

Ralph Gilman Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Ralph Gilman
Interviewer: Robert Klein
Date of Interview: September 13, 2005
Location of Interview: San Jose, California
Length: 60 pages

Biographical Note

Ralph Gilman served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana from 1962 to 1964 as a math and science teacher.

Access

Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed November 1, 2005, 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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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

Ralph Gilman, recorded interview by Robert Klein, September 13, 2005, 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

Ralph Gilman

September 13, 2005
San Jose, California

By Robert Klein

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

KLEIN: [00:00:06] Today is September 13th, 2005. This is Bob Klein, and I'm interviewing Ralph Gilman, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana in 1962 to '64 in a secondary education project. So let's go back, oh, maybe a year before you joined the Peace Corps and talk about what was going on.

GILMAN: [00:00:38] I was, uh, I was at Stanford University. I had my senior year, I was a sponsor at, uh, working for the Dean of Students. I was at the freshmen dormitory. I was in charge of part of one of the floors of the freshmen dormitory.

KLEIN: [00:00:56] What were you studying?

GILMAN: [00:00:58] I was studying physics in Stanford.

KLEIN: [00:01:00] And at that point, what kind of career goal did you have for yourself?

GILMAN: [00:01:07] At that point, I knew that I wasn't going to be a physicist.

KLEIN: [00:01:12] OK.

GILMAN: [00:01:13] Trying to figure out what I, what else I should do with my life.

KLEIN: [00:01:16] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:01:17] And working with the dean of students had just, he had, um, Al, Albert [Allard] Lowenstein. Al Lowenstein had just come on the staff. And I got to know him and, you know, probably know Al from his work in New York City and so forth. And he was encouraging people to do good social work and join the Peace Corps and so forth. So he was quite an influence on my life. And as I told you today, I was, hadn't. I'd been working my way through school. And so I didn't have a lot of chance to go traveling or do any traveling. So I thought that was a good opportunity for me to join the Peace Corps, get some traveling, do some, do some good things.

KLEIN: [00:02:04] Yeah. Well, let's go back a little bit. Where did you grow up?

GILMAN: [00:02:09] I first grew up as a child in Hawaii during the Second World War. My father was, uh, was he wasn't a military, but he had. He was working as a foreman on the docks when they bombed Pearl Harbor. He wasn't hurt. Then we moved to Maui. And I grew up on Maui, basically.

KLEIN: [00:02:30] Until what age?

GILMAN: [00:02:31] About age seven. And then we came back to the Bay Area here in San Francisco.

KLEIN: [00:02:36] So most of your school years and everything were in San Francisco?

GILMAN: [00:02:40] In San Francisco.

KLEIN: [00:02:41] And are you an only child?

GILMAN: [00:02:45] I have a sister, five years younger.

KLEIN: [00:02:47] Oh, OK. And growing up in high school, what kind of activities did you do? What did you do with your summertime? Did you do any travel?

GILMAN: [00:03:00] Um, I grew up in, uh, I started working for the California Division of Highways. They were taking interns on for becoming surveyors and so forth. And that was a summer job. And I started that when I was about 14 or so, my second year of high school.

KLEIN: [00:03:22] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:03:23] And would go off on summers and work for them. So I worked my way through high school to great extent too. I went to Lowell High School in San Francisco, which was a college prep school, had a lot of a lot of wealthy society people there. I didn't have any concept of that whole society thing. And I was a swimmer.

KLEIN: [00:03:51] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:03:51] My father was a swimmer and he'd been to the Olympics. And so I would go to school, study, and come home. I'd go to school in the afternoons, go and swim a couple hours a day.

KLEIN: [00:04:04] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:04:05] I ended up my last year, um.

KLEIN: [00:04:07] In high school?

GILMAN: [00:04:08] In high school, having done quite a lot of, as a very good swimmer. So I broke all the records and all that kind of stuff. And, um, it so happened that the high school coach of the swimming team was also the

football coach. So he introduced me. And so, you know, I got all these awards and so forth. And just after that was the election for student body president. So I won for student body president. And so that, that and the application got me into Stanford basically, being able to.

KLEIN: [00:04:44] Did you go in as a scholarship student?

GILMAN: [00:04:45] Yeah, I went as a. I went as a swimming scholarship, and then they later on put it over to an academic scholarship.

KLEIN: [00:04:53] Right. And when you first started, how did, had you been interested in science?

GILMAN: [00:04:58] I mean, I started off in engineering because that was sort of the thing to do.

KLEIN: [00:05:03] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:05:04] I really hadn't been, although I went to a good college prep school.

KLEIN: [00:05:08] Right.

