a lot of bitterness after the war.

GALL: [00:52:51] And I think already, so working with them is, it helped my language grow, helped my understanding grow. And this was incredibly slow. I mean, my understanding of the nuances and how things worked was not very sophisticated. It took a while to figure things out, but they were kind about that. And later on, I spent a lot of time working with community health workers up here in New England, and I kind of reflect that, oh good, my first job was with community health workers. I'm pretty lucky about that. And, um, there was a second part?

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:53:33] Well, just asking PC staff.

GALL: [00:53:35] The staff were great. I told you about Andy Ruby, who was the director. There was a secretary. So the Peace Corps, we had access to the Peace Corps office all the time because it was, we were in the region and so most of us would pass through every day. And there was a secretary and she was lovely and she ended up marrying one of the volunteers. There were anyone who came into the city, and eventually I moved into an apartment with two other nurses. One was my friend Joanne, and another one was an Irish nurse, and we rented a house from one of the missions, I think the Methodist mission, and it was a very nice like an American house, but I mean, like a 1920s American house. And, um, and there was three bedrooms and a living room and a dining room.

GALL: [00:54:28] And every weekend we'd be filled with volunteers sleeping on our floor because they'd come in from the city, into the city. But that was great. So we kept in touch with our friends. We would go to, it was about an hour bus ride to the

coast and most weekends we went up and went swimming and stayed on the coast.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:54:50] Very nice. Um. Let's see. What did you do during vacation time?

GALL: [00:55:02] So I think the first vacation I took was, um, I went with another volunteer that we were just friends, we weren't involved, and he was finishing up his service. So we, um, and a lot of people seemed to, they didn't want to go home right away. So he was going to go all the way down around South America and then home. And so I said I'd go partway. So we went and we went together as far south as Bogota, and we started by hitchhiking on the Pan-American Highway.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:55:40] Oh my goodness.

GALL: [00:55:41] And then I think at some point we had to buy a plane ticket. Maybe we took it all the way to Panama, but you couldn't get from Panama to Barranquilla, Colombia, by land. It was closed and you couldn't get a visa to get into Colombia without having a ticket out of Colombia. They were onto us gringos.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:56:08] I guess.

GALL: [00:56:10] They didn't want any illegal immigrants coming from the north. So we had to buy a ticket out. Now for me that was okay because I was going back north, but Cavall had to buy a ticket he wasn't going to use I think. We went to Barranquilla and there's a colonial city on the north coast to Medellin, which was then a very, very pretty city and still is probably. But it was an area that was totally managed by the drug cartels two decades ago.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:56:43] I recognize the names, yeah.

GALL: [00:56:44] And then to Bogota. And I do have a strong memory of taking a bus from Medellin to Bogota over land all night long, filled with people and roosters and chickens. They weren't all on the roof either, some inside, and just everybody slept next to each other, you know, it was all squished in and, um. But we got there.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:57:08] Yeah.

GALL: [00:57:08] So that was a vacation. Another one, um, the Christmas of 1970. So a year later than our swearing in. A lot of us went home for Christmas and I did. I think we had two or three weeks. One couple that had developed a relationship, they went to see her dad in Connecticut that they were going to get married. And he insisted, well, they were going to do it right then. They weren't going back to Honduras unmarried. So all of a sudden there was a marriage in Connecticut and everybody got together for that. And then we went back and I think that was the last vacation. But weekends were time off, you know, it wasn't. And Peace Corps brought us together, I think, for July 4th parties.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:57:59] Oh, okay.

GALL: [00:57:59] In the middle of the country, a place called Comayagua, which was the old capital. And maybe one or two group meetings that we had.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:58:12] Um. You. Did you extend for a third year?

GALL: [00:58:20] No.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:58:21] No. So it's just between the first and second year you made this job change?

GALL: [00:58:24] Yeah, yeah.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:58:25] Yeah. So your living changed accordingly?

GALL: [00:58:27] Well, I, I don't know that I, I was still in the same city.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:58:32] Okay.

GALL: [00:58:32] So I didn't have to move. I mean, I moved a couple of times just to be in a. One time I live with an Australian nurse and a Honduran nurse in an apartment, and because Joanne didn't want to leave the family she was with, because we were all encouraged to stay with the family as long as possible. And she was better at that than I was. But, um, and then. And but that was still in San Pedro. My mother came down to visit and, um, oh, another time one of my high school friends came down and we did take a side trip to Guatemala. And I went to Copán. I went to Copán with someone from the medical team, from the Duke group, on a motorcycle, which was.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:59:14] Oh my goodness.

