

James (Jim) Herberger Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: James Herberger
Interviewer: Sharleen Hirschi Simpson
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Biographical Note

James (Jim) Herberger served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1962 to 1964 as an insect specialist.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

James (Jim) Herberger

June 23, 2009
Branson, Missouri

By Sharleen Hirschi Simpson

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

SIMPSON: [00:00:03] Today is June 23, 2009, and this is Sharleen Hirschi Simpson interviewing Jim Herberger, and I'm going to start out by just having you tell us what you're doing now exactly. Well, not exactly, but.

HERBERGER: [00:00:20] OK you want me to be in? What I'm doing now is I live in Wooster, Ohio, and have 10 acres and acres of woods on it and has a couple of ecological pieces of property on it, which are on an acreage, and I do certain things to those areas because I have a small blueberry patch of about one thousand plants. And so I in addition to take care of this 10 acres, I raise blueberries and during the summertime, we pick about eight thousand pints of blueberries and we sell them at the Wooster market sale on Saturday. And in addition to that, we have our friends over to pick their own. We don't have outsiders except Britain's pick. During the wintertime, I spend a good deal of time working on the blueberries and pruning those blueberries, and in the summertime, the

work that I put into blueberries, I don't do any of the picking. I have Amish girls and my two daughters, one who lives in Germany, comes home and the other who lives with me and how they take care of the blueberries. And my particular job on the blueberries is that I take care of all the weed control under these blueberries. And so I am doing an experiment which is now in about sixth year where I've put a groundcover underneath these blueberries and that ground cover protects the area from weed infestation. And I hope to present the information about this to one of the weed society meetings are occurring here. In addition to that, I have a large lawn, which is probably around two acres. And so I have to maintain that. I maintain several ecological areas in the woods, which I replenish the trees. I manage the trees in one section and other sections I leave. To in the wild, I don't do anything to so that you can walk through, we can take people who walk through the woods and look at these different areas and see what minimum management is, sort of what I call high maintenance management. And then we can compare that to. The area which is not managed at all. And so my purpose in this is to teach people, my grandchildren and so forth, plus anybody else who is interested that the management of ecological areas has certain benefits to it requires a certain amount of work and one can observe the results from this sort of activity.

SIMPSON: [00:04:34] Is this kind of an outgrowth of what you're what you were doing at the university before it? What were you doing before you retired or just retired or?

HERBERGER: [00:04:45] I began this as a fruit farm in 1976. So what is it? It's about twenty, twenty, thirty three years and it's the. So for 26 years, I've been doing this sort of activity when I got out of the Peace Corps, Judy and I. I took an international job and spent time overseas and was active and stayed active in agriculture, in the pesticide business, and so I spent the next twenty five years after leaving the Peace Corps. I went back to the university, got another I got an advanced degree and after that and got a job in industry and international and after that. Nineteen

seventy six, we moved to, what, 16 years after 13 years after leaving the Peace Corps, we moved on to this small farm. Uh. At the university, when I worked in.

SIMPSON: [00:06:20] This is Ohio State?

HERBERGER: [00:06:23] This is Wisconsin. I got my first degree at Ohio State, my master of science in entomology, so I was an expert and a specialist in insects. And basically my specialty was bees. So and I'd always been interested in be so fascinated with bees, even as a sort of child I can remember. I could have only been six years old and I had the story and I wasn't afraid of bees. I used to capture them all the time, try to make me make my own beehive and so forth. Then when I went to Ohio State. I was going to become a dentist and I took a course in shark anatomy and decided that dentistry wasn't really for me. That's when I went into an entomology and I worked on a method where I manufactured bee venom and sold it to doctors while I was at Ohio State, and this was quite a unique event and after I had done this, you know, I made a lot of money off of it. And about the time I finished up my degree at Ohio State, I was ready to move on and that was about. The same time that Kennedy began the Peace Corps I figured that I would go into the Peace Corps. Went into the Peace Corps as an entomologist and was stationed on an experiment station outside of Santa Cruz, north of Santa Cruz.

SIMPSON: [00:08:52] Could we digress back a little bit to after you got in the Peace Corps and what happened when you first got into it?

HERBERGER: [00:09:04] Well, first of all. I was thinking on the way up here. Before when I found out about the interview, I was thinking about our tour group. I think I was 26 years old, I had my degree from. Last week, Judy was twenty four years old. And. It struck me when I think about the total group. When we all met in Arizona, you didn't know who you were going to meet. You were assigned by, in those days, a telegram and received a telegram, our first telegram. We were assigned to go to

Borneo. And then that was the time. Then I said, didn't know where Borneo really was. I really didn't know too much about or New York, someplace out there in the Pacific. There was a place called Borneo. And I proceeded to go to the library and try to find out what is Borneo like. And that's what I learned about long houses. And I learned about people who shrunk kids and I learned sort of. So you probably know the and I read the book, some of which intrigued me, was the woman who is the great anthropologist

SIMPSON: Margaret Mead

HERBERGER: Margaret Mead's book, who did all of her well, she did do all the work, but she wrote a major, major piece of work about that particular the Polynesian type of islands in which she was getting her degree. So I was trying to get up and and and so I decided, well, if you wanted to go to Borneo, you could go to Borneo, or if not, you could let the Peace Corps know and they'd see if they could go to some other place in Borneo was far enough away and adventure to adventurous enough. And I was young enough. Judy was young enough where she just scratched her head and said, why not? We'll go to Borneo. And so we decided.

HERBERGER: [00:11:37] And then we got another telegram several months after that and said, we've decided we're not going to send you to Borneo. We put together this group is going to go into agriculture and they're going to be an agriculture group. And it may have been one of the first agricultural groups. And, well, that was fine, too, because I considered myself, I got my degree in from the College of Agriculture at Ohio State University. And I said, fine, it's you know, that's okay with me. We're going to send you to Bolivia. That was good. Spanish. That was good. Sounds a little bit better than Borneo. And of course, I immediately thought it's a jungle and a but who knows what I was going to do and what the plans were. So when we got off in Arizona, we took off and I believe it was June twenty seven. And when we got off Arizona, which was in the evening, got off the plane around four o'clock, you're

traveling with the sun. And we landed in Phoenix. And the pilot's comment as we were getting off the plane was, we're in the evening cool. It's really cool out there. It's a hundred and four degrees. That's a nice thing. And it's like this place here when you walk out, you got off the plane.