GILMAN: [00:05:09] And there were good teachers there. I really didn't know how to study. I didn't really know much. So when I hit Stanford, it was quite a lot of work for me just to get up to speed and, um, feeling. I felt a lot of conflict. And it was like, I remember my first year I would try to work, I'd read, I'd read a passage, I'd read the same page over and over and over again because I was trying so hard. I got to get this done, I got to get this done kind of thing. And it wasn't easy. So in fact, I didn't really learn how to really learn how to think and study until like until years later.

KLEIN: [00:05:43] Yeah. OK. So let's jump now back to your senior year. Do you recall when you first heard about the Peace Corps?

GILMAN: [00:05:52] Kennedy was still president. And there's a lot of peace, a lot of Peace Corps stuff. So it was just in the news all the time at that point.

They were starting the Peace Corps. And I guess, I don't know if I first heard about it there. There wasn't any recruiting on campus necessarily, I think.

KLEIN: [00:06:07] Not in those days.

GILMAN: [00:06:08] I just, I just signed up. I called, you know, wrote in the application for it.

KLEIN: [00:06:13] Do you recall that it was a fairly lengthy application process with references?

GILMAN: [00:06:17] The only thing I really remember about that whole thing was when I was accepted and, you know. When I was accepted to go and they told me I was going to go to Ghana.

KLEIN: [00:06:30] Right.

GILMAN: [00:06:31] I had heard that Ghana was a fairly easy place. It wasn't you didn't have to suffer too much. So I went to Al Lowenstein. I said, Al, I want to call and tell them to send me something more difficult. And he said, don't do it. If you do that, they'll probably not take you, they'll think you're a kook.

KLEIN: [00:06:47] Yeah. Yeah. Good.

GILMAN: [00:06:48] So, um, so I didn't do that. And then the second thing was that they sent around the, uh, I had to get myself fingerprinted at the local police station. And then they sent, they came around with the, uh, was it FBI or?

KLEIN: [00:07:05] FBI background check.

GILMAN: [00:07:06] Background check. And they, of course, they came to all the students who lived in the dorm with me, and they all told me all the stories they told these guys, what kind of a person I was. And so that was interesting.

KLEIN: [00:07:18] How did your family react to your decision to join?

GILMAN: [00:07:26] Uh, very. My mother was OK, very positive. She was concerned about me being away from her for such a long time because they were divorced. My father was dead at that time.

KLEIN: [00:07:35] Ah, OK.

GILMAN: [00:07:36] So it was. And she, that's why we didn't have a lot of money going to school, because she was just trying to work to keep up things. And, um, so. So that was fine.

KLEIN: [00:07:50] Do you recall your sister's reaction?

GILMAN: [00:07:53] No, she was, she was in high school, so she, she didn't know, she wasn't too much involved with it.

KLEIN: [00:07:57] And how about your peers at Stanford?

GILMAN: [00:08:00] Stanford was very, it was very positive about that. They thought that was a good thing to do.

KLEIN: [00:08:04] Had had others around you joined the Peace Corps at that time?

GILMAN: [00:08:09] I don't remember anybody else who actually. There were a couple of other people, I think, but I don't remember who they were at all. It was more, the influence I had was mainly from Al Lowenstein.

KLEIN: [00:08:20] And at the point you began the application process, did you have any alternatives in mind if you didn't get accepted? Did you have any sense of what you were going to do?

GILMAN: [00:08:29] No, I figured I was gonna get accepted.

KLEIN: [00:08:33] Fair enough. So you must have gotten either a telegram or a letter, saying report to?

GILMAN: [00:08:40] Yeah, I got it saying you're accepted and that kind of stuff. And then they said, report to Berkeley, right? I said, oh, shit, yeah, Berkeley. I mean, they could at least send me to New York State or something different, right?

KLEIN: [00:08:53] Right.

GILMAN: [00:08:53] But of course, the Berkeley was a was. We stayed at the international house there in Berkeley.

KLEIN: [00:08:58] OK.

GILMAN: [00:08:58] And did the summer there. And as I wrote, I wrote some articles while I was in the Peace Corps, which they published in the Stanford newspaper, the daily newspaper. And as I said in there, I said that that was a very strong. That was a, how do I say? One of the most, not intense experiences, but to go through the training, the summer training.

KLEIN: [00:09:25] Yeah. Intense in what way?

GILMAN: [00:09:29] It wasn't intense. It was like, um, you felt you were. I felt that I was just cooking on all cylinders. I was just totally involved, that they were hitting me physically with all the physical things they were doing. They were hitting me with, of course, all the shots we had to take. They were hitting me with all the intellectual stuff, learning a little bit about the language and the culture. And of course, you were at Berkeley, too, I think, right?

