#### **Patricia Milliren Oral History Interview**

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Patricia Milliren

Interviewer: Jack Franklin Davies Date of Interview: July 31, 2019

Location of Interview: Port Angeles, Washington

Length: 17 pages

# **Biographical Note**

Patricia Milliren served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Fiji from 1968 to 1970 in an education program.

#### Access

Open.

# **Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed December 11, 2019, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. This interview is in the public domain.

### Copyright

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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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

#### **Technical Note**

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

#### Suggested Citation

Patricia Milliren, recorded interview by Jack Franklin Davies, July 31, 2019, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

### DISCLAIMER

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

Oral History Interview

with

Patricia Milliren

July 31, 2019 Port Angeles, Washington

By Jack Franklin Davies

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

DAVIES: [00:00:03] My name is Jack Davis, I'm going to be interviewing Patricia

Milliren, who was a Peace Corps volunteer, Fiji Group II, during the years

of late 1978, sorry, '68 through '80.

MILLIREN: Through '70.

DAVIES: Oh, I'm sorry. Let's start this over. Scratch. OK, we got good volumes.

> Check, check. Good. All right. Beginning again. My name is Jack Davis. I was a returned Peace Corps volunteer from the Fiji Islands from 1978 through '80. Today, I'm interviewing Patricia Milliren. I'll call her Pat. And she was a secondary school teacher at Nadi College on the western side of the main island of Fiji from 1969 through '70. And she started her

training actually in Hawaii in 1968. How are you this morning, Pat?

MILLIREN: [00:00:53] I'm good. Thanks.

DAVIES:

[00:00:56] Well, thank you for inviting me to your home. I've got a lovely place here. I can see some influence from Fiji. And it was delightful meeting your husband. And you can tell us about that later. So I'm just going to lead you through a few questions. We'll talk about what you did before Peace Corps, what you did during the Peace Corps and what you don't know. So the usual question is, why did you join the Peace Corps? What tell me about your upbringing, your influences and anything else that might have helped prepare you for Fiji?

MILLIREN: [00:01:26] Well, I came into the Peace Corps from college or very, you know, a few months after college. And I I think I don't have much idea about what interested me from my background, from it. I my family was interested in people. So that might have helped some. I didn't I think I heard about it in college. I think I was young and idealistic. I. Think that I applied while I was still at College of William and Mary in Virginia, and my recollection is that I spent the summer after I graduated trying to figure out why I wasn't being called for the Peace Corps. I had wanted to go to South America and learn Spanish. I thought that would be a useful language to learn. And eventually I made phone calls to the Peace Corps trying to find out why I hadn't heard anything. And I don't remember all the ins and outs except that eventually somebody listened to me. But I got sent to Fiji and learned to understand me instead of being sent to South America and learning Spanish. So in retrospect, that was a really good thing for me, because I grew up in a partly segregated household in Delaware, are not a household but community. And I probably would not have intentionally gone into a country where race relations were an issue, which they were in '69 and '70 when I went to Fiji. So it was a very good lesson to learn for me and going there. But it wasn't where I wanted to go and I didn't want to teach secondary school, which is what I ended up teaching. So there were a lot of things I didn't want to do that turned out to be very good in my life.

DAVIES: [00:03:22] And did you know anything about Fiji before you went?

MILLIREN: Nothing. DAVIES: Did you know where it was?

MILLIREN: [00:03:27] Probably not. I don't remember now, but probably not.

DAVIES: [00:03:30] Most people would say we're very lucky to go to Fiji. And tell me about your educational background. What did you study and what do you

specialize in that was appropriate for Fiji?

MILLIREN: [00:03:43] Well, I, I think when I was hoping to go to South America, I

wanted to be involved in social programs and probably programs with children or. Oh, in any case, I didn't want to teach. But what I studied in college was biology, primarily plant biology, even though the degree had to be a general biology degree. And so that's, I think, why I got picked up for Fiji because they were looking for science teachers. So I taught in a secondary school and I taught English as well as biology. But they wanted

science teachers in Fiji at the time.

DAVIES: [00:04:24] Mm hmm. You mentioned you did your training in Hawaii. What

was that like?