HERBERGER: [00:13:30] It was like walking into an oven. And I thought, OK, so that's it. You know, I hadn't traveled twice first to travel to the place like Phoenix, Arizona. So and then there's the I can't remember the accommodations where they picked us up at the airport. But anyways, we wound up housed at the I think they put us in because we were married. We didn't go with we weren't with the group. The group was then divided. They had the group divided into women, men and married couples. And so we roomed initially underneath the stadium and I guess it was Scottsdale at the old stadium. And I don't think it's there anymore. And we had there was a couple who they were engineers. They weren't Marj or Wayne. There was another couple in there. But they didn't stay. They left probably within a week. They decided this particular group wasn't for them. And I think that is. So anyway, we're in the stadium. And it's terribly hot and it's not air conditioned, and the first thing that struck me was how the mosquitoes here are terrible. I could get around the mosquitoes and of course, I'm an entomologist. And I was struck right away by the fact that there were so many damn mosquitoes. And I'm thinking, you know, mosquitoes are not a place that you would think you were in Phoenix, Arizona. And so I had a little bit of difficulty trying to figure out who, you know, is going to be a reason why there so many damn mosquitoes around here.

HERBERGER: [00:15:33] And sure enough, the reason for it was they watered the football field. I think they watered it every night. They didn't water it during the daytime. They put so much water on that field that we're in over water pools. That was a good place for mosquitoes to breed. And so we were continuously invaded by these sort of mosquitoes at night in the middle of the desert. Now, getting back to where I started this

whole thing, the thing that struck me when we first got together was how young everyone was. And I was struck by the fact that I'm expecting to see people my you know, up to twenty six, all manner of degrees from the university. You know, they have all specially trained. They spent some time. And the thing that struck me was there is a lot of young guys and women here that are, you know, 18 years old. And since when I think about that now. I. I think that if somebody looked back and looked at our group. He compared it to other groups that were being put together at the time, at that time, in any of the groups that were prepared subsequently after that, they would, uh, I'm pretty sure about this. We were probably the youngest group of volunteers that was ever put together.

HERBERGER: [00:17:23] I don't think there was because we met other groups, Dominican Republic. Later on, we met that group. We met and talked to people, we knew the ones the people in Bolivia I. And so we knew. And when you look and see how many young people that were in our group that they had, I'm convinced that we had one of the youngest groups were ever put together in in the Peace Corps then and from then until now. I think if somebody did some historical looking at that, they would see that all these people, because it was an agriculture group, you'd ask him, well, you know, what is your name, which is sort of qualifications. How did you get in these four? And so what you learned very quickly was they all worked in agriculture. At least they knew agriculture. These social workers, some of the social workers and yourself as a nurse were I'm not saying you had agricultural experience. My wife didn't have an agriculture experience, but I think the women in the group were. Leaders in a sense that they either hadn't done overseas or have worked in Third World countries. We call the place we're going is Third World with that term, I used to think about that term with what that really means. And I think that with, you know, almost everybody, even the older ones, Funke, several other people who were in a row, they came from historically, if you talk to them and say, well, where are you from? Around. I'm from Oklahoma.

HERBERGER: [00:19:40] And I've got a piece of property out there, and I've done all this and this and this and this and that. And of course, when they put a biblio together, you learn that each of these people, especially the young people, the qualification that they had, they were all leaders because they worked in starting either a very young age or while they were in high school, they worked in some sort of Future Farmers of America, 4-H, Farmers Union, Heifer Project type of work. And they had been involved and they had you know, I'm sure they had references that when they were asked these references and they were checked up by the FBI, whatever checks did, the checking thought, well, you know, these people are not your normal, your ordinary high school person and graduate. There are these people that are going and are interested in the Peace Corps, are people who have done something, done something or. Right. And they are 18 years old and they're looking for assignment in this agricultural group to go overseas. And so I think it was a special group of young people. I think the leaders in a sense that they could. They've worked hard, they had a lot of energy, they had a lot of energy that they previously come from, was associated with agriculture and so forth.

HERBERGER: [00:21:24] And so that was when I looked at the group. That's what I how I felt our particular group was. And I think looking back on that particular group of individuals, we had quite a few. And of course, they let us know. And then we started out with something like fifty five or fifty six people. And we eventually, Judy and I were we were first married and then the natives got married, I think when they took a break. So we and then there was another, Kaufmans, who were married also at the time. So was a very group with varied experiences. But there was a group that I thought was quite unique. And I think if we look at these people who were in that particular group, their lives later on, are an example, exemplify the types of people they were, and so that when you meet these people. After they come out of the Peace Corps and they went in different directions. Some of them did certain things when they took certain avenues, and I think all of them got something out of it.

HERBERGER: [00:23:19] All of them were people that you probably only meet that many people once in your life that have have sort of those the qualities of comradeship, friendship. Good memories of their time together and so for now, out of that group of 56, I think there was something I'm not sure about the number, something like thirty three and only disappointing part of that group, which was put through a rigorous training for psychological evaluation. The only part that was disappointing to me was when we lost people and somebody said, well, so-and-so is gone and we lost people, we lost a few, let's say. I think if you left this is the first couple we met the two engineer and the engineer and his wife, both in degrees, I think, from Oklahoma. And stick around for a couple, four or five days, and we're gone, but then there was another group that left and they left when we were going to ship out and go to Puerto Rico. They called everybody and individually and said, well, you can take the next step and we're going to send you to Puerto Rico. Or they said to us, here's your ticket and you didn't make it, he didn't make the grade and you're not going to go on to Puerto Rico. So that was very disappointing because I'm a person that when you see some of these young people who really put their hearts and souls into succeeding. In something they believe and then somebody in valuation. Yes, well, you're not going to go, you know. You're going to you didn't make the grade, and I guess that's why I never became a manager where I handed out tickets to anybody, because I that would be a dreaded job for me. I don't think I would have done that, but that's the way it was. And then when we left Puerto Rico, we went through another situation and said, well, you're going to go to Bolivia or you didn't make the second level of this screen that we put you through. And here's your ticket home. So there were a lot of not only not a lot, but there were a good number of disappointed, hardworking. Strong minded leader, people at the age of 18 that said, well, I'm sorry, after these screens and evaluations, you make it great. So for us, that made it we were very happy. I mean, we were excited, you know, like it was like, well, you know, we cut the we've cut the mustard, whatever the mustard was for these evaluations. So, uh, and

then when we finished when we finished that and they sent us on home and you and I'm sure the same thing happened to all of the other ones that made it somebody, would you try to explain to him? Well, that this group is going to go down, but they were intensively screened and people were dropped for whatever reason. They didn't explain to us why they were dropped back. I asked one of the doctors one time why such was dropped, because I thought, you know, it's a terrible thing. And so I said there was you know, you always have these good training, like and I said, well, it's heavy duty.