KLEIN: [00:09:54] Yeah. Well, let's go back. Do you remember when you first reported into Berkeley? Now you're in the midst of a bunch of people who also joined the Peace Corps.

GILMAN: [00:10:07] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:10:07] And I think inevitably, you match yourself up against them. Did you recall any of that, you know, how you felt in relation to the group?

GILMAN: [00:10:17] Nothing negative, it was all pretty positive.

KLEIN: [00:10:19] No, no, but.

GILMAN: [00:10:19] No, just a matter of going to classes with everybody, getting up and going and reading all the books they gave us to read.

KLEIN: [00:10:30] And how big the group was it, do you recall?

GILMAN: [00:10:33] It was about 50 or 60 people or something like that.

KLEIN: [00:10:35] OK.

GILMAN: [00:10:37] Men and women.

KLEIN: [00:10:38] Any married couples?

GILMAN: [00:10:41] I don't remember. I don't think so.

KLEIN: [00:10:43] Age for the most part, age range?

GILMAN: [00:10:45] Right out of college. All young people out of college.

KLEIN: [00:10:48] OK.

GILMAN: [00:10:49] Um. There weren't, I don't think there were. I mean, most of them are. I don't remember anybody who was, had been in the military. I think that.

KLEIN: [00:11:00] Now training usually has various components, area studies. And as we know, that was run by David Apter and Sinclair Drake. Your impression of that, do you recall?

GILMAN: [00:11:14] I thought, I was just trying to absorb everything as quick as, as much as I could, and going to classes was really. What got me was that they were, the physical ed was more oriented toward around, the physical education, was more about how do you teach physical education. It wasn't really to give us physical education. It was, you know, how do you create games for kids to play on the field, and how do you teach interesting things to kids? That was to me was very interesting. The, um, the language, the language, the medical we had. We did a lot of medical stuff, how do you keep yourself healthy?

KLEIN: [00:11:58] How was your language training structured?

GILMAN: [00:12:02] Uh, it was, we didn't go into a lot of language. It was just an introduction to Twi.

KLEIN: [00:12:07] And was everyone taking Twi?

GILMAN: [00:12:09] Yeah, I think so. At that point they didn't know where they're going.

KLEIN: [00:12:13] And it wasn't, I mean, it wasn't implied that you had to learn the language in order to qualify as a volunteer?

GILMAN: [00:12:19] So the whole idea there was that, like we said, it's a former British colony.

KLEIN: [00:12:23] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:12:24] And you're going to be teaching in English and you just want to pick up a little bit in order to get some of the culture, in another culture and so forth.

KLEIN: [00:12:32] Now, another big area of training is what they call technical studies. You had not trained as a teacher. You knew you were going into a teaching program. What did they do to prepare you for the skills?

GILMAN: [00:12:47] Frankly, I don't remember too much of that. But I think they did do a little bit of that.

KLEIN: [00:12:53] Was there a student teaching or a practice teaching?

GILMAN: [00:12:56] We did not do any student teaching.

KLEIN: [00:12:58] OK.

GILMAN: [00:12:58] We, um, they did go into some of the like lesson plans, how to do lesson plans and how to structure. I remember they gave us some books on that and workbooks. One of the big remembrances I have of that was we, they, one. We had to go for a night and work at the emergency room at the hospital to get an idea of just, you know, how to deal with the emergency people and so forth. And that was just an experience we had.

KLEIN: [00:13:32] And another big component of training is what's called the selection process. Do you recall psychological testing, seeing talking to psychiatrists or psychologists?

GILMAN: [00:13:47] I don't remember that.

KLEIN: [00:13:48] OK. So you don't recall that.

GILMAN: [00:13:52] It wasn't, it wasn't a, uh, something that was to me was stressful, I guess.

KLEIN: [00:13:59] Yeah. I mean, so you don't remember being concerned about whether you were going to be chosen to go?

GILMAN: [00:14:04] No.

KLEIN: [00:14:05] OK. At any point during the training, did you begin to have any kind of second thoughts that maybe, eh, maybe this is not such a great idea?

GILMAN: [00:14:17] No, I was looking forward to it. I was going to, I felt it was great.

KLEIN: [00:14:20] OK.

GILMAN: [00:14:21] As I said, the whole thing was I felt that here I was basically at the top, you know, clicking on all cylinders, right?

KLEIN: [00:14:28] Oh, OK. Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:14:29] Young, energetic. Emotionally prepared, physically prepared, mentally prepared.

KLEIN: [00:14:37] Did anyone from Peace Corps Washington come out to talk to the group?

GILMAN: [00:14:42] They probably did. It's not something I remember too much.

KLEIN: [00:14:45] And do you recall any discussions about political sensitivity going into the country? Any things you had to be concerned about?