GALL: [00:59:14] I know, that was interesting. And but Copán is absolutely incredibly a beautiful, spiritual place that is a jewel.

MADDEN-STURGES: [00:59:23] Hmm. Um. What do you think were your main accomplishments looking back at these two different assignments?

GALL: [00:59:33] Growing up a little bit, I think. I think I grew up a lot. And I think one thing about learning how to speak Spanish is that learning to listen, because you have to really pay attention when someone was talking to you to kind of get what it was. And I think it taught me how to pay attention when someone was talking to me. It made me a better nurse. The language is an incredible gift because every job I had up until almost the last one I got because I was bilingual.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:00:15] Hmm.

GALL: [01:00:16] So when I came to Boston, I got a job at what was then Harvard Community Health Plan in their Mission Hill clinic, because it was a mixed community.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:00:26] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:00:26] And then I worked in the Point neighborhood in Salem, and I spent 20 years in Chelsea. And I, the upside of it was that I learned that I could do things to help the people that came from those countries more than I could do anything to help when I was a young person and as a volunteer.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:00:49] Hmm. That's interesting. Um. Do you have any regrets?

GALL: [01:00:57] No. I mean, I'm sorry we've lost a few people that have died. And it's always sorry. It's always sad to hear that.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:01:05] Right.

GALL: [01:01:05] Because I think we were so close in, like when you're a real minority, you stick together.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:01:14] Yes.

GALL: [01:01:14] You know, and I don't regret that I did it. I regret that I wasn't better prepared, that I couldn't have done more in terms of like my friends that had more experience became ER nurses or, you know, you know, that could help more with the skills than I had. But I always have liked working in the community so I think that was probably me anyway.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:01:38] Yeah. It was your strength anyway. Let's see. And I think you just explained, but you may have something to add.

How did your Peace Corps experience influence your plans for the future?

GALL: [01:01:55] Um, I think. Well, I think I felt like I had traveled, so I accomplished that goal. I didn't turn into being someone who would always travel, like some people go on and work in international organizations and stuff. I wasn't particularly interested in doing that, so I was pretty much ready to, when I came home, I looked at jobs in D.C. Peace Corps then had like a re-immersion program for a week or two in D.C. I remember going with some other people, and it was down in DuPont Circle, and it was two weeks of, one or two? I think it was two weeks of cultural immersion. And between 1969 and 1971, the U.S. had changed tremendously.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:02:48] Oh my goodness, that's interesting.

GALL: [01:02:50] I mean, people I knew in college that would never touch marijuana, thought those people were awful, were now offering someone a joint. But beyond that, I mean, the, one of the things they had us to do was spend a shift in a D.C. police car. So this other former volunteer and I get, oh, Jane from Brooklyn, I think we were together, get in the back of the car and the police had never heard of the Peace Corps. So there's a divergence there, right? And they were going out into the District, into projects, doing domestic violence calls or, I mean, at one point, the fellow in the front seat said, I think you better get down under the seats and I thought, oh my God. I mean, it was more dangerous than anything I'd been involved in in Honduras.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:03:40] Yeah.

GALL: [01:03:40] And that kind of thing. People came and gave us talks about LGBTQ issues, which nobody talked about before. I mean, nobody talked about gender orientation in that I remember, certainly not formally, and those kinds of things.

And when I finally decided to come to Boston, when the new emerging field was becoming a nurse practitioner, so I was able to shift into that and become one of the early nurse practitioners.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:04:18] Yes. And you mentioned the language connection, which is very important. Overall, how do you assess your service in light of the three goals of the Peace Corps? Which is to provide technical assistance where required, when requested, to promote better understanding of Americans, or to promote better understanding of other people by Americans.

GALL: [01:04:46] So, uh, I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I don't remember anybody ever mentioning, uh.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:04:55] I think it's very new.