HERBERGER: [00:27:47] It's heavy lifting. It's, uh, it's an experience where there they're screening. They're taking our people there because I made it to the bridge and Judy made it. But, you know, we made it we made it through all is this heavy screening. It did. And you spent the rest of your life trying to figure out where we an experimental group. And I could think we were we were an experimental group in the sense that we went through a heavy screening and and why people like ourselves. As far as the psychologists were concerned, I think we tried to figure out why are these people why do they want to go and what are the reasons they're what motivates these people and what gets, you know, what makes them different than the people that don't want to go and are not motivated, you know? And so what are the characteristics for the psychiatrist or the psychologist? It was a great sort of study group where they could go in and say, well, you know, they did this test and this guy had these characteristics and so forth and so forth. And we can because we're smart enough and know enough, we can separate those out that have really good motivations and they can carry and do everything and we can separate out those that don't have we don't make the grade and so forth and so forth. When you go through life, after you've been through the Peace Corps, figure out screens that are set up, you can see that in many cases that screens are set. And people think when you do a screen and it give people tasks, that they can run an evaluation and they can't judge their human value, but they can judge a person by what he says, by giving him a Rorschach test, where they can judge a person by a

conversation with them, discussing something and so forth. And I'm a person that says. They only go so far, and then if something else, there's other characteristics that psychologists and especially psychologists can't do, there's other parts of the human nature.

SIMPSON: [00:30:15] So all in all, did you feel like that screening and training was too rigorous or?

HERBERGER: [00:30:24] Well, I know this is why this also was a special group that was in this training period. It was rigorous. Nobody ever expected to do the sorts of things that they asked. I tell people that it didn't make any difference whether you swam or didn't swear, they told everybody in the group, all of us had made it to Puerto Rico. You are going to all go into the pool and you are all going to be swim at the end of this course. And of course, some people never swam in their whole lives before. And as I recollect ourselves, was one of those people. She did not swim. She says, I don't swim. I never swim. I don't like the idea of swimming. And so I'm you're looking at a handicapped person as far as swimming, because I've never done that. I don't do those. I never did that sort of thing. And they said at that time in Puerto Rico, when we were at camp, they said to her that we don't care. Going to swim underwater in this the whole length of this pool. OK, so now didn't say no, I'm not going to do at. She told us that she didn't know how to swim, but she said, OK, I'll give it a shot, and she eventually did what they could do. Then they said one of the things that you had to do in the pool and you take the people who never swim and have a real fear for water. They said, we're going to tie your hands here first. We're going to tie your feet and we're going to throw you in the pool. And we expect you to float. We're going to show you how to float. And we're going to show you in this what do we call this? We call this survival technique in the water.

HERBERGER: [00:32:38] And they're sending us to Bolivia and we're an agricultural group. But we're going to show you how you survive in water. And so the first thing you did was take your feet and go in to the pool and you

tread water for 10 minutes. Then after 10 minutes, you come out before you can come out of the pool. They threw a little rubber thing that sank to the bottom of the pool and you had to go down and grab that with your feet tight. You had to grab that with your hand and bring it to the surface. So they had two parts to the initial part. Well, once you did that and some of us had no problem doing it and it was simple, people like ourselves, you know, I'm I don't I can't remember she did, but I'm sure she did do it. The next thing they did was a. Now we're going to tie your hands behind your back. Your feet are tied. You're going to tread through this survival technique in the water for 10 minutes, and then we're going to throw that little pieces, whatever it was, and you're going to swim to the bottom with your hands tied behind your back and your feet tied, and you're going to pick it up with your mouth and bring it to the surface. I don't know if everybody passed that. And I was one of the people who passed it. And I felt like Will and I never learned this stuff before swimming, OK? But I was I've been swimming since I was four years old. And I'm thinking to myself, you know, and then underwater, I can't remember that. I can't remember the fact that.

HERBERGER: [00:34:29] Somebody passed out. I can't remember who it was, but they had to swim the length of the pool under water and they said, guess what happened? So-and-so passed out underwater. I said, What do you mean passed that? I never heard it. And they said, well, they had to go and get him. He was underwater swimming the underwater part of the of the of the of the pool. And somebody the guys, the instructors, one of the instructors had to go in and pull them out, get them out, passed out underwater. They watched this very carefully because they knew what our limits were and they knew that they didn't want to mess up. Now, in that particular camp, when we were in Arizona, Judy and I camp together. We had a trailer, and I think there was another married couple in that area where I think may have been the Hoffmans, it would have been better when we got to Puerto Rico, they said no more. We're splitting up the married group people and all the women are sleeping in this big tent that they had

down below. And the men are sleeping in this big hall up above. And we're all going to get up at six o'clock in the morning. We're all going to go through this routine training every day and so forth. Was a carryover from Arizona because that's what we did in Arizona. And we get up early and make sure you try to get you to bed at night and then intermittently in between all this physical training course. And that, of course, is being so forth. So this this went on. And then they that that was the sort of out Outward Bound type of training, survival training that was down to the ocean, dressed us all up in overalls, coveralls, not coveralls, said, OK, you've got to go. And we had this beautiful swimming pool. You know, you're not just going to swim in the swimming pool. You're going to go out there in the Caribbean and you are going to tie the bottom, take these coveralls off. You're going to tie a knot in the bottom of the pant leg. You're going to flip this thing upside down and you're going to make airbags out of the of this these coveralls. And I thought, OK, somebody's done that. Right. And you'd say to them, well, you know, what are we doing this for? And the instructors would say, well, you know, you learn this technique. You can survive in the ocean for twenty four hours, you know, and they tell us you could do it. So then as part of the training at camp was going through the jungle, so you go out and spend one day on a one day trek, you go out in the morning and then in the afternoon.

HERBERGER: [00:37:34] You would come back to the camp. And Judy was like Lunelle and a lot of the other women and said, you know, that's everybody's got to do it, I'll do it just like everybody else. But the one thing she did, which was sort of a habit of women, was on the first day trek. I said, Judy, we have three pair of shoes. Why are you taking three pairs of shoes along with you on this one trek? And I guess you'd been used to going if she went someplace, she'd pack extra clothes. And so she had picked three pieces that, you know, she was going going after all whole day. And she said, well, you know, I'm going to wear this shoe doesn't work, that I'm going to put on another pair of shoes. And I don't want I don't you know, I. So I said, Judy, after the trek was over, I was carrying all the shoes, I wound up carrying on all

the shoes. I said, you know, when I tell you something, I said, you know, be sensible. You're not going to keep you're not going to do, you know, it doesn't make any sense to do that. So. So. And then we went from a three to a one day track to a two day track, and then we had a three day trek, which they sent us out and they said.

HERBERGER: [00:39:09] They said you're going to meet up in such and such a time. It's about so many miles away and we are going to pick you up at 12 o'clock. Three days and we expect you to be in the plaza be. And so they gave us maps and they gave us a compass and they gave us food and they gave us survival gear. And sent us out. I went out with the married people because I was married and there were two other couples from another group that were at the camp because we weren't the only, as I recollect, we weren't the only training group there. There was another I think the other group there or the two groups there. So I went out with this married couple and Judy got sick and she didn't go, so I'm with this with this married couples, but I'm by myself. Judy stayed back and. So we go where we got lost the first day, we never we know where the hell we were and then of course, we've got we've got one of the couples, one of the guys saying, well, I know where we are. You know, we have to go this direction.