MILLIREN: [00:04:30] Well, we met first in Southern California, but after I don't

remember a short period of time and some choosing people not to go on, choosing people to go into training, we went to Moloka'i and that was a fairly remote place at that time. And it poured a lot rain, which it does in Fiji. So that probably helped prepare us. They brought Hindustani and Fijian speaking people from Fiji to teach us language in Hawaii. We had over 100 people on our training group, which is really different from what I think they're doing today. So there were a lot of us there in an old school that they used as a place for us to have to to live. My main, well, I remember a couple of things. One was that one of our members went hiking or climbing and fell and did not return and died. And that was a very, very traumatic experience for the whole group to go through, to not know where he was and then to finally find his body. And then somewhere around Christmas or New Year's, we had a big pig, whatever *lovo* there.

And since I was in the Hindustani program, I hadn't learned a lot about that. But it was a big event to be away from your family at Christmas time and to go have that in spite of all the rain.

DAVIES: [00:06:10] Yeah. So you said Hindustani. So what language did you speak?

MILLIREN: [00:06:14] That's I was taught, Hindustani, but I was expected to teach in English. That was the goal to be taught. So I didn't use Hindustani a lot. And when I did, the kids thought it was hilarious. Oh, you know, but mostly I spoke English and taught English at the secondary school.

DAVIES: [00:06:35] And you were teaching Indian students or Fijian students?

MILLIREN: [00:06:38] Mostly Indian. Nadi College was a mostly Indian school and that was the head teacher or principal was Indian. But there were some Fijian kids and there were some mixed race kids and there were Chinese mixed race kids. So but mostly I understand.

DAVIES: [00:06:58] Can you tell me a little bit more about the culture of these kids?

MILLIREN: [00:07:06] You mean the kids that I taught?

DAVIES: [00:07:08] Yeah, let's let's use those as probably the closest example.

MILLIREN: [00:07:11] Well, let's see.

DAVIES: [00:07:13] Where do they come from? What are their homes like?

MILLIREN: [00:07:17] I did visit a few homes. I didn't go to a lot of homes. I think the Fijian kids lived along the rivers and in some villages, the Indian kids lived in some villages and they also, you know, had families that lived in town. It seemed to me that they were much they worked hard to pay the fees for the kids to be able to go to school. I can remember and I don't know that that was Hindi, Hindustani or Fijian, but that, you know, I went to visit

somebody and I got the only chair in the house at one time, which was kind of. You felt bad to get the only chair in the house to sit in, you know, and I did visit one of our Chinese Fijian families several times. So they had a little store out in the country in the cane fields, and they became good friends. But I didn't I didn't spend a lot of time out with student families. I had a roommate, another Peace Corps roommate the first year. The second year I lived alone in a in apartments. And so we became very close friends with the owners of the apartment complex, which was quite small. And I I searched for it when we went back for the Habitat for Humanity project a few years ago with one of my students whom I was able to find. And she was it didn't look very much like what I remembered it. So she was trying to help me find where I had lived was an apartment. It was, I'm sure, entirely different from what my kids were living in. It was more for the white folk apartment type thing. But I was very close to the I called the mommy and my mom are uncle and aunt that owned the complex and she let me use her treadle sewing machine so that I could make clothes for myself. So I remember that well.

DAVIES: [00:09:21] So you mentioned you got the only chair. What where did the rest of the family sit?

MILLIREN: [00:09:27] Well, they either stood or sat on the floor, I suppose. I don't remember very much about that. I suppose I was startled that there was only one chair in the place.

DAVIES: [00:09:38] So were there Fijian mats on the floor in an Indian house?

MILLIREN: [00:09:43] I don't remember.

DAVIES: [00:09:44] Yeah, in the villages they sit on Fiji mats and drink out of bowls and eat with their fingers. So was the Indian household like that?

MILLIREN: [00:09:53] I don't remember eating at that household. I did go to several weddings, Indian weddings, and we did eat with our fingers there.

DAVIES: [00:10:00] Tell me about those because I've seen some of the very interesting.

MILLIREN: [00:10:02] Yes. Well, I think I only went to a piece of them. You know, it wasn't days long, but brides usually wore a red or dark pink or something. And I didn't have much idea of what they were saying, but there was lots of good food usually. Yeah, that's what I remember. Yeah. And I, I would get sometimes to wear a sari to those, which was really fun to do.

DAVIES: [00:10:27] A sari, that's a wrap around.

MILLIREN: [00:10:29] The clothing that Indian women, some Indian women wear or *salwar* and *kameez*, but I usually wear sari to weddings.

DAVIES: [00:10:36] Ok, do you have any idea what their reaction to you was because you were one of the first groups.

MILLIREN: [00:10:43] Oh. Hmm.