GILMAN: [00:14:57] Yeah, a little bit because at that time we did have some discussions about the Young Pioneers. And some of the influence of the, of the eastern, of Eastern Europe on some of the structures. And the fact that you've just got to be a little bit careful about, um, not careful so much, but just to be, that this is, the newspapers are very slanted, have their own views.

KLEIN: [00:15:24] And do you remember if during training you were, uh, you did any kind of the peer grading or listing of people you'd like to be assigned with, not assigned with?

GILMAN: [00:15:35] I don't remember.

KLEIN: [00:15:36] Or any preference for assignment?

GILMAN: [00:15:39] Urban or rural.

KLEIN: [00:15:39] OK. How long was training, do you recall?

GILMAN: [00:15:44] It was a summer. So we went out of Stanford in the, you know, what, June or something like that. Started went to Berkeley immediately. And by September we were, when the school started, we were in Ghana.

KLEIN: [00:15:57] OK. Did you have any home leave from the end of training before you went?

GILMAN: [00:16:02] Well, I think we had a week, a week off.

KLEIN: [00:16:04] And big farewells?

GILMAN: [00:16:07] Went to see the family, my mother and so forth. Had some farewells. Took off a couple of days, a couple of days early, again from Al Lowenstein, they were having a big, um. They were having the National Student Conference or one of the big conferences that he had been involved with at Ohio State. And my father had been to Ohio State and I'd never been in Ohio and so I wanted to do some travel. So I did take off and I, instead of flying to New York, where the plane left for Ghana.

KLEIN: [00:16:35] Right.

GILMAN: [00:16:36] I flew to Ohio State and went to the student conference for a day or two there and then took the busses, took a bus from there to see the countryside a little bit into New York City and then spent a couple of days in New York City. Bought a camera.

KLEIN: [00:16:51] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:16:52] And then we all took off to Ghana.

KLEIN: [00:16:56] Had the group sort of divided into cliques or were friendships formed, do you recall particularly?

GILMAN: [00:17:04] I don't think that I ever had any sense of cliques.

KLEIN: [00:17:07] OK.

GILMAN: [00:17:07] Well, I never had as much sense of that anyway.

KLEIN: [00:17:10] Was there a, did you have a strong group feeling?

GILMAN: [00:17:15] I felt there was a strong group feeling.

KLEIN: [00:17:17] Yeah. OK.

GILMAN: [00:17:19] Yeah. The, um, there were a couple of people who stand out, who were different or sort of different. One girl, a very, very pretty girl, her father, I think, had been in a diplomatic corps. And so she knew, she knew what was going on. And had a lot of connections and so forth. And she sort of stood off a little bit because she basically knew what was happening. And, uh, but beyond that, everybody was to me was just part of the group.

KLEIN: [00:17:54] Sometimes groups come together during the selection process because someone is selected out who they feel shouldn't have been. And, you know, you sort of pull together and say that, but you don't recall any of that?

GILMAN: [00:18:06] I don't recall that.

KLEIN: [00:18:06] OK. Was it a charter flight to?

GILMAN: [00:18:09] Yeah, it was. It was a first class charter flight. And after that, I understood that was the last first class charter flight, that we had free booze.

KLEIN: [00:18:18] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:18:19] Although we were OK when we got, I don't think anybody was inebriated.

KLEIN: [00:18:25] Right.

GILMAN: [00:18:25] When we got there. It was, I think we, I think it was they stopped in the Azores or something like that.

KLEIN: [00:18:33] They had to refuel.

GILMAN: [00:18:34] And the biggest thing I remember about the arrival was I had bought a very light suit jacket, you know, a seersucker type.

KLEIN: [00:18:46] Yeah, right.

GILMAN: [00:18:47] And they opened the door of the airplane. It was like my clothes just gave up. And when they just melted, when the hot, warm air came in, and I could just feel everything just like, like just giving up and wrinkling on it.

KLEIN: [00:19:01] Was there a reception at the airport?

GILMAN: [00:19:03] So they took us, they put us in a bus right away and took us out to the university. And we spent the first two weeks in Ghana because, you know, Ghana was unique in that the government was sponsoring us, did our pay while we're in country. And so they wanted to do, the government wanted to do an orientation for us along with the Peace Corps. So we spent, I think, two weeks or ten days at the university living in a student dormitory and then doing trips around in the southern part of Ghana.

KLEIN: [00:19:39] Right. Do you recall your first impressions of being in Africa?

GILMAN: [00:19:44] My first impression, obviously, having never gone out of the country before.

KLEIN: [00:19:49] Right.

GILMAN: [00:19:49] My first impression was, my God, what am I doing? Um, not what am I doing, that was. Um. The smells, of course. And I think, I think as I remember. I remember thinking at the time, you know, I must be going through some culture shock because I'm sleeping 12 hours a day, you know?