HERBERGER: [00:40:51] And we know where we were. I mean, this was through the mountains on trails, I think it was. After two days of being lost. People who were claiming they knew where we were. Didn't know they didn't have the slightest clue what they did, and I said to them, I said, you know, the first people we come to, I'm going to wave down the first car and I'm going to get in that car. And I'm one of the things in my survival kit is I have American money and I am going to pay somebody to take me to that location, which they have marked out for us. So because, you know, they got the other the other two couple that I was traveling with said, oh, no, no, you can't do that. You can't do that. You know, we got to we got to stick to the to the plan, you know? And I said, you can stick to any plan you want. You can do anything you want, but that's what I'm going to do. And sure enough, when we came to the

paved road, we asked around some houses and said, is there anybody around here that can give us tickets for a few bucks, take us down to wherever we're supposed to go? We are back to camp, and, of course, you had to go through a debriefing and the debrief and they said, we understand that you people took a car to your place and they said, yeah, that's right, we took a car because we didn't know where we were.

HERBERGER: [00:42:37] And I said and I came to the conclusion we were never going to get there at the base we were going. And because we were so damn lost, we would never make it. And they said, oh, that was acceptable. That beat that passed the grade, you know, you're sick. And it says, well, I've come to the to the crossing and I took this. Why it wasn't the way you were supposed to, wasn't the planned way or where you were supposed to do it. You're supposed to do it on your own. So it was rigorous. The training was rigorous. I don't know if we lost any. Yes, we did lose some people at that particular camp because then they sent us because we were an agricultural group. They broke us out of the camp and they sent us to Mayaguez. And then I had Mayaguez then we had another training part. Now, I'm not sure of the days, but I'm thinking this this training is going on for about two or three months because I think when we went home at the end of Mayaguez, then we hit those people again were said, okay, you've made it or you're not. And most, of course, as you gradually took people off, a higher percentage made it first. People had to me, that was a high percentage, but then as we went through these gradients, let's wait, and then he said, well, we're going to send you home for two weeks and we're going to meet you. You go home and meet with the family and tell them that you made it. And when they were going all meet in Miami and the close to the to the leaving out of Miami, the 22nd of October, that's an easy day for all of us to remember, because we went down to Miami. We went out a couple of a couple of days early because Judy had some relatives there that had a motel and we stayed with them and.

HERBERGER: [00:45:00] And then we met at the Miami airport and October 22nd, and I believe that was the day, because when we got there right away, you could notice that the military all over the place and sort of like, is there a military base here or, you know, everybody's in a hurry, everybody's in. And so when we met with our representatives who were taking us down on the flight, they said, well, we're on a whole position here. The president is going to do a speech. Of course, the speech was that he was going to go back. Of course, what happened then was. What do we do, Washington Peace Corps central headquarters? What do we do about these people who are supposed to go to La Paz and they didn't know, they said, well, we're not going to send them to La Paz because we don't know what the reaction is going to be in La Paz, in the capital. We don't know how they're going to react to. What's going?

HERBERGER: [00:46:11] And so they took this down to a hotel and the beach and Miami Beach, which was a luxury hotel, and we just spent three to four months and is tough, rigorous screening training program. And I thought this is more like it, you know, I mean, we're in this hotel. We're on the beach. They don't know what to do and how long we're going to stay here. They don't know and so forth and so forth. And so I think we stayed at the hotel and I always remember the day it was the Royal Hotel or something. I can't I can't exactly remember. But it was the first class hotel, at least as I was concerned about hotels, whether it had been the best hotel I ever say that. So they told us, I guess we were there for three days, just relax and take it easy. And they were waiting to find out, you know, what to do with us. And so. Then we got the word three days we were sending you.

HERBERGER: [00:47:22] Up to Brattleboro, Vermont. What the hell was in Brattleboro, Vermont? And that was a real surprise because it was a training for international living that the Peace Corps had contracted with these people to train future groups. And they had a group there, the Dominican Republic group, that was at that place. But they had enough room in this big white mansion, in this gorgeous setting. It was

October that these were turning the meals were fantastic. We had these local women come up and they cooked all these meals for us in the morning. And this this is really great. If you want to go and walk, walk down, you walk through this natural wooded area. And so for us, for me at least. And I think for everybody. For the whole group. It was it was it was quite a different previous six months that we've been from the beginning of July until the 20th to the 25th of October, the end of October. It's been great. So and of course, everything was up in the air. They need to ask people what, what what's going on, what's happening. And they said, well, we're just you're. You don't know what you're. So we were having a pretty good time, but the problem was there was a Dominican group there and they were going through this sort of this rigorous training.

HERBERGER: [00:49:10] I mean, you know, I mean, you didn't have time to sit down with people. I mean, after 10 o'clock, you did this at 11 o'clock. You did this in the Dominican Republic group was doing the same thing. They were getting up at six o'clock in the morning. They were running for a mile down the road. They were in a Spanish class. They were in a history class. They were in and so forth and so forth. They were going through sort of a rigorous training. And there we are. This group has already been trained and we're not doing anything. You know, we're just sitting and enjoying this time in the best season to be in Vermont. I mean, you couldn't ask for a more wonderful place to be, and it wasn't too cold, too hot. These were turning away and so forth. So they came to us and said, oh, well, you know, this isn't good for the morale of the Dominican Republic. They look they're looking at you people doing nothing but enjoying the countryside. And and they're working their butts off, learning this thing, learning Spanish and learning the history of the Dominican Republic with all the stuff that we've gone through.

HERBERGER: [00:50:33] They're learning it for the Dominican Republic, OK. And it's that good for morale. They're just to say, how can it be, you know, how can we treat these people better? Oh, how come they got it better than us? You. Oh, they're having a good time. They're not doing so. They

came to us. And as I recollect, I could be wrong about this. But my recollection was they said, well, you're going to go back into training. And we said a lot of us said this guy said, I'm finished with training. I we've trained, we're trained out. We had six months of this already. And we're not going we're not going to do it. If you want to give a Spanish course, you won't take it. You didn't give us Spanish courses. That that's why I don't mind it at all, because it's not like you can improve on you can get better. But I said we're not going to get up and run with these people and we're not going to go through the physical thing. They put people through it. And of course, we went to Boston and we really had it. It was really good. And then sometime about I guess it was sometime in December, they said, well, we're going to ship you down. Things have settled down.

SIMPSON: [00:51:48] Wasn't it in November because I thought we got to Bolivia for Thanksgiving?

HERBERGER: [00:51:52] I thought we were. It may have been. It seems to me we spent two weeks up to. At least it was I have fond memories of a place to be so. So anyways, they put us on a plane and a few of us, I guess, had been overseas. The majority, 99% of us hadn't. They put us on a prop plane, they didn't fly anyone by jet in those days. And the stopping place on the way down from Miami was Panama City. So, again, this prop plane was on the plane or flying down to. So I put Panama and pick up gasoline there and then push on, go to La Paz and I'm not sure. I can't remember if we made the full jump or we stopped it someplace. And then, of course. You would you'd read the history of Bolivia, the geography is. And when you fly in at eleven thirteen thousand, thirteen thousand feet on a prop plane, you land in this place, we're out of the plane and you say there's La Paz down there. It looks like the Grand Canyon.