GALL: [01:04:55] Oh okay. Anybody mentioning the goals of the Peace Corps in the way, I mean, and I don't, I don't remember being measured about my goals or attainment.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:05:09] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:05:09] So in terms of technical assistance, I don't think I offered a whole lot of technical assistance. I think I, uh, I learned a lot about culture. I learned a lot about practices. I, I think hopefully a better understanding of Americans. The concept that most people in Honduras had about Americans was what they saw on TV. So we are on reruns on TV or in the movie. So we were kind of, the women were particularly warned about that the men's expectations of American women were quite lewd. And also we were exposed to, you know, I don't know if, you'd walk down the street. Now, granted, we were all in our twenties, so we looked a lot different. But they'd go, ch, ch, ch. And they'd whisper things and they'd go, *chica, chica, chica*. And it took a long time just to let that go.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:06:07] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:06:07] And because the veterans would say, don't turn around, don't say anything.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:06:12] Right.

GALL: [01:06:12] That, um, and that, we could present ourselves as being men and women who had a little bit of earnestness about us might have been helpful.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:06:23] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:06:24] And I think in terms of understanding other people, that, um, as I said about my experience in Puerto Rico, never experiencing the, the hospitality and the friendliness of people who are Latino and never experiencing also just the poverty that existed in Honduras or the poorness of health care or the illiteracy. That still gives me incredible respect for the people that struggle so hard to get here.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:06:56] Mm hmm. Have you continued any kind of involvement with your country of service?

GALL: [01:07:08] Um, not directly with Honduras. I did go, I went to Honduras sometime around 2002. My daughter had decided that she wanted to go live on Utila, which is one of the Bay Islands, for a couple of years. So like my mother, I went down to find out what was going on. And at that point we were told, frankly, not to go into San Pedro, that it was very, very dangerous. I had, I worked with a woman in Chelsea who was Honduran, whose husband had gone home after one of the hurricanes to help his family, and he'd been robbed and shot. So I thought if they were going to do that to him, I didn't want to be there for that.

GALL: [01:07:50] So I've worked a little bit with the Massachusetts, uh, very little bit with the MIRA group [Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition]. But in the communities that I worked in, like in Salem, I helped to train hospital workers on using interpreters and a program for kids in the high school. I've worked on developing curricula for, mostly for immigrants, I would say, more than going back. And I haven't done any kind of medical trips.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:08:24] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:08:24] I'm still involved with my group, yes.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:08:26] Yes. Or contact with people from that country?

GALL: [01:08:29] Oh, lots of contact with people from Honduras. I mean, the Honduras and the people that, so like the different communities, like there are a lot of Dominicans in Salem. There were in Chelsea, there were people who started coming from Puerto Rico maybe in the fifties. And then in the nineties there were big groups that came from Central America. There would be, and then Chelsea is a gateway city. There'd be people who came from the Balkans and people who came from other places of war.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:09:05] Mm hmm.

GALL: [01:09:05] So the city is very used to new immigrants, but there would be issues among the immigrant groups. Like, we're citizens, you're not, stuff like that. Awareness of that.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:09:16] Oh dear. Have you been involved with third goal activities? That would be the NPCA, I assume, and their.

GALL: [01:09:28] Other people by Americans. No, I think that in the, if I was the only one in a clinical group that spoke Spanish, I had to explain that role, what it meant to that person. Like for a

long time, I had a patient from Mission Hill who was Guatemalan, and she had mitral valve problems, heart valve problems. And I think in the time that I knew her, she had three valve replacements. Now, this was in the early stages of valve replacements when they were using pig valves and stuff like that. But she was getting them done at the Brigham, and the physicians would get so upset when she got pregnant. And that was like culturally not feasible for her to say no, in a way. I mean, having a good conversation with her husband might have helped or might not have, but it wasn't like she was trying to sabotage their hard work.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:10:26] Yeah, no.

GALL: [01:10:27] So I think you become an ambassador for the people that you're trying to help and trying to get your colleagues to do that too.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:10:41] Right. And third goal here is capitalized. But there's all the work you did by speaking Spanish and being involved in those projects to me would also include that. What has been the effect of your PC service on your life?

GALL: [01:11:01] Well, other than all the work things I talked about. So the irony. So one of my Peace Corps friends grew up in Reading, Massachusetts. And when I came to Boston, I, um, I came, I stayed with two of my Georgetown friends that had been living here a couple of years. And Tom invited me and them to go to the St. Patrick's Day parade. I think at this point, I already had gotten a job and I was to start like the third Monday in March or something like that. And so all the time we've been in the Peace Corps, it was the beaches is never as good as they are in Cape Cod. You know, life is never as good as it is in Massachusetts. And St. Patrick's Day in New York is nothing compared to Boston.