KLEIN: [00:20:13] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:20:13] It's just like reintegrate, integrating all this stuff. But that only happened for a couple of days and then, you know, and I got my sandals on and got my shorts on and was able to basically do what we needed to do.

KLEIN: [00:20:29] I mean, you're suddenly thrown into a completely black world. I mean, it's all Africans.

GILMAN: [00:20:35] Having grown up in, I've never, being growing up in the islands, in Hawaii. And I just didn't have that sense. I don't, I never grew up with the sense of racial difference, differentiate. I mean, I knew. But and also having never really ran into a lot of, uh, I mean I grew up in San Francisco on what we would call the poor side of town, right?

KLEIN: [00:21:01] Right.

GILMAN: [00:21:01] But overall, I didn't know that. I just was, I was just living my life.

KLEIN: [00:21:06] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:21:06] I didn't really, I didn't really grow up with any kind of sense of racial differences. And so people were people to me. They were black or white. They were just people.

KLEIN: [00:21:14] Yeah. Do you recall if any of the others in the group were having more culture shock than you?

GILMAN: [00:21:24] I think. I don't think so. I think, because I think the other reason is because a lot of the other people had traveled in Europe and been out of the country a little bit. And I, this is my first real trip out of anywhere.

KLEIN: [00:21:35] Yeah. And while you were at Legon.

GILMAN: [00:21:40] Uh huh.

KLEIN: [00:21:41] Do you recall if some of the Peace Corps volunteers in the country came to join you during the orientation?

GILMAN: [00:21:50] Oh, I don't even remember that. You probably you did. You were one of them probably.

KLEIN: [00:21:55] But you don't remember.

GILMAN: [00:21:57] I don't remember that at all. I tell you what, you want me to tell you what I do remember?

KLEIN: [00:22:00] Sure, of course.

GILMAN: [00:22:00] They took us on busses around different places. They took us to, and this is a story I've retold many times.

KLEIN: [00:22:06] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:22:07] To one of the, one of the suburbs, one of the towns along the coast near Accra. I forget exactly. [inaudible]

KLEIN: [00:22:19] It depends which way you're going, but yeah.

GILMAN: [00:22:20] Towards the west.

KLEIN: [00:22:22] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:22:23] And they were having a festival, you know, a lot of dancing and so forth. And they brought us up to the second floor of this building with, which was the I guess was the city, city town hall, with all the shutters open and they had chairs. We're all sitting in chairs and this guy's up on the front of the room and he's giving us a lecture, right? This is the mayor of the town. He's lecturing us.

KLEIN: [00:22:48] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:22:49] And he's saying to us, if he was going to build three statues in Ghana. He would build three statues, right? One of course would be the Kwame Nkrumah, the president that led them to freedom. The second would be to the Aborigines' Rights [Protection] Society, which is a group of Ghanaians who studied in Oxford during the turn of the century and got the parliament to pass a law saying that foreigners couldn't buy land because the *ingota*, because the land was held in common by the chief. The chief didn't own the land. He was just a caretaker. So you couldn't buy that. The third would be six foot high female anopheles mosquito, which kept the white man out of West Africa.

KLEIN: [00:23:35] That's great.

GILMAN: [00:23:36] I thought that was great.

KLEIN: [00:23:36] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:23:37] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:23:38] So during the orientation, you were feeling fairly comfortable about being in Ghana?

GILMAN: [00:23:45] Yeah, I felt pretty comfortable. We, of course, we went out to the local, uh. We had a chance to get out to the local high life bars.

KLEIN: [00:23:52] The Lido.

GILMAN: [00:23:55] The Lido, which is where they dance at nighttime especially and the highlife, which is the music. And so we had, we were getting acculturated.

KLEIN: [00:24:06] That's almost a rite of passage, you know, to go to the Lido and dance the highlife. Yeah, right. And at what point did someone come up and say, well, this is your assignment and this is what you're going to be doing?

GILMAN: [00:24:20] Somewhere along there they said, you're going, you're going, we've decided you're going to Dunkwa, right, which is the town they're going to here.

KLEIN: [00:24:27] Right.

GILMAN: [00:24:28] And myself and Don Fontaine, the two of us.

KLEIN: [00:24:30] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:24:31] And um.

KLEIN: [00:24:33] So do you have any sense of what was going on with the secondary schools? You know, Dunkwa was what they called the GED school, the new government school.