HERBERGER: [00:53:40] There's no trees and and on the Altiplano, which is flat up there and where a lot of the Indians lived and worked the land, and you could see that there was quite a bit of agriculture going on the planet

and that and the first thing you wonder whether we would ever put a city up here, like I mean, there is not much there. You know, it's sort of like and then, of course, you drive down from the airport at the bars and you go down this winding road and you stay there in, know, briefing, session, debriefing. Maybe you're being you're being introduced. You meet your managers, people, and the everything is set up so that, you know, where are you going? You know, which, of course, we knew which group we were going to be and some group, some part of the group is going to, of course, being coached by another part of the group has been to bond to the group, which was the lowlands. I don't think so. So we had these two groups coached by the group.

HERBERGER: [00:55:02] And Santa Cruz. So you try to you try to absorb this, in this environment. It's all new, and so if you're at this altitude, 11,000 feet in this city, and first thing that struck me was that, first of all, they had this strange habit in Bolivia. Of course, you never learn this in books where the taxis drove around at night and without lights, except when they came to another cross street, didn't turn their lights on for a little bit. Then they turned the lights off. And you drive around in the middle of night, lights off. OK, I guess that's the way they don't things. The other thing that struck me was you see these policemen in little boxes and they have manual switches and they're changing lights at the intersection of the important intersections. And perhaps I've never seen that before. You know, where you have a guy with sort of a railroad like my miniature railroad where I have a switch and I can do I could switch the tracks and so forth. He's out there directing traffic in in in his gloves and his little hat and so forth. And the official uniform. So and then, of course, we picked up Jeeps in the past. I think they had something like 11 Jeeps, powder blue Jeeps, and they did not they don't they don't look too much different than the Jeep that you see on the road today. It looked quite modern and quite nice. And then they teamed up, I think, four people to a car, to a vehicle. And then they drove down to the next drop off, the drop off point was Cochabamba. We all went to Cochabamba.

HERBERGER: [00:57:21] And of course, you introduced to. We think the setup to have you, imagined for you, that your manager, the guy that they had was responsible for you, you know, he had previously been sent to Bolivia, worked with the extension people and you were assigned and you were taken around Cochabamba and you're taken off to the big cow place, and this is where Batignole, is that guy's name, was that the tin guy? This is where he lives in this big mansion. You learn that he owned all the tin and made a lot of money. And in the first thing he did was leave Bolivia settle in another place, OK? And he's got this huge farm in the Cochabamba area. And that's some of the people who are going to work on this farm because there's still cows. So part of the group was left there and we spent a week there and then we went down in Cochabamba and struck you about Cochabamba, this meeting with this climate is fantastic. You could put a sweater on at night. Very comfortable. You walk out in the daytime and the temperature was seventy six degrees and I thought, wow, this is great. These guys in Cochabamba , they've got it made. Yeah. And I knew where I was when I was going into the jungle. OK, not these guys in Cochabamba , they joined the right group, they got the right system. They're in the with these cows and so forth and. I'd like to stay in this climate. So we all piled in , those that were going to Santa Cruz, all piled in. Some were going to be stationed in Santa Cruz, some were going to be stationed in Portachuelo, some of them are going to be stationed at General Saavedra, and some of them were going to be stationed at Montero, was that the city?.

SIMPSON: Guaveda first, then Montero?

HERBERGER: Yeah, so. Get to Santa Cruz and they introduce you to your counterpart. We are supposed. I had a counterpart who became my friend and I still communicate with him. And they introduce you that they take the group they went which to take them on to take us to General Saavedra, Peter Roycraft.

HERBERGER: [01:00:21] Rose Van Epps. And Judy and myself. And they don't have too bad a facility, they just had this sort of brick house and put on a slab. It had a bedroom, it had a sitting room and it had a tiny kitchen. They said, oh, this is where you're going to stay, and your meals are going to be prepared, if you want, at the commissary with, all the technicians have breakfast, lunch and supper on this campus grounds. And the technicians here that you're working with, they have their own houses and my fellow that I worked with who was a man biologist, he was. He lived right next door and also comfortable house to give us this place was totally screened in. And in the course of the show, the air is coming and you have the ventilation is green and there are no windows because there it never snows in Santa Cruz. And, uh, uh, we the system was that you worked with your technician and if things worked out, we're happy. If you're unhappy, you had to tell, who's who was our?

SIMPSON: [01:02:16] Ralph Kurtz.

HERBERGER: [01:02:17] You had to tell Ralph. Well, look, it isn't working. I need to be. And that didn't bother him, if you told Ralph, well, it is isn't working out for me because it's just not my cup of tea. I'm not I don't feel I'm doing what I thought I was going to do, I think can do better service elsewhere. They were they were quite flexible and saying, OK, you can we'll see. We'll see what else we can line you up with. And so I think initially we went through that sort of period of trying to adjust to our environment, to the people we're working with. And, uh, and we made the adjustment that was fine. If you had difficulty making an adjustment, the Peace Corps was smart enough to say, well. Let's see what else we can come up with and we'll accommodate started accommodating. And I've often thought of this was people who say, well, what, just like what was it like in Santa Cruz? Trying to get an idea what this country is about, because nobody knows. And you go back and say, well, Bolivia, where's that? And you go back afterwards and say, what was it like? And I said, I used to tell people after getting out that Bolivia, Santa Cruz area, was like the frontier. I can that I could

imagine myself. Imagine what it was like in the late eighteen hundreds in the United States in the middle of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma. It was frontier. In other words, you were on the side. You were on you were in an area where horses walked, roamed, walked around the General Saavedra. And it's like, well, who owns those horses or somebody owns these horses? OK, but, you know, we you know, and we the pigs would find a shallow in the middle of the road going to General Saavedra. And so if you had to watch it when you were driving your Jeep that you didn't run over pigs that were sleeping in, wallow in the middle of the road. And so and so Judy used to go down because she was preparing her meals.

HERBERGER: [01:05:10] And every Monday they slaughtered a cattle, a cow in Saavedra and she'd bring home this great big piece of meat. And because you could buy a kilo. Well, how did they measure it? Mean you go down to the market and you look at a piece of meat hanging up and you don't know what part of the cow came from. You don't know whether it came from the hind quarter, the front quarter, unless you're a butcher, you didn't know what I and you said, well, give me a kilo of that. That looks that looks pretty red and doesn't have too much fat on. And so we would buy a hunk of meat and then she'd come back and try to put it into something, you know, stew, so that we wouldn't get disease from it. But I mean, nothing was refrigerated. So that's why they always that's why they only killed cows once a week. And you had to be there because there were people said, OK, this is cow killing, this is Meat Day, we're going to get meat. The other thing that struck you is on this experiment station, your counterpart was my counterpart in the kind of person people I worked with were all graduates college from Cochabamba, they all graduated from the agricultural college in Cochabamba.

