

**Beverly J. Hanlon Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Beverly (Bev) Jean Hanlon served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1966 to 1968 on a community organization project.

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Oral History Interview

with

Beverly J. Hanlon

October 17, 2015  
Tampa, Florida

By Phyllis Noble

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

NOBLE: [00:00:03] This is Phyllis Noble. Today is October 17th, 2015. I'm interviewing Beverly Jean Hanlon, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1966 to 1968 in a community organization project. Bev, let's talk about who you were before you joined the Peace Corps. Talk a little bit about your family. Where did you grow up?

HANLON: [00:00:33] I grew up in Peoria, Illinois, and I had three older brothers and one younger sister. And I went to the same grade school. And then I went to the same high school that I met my husband and had an interesting childhood, let's put it that way.

NOBLE: [00:00:52] So the schools you went to were public schools?

HANLON: [00:00:54] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:00:55] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:00:57] And I guess my claim to fame in high school is that I was interested in leadership and I was elected president of the student council when I was a senior.

NOBLE: [00:01:06] Uh huh. Well, let's go back a little before you were a senior in high school.

HANLON: [00:01:12] Okay.

NOBLE: [00:01:12] You had, how many siblings did you say you had?

HANLON: [00:01:14] Three older brothers.

NOBLE: [00:01:15] Three older brothers.

HANLON: [00:01:16] Uh huh. And one younger sister.

NOBLE: [00:01:17] Oh, so there were five of you. Seven all together counting your parents.

HANLON: [00:01:21] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:01:22] Boy, that's a lot to cram into a car. Did you ever take trips together?

HANLON: [00:01:25] Oh, good question. Yes, we did. My dad worked for Caterpillar Tractor in Peoria, and in August, I believe the vacation period was always in August, we would go up to either Wisconsin or Minnesota. My dad loved to fish, and that was sort of the, you know, the relaxation of his work life was to take the family up to a resort, you know, a modest resort. And it was a lot of fun. I have good memories of that. The driving, not so much, the driving was not so.

NOBLE: [00:01:55] Well, you were kind of some, you were really squeezed in there. In a station wagon?

HANLON: [00:02:00] No, we didn't. We had big cars. We had big four door cars. One of them was a Cadillac. I remember that. My dad liked to have big cars.

NOBLE: [00:02:11] So your traveling with the family as a child was mostly within the United States?

HANLON: [00:02:16] Oh, yeah, definitely.

NOBLE: [00:02:18] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:02:19] I went to Indianapolis one time when I was in high school. I went to Chicago for a leadership conference. But other than that, no, we stayed. We stayed in Peoria.

NOBLE: [00:02:28] Peoria and Minnesota.

HANLON: [00:02:30] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:02:30] And local trips.

HANLON: [00:02:31] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:02:31] So you get to high school and there was a guy named Joe there.

HANLON: [00:02:39] Yeah. We were friends from the get-go. We both got elected to student council when we were freshmen. And we were in the same homeroom for four years. And it was a very kind of a dramatic time. One of our older classmates was accidentally shot by her boyfriend.

NOBLE: [00:02:57] Oh, my.

HANLON: [00:02:58] And I was 14. I think she was 16 or 17. And it was, you know, it was one of those life events that never had anything like that happened. And it was just shocking.

NOBLE: [00:03:09] No kidding. What year of high school was then?

HANLON: [00:03:11] I think it was '63.

NOBLE: [00:03:13] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:03:13] No, no, no, no. I graduated in '62. It must have been '59 or '60.

NOBLE: [00:03:20] Uh huh. So you were maybe a sophomore in high school?

HANLON: [00:03:22] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:03:22] Yeah, well, that's a hard thing to experience.

HANLON: [00:03:25] It was.

NOBLE: [00:03:27] So in high school, you were active, you were in the student council. Did you study a foreign language in high school?

HANLON: [00:03:34] I did. I had Spanish and I had a teacher named Zrizina Steppitis who is not Spanish. She was Eastern European, but she was a very hands-on teacher. And I loved speaking Spanish. I took French later when I was in college.

NOBLE: [00:03:50] You had four years of Spanish in high school?

HANLON: [00:03:52] I think I had three. I think I started when I was a sophomore.

NOBLE: [00:03:55] Uh huh, uh huh. And what other things did you enjoy in high school?

HANLON: [00:04:00] I really liked English. That was one of my favorite topics. And I also was artistic, so I enjoyed art classes.

NOBLE: [00:04:10] Mm hmm. I can picture that. And did you play sports?

HANLON: [00:04:16] Oh, no. No, no. Not sportsy at all. I was four foot ten. I was one of the shortest people in my class. There were maybe a couple of other

girls were in that range, but I always considered sports to be out of my league just because I was so short.

NOBLE: [00:04:32] Sure, but what a shame.

HANLON: [00:04:36] But I grew later, so.

NOBLE: [00:04:38] Yeah, yeah. You're a little taller than that now.

HANLON: [00:04:40] Five two, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:04:42] Yeah. And then, um, but you were, you started, you were starting to date Joe somewhere towards the end of high school?

HANLON: [00:04:53] No, not really. We were mostly friends. I think maybe we went out one time, but it was pretty much more of a friendship. And one thing I did want to talk about that was important to me in high school was that I was a candy striper as a volunteer.

NOBLE: [00:05:09] In a hospital?

HANLON: [00:05:10] It was actually, it was in a home called the Schlarman Home in Peoria. It was run by Catholic nuns, and it was for children who'd been given up for birth for various reasons. The least difficult reason was one little boy had a port wine stain on his face which disfigured him. It was just something that happens to the pigment of the skin.

NOBLE: [00:05:35] Oh. And his mother gave him up because of that?

HANLON: [00:05:38] There probably were other reasons. But, you know, I was 14 or 15 at the time when I was encountering this, and I just thought it was so strange. Many of the children had Down syndrome, which in those days when you had a Down syndrome baby, it was considered to be, um, something that you wouldn't deal with as a family.

NOBLE: [00:05:58] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [00:05:59] So these little babies would stay in the Schlarman Home with the nuns until they were five years old. And then they would go to a state institution.

NOBLE: [00:06:07] An orphanage of some sort. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:06:10] The Schlarman Home was just a little building. I can't remember how many children were there at one time, like maybe 20 to 30. And the nuns did everything. They cooked, they cleaned, and they made me feel welcome. I know that. I felt really welcome, even though it was a strange environment for a 14 or 15 year old girl. And one of the nuns, I thought she was very insightful with the little boy with the port wine. She said, you know, he just needs to be held. If you can just rock him and talk to him, that would be really important.

NOBLE: [00:06:43] Because apart from this superficial stain on his face, he was a normal kid?

HANLON: [00:06:50] He was totally normal.

NOBLE: [00:06:50] Oh, gee. So you would go there and you'd hold this little child and play with them?

HANLON: [00:06:57] And others and help feed the kids. They ate in small groups and round tables. I can remember helping feed them, but mostly I was just, I think I was just agog at these nuns because of their service. And they were very, um, cheerful about it. Occasionally they would get to take vacations, but it would be one at a time because they couldn't afford to have all of them go at one time.

NOBLE: [00:07:22] Oh, that's right. They needed to maintain the, keep those babies fed.

HANLON: [00:07:26] Yeah. So that was kind of an eye opener.

NOBLE: [00:07:29] And you did that for all four years of high school?

HANLON: [00:07:31] I don't remember if it was four years. It was probably less than that. I also had part time jobs. I worked in retail, like local department stores. I worked in a bridal shop. And so when I went to college, I was going through rush. Some girl said, oh, a bridal shop. Do you enjoy working with horses? I said, no, no. It was wedding clothes.

NOBLE: [00:07:57] That's great.

HANLON: [00:07:58] The other thing our student council did, we tried to do things for the community and we, um, I remember doing this with Joe, was we would put together food baskets at Christmastime and deliver them to the projects in Peoria. I don't remember the names of the projects, but I can remember that experience and going into people's homes and being welcomed and just kind of seeing that other side of life.

NOBLE: [00:08:21] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:08:21] That I hadn't seen.

NOBLE: [00:08:23] Projects in Peoria. The people would be obviously poor. Were they all, were they of a uniform racial group?

HANLON: [00:08:33] Mostly Black.

NOBLE: [00:08:34] Mostly Black.

HANLON: [00:08:35] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:08:38] Well, good for you for doing all that volunteer work. And then you decided to, uh, Joe went off to Yale.

HANLON: [00:08:44] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:08:45] And you went to school too somewhere?

HANLON: [00:08:48] I went to the University of Illinois.



NOBLE: [00:08:49] University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

HANLON: [00:08:51] Right.

NOBLE: [00:08:52] And so you would have lived on campus?

HANLON: [00:08:56] I lived in the sorority house, the Kappa Kappa Gamma house at 1102 South Lincoln. That's where you'll find the Kappas at home.

NOBLE: [00:09:04] Okay.

HANLON: [00:09:05] I still remember those lyrics. Anyway, I met three women there who are my friends still. Mary Jean, Nancy Jo, and Mary Sue. They all had double names.

NOBLE: [00:09:18] Yeah. And you were Beverly Jean.

HANLON: [00:09:20] But I didn't go by Beverly Jean, I was just Bev.

NOBLE: [00:09:24] Okay. Bev.

HANLON: [00:09:24] So that was really worth it. I enjoyed University of Illinois, but my second oldest brother committed suicide during my freshman year.

NOBLE: [00:09:33] Oh.

HANLON: [00:09:34] He was 26 and I was I think 18 or 19 at the time. So, um, I continued. I went home for the funeral, of course, and I just kind of slogged through my sophomore year, and then I took a junior year off. I went back home to Peoria and I got a job at the Peoria Journal Star. I worked in the advertising department. Just a small job, but it made me feel better. I kind of got my head together and then I went back to school for what would have been my senior year. But I did a semester as a junior.

NOBLE: [00:10:09] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:10:10] Then in the spring of that year, Joe and I got together for a prom or some gala, and I never went back home. I just left everything at school. And we eloped and got married and had already applied for Peace Corps. It was a very kind of drastic and sudden thing, but a lot of it was a result of my personal upset in my life.

NOBLE: [00:10:37] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:10:37] And I was just really ready to get on with something different.

NOBLE: [00:10:41] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:10:41] And, um, so that's what I did. It feels, I feel badly about it now, but at the time it seemed like it was such a smart thing to do.

NOBLE: [00:10:50] Sure. Well, when I look at how your life has unfolded since then, I think it was a smart thing to do. You and Joe are still together. You've got four wonderful kids. Um, so just a little bit more time about University of Illinois. You mentioned earlier that you studied French there?

HANLON: [00:11:13] No, I started out, I was in elementary education. I did take French.

NOBLE: [00:11:18] A couple of French courses, yeah.

HANLON: [00:11:19] Yeah, that wasn't a mainstream. I finally ended up in art history. I really didn't like the elementary education courses at that time. It was a funny time in the sixties, the early sixties, they were changing curriculum standards and new math was coming into play. There was a lot of, uh, controversy over how to teach children.

NOBLE: [00:11:41] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:11:43] And so, I don't know, I just, I really liked art and I liked history, so art history seemed like a logical way to go. So I think I have a minor in art history. When I finally graduated, I had a major in psychology and a minor in art history.

NOBLE: [00:11:59] Art history.

HANLON: [00:12:00] Because I went to school after I came back from Peace Corps. That's when I finished my degree.

NOBLE: [00:12:04] Ah, yeah, okay.

HANLON: [00:12:04] Then I got a master's degree, so I stretched it out until I was like about 30 years old.

NOBLE: [00:12:10] Yes. I'm going to turn this off for a moment. [tape break] Okay. We're recording again now.

HANLON: [00:12:22] Good.