GALL: [01:11:51] Now, I was very skeptical of this, but so I went and I took the T. I think I, they lived, he and his friends lived in Allston. So I went to Allston and we took the T to South Boston and we went to this German bar in South Boston called Amrheins. And little did I know that the tradition had nothing to do with the parade. Everybody spent the day inside the bar drinking. The cop at the door was named John Law, and one of. I met my husband that day.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:12:26] Oh my goodness.

GALL: [01:12:27] And he had grown up with this fellow, my Peace Corps friend. So that was a very huge influence over my life. We've now been married 45 years. So that, that's one huge thing. And I think being aware of how the rest of the world works. And with a little maybe more humility than I had when I was, before I did it.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:12:58] Hmm. Well, those are the questions on this.

GALL: [01:13:01] Oh good.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:13:01] Unless there's a specific topic that you would be interested in pursuing.

GALL: [01:13:09] I feel like I've talked a lot.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:13:11] Oh, I think you've done a fabulous job. Much more detail than I would do.

GALL: [01:13:18] Um.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:13:31] Did you have any health issues while you're in the Peace Corps yourself?

GALL: [01:13:36] I think I got a lot of rashes and things like that, skin things. We had a great doctor, Dr. Arias, Luis Bueso Arias his

name was, and his family was some of the leaders in the Democratic, or the more liberal parties in Honduras at that time. And there was. So when I was working for Caritas, we had this white jeep pickup with a standard shift, you know, on the wheel. So it was the letter H. So I had to learn how to drive that. And so it was not uncommon to ride in the back of the jeep. And one day we were in the city and the fellow who was driving ran through a stop sign and a policeman on a motorcycle hit the back of the jeep. And so I was thrown out of it and landed on the ground.

GALL: [01:14:30] Now, I wasn't knocked out or anything, but I was like, oh, I was abraded and bleeding all over. And I think I kind of retreated to like a third grade level and we went to the doctor's office and Dr. Arias calmed me down. He sent me to a private clinic. We didn't have to go to the dreaded public hospital. And I spent a couple of days there getting taken care of. And I think it was probably just what I needed, but I didn't have anything serious wrong with me. I don't remember many people having that happen, um, so that was my experience of health care.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:15:07] And your contact with home? You talked about calling once a week when you're in training, but did you?

GALL: [01:15:12] No, I only called once a week before I went in the Peace Corps. And I, I don't remember the frequency of the tapes, but I have a whole case of tapes in this pretty little mahogany box. And one of the things that would happen is that artisans would come door to door in the, um, the, some of the neighborhoods in San Pedro selling their wares. And they had carved in mahogany either boxes or I have a big circular tabletop that I made into a wall hanging. And their carving was excellent. It sort of took, you know, when you look at the things in any exhibit you go to about the Maya or Copán, they use those motifs.

GALL: [01:15:55] And I remember, things I remember about the city streets were there was always a lottery and they called La Chica and La Grande. So you could, they, and the people wore the kind of the tickets on shoulder boards and walked around selling the tickets. And one of my friends always bought a ticket. And you'd also get the political dope, because my friend would say, they're all saying there's going to be a *golpe* this weekend, and *golpe* is Spanish for coup. So there was always a kind of a rumor about a coup d'état or *golpe de estado* coming.

GALL: [01:16:35] We went to the movies. We would go to, uh, but in the second year there was a nice air-conditioned movie theater in town, and we'd go to the movies and I remember seeing the movie Tora! Tora! Tora!, which is about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Well, interestingly, that movie had been filmed using planes from the Honduran and Salvadoran Air Force, because when they had their war, they were using surplus planes and they were Spitfires in World War II, little fight. And so we would be sitting this whole row and the Hondurans would all be rooting for the Japanese.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:17:25] I know the feeling.

GALL: [01:17:27] Because that was their plane, you know, and it was just like, oh yeah, they don't, you know, it was, it sort of. It made you think about the United States in a different way. One of the saddest days was the day of Kent State when we heard about the murders at Kent State, and we thought about how horrible things were at home. That that could have been us.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:17:51] Yes.

GALL: [01:17:53] So we weren't that divorced from politics.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:17:56] Mm hmm. Um. Let's see. Any other topics? It definitely seemed to fit in with your life. That's what my reaction was. Um. Okay. So I assume we can.

GALL: [01:18:21] Yeah.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:18:22] Uh, complete this.

GALL: [01:18:24] I think you covered it.

MADDEN-STURGES: [01:18:24] Okay. If I can just figure out how to do it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]