HERBERGER: [01:06:35] And there was another level below them, which were the regular fire me that did most of the labor. In other words, when you did an experiment, you went yours to other people with you. And, you know, they did all the hard stuff, you did sort of all the analysis, we

would go my counterpart was interested in sugar cane more so we used to go to cane fields and then they would take measure of a certain amount and try to get some sort of statistics on how much corn bread was a sugar cane or and whether or not how many he was interested in biological control, how many of these bores, which are small larva, which eventually become laws. And so he would see how many are infected with the with. And then he would try to raise these parasites that lived. And so that was his that was his research project was to help sugar cane people biological, which he later went to Riverside, California, and got his master's degree in biological control at Riverside in California, and then later wound up spent the rest of his life in sugar plantations in Brazil working on biological control..

HERBERGER: [01:08:20] But anyway, the thing that struck you was that you'd see little children that were probably two to three years old. And you noticed it right away of the, not the technicians, but the children of the workers. This working group would see their children would come up to our house at 6:00 a.m. and they would have red hair and you'd say that's not right. There aren't red haired adults in this area. You'd say, well, what is that all about? And of course, right away, you know, their extended stomachs and so, it's parasites. And these babies are suffering from protein deficiency. And when you have a protein deficiency, you get red hair, you know, maybe black, you have the right protein. When you've got parasites, you're eating everything up. So they have a saying in General Saavedra, again, it strikes you like it must have been like this in the frontier of the United States. They tend to say, well, how many children do they have? And they'd give me a number. You've got more children than that. And some of them made the comment, well, we don't count children to six years old because we don't know what they're going to make it within that period, the 50 percent chance that they won't, that they'll die from something, from sickness.

HERBERGER: [01:10:05] So one of the things that Judy did while she, well she was a social worker. She set up classes of cooking class. And said, here's

the thing, I'm OK, I'm going to show you teach you some of that. So one of the first things I'll never forget was all these lemonade lemons on this experiment station. We're in the tropics raising lemons, grapefruit, sugar cane. And so she says, I'm going to teach you how to make lemon pie. And she had all these women that, you know, you get in a group of women and you're an American and you're down there and she said she used to teach these women and they just, their eyes couldn't believe how she made this sort of lemon pie and how wonderful it tasted besides. And they had no concept of ever knowing that you could make lemon pie from lemons. You know, that old saying, if you got lemons, make lemon juice. Well, she said we're going to make lemon pies. So those are the kinds of things that when they said, well, what are you going to do in the Peace Corps? He said, well, you know, when I see that I can teach somebody something, they're going to buy into it real well and that's what's going to happen. And so that experience for us was know a great experience. And then there were all the funny things that happened.

SIMPSON: [01:11:53] Would you like to elaborate on one or two of those funny things that are memorable, particularly?

HERBERGER: [01:12:00] Well, the first time I went out with my technician was we're going to go out to a field and the technicians are already the farmhands. This is the bottom echelon. They're already there. And they cut cutting the cut sugarcane. And this is my first, this is my first adventure going into a sugarcane field with my counterpart. And, you know, I'll never forget this. So either way, I'm driving the powder blue jeep, I'm driving into the sugarcane and it's down the road toward Montero and just before we get to the sugarcane field, I have sunglasses on and Oscar turns to me and says, take your sunglasses off. It's a bright, sunny, hot day, we're going to be outside. Why should I take off my sunglasses? And he says, well, when you get to the field and you have sunglasses, they're going to automatically think you work for the government and they don't like government people. I said, OK, took off my sunglasses, put them in my pocket, and when we got to the

field it worked OK. So these are the stories. These are the sorts of things that uh.

SIMPSON: [01:13:42] What about the?

HERBERGER: [01:13:43] The other funny one. I want to tell you about the other funny incident because we all got we got a big kick up about it. Every month you get paid. And so we'd always wait for pay day, you know, Ralph is coming today. And so, Ralph had come out and you had this suitcase of money, a briefcase that was filled with Bolivianos. And the first time we got paid up, we were only making seventy five dollars a month. And he comes out with the suitcase of money and he opens it up. And I mean, he's just got bales and bales and bales of money in this thing. And he starts, I made seventy five dollars and Judy made seventy five dollars. We get one hundred and fifty dollars and he's piling all this money up. And, you know, it's like Reno, Nevada, one million dollars. You've made one million dollars. You know, we were playing poker. You see this great big pile of Bolivianos worth one hundred and fifty dollars. But I mean, it looks it looked like a million dollars. And we used to get the biggest kick out of that because you come out and say, OK, here it comes, all the money. And then and then, of course, every day in Santa Cruz, the Boliviano was in such a flux that you really never knew from week to week unless you went into the exchange place what it was worth, to go down and say, well, this week the Boliviano was deflated, inflated, whatever, you know, it's like, well, that's the way. So I got that. That's just very you know, it's sort of interesting.

SIMPSON: [01:15:31] Did you do any traveling around Bolivia while you were there?

HERBERGER: [01:15:33] There, um, that was telling everybody this morning. I have a. For some reason, I was collecting butterflies, so I used to go on excursions and collect butterflies and insects and so I made several trips into the jungle with another entomologist who was in General Saavedra. He didn't have a degree, but he was he collected insects

because it was a commercial thing. He could collect insects and put them in alcohol, which they had plenty of. And then he could sell them to people who were coming to it and never seen beetles that were five inches long and butterflies that were iridescent and beautiful things, you know, and you could sell. There was a market for that. And if a tourist came through or people who were collecting insects, there was a market for that. So he and I used to go. And then sometime in the first year, Norm Coble was living in Santa Cruz and he was at the extension working, with the extension people there. And myself, I went to Norm Coble because I had been up to a river about 60 miles from us and they said they had balsa wood and they and they were the oil people forded this river and had built this massive wooden bridge. I mean, it was something to behold. This wooden bridge, I mean, it was unbelievable. And why were we up there on whatever reason we were there to see it, to see the bridge and to see the river because it was the closest river around us. Somebody said, well, there's a lot of balsa wood in the jungle.

HERBERGER: [01:17:52] And for some reason there's a young boy. One of my favorite books was that I read, didn't read too many books to speak of, but one of my favorite books was Huckleberry Finn, and it always struck me with Huckleberry Finn and Tom. I think it's I think it's caught with Tom is when they built this raft after the murder of his relative and they went down this river, they had this adventure on the Mississippi River. And the basic story is that he is he's with this Negro and that, you know, so that struck me as sort of like, oh, God, if I was Huckleberry Finn, that sounds to be like one of the great adventures a boy could have, is to go off and winds up at his aunt's house. And but he goes through all these adventures and meets all these different people. And he has this is just a marvelous book to read. So I thought, well, you know, we ought to try to go down this river. And I said, not knowing whether he's going to bite or not, said, Norm, let's build a raft and we'll take it down the river. And we didn't know what the hell we were doing. He said, okay. And so every Sunday and Saturday, every weekend, we travel 60 some-odd miles, about an hour's worth of

driving down to this river. And it was a learning process. We learned where the little balsa tree was like, what it was and where you can get it.