DAVIES: [00:10:47] Were you well accepted?

MILLIREN: [00:10:48] I think I was well accepted, yes, and I can remember my reaction and that we had a picture taken, which I still have, of the teachers of Nadi College together. We would do that once a year. And how startled I was to see myself as the only white person in that picture and how different I looked from everybody else in the picture, like everybody else is dark and I'm white. But I had no sense of that when I was just me being with the kids. You know, you're in the minority. I was in the minority, yes.

DAVIES: [00:11:21] Although there were other Europeans or?

MILLIREN: [00:11:23] No, not at the college. No. Let's see. Let me think. There were Indian teachers. Was there anybody else? No, I think I was the only person of a different race there, you know.

DAVIES: [00:11:39] Do you think they knew the difference between you being a white American and some of the white volunteers from New Zealand or Australia or England?

MILLIREN: [00:11:49] I'm not sure they'd had experience with those people. So I don't know other than as tourists downtown, right? No, I don't know that they would have had the personal relationship that we developed over two years. So, yeah.

DAVIES: [00:12:03] It seemed to me it was sort of a colonial attitude towards the Europeans when I was out in the villages. But I was treated with great respect. But like, yeah, if there was a chair, I got it. Yeah. But I'd rather sit on the floor on the mats, drink kava. Did you ever drink kava?

MILLIREN: [00:12:19] Only once or twice. Yeah. It was not my favorite. I was really glad not to have to drink it much.

DAVIES: [00:12:25] Would you care to explain what kava is?

MILLIREN: [00:12:30] Well as a drink made from a pepper plant of some sort that is ground and mixed with water that Fijians drink and ceremony and other people they can invite to drink it if you're sitting in the circle. But it's not a cultural thing for the Hindustani or Chinese people to drink like it is for Fijian people.

DAVIES: [00:12:54] So, yeah, thank you. So tell me about the specific job that you had. You said you were a teacher. What subjects did you teach?

MILLIREN: [00:13:05] I taught biology in English. I think I taught a health science one time. I did not teach the highest level. I taught like ninth grade in 11th grade, which went to 10th and 12th, the second year of English and biology. But there was another. Let's see, she was German and Fijian, no, German and Indian woman who taught the highest levels of biology and English there, who was a very close friend of mine. And I, you know, I enjoyed her friendship and her home with her parents. She lived with her

parents. There was a lot I didn't know about Judy at the time that I've tried to find out a little bit about.

DAVIES: [00:13:59] Are you still in touch with her?

MILLIREN: [00:14:00] Well, she's died.

good circumstances.

DAVIES: Oh, I'm sorry.

MILLIREN: I learned that when we were trying to go back for the Habitat for Humanity project because the Fijian woman volunteered to help us find old friends while we were there. She found out that Judy had died. Judy did come to the United States once. And I got to pick her up at the airport and take her for, let's see, a friend's national conference in Seattle. And it warmed my heart. I had been working on peace issues and non nuclear proliferation issues in Bellingham at the time. And I found out that Judy had been working on those projects in Fiji since I had seen her, which was very heartwarming. But she died of of, um, I'm not sure what, but not under

DAVIES: [00:14:48] Sorry to hear that. As I remember, Fiji was a nuclear free zone.

MILLIREN: [00:14:52] Yeah. And we were working on that in Bellingham, which is what was so special about that.

DAVIES: [00:14:57] Right. So you told us a little bit about your work in the classroom. What did you do on your days off?

MILLIREN: [00:15:08] What did I do on days off? Well, often I went to market, which is kind of interesting because I go to a farmer's market here now. So you didn't like having to dicker over prices, but we often did for the fresh fruits and vegetables. And so that was usually a Saturday kind of thing.

DAVIES: [00:15:26] Did you speak in Hindustani?

MILLIREN: [00:15:29] Oh, I don't remember. I probably try, but some of the vendors probably were Fijian too, so I wouldn't have been able to. Not much to say to them. I think I worked a lot on preparing lessons on the weekend as well.

DAVIES: [00:15:47] OK.

MILLIREN: [00:15:48] Because I was teaching like at least three different classes, if not five. So there was a lot to prepare.

DAVIES: [00:15:56] And that was your first job out of college?

MILLIREN: Yes.

DAVIES: OK. Did you have any time to take a vacation and get away from Fiji? If so, where did you go?

MILLIREN: [00:16:07] While I was there? No, no, I didn't.