NOBLE: [00:12:25] Okay. So you and Joe have been corresponding for a while?

HANLON: [00:12:31] Yes. Actually, he was very supportive when my brother committed suicide. His father, and I didn't know this at the time, his father's mother had been hospitalized many times during her life. This is Joe's grandmother.

NOBLE: [00:12:46] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:12:46] And I had never talked to Joe about this or anything. But anyway, his father saw it in the paper that my brother had died. So he called Joe and he said, you ought to call her. So Joe was one of the few people from my past, from high school, who did call and check up on me. And we, we remained friends. Whenever he was in town, he would call me. When he came to University of Illinois, we would spend time together. So that was sort of how our friendship matured and turned into romance.

NOBLE: [00:13:16] You knew each other quite well, having both served on the student council in high school for all those years.

HANLON: [00:13:21] Oh, yeah. Well, we actually we ran for president against each other, and Joe became the vice president and I was the president, which I richly deserved. And in fact, this is something that always sort of affected me. Dodie Hall was the young woman who was shot by her boyfriend and died, and they set up an award in her name. And I received that award at least twice during my high school career.

NOBLE: [00:13:47] Wow.

HANLON: [00:13:47] And it was for being a hard-working person. And Joe received it one time. I think maybe we even received it together. It was, it was kind of weird. It was like, oh. Such a bittersweet thing.

NOBLE: [00:14:04] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So you and Joe eloped?

HANLON: [00:14:09] Yeah, we did.

NOBLE: [00:14:10] And where were you in, were you visiting him out in Yale?

HANLON: [00:14:15] I was in New Haven.

NOBLE: [00:14:16] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:14:16] And I had been there for probably a week, and I was supposed to go buy, I had a standby ticket, and there were no seats on the plane. So we drove back to New Haven, and on the way back we decided, well, we might as well just get married. So we did. And we, we, he had a friend who was a minister and I stayed with the minister so. I don't know why that was, but I did and, um. We got a license, we got blood tests, and we did everything that we needed to do. Fairly well organized. We found an apartment to live in. I don't know really how we did it all. And I know that at one point he had this little car and we had a mattress on the top of the car, and we were taking that to the apartment that we had just rented. That looked really nice. I don't think it was on the day of our wedding, but almost. Anyway, the wedding was very nice. We got married in a chapel at New Haven. His minister friend was the officiant and we were happy.

NOBLE: [00:15:13] Nobody from your family was there?

HANLON: [00:15:14] No, nobody.

NOBLE: [00:15:15] How did they feel about that?

HANLON: [00:15:17] Well, it's a long story, but with all of the upset in my family and my brother's suicide, my dad had been very depressed and he was kind of a loose cannon anyway. His personality was not reliable, and I think it was a relief in a way that we didn't have big wedding plans.

NOBLE: [00:15:37] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:15:37] And at that point in time, it just it wasn't important to us and, uh, so that was that.

NOBLE: [00:15:44] And then somehow the two of you decide to join the Peace Corps.

HANLON: [00:15:50] We had actually applied before we were married.

NOBLE: [00:15:52] You had?

HANLON: [00:15:53] We were engaged. I think we got engaged in November of the year before we went into Peace Corps, in '67. And we had gotten accepted as single people.

NOBLE: [00:16:08] Individually.

HANLON: [00:16:08] Yeah. It was the plan to get married, but at the time I think Peace Corps could have sent us to different countries if we hadn't gotten married.

NOBLE: [00:16:15] Yes. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:16:19] So when we applied, I was pretty much open to any place in the world, to tell you the truth. But we sort of mutually decided that it would be good to go to South America and go to a big city.

NOBLE: [00:16:35] Why did you want to go anywhere in the first place? What drew you towards Peace Corps?

HANLON: [00:16:40] Oh, it was the sixties. Um. So much was going on. I mean, if you do a timeline of all of the, you know, the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy. I mean, I'm getting those timelines mixed up. But it just seemed like there was like one upset after another. The world was changing and it suited my mood. I wanted to get the hell out.

NOBLE: [00:17:10] Right. Peace Corps seemed like a good thing to do.

HANLON: [00:17:11] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:17:12] Did you know other people who had joined the Peace Corps?

HANLON: [00:17:14] No.

NOBLE: [00:17:15] Hmm. Hmm.

HANLON: [00:17:16] Not until we actually went to training.

NOBLE: [00:17:18] Did Kennedy have anything to do?

HANLON: [00:17:20] Oh, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:17:21] Your admiration for Kennedy?

HANLON: [00:17:22] Absolutely.

NOBLE: [00:17:23] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:17:23] Yeah. Ask not what you can do for your country.

NOBLE: [00:17:28] Right, right.

HANLON: [00:17:30] Is that the way it goes? Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.

NOBLE: [00:17:35] I think that's how it went. Yes. So you're accepted into the Peace Corps. You get an invitation to train for, did you know it was going to be Honduras?

HANLON: [00:17:46] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:17:47] When you got the invitation to train?

HANLON: [00:17:49] Yeah. And it was kind of like, where's Honduras and where's Goascoran?

NOBLE: [00:17:53] Right. Did you, you already knew it was going to be Goascoran?

HANLON: [00:17:57] I think so, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:17:58] Wow.

HANLON: [00:17:59] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:18:00] Where did you go for training?

HANLON: [00:18:02] We went to Saint Louis, Missouri.

NOBLE: [00:18:04] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:18:05] We had to leave New Haven. We left New Haven in the early summer.

NOBLE: [00:18:09] Now, Joe had already graduated?

HANLON: [00:18:11] Yes, he graduated Yale. And that was kind of like, yeah, that was very nice family get together.

NOBLE: [00:18:15] So you have to give up your apartment. You've got stuff.

HANLON: [00:18:18] It was a great apartment. And, uh, but you know, in those, I mean, you just take everything in stride when you're 21. What's the big deal? So we packed up and we stopped in Louisville, Kentucky, and went to a wedding of one of his classmates, which was very nice. And then we went back to Peoria, started getting ready to go to training. Our training started, I think, in probably August.

NOBLE: [00:18:46] What did your family? I mean, already you've eloped, but now you're telling your family that you're going into the Peace Corps, you're going to Central America.

HANLON: [00:18:57] Both families were amazingly supportive.

NOBLE: [00:18:59] Were they? Good.

HANLON: [00:19:04] There is some, lots of back stories in my family, but I think my mother always supported me. Whatever I wanted to do, it seemed like she always said that was a good idea. And my dad at that time, he was just kind of like a beaten person. He had just suffered so much and, um, I don't think he liked the idea. I think he was, he always wanted to keep me. He didn't even want me to go to Girl Scout camp when I was younger. I had to talk him into that. But I think all in all, he was proud of it and never, never argued with me about it. Never said no.

NOBLE: [00:19:39] And your siblings?

HANLON: [00:19:42] My sister was pretty young at that time. I think she was only 11. So, I mean, she was just a little girl.

NOBLE: [00:19:50] Yeah.



HANLON: [00:19:51] And my older brothers were all gone. Well, there were only two left, and one was married and. Two were married actually, they had their own lives, so they didn't really weigh in very much.

NOBLE: [00:20:02] Okay.

HANLON: [00:20:03] I mean, maybe they did behind my back, but to my face they never said anything. In fact, I had a sister-in-law, my older brother's wife, and she was a very good seamstress. So I asked her to make me five dresses of the same pattern, different colors. So she made me five very nice dresses that I wore for the entire two years.

NOBLE: [00:20:22] Oh, my goodness. They were just right.

HANLON: [00:20:24] Yeah. I can remember them hanging on the little hangers. You know, see, the part about simplifying, simplifying our lives now, it really relates to that period of time where we, you know, we were limited to 200 pounds to take to Honduras. So many this, so many that, you know, clothes very simple. You had to wear dresses if you were a woman, no sandals if you were a man. That was considered to be more of a revolutionary sign, if men wore sandals. So yeah, we really had very few things and that sort of suited our mindset.

NOBLE: [00:21:01] And even in training there was a limit to the amount of possessions you could take with you into training. So let's talk about training. You said, do you remember where in Saint Louis?

HANLON: [00:21:13] Well, we were in the YMCA, wherever the YMCA was, and um.

NOBLE: [00:21:19] Downtown Saint Louis?

HANLON: [00:21:20] Downtown Saint Louis. Married couples were allowed to stay on one floor. We had, you know.

NOBLE: [00:21:25] So you had your own room?

HANLON: [00:21:27] We had our own room and our own bathroom. And, you know, it was a very, I think it was pretty demanding in terms of a training schedule.

NOBLE: [00:21:35] Well, talk about that. What did you do?

HANLON: [00:21:39] We had leaders. I can't remember their specific names, but we had leaders for different areas that were being taught. The Spanish language was really the very best. We had teachers that were mostly from Colombia, and as I remember them, they were just excellent teachers and that was the majority of our day. We did other things and one of the projects that we did in Saint Louis was to go to this incredibly horrible high rise project called Pruitt-Igoe, which was eventually imploded because it was such a hellhole for human life. The gangs had taken over the elevators, so there were, there was no elevator service. So what we did as volunteers, we would go and we would meet with people, probably adults and children. We would meet at picnic tables in the common areas outside. We didn't ever go into the projects themselves. And, uh, let's see.

NOBLE: [00:22:40] So what you would as Peace Corps trainees, you'd go to that area right in front of the projects and you'd meet with residents there?

HANLON: [00:22:49] Right.

NOBLE: [00:22:49] To do what?

HANLON: [00:22:50] I don't know if we were doing literacy training, maybe it was playing with children. It was, it was a variety of things. Everything was so time oriented. I mean, we didn't have much time to do this, much time. So you kind of jump from project to project.

NOBLE: [00:23:07] What time of year was this, summer?

HANLON: [00:23:08] Summer. Hot, hot in Saint Louis. Hot and humid. Like kind of like Florida is today.

NOBLE: [00:23:12] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:23:13] And, um, but pleasant. I mean, the camaraderie. Unpleasant in the sense of this deselection.

NOBLE: [00:23:23] Oh, yes. Yes. What was that like? How did they, how did they do that?

HANLON: [00:23:28] Oh, I didn't like it. And that kind of followed a pattern in my life. Like when I was in high school, there were these things called spreads. They were these exclusive groups of girls who would get together from the different grade schools, and in high school they would kind of stick together and they'd establish their identity as being all the cute girls or the fast girls, I don't know. But I said, you know, I don't really want to be a part of that. I want to be able to hobnob with whoever.

NOBLE: [00:23:58] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:23:59] Get to know people. And then in college, kind of the same thing again. I don't know why I was attracted to a sorority, but people talked me into that. I went through rush and then when I kind of realized what it was about and how girls came through year after year, and they were judged on different, you know, kind of superficial traits and abilities. I said, I'm not, I'm not doing that. I'm not going to do that at all. I will work in the kitchen. If you give me some food to prepare, I'll do that. I will be friendly and nice and smile at people. But I'm not going to do the evaluation of these girls as they walk through. And I quickly learned that there were no Blacks in our sorority, no Jews. It was all just pretty much middle, middle class white girls. And many of them, their parents, their mothers had been in that sorority. So they came in as what they were called legacies.

NOBLE: [00:24:59] Ah, yeah.

HANLON: [00:25:00] So the whole thing seemed pretty artificial to me, but I had my good friends and, you know, the three, the three double named women, we had a lot of fun. We laughed a lot and it kind of got me through.

NOBLE: [00:25:16] So when you're in Peace Corps training, some of this is coming back. Some, the deselection process is reminding you of the exclusivity in those, those groupings that that you'd experienced in high school and again in college.

HANLON: [00:25:32] I thought, oh no. I thought this was going to be different.