GILMAN: [00:24:44] They gave us, during the orientation, they basically said that, you know, the education in Ghana has been a very, has been well established. The British had had very good schools, mostly church schools, I guess, church related schools along the coast. And they were, they had very prestigious. I always felt that it was like in, to get into secondary school was like getting into college here. You had to take the exam and if you did very well and or if you had rich parents and well connected, you would get into the best schools. And then if you couldn't get into the best schools, you go to the second schools. If you couldn't get in there, you go to the third schools. And if you couldn't get anywhere else, you'd go to Dunkwa.

KLEIN: [00:25:25] Yeah, OK.

GILMAN: [00:25:27] Because we had just, the school had just started out and it was brand new and.

KLEIN: [00:25:32] OK. And how did you get from? Well, let me ask. Do you remember Peace Corps staff then?

GILMAN: [00:25:45] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:25:47] And what role they were going to play in your, in getting you out there and supporting you once you were out there. Do you have any sense of that at the beginning?

GILMAN: [00:25:59] No, I didn't have much sense of that. I, you know, there was a doctor there. We knew that Carter was in charge of the Peace Corps there. I had, so, you know, I was just running around on the busses, having a good time. And I didn't have too much sense of those guys, of what they were doing, if that's hat you mean?

KLEIN: [00:26:23] OK, yeah. Yeah. So but you were content that there was a structure within which you would work?

GILMAN: [00:26:29] It was very good. And they also had a hostel of course in Accra, which we didn't, we didn't get into until. Well, I guess we stayed there a couple of times. But the idea that there was quite an infrastructure that they laid out for us.

KLEIN: [00:26:41] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:26:42] We were, of course, we were the first white people in, or Europeans as they commonly say, the white people to actually hitchhike around. Because up to that time, the British and everybody else, all the expatriates were in cars. So it was an interesting thing for the Ghanaians to see us hitchhiking around.

KLEIN: [00:26:58] Now when you got the assignment.

GILMAN: [00:27:00] Or going on bores.

KLEIN: [00:27:02] When you got the assignment, it was you and Don Fontaine to go to Dunkwa. Had you known Don particularly in training or just one of the group?

GILMAN: [00:27:11] He was just one of the group. And we, they put us together and we went up there. The headmaster sent a taxi for us.

KLEIN: [00:27:20] OK.

GILMAN: [00:27:21] From Dunkwa, which is like, what, three or four hour drive, right?

KLEIN: [00:27:26] Right, at least.

GILMAN: [00:27:27] At least. And so like it's interesting. This taxi came and picked us up and we ended up 4 hours later, 5 hours later, in Dunkwa.

KLEIN: [00:27:34] Do you remember shopping in Accra or your, uh, what was it called, your settling in allowance, mosquito nets and pots and pans and? Don't let me put words in your mouth.

GILMAN: [00:27:47] I'm sure we got all that stuff because I remember we had, when we got to the house, I sprayed, I sprayed the bed very well with all kinds of insect repellent and stuff like that.

KLEIN: [00:27:56] Well, talk about arriving at the campus at the school.

GILMAN: [00:28:01] So it was a long trip, of course, on the taxi. And it was going through all these new areas for us.

KLEIN: [00:28:08] Right.

GILMAN: [00:28:08] And all the people along the road who were selling the bread and the bananas and all that kind of stuff. The women and, um, I didn't know necessarily too much about Dunkwa at that time. And so we arrived in Dunkwa. It was sort of like it was late. It was getting on late in the afternoon. And we, so the headmaster was there. So they drove us up to the school and the school was up on a hill. So it was very nice. And you could see, you could see around. And the headmaster greeted us and we got to know him a little bit. And I think he had dinner for us at his house.

KLEIN: [00:28:49] Do you recall his name?

GILMAN: [00:28:51] No, I don't.

KLEIN: [00:28:51] OK.

GILMAN: [00:28:53] Um, what I do remember of him was he was a short man.

KLEIN: [00:28:57] Right.

GILMAN: [00:28:57] And he was not from the tribe. He wasn't from the Denkyira tribe. He was from the coastal tribe. And that being short and not from that area had very strong effect on him.

KLEIN: [00:29:12] So you, uh, you had dinner with the headmaster.

GILMAN: [00:29:16] Had dinner with him. And then he showed us to our, we saw the bungalow. They had a cement brick bungalow where the two of us stayed. We had two bedrooms.

KLEIN: [00:29:28] Have you been accustomed to taking care of yourself in a house? I mean, you're.

GILMAN: [00:29:35] So, and we have of course, we. I don't know if the first day if he had arranged it, but we have been told in during training that, you know, it's expected that you're going to have a houseboy.

KLEIN: [00:29:47] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [00:29:49] It's not something that you have a servant. It's just, it's more a matter of if you don't have a houseboy, what are you trying to do, take your money and go home or? You know, aren't you helping out the local people? So you're expected to have a houseboy to help out. And because you basically can't get out in the sunshine and work that hard.