DAVIES: [00:16:08] So you spent your vacation time there.

MILLIREN: [00:16:11] In Fiji and we at least the. Between our first and second year, we had some kind of a conference in Suva that everybody went to during that time off from teaching. So that was one highlight anyway of. Yeah, seeing everybody that we haven't hadn't seen for months.

DAVIES: [00:16:32] So do you think teaching in Fiji was similar to teaching in the U.S.?

MILLIREN: [00:16:37] Oh. Well, not compared to today anyway, but maybe then I don't know enough about my father and mother were teachers and they did a lot of work at home. So I suppose in some ways it could have been. And and the friendships with students, which you had to be careful about. But which. Or, of course, the precious part of being there.

DAVIES: [00:17:09] Hmm. Yes.

MILLIREN: [00:17:11] I'm sure my dad was friends with his students, but it's hard it's

too long ago to remember to be able to recall that

DAVIES: [00:17:21] We were grassroot ambassadors.

MILLIREN: [00:17:23] Yes, something went through my mind that I can't remember

just now. I'll have to come back to it.

DAVIES: [00:17:28] Maybe one of the students that you got close with.

MILLIREN: [00:17:31] Well, I did get, Romijn and Ramallah were my favorites in the

older group, and she brought me lunch every day, which was veggies with a roti. Yes, I was really spoiled with that. When I went back to Fiji for the Habitat project, I was able to find her and they had gotten married and they had actually had a child, which was very I knew was difficult from communicating early with them. And she made me roti and veggies again.

So nice. That was very nice. Yeah.

DAVIES: [00:18:12] And did you continue to correspond with her after you left?

MILLIREN: [00:18:15] A little bit. Not very much. We lost touch after a long time. And

so I, I had gotten an email a couple of times from Romijn and he certainly probably has a bigger lifestyle than we have these days. He's a business person now. And so I had tried to Google and see if I could find him when we went back and I wrote a letter to the address of his business and didn't

get any answers. So I didn't know how to deal with that. Well, while we were in Fiji doing the Habitat project, he got the letter that I had written and called Habitat in Suva and said, you know, we're here, we want to see

you. So it worked out in the end, although I didn't see that was that was

very gratifying.

DAVIES: [00:19:02] And you were building homes for Habitat?

MILLIREN: [00:19:05] Well, we were supposed to be it didn't quite work that way, but we got close.

DAVIES: [00:19:10] Oh, that's good. So looking back at your tour service, what were your main accomplishments, would you say?

MILLIREN: [00:19:20] Well, for me personally, and this is something I've thought about often on quite a bit, it was not a U.S. accomplishment, it was a personal accomplishment. I think the United States wanted to send people overseas to influence other countries to say that we're good people in spite of the Vietnamese war or whatever and. For me to rah rah rah the United States, well, for me, I didn't. That was not the result. The result was I felt like an international citizen after being in Fiji, I no longer felt like a United States citizen, I felt like I was a person of the world and appreciated the world and the different people and cultures that were there. And I don't know whether that was the U.S. goal, but that's what happened to me. I was not, I did not come home rah rahing the United States. I came home grateful for the people who had given me so much while I was there.

DAVIES: [00:20:21] Yeah, well, in fact, I think that is one of the goals is to bring back an understanding of people of other cultures. So here you are telling me all about Fiji in the early days, because even in my time, we didn't have TV. No telephones were very limited. Roads were all gravel electricity in the towns.

MILLIREN: But not in the villages.

DAVIES: Not in the villages, and certainly no air conditioning.

MILLIREN: [00:20:47] No. Well, I can remember that is a little fun memory with my roommate. The first year that it was so hot and muggy, we came home from school and it was just hanging heavy and it eventually rained and we went out in the little compound where we lived and danced in the rain

because it was so glad it rained and we were so hot and our mommy just laughed at us dancing in the rain outside.

DAVIES: [00:21:13] Nice. Well, you mentioned the goals of the Peace Corps. So the first is to provide technical assistance when requested, which you did as a teacher.

MILLIREN: [00:21:24] And I don't think they send teachers anymore. I think I have read that they feel like their training and their teachers are adequate now that they want other help, but not teaching help. Oh, yes, I understand. I don't know whether that's true.

DAVIES: [00:21:38] Well, my wife was also a biology botany teacher there in Fiji.

That's where we met. And then we got married later. Was that common?

Did many of the couples develop relationships either with other Americans or with the Fijians?