NOBLE: [00:25:36] Yeah. So how did they, um, how did they do deselection? Were there, did you have interviews with psychologists?

HANLON: [00:25:47] Yes, yes.

NOBLE: [00:25:48] Individual interviews? Do you remember those?

HANLON: [00:25:51] Not really. I think I was nervous about them because of my family background. I was afraid, oh, this girl. This girl is high risk.

NOBLE: [00:26:02] Because of your brother's suicide?

HANLON: [00:26:03] Yeah. And they also they actually went and interviewed my sorority sisters about my behavior when I was in college, which I thought was kind of.

NOBLE: [00:26:11] Wow.

HANLON: [00:26:12] FBI-ish or something.

NOBLE: [00:26:13] Yeah. Yeah. Did you get reports that FBI had been coming around to your neighborhood where your parents lived and talked to?

HANLON: [00:26:21] No. Did you?

NOBLE: [00:26:22] Yeah, they did.

HANLON: [00:26:24] No, maybe they did, but I never knew anything about it. Boy.

NOBLE: [00:26:31] Well, and then was there a peer review?

HANLON: [00:26:35] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:26:36] Did you have to sort of?

HANLON: [00:26:37] Yeah, I think we did.

NOBLE: [00:26:40] Indicate whether there was anybody in your group that you thought ought not to go?

HANLON: [00:26:46] Mm hmm.

NOBLE: [00:26:46] That's hard, isn't it?

HANLON: [00:26:47] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:26:48] Were there people deselected that you in particular thought should not have been deselected? Were you, were you dismayed?

HANLON: [00:26:58] I think I've kind of forgotten who the deselectedees were. Some people dropped out.

NOBLE: [00:27:04] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [00:27:05] I think a girl got pregnant. There was one who got pregnant, so she left. There was a Black prospective Peace Corps volunteer, and I think he got drafted out of Peace Corps training.

NOBLE: [00:27:17] Oh my. Yeah, yeah. And was he the only Black person in the group?

HANLON: [00:27:23] No, there were several. There were several, but, uh, he was a very nice guy, and I think it was kind of a shock.

NOBLE: [00:27:30] Yeah. Yeah. How many, how big a group was this?

HANLON: [00:27:37] I wish I had those statistics at my fingerprints. I would say, fingertips. I think, you know, the FBI fingerprints. I'm going to say there were 40 or 50 of us at the beginning. I think there were some people who went home when we were finished with training who had not been deselected but who never came back. Somehow they had a boyfriend or girlfriend or their parents.

NOBLE: [00:28:06] So they chose not to come back.

HANLON: [00:28:07] And then they chose not to go. On the day that we're supposed to be meeting in Miami, we're looking around and say, oh, so-and-so's not here. Oh, that's funny.

NOBLE: [00:28:15] Huh. So you can only assume that they chose not to go. A little bit more about training. You especially liked the way they taught Spanish.

HANLON: [00:28:24] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:28:25] Could you describe how you were taught Spanish?

HANLON: [00:28:28] It was very oral. It was conversational Spanish and lots and lots of practice. You didn't, you know, you wouldn't like put your face in the book and just read something. It was like the teacher talking to you and you answering back. And I was complimented because I had a good accent. That gave me confidence. And I'd had the two years in high school.

NOBLE: [00:28:51] That's right. So you had the grammar structure in your head?

HANLON: [00:28:54] I think I did, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:28:55] Yeah. Sounds good.

HANLON: [00:28:58] Don't ask me to say anything now but.

NOBLE: [00:29:01] You were in small groups learning the language?

HANLON: [00:29:03] Yeah, I would say 10 to 12 maybe, with one instructor.

NOBLE: [00:29:06] Uh huh. Uh huh. And what else, what else happened in training? Was there physical education stuff? Did they put you through?

HANLON: [00:29:15] We did a garden. I remember doing that, planting a garden in St. Louis, and that was hot and sweaty. Yeah, we did. I think we went to gym. There was a gymnasium kind of setting.

NOBLE: [00:29:28] Did you? Were there classes about Honduran history, politics?

HANLON: [00:29:35] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:29:38] Uh huh. Were there classes of American studies discussing communism?

HANLON: [00:29:51] Uh, probably. I don't think it was like a huge emphasis. As I'm saying, I really think that they wanted us to be able to communicate in Spanish and so that was the focus. Our director, who was Ray Swan, he had a close relationship with a woman in Honduras named Maria de la Paz Ordonez.

NOBLE: [00:30:11] When you say he was your director, you mean once you got to Honduras?

HANLON: [00:30:14] No, in Saint Louis.

NOBLE: [00:30:15] Oh, in Saint Louis.

HANLON: [00:30:16] Yes. But he had this what I considered to be like this very close friendship with Maria de la Paz Ordonez. And he assured us that our group was going to be taken care of royally because of that good relationship. But then something happened in their relationship. They got into some kind of debacle. And so by the time we got to Honduras, like all plans had changed and we were not as welcome as we.

NOBLE: [00:30:48] As you had expected.

HANLON: [00:30:49] As we had been told.

NOBLE: [00:30:51] You had said a few minutes ago that the men were told not to wear sandals because that would make them appear to be revolutionary. And so there's a, there is a political edge to this. They had, it sounds like they had an image they wanted the Peace Corps volunteers to present.

HANLON: [00:31:11] Right.

NOBLE: [00:31:11] That you were not to appear.

HANLON: [00:31:14] 1950s.

NOBLE: [00:31:14] So how as a woman, how were you supposed to? As a woman, how were you supposed to dress?

HANLON: [00:31:21] Dresses. We were supposed to wear, you know, not fancy dresses.

NOBLE: [00:31:24] But not blue jeans.

HANLON: [00:31:25] We didn't wear blue jeans. I didn't have any pants.

NOBLE: [00:31:27] Yeah, that was pretty pre-blue jeans era.

HANLON: [00:31:30] Yeah, this was this 1968. Or '66. And even in college I don't think I wore, I mean, because it was so damn cold in the winter I would wear pants to get to class but.

NOBLE: [00:31:42] So in that day to be told that you had to wear a skirt when you were in Honduras, it didn't seem that weird.

HANLON: [00:31:49] No.

NOBLE: [00:31:50] No. Okay.



HANLON: [00:31:51] I guess we just fell in line.

NOBLE: [00:31:52] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [00:31:53] We were so young.

NOBLE: [00:31:55] Yes.

HANLON: [00:31:55] And we didn't want to get shipped off.

NOBLE: [00:31:57] Yeah, we were 21. My gosh. Is there anything else you'd like to say about training before we move on to Honduras?

HANLON: [00:32:05] Well, I liked the camaraderie. I really did. Like once I got over kind of like who, we're going to be watched, you know, we got to talk to the shrink and maybe we won't make it. We kind of like eased into it and it was fun. And at the end of a long day, we would meet somewhere and have a drink and kind of relax. And so all in all, it was kind of a good feeling. It was kind of like being in another social group.

NOBLE: [00:32:30] Yeah. So you were able to get away at night with some of your fellow trainees.

HANLON: [00:32:35] At the end of the day, yeah, it seems like we took a bus to get back to the Y.

NOBLE: [00:32:38] Uh huh.

HANLON: [00:32:39] And we would take this bus.

NOBLE: [00:32:40] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:32:40] We would sing like Guantanamera.

NOBLE: [00:32:44] Yeah. Yeah. And you'd have parties and you'd go out for drinks?

HANLON: [00:32:49] Yeah, just short parties because we were usually so dead tired.

NOBLE: [00:32:52] Yeah. And you had to get up early.

HANLON: [00:32:53] Yeah, definitely.

NOBLE: [00:32:54] Yeah. Okay, so then did you have a chance to go back home and say goodbye to family before going to Honduras?

HANLON: [00:33:03] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:33:04] Talk about that.

HANLON: [00:33:06] Well, let me think. Joe's parents actually came to Saint Louis. They always.

NOBLE: [00:33:11] Oh, they visited you?

HANLON: [00:33:12] Yeah, they visited us when we were in training. So we had seen them at least once during that, was it eight weeks? I'm trying to think. It was July, August. And I think we went to country, in country by September or October.

NOBLE: [00:33:26] So your training lasted two or three months.

HANLON: [00:33:29] Two and a half months, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:33:30] Okay.

HANLON: [00:33:32] And again, nobody ever tried to say, oh, don't do it, don't go. And Honduras at that time, compared to now, was a relatively peaceful country, albeit poor. And there was a big presence there, United Fruit Company and the American military kind of supported the Honduran military. So I think while my father was nervous about my going far away, he also his fears were allayed because it was more peaceful than.

NOBLE: [00:34:09] Than some other places. Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:34:13] You know, I think everybody, you know, what can you say? If it were my kids, I. The thing is, now we wouldn't be so cut off from our children if they decided to go anywhere in the world.

NOBLE: [00:34:24] Oh, everybody's got a cell phone.

HANLON: [00:34:27] Exactly.

NOBLE: [00:34:27] But not in the, not in the 1960s.

HANLON: [00:34:29] We had nothing. I mean, it was snail mail.

NOBLE: [00:34:32] That's right. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:34:33] Even that was iffy.

NOBLE: [00:34:34] Yeah. So in saying goodbye to your parents, there was that awareness that you're, you're going to be out of contact.

HANLON: [00:34:42] And I realize now, you know, with my brother's death a few years before. My father was ill, he was actually in the hospital right before we left. He had had several heart attacks.

NOBLE: [00:34:54] Oh my.

HANLON: [00:34:54] And when I said goodbye to him when he was in the hospital, he said, if I don't see you again. And I said, Dad, don't say that. No, I'm going to see you again.

NOBLE: [00:35:03] But that was on his mind, that he might not.

HANLON: [00:35:05] You know, it's just the difference between, you know, the mature brain and the immature brain. I mean, he probably knew that his days were numbered and I couldn't accept that.

NOBLE: [00:35:14] You couldn't see that.

HANLON: [00:35:16] Yeah. And I really wanted this adventure.

NOBLE: [00:35:17] Sure, sure.

HANLON: [00:35:18] This is my getaway opportunity to do some things that were I thought exciting and to be with my husband.

NOBLE: [00:35:28] Yes, you were. You were in your twenties and you were healthy and you wanted life. Yeah. So how do you get from Peoria to Honduras?

HANLON: [00:35:39] We flew from, I think Peoria, maybe went to Chicago, and went to Miami. We all met in Miami. I think we were there for one night and then the next day we flew to Honduras, which is a hop, skip and a jump. It's like going to Cuba almost.

NOBLE: [00:35:54] Yeah, it's a short flight.

HANLON: [00:35:56] Yeah. In fact, we looked at Cuba as we were flying in the airplane. We could see it. Yeah. So we got into Tegucigalpa, which is the capital, and I think we had several days there for orientation and then we were.

NOBLE: [00:36:12] What did it feel like to you when you got off the plane in Tegucigalpa? Was it, uh?

HANLON: [00:36:19] Hot. Although in Tegucigalpa, it was cooler because it's mountainous. But, um, and it was the time of year where it was a little bit cooler.

NOBLE: [00:36:29] Ah, okay. So you weren't overpowered when you stepped off the plane.

HANLON: [00:36:33] You know, it was primitive. There was no air conditioning. I remember the smells, the smells in the street, like the sewage. The raw sewage was in the streets.

NOBLE: [00:36:41] In Tegucigalpa?

HANLON: [00:36:43] In Tegucigalpa.

NOBLE: [00:36:43] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:36:45] So that was kind of an eye opener, nose opener. And, you know, we had more training there. And I think we were just anxious to get to our place.

NOBLE: [00:36:56] Yeah. Yeah. Let's get started.

HANLON: [00:36:59] Wanted to get going. So. And saying goodbye. You know, we had to say goodbye to some of the people that we had gotten close to in Saint Louis.