KLEIN: [00:30:06] Yeah. All right. Let's stay with the living arrangements, then we'll get to the teaching. So you had a houseboy?

GILMAN: [00:30:15] Yeah, it was a cement brick bungalow. It was very nice.

KLEIN: [00:30:18] And water, electricity?

GILMAN: [00:30:21] Electricity part of the evening, because we had our own generator they'd turn on.

KLEIN: [00:30:25] Right.

GILMAN: [00:30:26] And when the generator is off, the electricity went off. But in the evening we had electricity. Running water was fine. And a gas or kerosene refrigerator.

KLEIN: [00:30:41] That's right. Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:30:42] Yeah. And it was a living room and two bedrooms and a courtyard in back. A little courtyard in back of the thing.

KLEIN: [00:30:51] And the steward lived back there, the house boy?

GILMAN: [00:30:56] The steward? Actually, he lived in the little village and he would come up and he didn't live with us.

KLEIN: [00:31:01] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [00:31:02] He lived. He had his own. He had his own.

KLEIN: [00:31:05] Did anyone living behind you?

GILMAN: [00:31:07] No. There wasn't a separate house behind it.

KLEIN: [00:31:08] OK. So how did, did you let the houseboy take care of the whole thing about meals, I mean?

GILMAN: [00:31:19] Yeah, he took, he took care of the meals. We, yeah. He would do, he would do the shopping, go to the market and do the. [tape break]

KLEIN: [00:31:34] OK. OK, well, let's.

GILMAN: [00:31:38] So the houseboy took care of the food. Cleaned the house for us. He did all the shopping, the market. Um.

KLEIN: [00:31:51] Was he an older guy, or is it?

GILMAN: [00:31:53] A young boy. Yeah, a young boy. He was, he got a girl pregnant while we were there. So he had come wanted extra chop money. We helped him, paid him a little bit extra to get money to so that his, uh, the lady could have food for their pregnancy.

KLEIN: [00:32:13] And he was from the area?

GILMAN: [00:32:15] Yeah, he was local.

KLEIN: [00:32:17] Why was he interested in school or had he done school?

GILMAN: [00:32:20] No, he wasn't interested in school at all. You know, he just. He was. But I think he was recommended through the school to the people there. There was another although, another Ghanaian teacher there that taught physical ed.

KLEIN: [00:32:37] Right.

GILMAN: [00:32:37] Maybe he was the one that recommended the young boy. Somehow he got ahold of him.

KLEIN: [00:32:40] OK. Now, let's talk about, uh. What was Don's background? Had he been a teacher or?

GILMAN: [00:32:49] No, he, Don hadn't been a teacher, but he'd been to, um, he was a liberal arts English major. So he taught. I taught science and math and he taught English and history and things like that.

KLEIN: [00:33:03] Right. And he had not taught before so he was a novice just like you.

GILMAN: [00:33:08] Correct.

KLEIN: [00:33:10] Who else? How large was the school?

GILMAN: [00:33:13] The school was a fairly big school. It was a, we had a three two-story buildings. Three, two. Plus a, um, in the back an eating place, what do you call it?

KLEIN: [00:33:33] Dining room.

GILMAN: [00:33:33] Dining room and the kitchen with the, where the ladies fixed food for the students.

KLEIN: [00:33:38] Right. So it was a boarding school?

GILMAN: [00:33:40] It was a boarding school.

KLEIN: [00:33:41] Was it coed?

GILMAN: [00:33:42] It was coed. There was a separate, there was a. There was actually was there was two school buildings and the third. The third floor. The ground floor or the ground, the ground floor was where the classes were right. And above that was the, was where the, um, the boy students, the students lived. And there was a, uh, the building you come up to, the central building, was the administration building.

KLEIN: [00:34:11] Right, right.

GILMAN: [00:34:12] And that's where the girls lived, upstairs there.

KLEIN: [00:34:14] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [00:34:14] So there are more boys and girls.

KLEIN: [00:34:16] Right. And was it, were there three forms? You remember?

GILMAN: [00:34:20] We had, I think it was the second year the school was open, so there two forms.

KLEIN: [00:34:23] Two forms. And then they added on. Who else was on faculty?

GILMAN: [00:34:29] Don, myself, and the, uh, I think the Ghanaian teacher who was teaching physical education, soccer and so forth.

KLEIN: [00:34:42] And that was it?

GILMAN: [00:34:43] That was about it, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:34:44] Just the three of you? There must have been.

GILMAN: [00:34:46] There must have been someone else.

KLEIN: [00:34:47] OK.

GILMAN: [00:34:48] I forgot.

KLEIN: [00:34:49] And the headmaster.

GILMAN: [00:34:50] And the headmaster.