HERBERGER: [01:19:54] And so we started gradually putting this piece of work together and we wound up with a raft that was probably almost 30 feet long and probably almost, I'm going to say, 15 feet wide. And on that basis, it had something like twenty eight logs. And had we built a little lean to with a galvanizer. Drew it and he said, we're gonna put four bunks in it and we're going to take four people and we got to decide who else can go. And in this interim time, Tom Stachelek was, I always enjoyed Tom because he had a sense of humor and he always made me laugh. And I, like people made me laugh. And Tom used to tell these stories about all of his adventures up in Cochabamba. You get me going. And I'd have, you know, just for being an 18 year old, I thought, this guy is something else. I mean, he's seeing more in life. And in a period of six months in in Bolivia, he's seen his whole life in Swank's world where Swanksville, or something like that. He says, oh, yes, still today Swanksville, tomorrow the world. I used to get, I used to get the biggest charts. And so he came up with all this sort of, he had a plastic that a black plastic piece of plastic that looked like a coin. And he used to go around and say, yeah, I love to go up to the Indians and say, you know what, what is this thing. It looks like a black 50 cent piece. It had no markings whatsoever, but it was plastic and he didn't know what this is in America? The kids would look at him and say, no. What is that? It's black gold. It's black gold, it's plastic. It's like the graduate student reminded when I saw the picture the Graduate Student, reminded me of a guy telling the story to the young graduate Dustin Hoffman that, oh, this is what you want to do.

HERBERGER: [01:22:33] You got to get into plastics. You know, it's sort of like American philosophy. You know, we're up there, we're now and this is the next go to the next ship. It's the next computer chip. OK, so Tom was a great guy. You can go on a trip with him and you could laugh and he kept you going. So I think I asked Tom, who else do you think

would be interested, we could take four guys? And he came up with John Sykes. I wasn't I wasn't a friend at all of John Sykes, an 18 year old group and they sort of hung out together. You know, they all had they all had a common thread. They're all the same age. They had similar experiences in agriculture. And so they had a common language. And so they had that they had that sort of camaraderie in that particular group in Cochabamba. So I said, John Sykes, you think he'd go? Yeah, he's from Florida, he's a good swimmer, he gave me all the reasons why we should ask him. And he said, yeah, I'll go with your guys. And so we went off on this great adventure. Now on this great adventure, I mean, you know, we thought it going to be easy money and we thought we could shove off from shore and we're going to go to this faraway place called Trinidad and that where they got five nurses down here and we're going to get to meet all these nurses and all the rest of the Bolivian group. You'd say to them, as I said to somebody, you'd say to them, where are you go on vacation and they say, well, we're going to Argentina, we're going to take the train across Brazil, we're going to Peru, we're going to Machu Picchu. That was their vacation. We're going down this river. OK, so what are you going to do? Well, one of the things you're going to do is you're going to have a lot of time to kill. This is a long distance, long distance. And you're going to go on three rivers, the Yapacaní, the Rio Grande and you're going to wind up on this Mamoré River and then eventually you're going to get to this town, Trinidad. But what do you do? You play cards. We brought a card deck with us and that's how you kill time, you sit around on this river and it floats by itself, like Huckleberry Finn down the river, and you don't have any problems.

HERBERGER: [01:25:35] It's just like the river carries. This is where we're going, you know, it just sucks us right now and takes us to Trinidad. And so you have to have something to do in all this time that you're killing. So you play cards. So the story about the cards is very interesting. We're playing cards, killing time one day, and somebody drops a card and it falls through the cracks, and we lose the card. And I believe we were playing hearts. I think that was the name of the game. And so we've

lost the card. There's three of us, we've lost the card, what do we do now. This is how the mind of a Peace Corps person works. What do you do? Well, it's the three of clubs. Throw away all the other threes and therefore we continue playing the same game, but we don't have any threes anymore. So as we proceeded this deck slowly dwindled down to, it didn't make any sense to play anymore. So things like that would happen. We eventually wrecked the, on the first day we ran up a lot of junk and a lot of junk in these rivers due to soil erosion along the river banks and then trees would topple in. And they would stay where they fall or get waterlogged and sink And it would be like when they, when you look at petrified wood and you say, well, where did this petrified wood come, you know, there was a forest and somehow all these logs of trees got under water.

HERBERGER: [01:27:37] And then through the millenniums, they became petrified due to pressure and other circumstances that go on under water. So there was a lot of junk called junk in the river, and we when we built this raft, we didn't think about navigation. We thought that it's going to be like the Mississippi and in the Mississippi you can put a boat in and Ohio and Cincinnati and you'll never see a piece of junk sitting in the middle of the river. And so you don't worry about, we got on this raft thing, we don't have to worry about junk in the river. You know, it's going to be nice and free of anything which again, going to float down to Trinidad. Well, you learn the first day that you have all kinds of problems because you can't navigate. So the first thing we did was put oars, put an oar on the front and an oar in the back. Norm built the oars and John built the oars. And we cut up planks. I mean, we were really, you know, sort of like working well, we need oars, we got to build this fulcrum in the back and we got to be able to stick this piece of wood in it. And we've got to do this. Well, that's the first thing you learn, OK? And then as you proceed down the river, you learn all this stuff, and go through all these experiences. Tom Stachelek almost drowned, and then he had to leave us because he got mono, and so you learn it was a process of learning, but people ask me, well, about death. And I

say to them, well you know, when you're twenty five and another person is 22 years old. And Tom was probably 18, 19.

HERBERGER: [01:29:48] And John is the same age. It's like youth today, you don't think about death. You say I can survive, I went through a survival course, I survived the Peace Corps and, you know, I mean, this is a piece of cake, as the English would say. This is a piece of cake. We're going to go down this river. And what you find out is it isn't a piece of cake and if you do it over again, you'd do it a lot different than the first time did you did it. And it was all first we there none of us had this experience before. So those are the sort of things that were memories that you have to say, well, hey, nobody else ever did this.

SIMPSON: [01:30:39] Probably not. So if, uh, let's look at this, for example. Do you recall anything particular, like at the end of your first year? Anything that stuck out?