NOBLE: [00:37:07] Because they were going to be sent to other parts of Honduras?

HANLON: [00:37:10] Right, we were all spread out. We were far away from anybody.

NOBLE: [00:37:12] Were you and Joe the only ones going to Goascoran?

HANLON: [00:37:15] Yes. And there had been one Peace Corps volunteer, I think maybe one, a female, Betty. And when we got there, I mean, they told the stories about Betty that her, maybe her morals were not quite on the up and up. You know, it was kind of, oh gosh. And they also they assumed that Joe and I were brother and sister.

NOBLE: [00:37:35] Oh, dear.

HANLON: [00:37:36] Yeah. So *hermanas* and things like that. But, yeah. We got to this, to our town, and we didn't really have a place to stay. And the local priests, they were French-Canadian priests, and they were pretty well established in Goascoran.

NOBLE: [00:37:55] How did you get to Goascoran?

HANLON: [00:37:58] I think we took a *busito*.

NOBLE: [00:38:00] Just yourselves, on your own steam? You didn't, Peace Corps didn't take you there to introduce you to people?

HANLON: [00:38:07] It sounds harsh, doesn't it? But, um, I don't remember that. I do remember occasionally getting visits from our directors who were in country. But that first.

NOBLE: [00:38:21] That arrival.

HANLON: [00:38:22] Yeah, the first arrival. I don't know what Joe said. Maybe he said something else, but I just remember the standard way of getting from our little town, which was on the south coast of Honduras, to Tegucigalpa, was to go on a *busito*. A little Volkswagen bus.

NOBLE: [00:38:37] Like a little van converted into a bus.

HANLON: [00:38:40] Yeah. A van with lots of people and animals sometimes. Chickens and goats. So I think that was the standard way. And that might have been the way we got there.

NOBLE: [00:38:49] I interrupted you. You were talking about arriving and there were the French Canadian priests.

HANLON: [00:38:55] Yes, there was Father Padre Mario. He was the elder. And then there was a younger, I can't remember his name. Very, very nice priests who had been there for, I would say ten years. And, um, so they set us up in a house that was close to them, and it was an empty house, but it was close to the river which separated El Salvador and Honduras. And after we were there for about a week, just kind of camping out. I mean, I don't remember there was any conveniences. I don't even remember there was a latrine, I guess, somewhere that we used. They came and it was in the middle of a big rainstorm. And they brought who were the couple who was going to be our landlords for the next two years.

NOBLE: [00:39:47] When they came, the priests came?

HANLON: [00:39:50] The priests came. They knocked on our door and they said, you know, we think for your safety, it would be better for you to move away from the river.

NOBLE: [00:39:56] Oh.

HANLON: [00:39:57] That there had been some, some troubles and people crossing the river to get into Honduras. The Salvadorians wanted to come to Honduras for land. They needed land. Salvador was so small.

NOBLE: [00:40:09] Okay, and so they'd crossed the river.

HANLON: [00:40:11] Yeah. And we had no weapons. We were not armed in any way or, you know, we had no defense.

NOBLE: [00:40:17] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:40:18] So I just remember that night, it was so, so strange, a knock on the door, and it seemed like it was dark and rainy. We picked up our suitcases. We didn't have our trunk yet, it was early on, and kind of sloshed through the streets, the muddy streets where there were no sidewalks. And got to this one room where we were very happy to live for the next two years. And standing around, there were all these little kids looking at us.

NOBLE: [00:40:47] In your room with you?

HANLON: [00:40:48] Yeah. They were the sons and daughters of the landlord.

NOBLE: [00:40:51] And the landlord.

HANLON: [00:40:52] Don Jesus and Dona Maria. And so we're standing there like, okay. We don't think we had a bed. I don't know what we slept on those first few nights. We eventually had a bed made. There must have been something. There must have been a cot or something.

NOBLE: [00:41:11] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:41:12] I think there was like a bare wood table. There were some shelves on the wall, empty, because there had been a little *pulperia* there at one time owned by the.

NOBLE: [00:41:22] What's a *pulperia*?

HANLON: [00:41:23] A little store. You know, like a little variety store. Fabric, things like that. Maybe some food.

NOBLE: [00:41:31] So this room had been a store before, now it's your dwelling place.

HANLON: [00:41:35] Yeah, this one room. And there was a latrine kind of way out in the back of the property.

NOBLE: [00:41:42] Outside.

HANLON: [00:41:42] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:41:43] And your room is connected to other rooms in the same building?

HANLON: [00:41:49] It was a three room house. We had one whole room to ourselves.

NOBLE: [00:41:53] And the three rooms were all on one level?

HANLON: [00:41:55] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:41:55] Sort of strung out.

HANLON: [00:41:56] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:41:56] Uh huh.



HANLON: [00:41:57] And the ceiling was *tejas*, the clay tiles.

NOBLE: [00:42:02] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [00:42:03] And there was an opening between the room, like a triangular opening.

NOBLE: [00:42:10] Okay, at the top of the wall?

HANLON: [00:42:11] Yeah. And so there wasn't a lot of privacy. There was a window with bars, and then it had shutters inside that you could close.

NOBLE: [00:42:19] But between you and the people on the other side of the wall in your same building. You could hear them and they could hear you?

HANLON: [00:42:27] Yeah, but they're speaking Spanish. We're speaking English.

NOBLE: [00:42:30] Okay.

HANLON: [00:42:31] There was a little bit of a separation there, and, um. I don't know. It just, it was like a whirlwind of culture shock in a way. And I always felt like it was going back in time 200 years.

NOBLE: [00:42:44] Yeah. You probably were.

HANLON: [00:42:45] It was, in many ways. I mean, as we get to know people, it seemed like, you know, that they were quite dignified and had a lot of intelligence.

NOBLE: [00:43:00] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:43:03] But anyway, it was an adjustment and. You know, the Peace Corps I think was loosely organized. Let's just say that. They really didn't have strict plans for us, you know, sort of like, okay. You're young, you've got a little Spanish under your belt. You know, we're going to, we're going

to look after you. But we had rules, like things that we had to do. We had to write up these reports.

NOBLE: [00:43:33] Oh, you did?

HANLON: [00:43:34] Oh yeah, I can remember typing.

NOBLE: [00:43:36] What did you have to say in the report?

HANLON: [00:43:38] We had to talk about the leadership that we found that was already in place and how we would fit into that and how we would work ourselves out of a job eventually. Like, we never could establish ourselves as being the primary, um, movers, shakers.

NOBLE: [00:43:57] Right, right.

HANLON: [00:43:57] We're supposed to be the support system.

NOBLE: [00:43:59] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:44:00] That would provide some kind of expertise.

NOBLE: [00:44:03] Right, and there'd be some way for other people to take over whatever you initiated.

HANLON: [00:44:09] Yeah. It was people to people, though, when you really look, step, step back. I mean, we were very curious about them and how they live. They were very curious about us and how we were going to fit into that.

NOBLE: [00:44:22] Before we talk about your jobs and the work that you did, let's talk a little bit more about your living situation there. You have landlords who live in the same building, but they, your landlord had two rooms in this house and you had the third.

HANLON: [00:44:39] I think there were 18 people in those two rooms.

NOBLE: [00:44:42] 18 people in two rooms. So they had a lot of children.

HANLON: [00:44:45] They had children. They had a grandmother, an elderly grandmother, and they had grown daughters who had children who lived with them. At least one, I can remember one granddaughter. And, um, so very social people. They really did, they were always together and the kids were always doing something. There were antics, lots of antics. Dona Maria was 39, I think, when I first met her, and she'd had at least 16 children, which just seemed unbelievable to me.

NOBLE: [00:45:22] At age 39 to have 16 children? Wow.

HANLON: [00:45:26] And Jesus was a musician, which I really liked. He had a band and he would play for gatherings like dances and also for funerals. And he was a trombone player. So they were very much involved in the community. I think they were liberal Democrats. I think that's what they called themselves. And I think Jesus had run for office, you know, over time.

HANLON: [00:45:53] Dona Blaca was just a force of nature. You can imagine. I can't tell you all the things that she showed me that, you know, were kind of progressive for her. She had, they had a truck called La Rapida, which means the fast one. And it was anything but that. It was old. You know, I have pictures of it, but it was a real old truck and it had storage space on it where they could take things into market. I don't even know what all they took, if they took other people's goods to sell in Tegucigalpa or other little towns. But anyway, she was always on that truck. And I'll tell you this. Remind me, there's a really good story I need to tell later on. But she knew how to fix that truck. She had her head underneath the hood of the truck.

NOBLE: [00:46:44] Wow. That breaks the image, doesn't it?

HANLON: [00:46:47] Totally. And she, I mean, she had all these children, but she had her older children taking care of the babies, you know, she was not always like toting a baby around or breastfeeding or anything. But one of the children, we call him Oscar, and I can't remember if it was her child or her grandchild, but he was one of the younger children. I think he was

three years old. He was very, very sick when we got there. And he had kwashiorkor. He had that orangish hair.

NOBLE: [00:47:15] Oh, malnutrition.

HANLON: [00:47:17] Malnutrition. He was in a hammock when I first saw him and there was a bloody stool underneath the hammock. He just looked like he was not going to last very much longer. And everybody said, *pobrecito se va a morir*.

NOBLE: [00:47:32] Yeah. The little kid, he's going to die.

HANLON: [00:47:35] And I couldn't believe that. Like, what? You're saying that in front of him, that he's going to die?

HANLON: [00:47:40] So what happened was miraculous. The visiting nurse, there was no regular nurse that lived in Honduras, but a visiting nurse came through. She came in and saw him. She got really mad at them for not doing something for his ill health, sent the people out in the family to get a female iguana and slice it open, take the eggs, mash them up and cook them and start feeding him small portions of this high protein food.

NOBLE: [00:48:11] Wow.

HANLON: [00:48:12] And sure enough, he recovered.

NOBLE: [00:48:15] Iguana eggs.

HANLON: [00:48:16] Iguana. Female iguana eggs.

NOBLE: [00:48:20] Eggs. I'm speechless at the story because kwashiorkor. You don't get kwashiorkor unless you're not eating sufficient nutrients.

HANLON: [00:48:35] Well, he had diarrhea because they all had parasites.

NOBLE: [00:48:37] Oh, I see. Okay, so that was.

HANLON: [00:48:39] From the water.

NOBLE: [00:48:39] That was washing him out. So there.

HANLON: [00:48:42] I have pictures of him.

NOBLE: [00:48:44] The distended belly.

HANLON: [00:48:45] The distended belly, yeah. But he survived. He revived and survived, and he became like a part of the community. And of course, the story was always, oh, he's like a miracle because he was supposed to die. And there had been many deaths of other children.

NOBLE: [00:49:02] But there must have been, yeah. So the drinking water, the water that people were drinking was contaminated?

HANLON: [00:49:08] Not potable.

NOBLE: [00:49:09] Not potable, but they were drinking it anyway.

HANLON: [00:49:11] Absolutely. From the river. Directly from the river. And that's where the animals went to drink.

NOBLE: [00:49:16] And so they didn't have, they didn't see the connection between the bacteria in the water and their illnesses?

HANLON: [00:49:26] Well, I think they were just sort of like hopeless, like this is the way it has always been.

NOBLE: [00:49:31] And so the idea of boiling and filtering water was not something that anybody had suggested they might do? Wow.

HANLON: [00:49:40] That's, that's primitive.

NOBLE: [00:49:42] Yes, it is. And then the iguana eggs part was just chicken eggs? Did people have chickens or?

HANLON: [00:49:50] Oh yes.

NOBLE: [00:49:50] So chicken eggs were available to eat?

HANLON: [00:49:53] Yes. Yes.