MILLIREN: [00:21:56] I don't know whether common is the right word, but it did happen. I mean, we had a big group where there were still over 100 people when we went. And so we had I know that one couple in this picture, I'm getting too close to the microphone, got married. They were both in Ba, not Ba, one of the islands to the south. They were on separate ends of the island and they eventually married and are still together. And several several couples went already married. And there are I believe there were a few that married people from Fiji, but I don't remember now who or how many.

DAVIES: [00:22:37] So, yeah, well, the national language is English. So, you know, we should have that common denominator. But any regrets or failures, if I might ask?

MILLIREN: [00:22:53] Huh. I think mostly gratitude.

DAVIES: [00:22:57] Great. That's wonderful, yeah, because it is mostly people, the people and obviously you promoted a better understanding of what

Americans are, even though it wasn't necessarily intentionally to be a diplomat. But so throughout the years, have you had other involvements you mentioned to Habitat for Humanity, you mentioned staying in touch with a few people or any other kind of activities?

MILLIREN: [00:23:25] Certainly not very much. I have nominally belonged to friends of Fiji, but they're on the East Coast mostly, and I'm on the West Coast. So, you know, I follow what they do. I gave them a gorgeous sari that I had that I couldn't wear anymore, or I hadn't ever really worn, and other things to sell. But I'm certainly not involved with Friends of Fiji very much. I have been able to get in touch again with the woman who was my first year roommate who lives in Texas now. And so we are communicating more frequently than we have in years, which I'm thrilled about. And our group had a fiftieth reunion last October for our time of going into training in Hawaii, in, well, California and Hawaii. So I did remember some of those people who went to the reunion and the Habitat for Humanity project was not a Fiji II project. It was a fiftieth anniversary of what, the?

DAVIES: [00:24:32] Of the Peace Corps itself?

MILLIREN: [00:24:32] Of the Peace Corps itself. I think so. It was a few years ago. And so there were three, one, two, three, four, six of us from Fiji II that went, which we were the best representative of all the groups who went. And I was very grateful for that, somebody I know, remember his name now organized it and it took a long time to organize people from different Fiji groups going and all the stuff that had to be prepared in order to work with Habitat for Humanity. But I wanted to go back to Fiji and I did not want to go alone. So it was a really wonderful experience and I probably couldn't do it physically now. So I'm really grateful we did it when we did it. And I got to see the friends that I remembered so screwed up.

DAVIES: [00:25:28] So we kind of jumped over when you left Fiji and came back to the States. First of all, how did you feel about leaving?

MILLIREN: [00:25:35] Oh, golly. I remember not wanting to come home that. I felt like my values had changed so much that. I didn't know how to fit in at home and culture shock. Yeah, a lot of culture shock. I arrived in Baltimore's airport. I mean, I spent a few days in Hawaii with a friend who was in Fiji, but not a Peace Corps person. And she and I tried to use that time to get used to the U.S. again a little. And then I flew into Baltimore right before Christmas and where I was wearing sandals and a cotton dress and really dreading, in a sense, seeing my family who loved me dearly, who wrote to me every week, who, you know, kept me there. There was no phone calling, nothing like that. So a letter a week from your family was very precious.

DAVIES: What were you afraid of?

MILLIREN: I wasn't afraid. I just, I didn't really want to deal with where the United States was, versus where I was.

DAVIES: [00:26:42] Yeah. Anticipation of.

MILLIREN: [00:26:43] Yeah. So I, I had some months at home and I had I knew from college days that I wanted to work for the National Park Service. So while I was in Hawaii and training, I was able to take the test that was required back in 1969, '68, to get into federal service. And so I had taken that test and done well enough that I was lucky to get into the Park Service. They were looking for women. I had worked with the Peace Corps. So I got into the National Park Service training program. Oh, let's see, about four months after I got home, I guess.

DAVIES: [00:27:27] Ok, well, I met your husband, Alan. I want to tell us a little bit about how you met him.

MILLIREN: [00:27:32] Oh, well, that was years later. He remembers that I was working for the Park Service. This would have been '73 and he was working as a seasonal. And I did some environmental and interpretive training for I was working in a regional office and he was working at North

Cascades National Park. So he remembers meeting me when I was training summer employees. And I remember him from graduate school in 1980 when we were both at Western Washington University. And he was I had already been there a year and I was just starting grad school, having worked for the Park Service for nearly ten years. So I had to quit the Park Service to go to grad school. And I was very lucky afterwards to be able to get back in after some non park service work that I really didn't want to do very much. So I lucked out and got back into the Park Service.