HERBERGER: [01:31:01] Um, no, I, I, I consider myself fortunate that I really liked the technician I was working right off the bat. My Spanish was so bad and was, it was wasn't a good thing for me. I wasn't, there were other people in the group you could speak. Norm Coble, he could sing or speak. And so I always I used to use those people as my crutch. People like, you know, what is what is he saying? You know, normally converse very well, you know, with other people converse very well. But I was a person who could get by, you know, where's a glass of water? Where's the beer? Where something? I could learn all those little phrases, catch phrases that you use. I learned all of those. So, uh, the, uh and the thing that happened to me, which I didn't make any difference to me, but my technician wanted to learn English. And so if I tried to speak Spanish with him, he'd say, no, no, let's talk English. I'm here to learn from you, because my plan is that I want to go on to a university in the United States. That's my goal. I would love to do that. And who am I to say, well, I'm sorry.

HERBERGER: [01:32:42] That's, uh, you know, you're in the Peace Corps. You're not going to say that to somebody, OK, it's OK with me. I don't I'm not I'm not going to back teach. I don't care less, you know, if you want to learn. And I was there to teach. And if somebody said to you, OK, I want you to show me or do this or thing and you do that, you just say, OK, that's why I'm here. I'm here to show you I have ideas, I can do things. And there certain things you do and certain practices and so forth and so forth. And that's what you did. You were down there saying, I can help, I can do something I can. And I think everybody had that in the back. And said, you know, I'm here to that I'm not I wasn't down here, I knew it would help me, but I wasn't down there. I was down there for what Kennedy, the spirit of the Peace Corps, was that we had advantages in the United States and that, you know, by making a one to one basis contact. You could change the world, OK? We believe that that was an idea that you if you met people, you could be friends with them.

HERBERGER: [01:34:09] You could get them to understand you. You could understand them. And for me, it was an experience where I really valued culture. I came away with that total experience. What really happened to me was that people used to say things, you know, they'd say this and say that. And I and I'd say to them, you know, you got to look at it. You've got to look at this as a cultural thing. You can't go and you don't go into these places and say, well, when I went back to Wisconsin University, I took an economics course. And they say, well, those Indians are living such terrible, but they got the lowest income of anybody in the world at that time, 1960s. They had if you looked at they made a hundred and the pounds they made some guy wrote his economic and he and the Indians. Philosophical feeling. I look back and one of the great achievements in my life was that, after the Peace Corps I had been involved in international agriculture. When I went to graduate school at Wisconsin University, I met a professor who asked me what I was interested in. And I told them three things I was interested in, and that was business, international work and plant science, weed science, because I wanted to become a weed scientist,

I'd been an entomologist and I wanted to become a weed scientist. I think that's the other thing about Peace Corps people. When it's time to change course, they go ahead and change the orders and you go on to do other things. So I said, well, I want to be a weed scientist. And he said, that's a great idea. I've just come from Rome, where I was the head of the first weed science group in FAO. And one of the problems that I was faced with was that we had a budget of sixty nine thousand dollars a year, this is 1968. We have a budget that we got a hold of and we can spend this money. And I hit up the first section in Rome. And I'm back here now, and this is going to go on this section, this weed section, is going to go on now. And he said to me, I have an idea of. And we're sitting across the table from each other, first time I ever met him and called him up on the phone to have this interview and I going to meet him. And he said, I have an idea. He says one of the major problems we face with science on a global basis is that our resources are limited. And so when we want to, when I was in Rome, people would come in from India, South Africa, Timbuktu and say we have the worst problem in the world. And to research it and to help out our agriculture, we need the money that you have to do the research that's required so that we know how to resolve this problem.

HERBERGER: [01:38:30] He also said that he said, I didn't know whether the guy from India was had a worse weed problem than the guy from Zambia. I didn't know whether the agriculture in South America and the guy that came in and said, we have this particular weed and it's rampant and it reduces our crops by 30 or 40 percent. There was no way for me to know. There's no book I could lift off the shelf and say I can weigh these things and I can say, well, we're going to proportion out the amount of money that we have, the limited resources that we have. And this problem is crucial to starving people in India. This problem may a crucial one step down from India, this problem over here in this part of the world. So he says, one of the things I like to do is to find out if we are faced with a world wide problem where we have 8,000 plants, because that's a number that's thrown around, we have 8,000 plants that cause major losses and weeds. And he said to me that most

people don't realize it, but if we would take any endeavor in the world, any activity, whether it's farming, whether it's working in health practice, whether we could take all these endeavors and we could, and I could take you to places in India, he says where the total life of a family living in an agricultural setting, the total life of that family depends upon one or two hectares of farm.

HERBERGER: [01:40:44] They leave a substance life, and so when the child, a child is four years old, one of the first things he's ever taught is how to pull weeds by hand. And he says, I am sure I can show that there is more human energy in the world for controlling weeds than any other activity that you can think of. And he said, so when you have limited resources and you have plants that are diminishing your food production, those two things, a farmer, he may, when you talk about subsistence, he may survive or he may fail, he may starve. That's what it's like out there in those places. And you've experienced that. You've been in Latin America, you know, with these small farms or like, you know, how these people struggle in agriculture to produce more and better quality food. You you've experienced that. We hit it off right away. I sat back listening to and thinking this is the greatest idea I ever heard of. But sure, I'd like to be part of that. Now, I spent my next, this is 1968. Our final book was printed in 1997 and it's almost a period of 30 some odd years doing research towards this goal to find whether it's 8,000 that are causing 90 percent of the losses in the world or whether it's another fixed number. And so I was gathering data for the next worldwide on this and we printed three books in this 30 year period. And the last book drew on data that had been gathered, started to be gathered in 1968.

HERBERGER: [01:43:13] And I joined this professor now. The plants that we have identified in these three books, you can go and you can Google "world weeds." It comes out it comes out to you probably get 10,000 references. All quarantined or wherever they are. The Australians have this all the time where they want to keep certain plants out. You want noxious plants. They call them exotics. You don't want those plants

introduced into the environment. And because you don't know what they'll do, they could do tremendous damage. So all quarantine operations and plants are one of the basic, one of the basic reasons that it appears that they used the three books that we produced, they use these books as a base for determining we don't want that plant. So somebody will send in a plant and say, can we ship this in? We're a nursery and we want this aquatic plant that grows in in in Africa or grows in Latin America. And we want to ship it in so we can sell it in the marketplace to aquarium people and they can put this great plant. It grows, it thrives. So they go to that book and they say, what does the three books that we published, what does it say? It is listed at this point in that list and if it's listed that way, that plan could not be shipped in the United States.

SIMPSON: [01:45:21] And your entree to that was your Peace Corps experience, would you say?

HERBERGER: [01:45:24] Yeah, I wouldn't have done that. I wouldn't have wound up where I am today if I hadn't gone through that experience.

SIMPSON: Oh, that's great.

HERBERGER: It's like life takes you on this journey, a journey and fortunately for me, it worked out. You know, as a result, the final result was, you know, you couldn't ask for a better story.

SIMPSON: That's great, I'm glad you put that on.

HERBERGER: [01:46:01] Ok.

[END OF INTERVIEW]