NOBLE: [00:49:54] As well as the meat of chickens too?

HANLON: [00:49:56] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:49:56] Did they even invite you over to eat? Did you ever eat with these people?

HANLON: [00:50:00] Well, they made tortillas and we bought tortillas from them. But mostly people there, because there were so many people in this small quarters, they didn't sit down to eat. They just carried a plate and they'd have tortillas, beans and rice. That was the main staple and that was, they just sort of ate as they were wandering.

NOBLE: [00:50:22] All right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [00:50:23] I think they thought we were strange because we did sit down to eat. But the food in Honduras, I think about it a lot. It was very plain. It was not like the spicy Mexican food or other cultures, but it was very nutritious. And they didn't have enough of it.

NOBLE: [00:50:45] Right. There was rice?

HANLON: [00:50:47] There was rice, red beans.

NOBLE: [00:50:50] Red beans.

HANLON: [00:50:53] Not black beans. Rice and beans, that was the main staple. And these corn tortillas which were to die for, they were.

NOBLE: [00:50:59] Handmade?

HANLON: [00:50:59] Handmade, masa.

NOBLE: [00:51:01] Did your host, did your, uh, I want to call her your host mother but she sort of wasn't, the landlady. Did she make her own tortillas with the slapping?

HANLON: [00:51:10] Her daughters.

NOBLE: [00:51:11] Her daughters made their own.

HANLON: [00:51:11] That's how we woke up in the morning, to the sound of [clapping]. Yes. That and ox carts. That was our wake-up call.

NOBLE: [00:51:18] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So it was rice and beans and tortillas and maybe the occasional chicken.

HANLON: [00:51:26] Yeah. There were tomatoes and cabbage. They made a cabbage slaw and they had their, it was pineapple vinegar, which is kind of sweet and delicious. So this coleslaw with pineapple vinegar, I don't remember if they put other vegetables in there. It was quite tasty. It was kind of unique.

NOBLE: [00:51:48] So did you and Joe eat a similar diet? Rice and beans and tortillas and cabbage coleslaw?

HANLON: [00:51:56] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:51:57] But you would have, I'm thinking about cabbage coleslaw being a raw cabbage. So you.

HANLON: [00:52:04] We used to bleach it. We used to put bleach in the water.

NOBLE: [00:52:05] How did you do that?

HANLON: [00:52:06] Well, we just had a quantity of bleach and we just, we had filtered water too. We had a water filter.

NOBLE: [00:52:11] You had your own filter?

HANLON: [00:52:13] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:52:14] Did you boil it?

HANLON: [00:52:15] I think we boiled it, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:52:18] Boil it first and then filter it.

HANLON: [00:52:19] And then filter it. Yeah. Just to be sure.

NOBLE: [00:52:22] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:52:23] And I didn't have problems with the water. Joe occasionally would get something that would make his burp smell like sulfur.

NOBLE: [00:52:34] Ugh.

HANLON: [00:52:36] He wasn't as careful. Like, if he went out into the campo to do some kind of project, he would eat and drink maybe.

NOBLE: [00:52:43] Okay, whatever everybody else, whatever the other guys would.

HANLON: [00:52:46] I don't think the water, I don't know how he got it. Maybe he was just a little sensitive.

NOBLE: [00:52:51] And you? Did you stay healthy?

HANLON: [00:52:53] I did. I did. I had, this is an interesting thing. Before we left Peoria, while we were there for that short time, like maybe several weeks in the summer, I went to Planned Parenthood in Peoria and told them that I was going to be gone for two years and that I wouldn't be accessing medical.

NOBLE: [00:53:13] Yeah.



HANLON: [00:53:15] Of course. I had just gotten married, so I needed birth control.

NOBLE: [00:53:20] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:53:20] So at first they said we can't give that amount, you know, that.

NOBLE: [00:53:25] A two year supply.

HANLON: [00:53:26] Yeah. And I begged them. I said, listen, I can't, if I get pregnant, it will end my service.

NOBLE: [00:53:33] Wait, didn't Peace Corps take care of that? Didn't they give married couples contraceptives?

HANLON: [00:53:37] I don't think so.

NOBLE: [00:53:39] Oh my.

HANLON: [00:53:39] But maybe they did. But I was worried. I didn't want to get pregnant before I went into training.

NOBLE: [00:53:44] What had Peace Corps told you might happen if you did get pregnant while, uh, during your two years as a Peace Corps volunteer?

HANLON: [00:53:51] Well, that they didn't allow Peace Corps volunteers to stay in the country.

NOBLE: [00:53:54] Then you'd have to go home?

HANLON: [00:53:56] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:53:57] But they didn't help you prevent a pregnancy.

HANLON: [00:54:00] You know, I would have to double check on that.

NOBLE: [00:54:03] Yeah, but the very fact that you went to Planned Parenthood in Peoria indicates that you were on your own for that.

HANLON: [00:54:08] I also went to the Tupperware distributor and got lots of Tupperware. You know, we just, we were so young. We tried to plan ahead. And you're probably right. I think Peace Corps must have had some contraceptives available.

NOBLE: [00:54:25] Whatever it was, it couldn't have been sufficient if you found yourself at Planned Parenthood in Peoria.

HANLON: [00:54:32] Well, that's the situation. I was taking birth control pills. I did not have a good reaction to them. They were very strong. I can't remember what the dosage was, but stronger than what they used later on. You know, that was still pretty early.

NOBLE: [00:54:45] Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [00:54:47] So I got an IUD and that was how I.

NOBLE: [00:54:52] Oh, that's good, then. Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:54:54] So that was the birth control. In case you were wondering.

NOBLE: [00:55:00] I actually hadn't thought of the question, but it's a good one. And then you cooked for yourself?

HANLON: [00:55:07] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:55:07] So you had to do your own shopping.

HANLON: [00:55:10] Which was easy. I mean, people came to the door because we were Americanos, and they had things for us to buy. From these little delicious hard cinnamon cookies, I can't even remember what they were called, to eggs. To chickens.

NOBLE: [00:55:30] Like a whole chicken?

HANLON: [00:55:32] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:55:33] A live chicken?

HANLON: [00:55:34] Yeah. I gave that up after, I tried doing that, you know, I had to try it, and it was just kind of gross. And it took a long time.

NOBLE: [00:55:44] Oh yeah. Pluck it.

HANLON: [00:55:47] Boil and. But, um. When I think about it, it's almost like you could do a show, like a Survivor show and say, okay, here's a raw chicken, here's some veggies, you know, here's a pan. Good luck. So that's how I learned to cook.

NOBLE: [00:56:07] How did you cook?

HANLON: [00:56:09] A lot. I cooked all our meals, I mean.

NOBLE: [00:56:13] On what?

HANLON: [00:56:14] We had a double burner propane gas stove.

NOBLE: [00:56:18] Propane.

HANLON: [00:56:18] I think it was propane, yeah. I mean, there was nothing electric or anything.

NOBLE: [00:56:23] Yeah. Yeah.

HANLON: [00:56:24] Eventually we got a little refrigerator, but it was a gas-powered refrigerator. That's how it cooled. Except our room was drafty. The rafters were kind of open. And if there was a windy, and there were some very windy months, the, if we were out of town and we left any meat in the refrigerator, the refrigerator went out.

NOBLE: [00:56:44] It would blow out.

HANLON: [00:56:45] But there were a lot of vultures around, so we would just take it out and throw it to the vultures. But, you know, I learned to cook beans and rice and pork. The pork was the best meat because it was so tender. The down part of that is that when they came to get the pigs for slaughter, they cried like people. You could hear them crying.

NOBLE: [00:57:11] Oh.

HANLON: [00:57:12] And I had never, you know, I had never spent time on a farm. So all of this was very new to me. And so things like that were pretty harsh. We had an oven that was made out of a safety oil can. Somebody, I don't remember it was a Peace Corps volunteer, devised this thing. But you could put it on top of the stove and actually bake in it.

NOBLE: [00:57:35] Oh.

HANLON: [00:57:35] And there was a group of women, I assume it was women, maybe men. They put out a Peace Corps cookbook, and one of the recipes was for lemon meringue pie because lemons were also plentiful. And if I had been smart, I would have done green mango pie. I didn't know anything about mangoes either, but we did do lemon meringue pies in this little oven and they were delicious. It was quite a treat. So I felt, I felt good about, um. I even made donuts one time. We had some kind of a fundraiser and I made donut batter and fried these donuts, which I would never do now, but things like that.

NOBLE: [00:58:21] Yeah.

HANLON: [00:58:22] You know, just experimenting.

NOBLE: [00:58:23] So you didn't have electricity?

HANLON: [00:58:25] No. No.

NOBLE: [00:58:27] And at night, how would you light your room? You had just one room.

HANLON: [00:58:31] Well, later on down the road, we got, you know, we bought into this co-op that one of the townspeople had a generator. The generator would come on and we had a light bulb and the light bulb would come on for three or four hours.

NOBLE: [00:58:46] Just in your room?

HANLON: [00:58:47] Yeah, just in the middle of the room.

NOBLE: [00:58:47] But your landlord's family and the other two rooms of the house didn't have the electricity.

HANLON: [00:58:54] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:58:55] So just for a few hours, the generator would be on for a few hours. And during that time you had a little light and then it would go off.

HANLON: [00:59:03] So let me tell you about our light.

NOBLE: [00:59:05] Candles? Yes.

HANLON: [00:59:06] Yeah, we had these little candelas. They were a little metal cans with wicks and there was liquid fuel in the bottom. I don't remember what it was, but that was pretty effective light. I mean, it wasn't great light, but.

NOBLE: [00:59:18] You could read.

HANLON: [00:59:19] I like, I like things low lit. I don't like bright lights anyway so. All right. Joe being the Joe that he is, he found a carpenter who could build us a bed. And it was, I think, mahogany wood. It was very nice wood, but it was this damn, ah, rope bed.

NOBLE: [00:59:39] A rope bed?

HANLON: [00:59:40] Rope bed.

NOBLE: [00:59:42] Okay.

HANLON: [00:59:42] It was probably a standard size, regular sized bed and frame. It had four posters so we could put a metate on the top because they told us that there were scorpions in those tiles above us and on the roof. And at night they might fall down on us and sting us. So get this little mat, just like why they did four poster beds in the olden days, you know, to keep the case from coming out of.

NOBLE: [01:00:06] Falling onto your face.

HANLON: [01:00:09] The thatch roof and stuff. Okay, so this bed was beautiful. It really, it looked like it belonged to a museum, but damn, it was rope stretched across a frame with a metate.

NOBLE: [01:00:20] And a metate is a woven mat?

HANLON: [01:00:23] It's just a little thin, tiny thin woven mat. No mattress.

NOBLE: [01:00:28] That was it for a mattress?

HANLON: [01:00:29] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:00:31] Oh.

NOBLE: [01:00:33] I longed to go to Tegucigalpa, where we slept on beds, you know, with mattresses.

NOBLE: [01:00:37] Yeah. Oh.

HANLON: [01:00:39] I don't know.

NOBLE: [01:00:40] So in all your two years, you.

HANLON: [01:00:42] My husband can talk me into anything.

NOBLE: [01:00:44] In all your two years, you never slept on a mattress. You just slept on that mat on top of the room. If you went somewhere else, but at home, it was sleeping on that hard metal.

HANLON: [01:00:53] Or sometimes in the, uh. We had one hammock.

NOBLE: [01:00:58] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:00:59] But that wasn't very comfortable either.

NOBLE: [01:01:01] No, no.

HANLON: [01:01:01] It was, I mean, it was more for reading.

NOBLE: [01:01:04] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:01:05] So, yeah. So we slept on that.

NOBLE: [01:01:06] And you had a hammock inside your room?