DAVIES:

[00:28:33] Well, I asked Alan, do you have any particular habits that he doesn't understand that might have come from Fiji, like sitting on the floor drinking out of bowls?

MILLIREN: [00:28:43] I don't sit on the floor and drink out of bowls, although I, I well, I don't even know whether I could sit on the floor very much. I drink a lot of tea and I'm pretty convinced that that started in Fiji because we had tea mid-morning and mid-afternoon every day that are some of our older students would make tea for us and some of them could do it wonderfully and others got chided because they didn't do so well.

DAVIES:

[00:29:10] Yeah, it was part of the British Commonwealth at that time. It was it's now an independent republic.

MILLIREN: [00:29:15] It became independent while I was there.

DAVIES: [00:29:17] Did I recall what that was like?

MILLIREN: [00:29:19] Oh, I do. It was a very exciting time. And I'm sorry for the troubles that have come since. But at the time it was, Nadi had some very big celebrations and I went to some of the cultural dances and other things that they were doing to celebrate both the Fijian culture and the Indian culture. It was a very exciting time in Fiji.

DAVIES: Wow. MILLIREN: So I'm and I yeah, I'm sorry that things are not as good now as they were then, but at that time it was.

DAVIES: [00:29:56] So Peace Corps also has people that are retired. Would you ever consider going back?

MILLIREN: [00:30:02] Well, I might have 10 years ago, but not now. My body doesn't doesn't work as well as it used to work so well.

DAVIES: [00:30:10] What advice would you have for anybody else that's interested in joining the Peace Corps?

MILLIREN: [00:30:15] Well, you know, I have very dear friends that live out in Joyce and their granddaughters had heard about the Peace Corps and they had me talk with her. So I I told her that I didn't think I could tell her very much now because things in our whole world have changed so much. The fact that you can call all the way around the world on a little handheld phone is so different from the experience that I had. And I didn't live in a village where and I don't know now whether Peace Corps volunteers in Fiji anyway live in villages or whether. They are all in the cities. I was a city person, so I didn't have, in a sense, the full experience. I did go to one Fijian wedding in the mountains and that was quite exciting. But for the most part, I was in a city. But I now treasure the experience of being really immersed in the culture there, and I fear that Peace Corps people now would have to work at that, that they might. Because we have so many gadgets now that keep us, what's the word, tied to our culture? It is harder to go native, or experience a culture that is different from ours, or we are so dependent on our gadgets now that it would be harder. It was easier then I think.

DAVIES: [00:31:43] Yeah. And I'm sure TV has transformed them into something else. So I think we're very lucky to go when we did.

MILLIREN: [00:31:49] I am too. I'm very sure we're lucky.

DAVIES: [00:31:52] Well Pat, it's been delightful talking to you. Any final thoughts?

MILLIREN: [00:31:56] Um, no. I think the influences for me were realizing how much I got out of the Peace Corps experience, no matter whether the government

wanted other people to benefit from the Americans being there. For me, it was not that. It was how much benefit I got. And I think something that

influenced my life tremendously in retrospect is that while I was there, a

person from Fiji I, whom I didn't know or before I was there, he went to Fiji and was drafted and forced to go to Vietnam and was killed. And of

course, that was a Fiji I person. But Fiji II heard about that. And I met his parents who came to Fiji to find out why he had loved Fiji so much. That

has had an enormous impression on me all of my life to work for

nonproliferation of weapons, of non-nuclear stuff, of being anti-war,

because I felt like his life could have done so much more if he had stayed

in Fiji and not gone and been killed in Vietnam.

DAVIES: [00:33:12] I'm sorry to hear that. So why do you think he loved Fiji so

much?

MILLIREN: [00:33:18] Well, the people, I mean, it makes me cry to think about it. The

people were very loving then. They welcomed us. They forgave our foolishness of mistakes, you know, was a one-on-one or a community

event. That was wonderful.

DAVIES: [00:33:38] Yeah. I have to agree with you. Well, I think we've come to the

end. Thank you, Pat. It's been very nice talking with you. We'll look

forward to seeing this posted on the Kennedy Library.

MILLIREN: [00:33:49] Thank you very much, Jack.

DAVIES: [00:33:50] Ni sa bula. Namaste.

MILLIREN: [00:33:51] Namaste.

[END OF INTERVIEW]