HANLON: [01:01:08] Yeah, but I think we took it up and down because it was so small that we couldn't have it there all the time.

NOBLE: [01:01:13] Yeah. And you had a couple of chairs?

HANLON: [01:01:16] Yeah. We had a table and just a couple of wooden chairs. Nothing lounge-y or comfy.

NOBLE: [01:01:22] So if you wanted to read a book, you'd sleep, you'd sit in a hard wooden chair at the table, or you'd lie in the hammock?

HANLON: [01:01:30] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:01:30] Oh. This is hard.

HANLON: [01:01:31] I know. We added on to our little space. We added a *pila* for water.

NOBLE: [01:01:42] A *pila* is a sink?

HANLON: [01:01:44] Uh huh. A deep sink made out of concrete.

NOBLE: [01:01:46] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [01:01:46] Holds a lot of water.

NOBLE: [01:01:47] Oh, so that wasn't there when you first moved in?

HANLON: [01:01:50] No, we added that, and then we had another little sink. I think we had some running water. What we did is we hired somebody to build a porch. It was an L-shaped porch on the back of our place with some columns and a roof over it. And that came in handy because later on down the road we got a bunch of Singer sewing machines. And I had a small class of young women, and we made baby clothes.

NOBLE: [01:02:16] Oh, wonderful. On your back porch.

HANLON: [01:02:18] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:02:19] You mentioned something about running water, which reminds me, I was going to ask you, in terms of your own consumption, where did your water come from?

HANLON: [01:02:27] The river.

NOBLE: [01:02:28] From the river. Would you have to go to the river with a bucket?

HANLON: [01:02:32] No, I did not do that. I think the kids brought.

NOBLE: [01:02:35] Kids brought you the water.

HANLON: [01:02:37] And then pretty soon, you know, we had access to a pipe and so we got our own running water.



NOBLE: [01:02:44] Okay, so you had a little spigot.

HANLON: [01:02:46] Yeah. We had like a freestanding shower in the yard, but there was nothing around it except those big leafy palm.

NOBLE: [01:02:53] So you had a little privacy.

HANLON: [01:02:55] Elephant ears. Yeah. Very little privacy.

NOBLE: [01:02:58] Okay. But people wouldn't look at you while you're taking your shower?

HANLON: [01:03:01] I don't think so, I hope not. I would just take a quick shower. And I'll tell you something, Phyllis. I recently admitted to myself I have no memory of using the latrine.

NOBLE: [01:03:12] Really?

HANLON: [01:03:13] It was like, ugh, it smelled bad. One time I looked down in.

NOBLE: [01:03:17] Did you have to share it with the other people in the family or was it?

HANLON: [01:03:20] I think they used it from time to time. Because, you know, poor things.

NOBLE: [01:03:25] Yeah. They didn't even have a hole in the ground.

HANLON: [01:03:28] Yeah, exactly.

NOBLE: [01:03:30] So your latrine was essentially a hole in the ground with what, a box on top of it?

HANLON: [01:03:34] Yeah. It had some adobe around it, so there was privacy. But I looked down in it one time, and it was. I remember that.

NOBLE: [01:03:46] I'm imagining you did use it. You just don't, you put that on delete.

HANLON: [01:03:51] Did you see the movie Slumdog Millionaire?

NOBLE: [01:03:54] Yes. Yes.

HANLON: [01:03:56] That brought back memories of the latrine. And I never fell into it but. It was just, it was primitive. You know, I had never, I was in a. I lived at my parents house. I lived in the sorority house. And then I went to Honduras.

NOBLE: [01:04:11] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:04:12] So sort of like being plucked out of middle classdom into.

NOBLE: [01:04:17] And having to make.

HANLON: [01:04:18] It was primitive.

NOBLE: [01:04:19] Yes, but you stayed there for two years.

HANLON: [01:04:21] Oh, yeah, we loved it. We loved it.

NOBLE: [01:04:23] Well, let's talk about what you did. I'm intrigued with the sewing. You had women coming to your back porch and you had acquired sewing machines somehow. And you, how did you get the sewing machines?

HANLON: [01:04:33] They were Singer treadle machines.

NOBLE: [01:04:36] Treadle. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:04:36] Because we had no electricity.

NOBLE: [01:04:38] That's right. That's right.

HANLON: [01:04:39] And I think I had, there were young women who were pretty good seamstresses. And I think that they were more the teachers than I, because I'd only had like a few sewing classes in high school. I wasn't really a seamstress.

NOBLE: [01:04:53] But where did you get the machines?

HANLON: [01:04:56] You know, that's such a good question. They must have been in Goascoran, like maybe the priests had them stored away. Maybe in one of the churches. But, you know, we begged and borrowed and got things like that.

NOBLE: [01:05:12] So how did you get this idea to have women coming over to your house to make baby clothes? How did, how did you figure out that this would be the good thing to do?

HANLON: [01:05:22] Well, eventually it wasn't such a good thing to do. I don't think it really prospered anybody. But it was, you know, we were just trying to think of ways of commerce, making some kind of commerce.

NOBLE: [01:05:35] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:05:36] And my original job, to go back to the very beginning, was that I was supposed to teach songs and somewhat educational material to children while they were eating lunch. These were school children who came to a pulperia, I think. No, no, it was a *comedor*. They had a *comedor*. They had a.

NOBLE: [01:06:00] So a *comedor* is like a lunchroom?

HANLON: [01:06:02] Yes. And the children would come they'd be in their uniforms. They'd be very sweet and polite. But they were trying to eat their lunch and I was supposed to be teaching them something.

NOBLE: [01:06:12] While they were eating their lunch?

HANLON: [01:06:15] Yes. And I'm sure I did something. You know, I had a kind of a background in teaching before I went into Peace Corps.

NOBLE: [01:06:22] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:06:23] It was pretty modest. But anyway, I soon thought, hmm, this doesn't, just doesn't seem to be going in the direction that I want it to. So that was probably about the end of the first year.

NOBLE: [01:06:38] And it was Peace Corps that had suggested that you do that?

HANLON: [01:06:41] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:06:41] With the kids during their lunch hour?

HANLON: [01:06:42] That was one of the goals was to teach the children. Well, the thing in Honduras is that children don't start school until they're seven.

NOBLE: [01:06:52] Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:06:53] And I was very interested in early childhood education. So in the Peace Corps locker, our book locker, which we.

NOBLE: [01:07:00] Oh, you got a book locker?

HANLON: [01:07:01] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:07:02] Oh, good.

HANLON: [01:07:02] We had like 200 books. And there were two books in it that just really impressed me. One was about Maria Montessori and her didactic methods of making materials and teaching. And the other one was Teacher.

NOBLE: [01:07:17] Sylvia Ashton-Warner.

HANLON: [01:07:19] Yes. And I loved that book.

NOBLE: [01:07:21] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:07:22] That was a tremendous, I would still love that book.

NOBLE: [01:07:24] Yes.

HANLON: [01:07:25] So, um, I started thinking about the Montessori method and the materials. The materials were just so beautiful and there were carpenters in town that we got to know who built these beautiful wooden blocks and puzzles. I wish I had pictures of them. Maybe I do somewhere. But I don't.

NOBLE: [01:07:45] But you were able to give the pictures to the local carpenter?

HANLON: [01:07:48] The book. I had the book from the book locker.

NOBLE: [01:07:50] Yeah. And then the carpenters were able to make?

HANLON: [01:07:53] Well, the one carpenter was actually English speaking. And the reason that he was is that he used to come to, I think, Louisiana as a young man, and he got into trouble and he went to prison, but he learned to speak English. But he was a great guy. So anyway, he made those blocks and other materials. And somehow I finagled a space in the same place where the *comedor* was. There was another room that wasn't being used. And I invited kids who were preschool aged, like 5 to 7, or 5, or maybe 4 to 6. And they came in and I sort of developed a morning program for those kids so that they would have something to do because otherwise they were.

NOBLE: [01:08:36] Just wandering around.

HANLON: [01:08:36] Yeah, which is fine actually, when I think about it now, that was probably fine too. But I loved that.

NOBLE: [01:08:44] And so what did you have the kids doing?

HANLON: [01:08:47] It was like a little preschool.

NOBLE: [01:08:48] Preschool.

HANLON: [01:08:49] Yeah, with centers and story time and songs and, I don't know, it was just.

NOBLE: [01:08:56] What kind of stories? What kind of songs?

HANLON: [01:08:59] I wish I could remember. Um. I think they were nursery rhyme books, but in Spanish. Everything was.

NOBLE: [01:09:08] You had a few books?

HANLON: [01:09:10] I must have gotten them from somewhere. I can't remember where. I just, I had to write this proposal. That was one of the things. I had to submit it to the woman in Tegucigalpa who was in charge of us, and I think.

NOBLE: [01:09:22] In charge of Peace Corps volunteers?

HANLON: [01:09:24] Yes. And I think they gave me a small stipend. It was very small but allowed me to buy some materials. So. And there was a young, probably late teenage, early twenties. She was about my age, a young woman who I got along with really well. And she came in and sort of was my assistant and she kept the school going after we left. She kept it going. I don't know how long it went, but I think people were pretty pleased with it. You know, at first it was like, oh, no, no, no. These are my babies. They don't go to school yet. But then eventually it became a good thing. So I was proud of that. There was something written up about it. I can't remember who wrote it. Somebody came. We must have had historians that were doing reporting on the different Peace Corps volunteers.

NOBLE: [01:10:23] So in some sort of Peace Corps publication?

HANLON: [01:10:25] Yeah. They took pictures.

NOBLE: [01:10:27] Ah, good, good. You got some recognition for that.

HANLON: [01:10:30] Yeah, it was, it was very positive.

NOBLE: [01:10:34] So you spent your time. I'm impressed that you were able to find what was available, the space, and you made that happen.

HANLON: [01:10:42] Well, it was so much better than this assignment to somehow teach while children were eating lunch. I just didn't.

NOBLE: [01:10:49] No, no.

HANLON: [01:10:50] And what I ended up in that *comedor* doing was like washing dishes. And that drove me crazy because they didn't have hot water.

NOBLE: [01:10:56] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [01:10:57] Any grease that was on the plates, well, that just stayed. It was greasy dishes drying in the sun.

NOBLE: [01:11:05] So there was the preschool for the kids that you started and a little sewing, sewing club sort of for the women, because you made those sewing machines accessible to them.

HANLON: [01:11:20] Yeah. I think that what we were hoping to do is sell those clothes at the market. There was a Saturday market.

NOBLE: [01:11:25] Oh, was that, to get a little business going?

HANLON: [01:11:27] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:11:29] Where did they get the cloth?

HANLON: [01:11:34] I don't know.

NOBLE: [01:11:34] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:11:35] You know, we probably begged for it. You know, probably went to the local little stores and said, do you have any cloth that we could use for this?

NOBLE: [01:11:43] Uh huh. Baby clothes are pretty small so.

HANLON: [01:11:47] Yeah, that was a good thing.

NOBLE: [01:11:48] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:11:48] To make them. I think that was the idea.

NOBLE: [01:11:50] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:11:54] Cause they were small. Another thing we did is we taught English in the high school.

NOBLE: [01:11:58] Oh, you did?

HANLON: [01:11:58] And that was very, um, I don't know, it wasn't very well organized and there weren't very many people. And a lot of the people were much older than you. It wasn't high school age.

NOBLE: [01:12:10] Mm hmm.

HANLON: [01:12:10] So Joe did that, and I did that.

NOBLE: [01:12:15] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. In the evenings?

HANLON: [01:12:17] Mm hmm. And that was kind of fun. It was.

NOBLE: [01:12:21] I'm sure it was, yes.

HANLON: [01:12:23] Go teach English. Okay.

NOBLE: [01:12:24] Did Peace Corps come out to visit you and check on how you're doing?



HANLON: [01:12:33] See these fingers?

NOBLE: [01:12:34] I see two.

HANLON: [01:12:37] There is the best story. I have to get this on tape because it was so dramatic and I love to tell it. The Peace Corps doctor came to visit us kind of unexpectedly, and his name was Peter.

NOBLE: [01:12:49] He didn't call you on your cell phone?

HANLON: [01:12:50] No, no, no. But we were always glad, you know, when other volunteers happened to show up. Like Ed showed up because he had transportation. Another woman from Nacaome came. I remember she stayed the night and she had those night terrors where she would scream during the night.

NOBLE: [01:13:08] Oh no! This is a Peace Corps volunteer?

HANLON: [01:13:11] Yeah. So we learned a little bit about her. But anyway, Peter came, the volunteer, and he was a very, very lovely person and we were having kind of a social time. I think we were having dinner. And while we were eating dinner, we heard this screaming. Horrible screaming. And it turned out that Don Jesus had had his, the tip of his pointer finger cut off while working on La Rapida.

NOBLE: [01:13:41] Oh, the slow-moving fast truck. Yes.

HANLON: [01:13:44] So they wrapped that finger. They knew that, you know, they always knew everything we were doing. And I guess I had introduced the doctor when he came earlier in the day or something. So they knew that we had this doctor.

NOBLE: [01:13:55] The Peace Corps doctor was at your house? Yeah.

HANLON: [01:13:57] So they came over and Don Jesus was just in such great pain.

NOBLE: [01:14:02] Of course.

HANLON: [01:14:02] And his finger was so dirty and it was bleeding.

NOBLE: [01:14:06] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:14:07] So the doctor was very cool and calm. He told me to boil some water and put salt in it for sanitizing. And then he instructed the children to go out and find the fingertip.

NOBLE: [01:14:23] Oh.

HANLON: [01:14:24] So they did.

NOBLE: [01:14:25] Oh.

HANLON: [01:14:26] And everyone was crying. And, you know, there was just a whole bunch of people and we kind of got some of the people to leave. But Don Jesus was there and I think his wife was there. And maybe a couple of the kids. Took the fingertip. And you can imagine, they did not practice hygiene on the nails. So there was this dirty, dirty fingertip in the salt water soaking.

NOBLE: [01:14:49] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:14:50] To keep it, keep it going. And Peter.

NOBLE: [01:14:53] From the knuckle? I mean, how much of his finger was?

HANLON: [01:14:55] I think it was just above the knuckle. But you have to remember that he was the musician.

NOBLE: [01:14:59] Oh.

HANLON: [01:15:00] He needed that finger.

NOBLE: [01:15:04] Oh. Because it was his instrument was the guitar.

HANLON: [01:15:05] No, trombone.

NOBLE: [01:15:07] Trombone.

HANLON: [01:15:08] Yeah, it was a, uh. I'm pretty sure it was a trombone.

NOBLE: [01:15:13] Oh, okay. So this is really critical that he had this. Yes.

HANLON: [01:15:17] Yeah. And he was just beloved in the town. I mean, his name was Jesus.

NOBLE: [01:15:21] Jesus, yeah. Right.

HANLON: [01:15:23] So, um, we gave him something to drink. I think it was just the local thing called guaro.

NOBLE: [01:15:30] Which is an alcoholic drink? Uh huh.

HANLON: [01:15:33] To kind of ease some of the pain. And then Peter sewed that fingertip back on.

NOBLE: [01:15:38] My goodness.

HANLON: [01:15:39] Put a bunch of antiseptic, gave him bandages and antiseptic to use, because he was only going to be there for a day. The doctor was leaving the next day.

NOBLE: [01:15:50] The doctor was going to spend the night.

HANLON: [01:15:51] He's going to stay the night.

NOBLE: [01:15:52] In your home?

HANLON: [01:15:52] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:15:53] In your little room?

HANLON: [01:15:54] Yeah. And I don't remember. I think we had a porch that had a bed out or hammock or something. He was very resourceful. So I know he didn't sleep in our bed because it was too small. But anyway, uh, that was just one of the most dramatic scenes.

NOBLE: [01:16:12] No kidding.

HANLON: [01:16:13] I'm kind of averse to hospitals and surgery. Anyways.

NOBLE: [01:16:16] Blood spurting.

HANLON: [01:16:18] Blood spurting, everybody screaming. The pain. It was just, you know, tremendous.

NOBLE: [01:16:25] Did you have antibiotics to give the guy?

HANLON: [01:16:29] Antibiotic cream.

NOBLE: [01:16:29] Cream. But he couldn't give him those.

HANLON: [01:16:31] Oral antibiotics. Yeah, I hope there were. But the good thing is, is that finger grew.

NOBLE: [01:16:38] Oh, it did heal? Wow.

HANLON: [01:16:41] The visiting nurse came a few weeks later and chided him for not keeping it clean enough. But it didn't fall off and it didn't get infected. [sneezes] Excuse me. So that was one scene.

NOBLE: [01:16:57] What an amazing story.

HANLON: [01:16:57] It's forever etched in my mind.

NOBLE: [01:17:01] Just the serendipity of that happening to Jesus on the one day that the Peace Corps doctor happened to be right there.

HANLON: [01:17:09] Can you imagine? He never came again. The doctor never came again. We had no idea that he was coming when he did come.

NOBLE: [01:17:19] Wow.

HANLON: [01:17:21] It was amazing.

NOBLE: [01:17:24] No kidding.

HANLON: [01:17:24] Yeah. And he went on to play. You know, he can continue to play his instrument, his horn. Maybe it was just a horn.

NOBLE: [01:17:34] I bet they're still telling that story today in Honduras.

HANLON: [01:17:36] I hope so. It was quite amazing.

NOBLE: [01:17:39] Yeah. So in terms of.

HANLON: [01:17:45] I feel like I'm lying when I tell that story.

NOBLE: [01:17:50] Yeah, but it's true.

HANLON: [01:17:50] The iguana eggs curing that little boy who looked like he was going to die in a minute. And then Jesus. There was just a lot of drama. Drama.

NOBLE: [01:18:01] No kidding. So in terms of support from Peace Corps, it sounds like you gave, you had to write reports to them about what you were doing.

HANLON: [01:18:10] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:18:12] Did they offer you advice or help in any way? You talk about a little bit of money that you were able to get to buy supplies. When you went, how often did you have to go into the capital city, into Tegucigalpa?

HANLON: [01:18:30] I would say that we went every couple of months. It was kind of an R and R situation.

NOBLE: [01:18:33] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [01:18:34] And they did have classes that we would attend. There was a local person, Antonio Casa Solo was his name and he was very big in the radio schools that they had at that time. Radio schools would teach people who lived too far away to go to a regular school or academy.

NOBLE: [01:18:56] Oh. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:18:56] And so they would use the radio to, to teach and offer certain lessons. And that was Antonio Casa Solo. So he was just such a nice man and very good teacher and he liked working with Peace Corps volunteers. We always felt like we were doing something good for Honduras when he was around. He was very, uh, very uplifting. So, yeah, we would get away. I remember we went to El Salvador one time for a vacation and that was a real, oh, it was just like amazing. We were sitting on the sandy beach in the morning and we saw this sort of like a mirage. It was a woman coming and she had fresh oysters.

NOBLE: [01:19:35] Oh, my goodness.

HANLON: [01:19:36] I know. So, you know, sprinkled in with kind of the, the oddness of being so isolated. We also got to go on trips. And then I even told you this part, maybe Joe told you that his parents came to visit us in their Airstream trailer?

NOBLE: [01:19:56] Yes. In his interview, he talked about that. Why don't you talk about what that was like for you?

HANLON: [01:20:00] Well, I was nervous because, you know, we had not spent any of our married life around them. So this is the first time they'd seen our little home or our little place. And Joe's dad came in. He looked around, he says, well, it's clean. And that made me feel really good. Because at least it was clean. And they probably stayed for one night. And then we took off and we went to Mexico together.

NOBLE: [01:20:27] In their Airstream?

HANLON: [01:20:28] In the Airstream, which was very nice.

NOBLE: [01:20:30] Was there room in the Airstream for all of you to sleep?

HANLON: [01:20:33] Just barely. I don't know if Joe told you this, but one time we were in the car, all in the car, and I was like, oh, I'm so tired. Joe's like, I am so tired too. So we went back in the Airstream and I'm sure they knew. It was a little bit of a hoax, but it was a little bit of privacy. And it was really nice to be in this, you know, it was the first privacy that we probably had in a long time. So that was nice. And we went to Teotihuacán.

NOBLE: [01:21:12] In Mexico City.

HANLON: [01:21:13] In Mexico City. We went to Mérida. And mostly it was just, it worked out to be like a really amazing thing because his parents died in their early sixties.

NOBLE: [01:21:23] Oh.

HANLON: [01:21:24] So every little bit of time that we spent with them was pretty memorable.

NOBLE: [01:21:29] Oh, sure.

HANLON: [01:21:30] Because we did not have a long, a long time to spend with them.

NOBLE: [01:21:35] Right.

HANLON: [01:21:35] Like we, well. Our second daughter was born. Our third daughter was born just at the point when his mom was dying and his father had already passed away. So.

NOBLE: [01:21:46] So you had that really good time with them.

HANLON: [01:21:47] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:21:48] You were taking a break. And then after your trip with Joe's parents to Mexico, you went back to Honduras to continue back to your village?

HANLON: [01:21:57] Yeah, actually, we must have taken a bus back to Goascoran.

NOBLE: [01:22:00] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:22:01] And they went on.

NOBLE: [01:22:02] Because they had a pretty long drive. They drove down from Peoria?

HANLON: [01:22:05] Yeah, that was their thing.

NOBLE: [01:22:06] Crossing Mexico and Guatemala to get to you.

HANLON: [01:22:10] Actually, Jo's mom did that again after she was a widow. She went to the Panama Canal by herself with a Wally Byam Caravan. That's when Airstreamers get together.

NOBLE: [01:22:21] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:22:22] But.

NOBLE: [01:22:22] And she drove all that way herself?

HANLON: [01:22:24] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:22:24] My goodness.

HANLON: [01:22:25] Well, she was the one who learned to fly when she was 55.

NOBLE: [01:22:28] Yeah.



HANLON: [01:22:30] They also had gone to Alaska on the Alcan Highway when it was real rough.

NOBLE: [01:22:35] They were real travelers. Yeah.

HANLON: [01:22:37] Yeah. And they loved road trips. You know, that was their preferred way to travel.

NOBLE: [01:22:42] So you had, it seems uniquely wonderful that you had a chance to have a little bit of family time there.

HANLON: [01:22:51] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:22:52] Did you, uh, talk about your contacts with other Peace Corps volunteers. You had been part of a group of what did you say, 50 or 60 people in your training group. After deselection that number was a little bit smaller. But then when you got to Honduras, you were all, you were all spread out in different parts of the country.

HANLON: [01:23:11] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:23:12] Did you have a chance to see those people again?

HANLON: [01:23:15] Occasionally. And sometimes they came to visit. You know, they would just take time off on their own. They take their own R and R and they would come and visit us.

NOBLE: [01:23:23] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:23:24] I remember Peter Cooley coming. And Ed Arnolds coming. And Ann O'Hara. There were probably others, I just, I don't.

NOBLE: [01:23:34] Jim Pickard?

HANLON: [01:23:36] Jim, we went to see because he wasn't too far away, so we would kind of go over there.

NOBLE: [01:23:40] You'd go to Jim's place?

HANLON: [01:23:41] Yeah, I got to know Jim better when we came back to the States. I didn't, I didn't really know him as well. And he was in a different training group than we were.

NOBLE: [01:23:49] Yeah, yeah.

HANLON: [01:23:50] That was the thing. There were so many training groups at that time. There were over, I think, 250 volunteers in Honduras at that time.

NOBLE: [01:23:56] No kidding, in that tiny country? Wow.

HANLON: [01:23:59] They were everywhere.

NOBLE: [01:23:59] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:24:00] And, um, and we did have. Oh, this is a story. I just. I can't believe it happened, but we had a person, Charlie Thomas, who I think had worked for the CIA, and he was one of the in-country directors. He was a very quiet, reserved redheaded person. He was married and lived in Teguc and, um, his wife. She was, I thought she was strange. She invited us for dinner. I think there were six of us, six different Peace Corps volunteers, and we kind of dressed up to go to their house for dinner because it was a special occasion. And we were sitting at this table for quite a long time and there was some kind of, you know, to-do going on in the kitchen. Of course, all the leaders, the, uh, what were they called? Our host country leaders. I can't think of their names. Like Charlie Thomas and Ray Swan and.

NOBLE: [01:25:10] They were Peace Corps people?

HANLON: [01:25:11] They were the Peace Corps leaders.

NOBLE: [01:25:14] Okay.

HANLON: [01:25:14] They lived very nicely.

NOBLE: [01:25:15] Oh, yeah.

HANLON: [01:25:16] They had servants and all this stuff. Okay. So we're sitting at this table. And finally the soup is delivered and it's really good soup. We're enjoying this so much. But there was lots of silverware on the table and, you know, it was set in a pretty formal way.

NOBLE: [01:25:33] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:25:35] And Joe, I remember Joe asked for more soup, and that was a good thing because there was never any more food.

NOBLE: [01:25:41] Oh, that was it?

HANLON: [01:25:42] That was it. Something had gone wrong. I don't know.

NOBLE: [01:25:45] Something in the kitchen.

HANLON: [01:25:46] But it was never explained.

NOBLE: [01:25:47] Oh.

HANLON: [01:25:48] And Charlie, whose house it was, he got up and left the table. I think it was even before we.

NOBLE: [01:25:55] He was the in-country director?

HANLON: [01:25:57] Yeah. He was one of the directors. Like maybe he was this second in line. Tony Duran was the main director. Tony Duran. Anyway. So Charlie got up and left and went and sat in another room. I think he's reading a newspaper or a book. His wife never offered an explanation of why there was never another course delivered.

NOBLE: [01:26:20] Oh. And here we have hungry Peace Corps volunteers.

HANLON: [01:26:24] We were like, what the hell? This isn't right. So we had popcorn. I remember they did offer some popcorn.

NOBLE: [01:26:32] No dessert?

HANLON: [01:26:33] No, I don't remember dessert. Anything. It was just the oddest thing. It was like bait and switch.

NOBLE: [01:26:40] My goodness.

HANLON: [01:26:40] You know, you're invited to this dinner, and there's really nothing but soup. It was a good thing. I remember thinking, Joe is so smart. He doesn't hold back. He asked for his second bowl.

NOBLE: [01:26:51] Yeah, yeah. And he got it.

HANLON: [01:26:53] Yeah. But we did have training in country. I mean, it wasn't like there was no more training once we got there. And that was always fun. It was mostly people coming from everywhere, from the south part of Honduras anyway. So.

NOBLE: [01:27:15] In your, in your second year there, did you find that you were? Um. What would, how would you describe the difference between your last few months there, or your last year there, and the beginning? Did you find yourself more effective somehow?

HANLON: [01:27:33] Well, certainly in terms of being able to communicate, definitely. And just, you know, we're getting used to it, but then you start looking forward to what you're going to do when you get back. I had really kind of a tragedy. One of the directors, it wasn't Charlie and it wasn't Tony. It was another guy from Tyler, Texas, came to us unexpectedly and told me that my father was critically ill.

NOBLE: [01:28:03] Oh.

HANLON: [01:28:05] And I had a choice of either leaving or.

NOBLE: [01:28:10] Leaving permanently?

HANLON: [01:28:11] Well, no, not necessarily that. But he said the problem was that they had called to check about my dad because they'd heard that he was sick, but in fact he was at work that day. So that kind of stopped all of the momentum towards getting me a ride back to Peoria.

NOBLE: [01:28:30] Ah.

HANLON: [01:28:32] And he said, now you can go through Mexico. But if they check your passport when you come back and they see that you've been out of Honduras. Yeah. You will be, you will be let go.

NOBLE: [01:28:45] You won't be allowed to come back in?

HANLON: [01:28:48] Mm hmm.

NOBLE: [01:28:48] Peace Corps would not accept you back if you?

HANLON: [01:28:50] Right.

NOBLE: [01:28:50] Oh, so if you went to visit your father, you'd be going against their wishes, as it were.

HANLON: [01:28:56] Exactly. And they didn't see the great need.

NOBLE: [01:28:58] Because your father was at work.

HANLON: [01:29:00] Right. He worked until the day before he died.

NOBLE: [01:29:02] Yeah. And they didn't, they didn't consider that somebody would be so dedicated to their work that they would be dying and still go to work.

HANLON: [01:29:11] The budget must have been very, very tight. So my father died. So then Joe and I got, of course, we got tickets to go back.

NOBLE: [01:29:21] For the funeral. But not to say goodbye to your dad.

HANLON: [01:29:23] No, he was already gone.

NOBLE: [01:29:25] Oh, so sorry.

HANLON: [01:29:26] Yeah, I think it was a bit of a rift between my mother and me too, because, of course, she was left, you know, as a widow with his younger kids still at home and.

NOBLE: [01:29:38] Yeah.

HANLON: [01:29:38] She was only 59 when my dad died. And, um, there was a little bitterness there and, anyway. It wasn't a good situation. But soon after that I became pregnant, which is very common when there's a death in the family. And the reason I became pregnant is that I had problems with cramping with my IUD so I had it removed and we were going to use other birth control. Well, it never happened. I got pregnant. So then.

NOBLE: [01:30:07] But you went, you went back. After you came home for your father's funeral, you went back to Honduras?

HANLON: [01:30:11] Right. It was March. We went back in I think mid-March or late March. And then we spent April, May, June. And I think we went home in July or August because Joe was accepted at the University of Chicago Law School.

NOBLE: [01:30:25] Okay, and he had to be back for the start of school.

HANLON: [01:30:27] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:30:28] And by then, you knew you were pregnant?

HANLON: [01:30:30] I was pregnant, yeah. So there you have it. A lot of drama in two years time. It was so much.

NOBLE: [01:30:37] No kidding. Yes.

HANLON: [01:30:38] You know, happening in two years time.

NOBLE: [01:30:40] Yes. What was it like leaving Goascoran?

HANLON: [01:30:47] Um.

NOBLE: [01:30:49] Was there some sort of gathering of local people to say goodbye?

HANLON: [01:30:56] I don't remember that. I mean, I'm sure there was. But I think, um, you know, it was just sort of like, dang, I've got to go home. I have to have this baby. You know, my husband has to get into school. I think we were ready to go. I think, you know, there were ups and downs and moods. I think Joe got a little depressed at times. We both did. You know, it was kind of depressing.

NOBLE: [01:31:28] Well, you're in a very hard, a hard situation there.

HANLON: [01:31:32] Yeah, we were isolated. There was a lot of, uh, you know, it just, it seemed like there was so much that needed to be done. And here we were, clueless, like in terms of big organizations. Or any kind of major change. It was just.

NOBLE: [01:31:51] On a smaller, smaller level making some changes.

HANLON: [01:31:58] I wouldn't trade it for the world. It was a great experience. And of course, you know, every experience could always be better, I guess. I guess the Peace Corps organization could have been better. Because I do think they kind of just kissed us goodbye and said, have fun.

NOBLE: [01:32:18] It doesn't sound like you had a whole lot of either direction or support from Peace Corps when you were out there.

HANLON: [01:32:23] No.

NOBLE: [01:32:25] But you were young and flexible and creative. You found things to do.

HANLON: [01:32:31] Yeah. We liked it. I can remember, this is a pretty, uh. Whenever I walk outside at night and the moon is out, I remember that we would get dropped off on the Pan American Highway and I think it was a kilometer and a half or two kilometers to our village.

NOBLE: [01:32:51] From the Pan American Highway.

HANLON: [01:32:53] Yeah. And it was kind of a rocky road, as I remember. But when there was moonlight, it was pretty easy to see. But that's how we would get home.

NOBLE: [01:33:00] You'd walk?

HANLON: [01:33:02] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:33:02] You'd walk home from the Pan-American Highway. Yeah. And then to get to Tegucigalpa, you'd walk back that mile and a half or so?

HANLON: [01:33:08] I think so. I think, though, sometimes there were, there were, the *busito* would come to your door because you'd have a suitcase or something.

NOBLE: [01:33:17] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So even leaving you had, you had to pack up, you had to decide what to take with you.

HANLON: [01:33:26] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:33:27] All you'd accumulated.

HANLON: [01:33:28] We didn't really collect a lot of stuff. We had a few things. I remember a fishnet that we thought was so pretty. One of those real fine fishnets. We used that as wall decoration. Um, hats. Bags.

NOBLE: [01:33:42] Music?



HANLON: [01:33:46] You mean like CDs?

NOBLE: [01:33:47] Like CDs or some, whatever they had then? Cassette tapes or something. Or 45 records of local music.

HANLON: [01:33:54] I'd have to look in our, we still have our trunk.

NOBLE: [01:33:56] You do? You have your Peace Corps trunk?

HANLON: [01:33:58] Yeah. It's in storage now, so that every month. Um, no, I don't remember that.

NOBLE: [01:34:08] You get back to the United States, you have a baby. You somehow get yourself back to school and finish your undergraduate degree, go on to get a master's degree. And you spent several years teaching?

HANLON: [01:34:25] My, part of my training at Erikson Institute was supervised teaching in different centers. And I think I had three different posts during that two year time and closely supervised again with lots of paperwork and. Uh. And that was a good experience. And the neat thing was that when we moved to Florida many years later and I applied to be a certified kindergarten teacher here. The usual protocol is that you go back to school. And it's at USF, which was far from where, you know, it would have been a very big sacrifice for me to go back to school for a couple of classes. It would just have been like maybe 4 hours worth of classes. And amazingly, while I was talking to the person who was looking at my paperwork, she says, oh, we never certify anyone without going back to school, especially since you're out of state, blah, blah, blah. And she answered the phone and said, oh, really? Oh. Oh. Okay. Oh, all right! So I got certified without going back to school, which was a huge relief to me.

NOBLE: [01:35:34] But they recognized that you had, you had done all this work in the Peace Corps with, you had really set up your own preschool. You had all this time at the Erikson Institute. You were really very qualified and also experienced. So you put in how many years here in Tampa teaching?

HANLON: [01:35:52] 20.

NOBLE: [01:35:52] 20 years as a kindergarten teacher?

HANLON: [01:35:54] Yeah. And I had a lot of Spanish speaking students. So that was another thing.

NOBLE: [01:36:02] You had the Spanish from Peace Corps.

HANLON: [01:36:05] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:36:07] So anything else you'd like to add?

HANLON: [01:36:11] Well. I think if anybody has the desire to go abroad and do some kind of service to just go for it. Do it while you're young because it's harder to do. I know some people do it when they're older, but for me, I would never leave for two years because of my grandchildren.

NOBLE: [01:36:30] That's right.

HANLON: [01:36:31] So, do it. It's, it's a wonderful. It's like a mind blowing experience.

NOBLE: [01:36:39] Clearly.

HANLON: [01:36:40] So I'm all for it.

NOBLE: [01:36:42] Thank you, Bev.

HANLON: [01:36:43] Thank you, Phyllis.

[END OF INTERVIEW]