KLEIN: [00:34:50] Do you remember getting your teaching assignment and having any sense of what it is you were supposed to be doing?

GILMAN: [00:34:58] Yeah, we had the, we had the books there, and there are books that we that we had to teach against that. Frankly, if I look back on it, I'd say I was not a very good teacher. I was learning a lot about how to teach and how to and how to get the subject across. I had, uh, I wasn't necessarily teaching to the British system. I was trying to teach them to think and trying to interest them in science and math and so forth. So I was, we, I was teaching to the book. We had the books. They had to go through the books. There are textbooks for the form.

KLEIN: [00:35:36] Right.

GILMAN: [00:35:36] But I didn't stick, I didn't stick enough to that because it was important to get that done.

KLEIN: [00:35:45] So you were teaching general science?

GILMAN: [00:35:47] Yeah, just general science. We had general science books.

KLEIN: [00:35:50] Did you have math also?

GILMAN: [00:35:51] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:35:51] Did you teach math also?

GILMAN: [00:35:53] Uh huh.

KLEIN: [00:35:53] And math?

GILMAN: [00:35:53] And math.

KLEIN: [00:35:55] And Don taught English?

GILMAN: [00:35:56] English. I remember he was, he was teaching 1984.

KLEIN: [00:36:01] OK.

GILMAN: [00:36:02] George Orwell. Didn't go over big with the local officials.

KLEIN: [00:36:05] That was a set book? In other words, it was.

GILMAN: [00:36:09] Part of the set of books, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:36:11] But just to set the context, the students would go to school for five years, at the end of which they would sit for the West African Exams Council set exams.

GILMAN: [00:36:23] Right.

KLEIN: [00:36:23] So as of your first year, that was still a couple of years down the road.

GILMAN: [00:36:29] Right.

KLEIN: [00:36:31] So the students didn't particularly pressure you? Or did the students pressure you?

GILMAN: [00:36:35] The second year they were getting more interested in this.

KLEIN: [00:36:38] But they didn't say, please, sir, that's not on the syllabus.

GILMAN: [00:36:43] They didn't go that far.

KLEIN: [00:36:44] OK. All right. Well, how did you take the teaching, do you recall your? I mean, you're suddenly in front of, what, 35, 40 kids and none of whose names you know.

GILMAN: [00:36:54] Yeah, I had done a lot of standing in front of people, doing things with them during schools and so forth, so that being in front of the classroom didn't bother me.

KLEIN: [00:37:09] Right.

GILMAN: [00:37:10] And teaching didn't bother me. But it was, it was a matter of just being able to get the things across to the students that I thought was good. And writing the, writing the exams and grading the exams and trying to keep up with all that stuff. Which I think overall, I mean, like I said before, I don't, I think I could have done a much better job with that.

KLEIN: [00:37:35] Yeah. Two problems that classically the Peace Corps teachers had in this situation. One is adjusting to the students' language and they're adjusting to your language. I mean, American English and Ghanaian English are two different things.

GILMAN: [00:37:54] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:37:55] Do you recall that particularly?

GILMAN: [00:37:56] Yeah, that was fun. That's obviously a fun thing. The, uh, the students were fascinated by American English and American slang, as they called it.

KLEIN: [00:38:07] Right.

GILMAN: [00:38:08] And they would put rocks in their mouth and say, I'm gonna speak American slang. And they, uh. So I go to class, I think it was like the first day of class. You know, I'd say, you know, you take some water and, ha, ha, ha! The whole class is breaking up. This is so funny. I said, what, what did I? What happened? Right? And they'd say, water, you know, the way we pronounce water in here is W-A-D apostrophe R. Right?

KLEIN: [00:38:41] Right.

GILMAN: [00:38:41] And the way they pronounce water is water, right? And so they thought that was so funny that I was going, I was doing wader instead of water. So I quickly learned to speak very, enunciate.

KLEIN: [00:38:55] Right.

GILMAN: [00:38:56] And speak slowly.

KLEIN: [00:38:57] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:38:58] And such, so much so that when I ended up getting out of the Peace Corps years later, people thought. I came back here. I was still doing the same thing. People thought I was speaking down to them. I wasn't. I was.

KLEIN: [00:39:11] Yeah. How did you, do you remember how you addressed the students? Did you learn their names?

GILMAN: [00:39:21] Yeah, I tried to learn their names.

KLEIN: [00:39:23] First name, last name?

GILMAN: [00:39:25] Kofi, first name usually.

KLEIN: [00:39:26] Yeah. And that went?

GILMAN: [00:39:29] And the students were organized themselves or they, they were. They would organize themselves. There were obviously some students who were very bright and other students that weren't. So there was obviously a very mixture of academic talent.

KLEIN: [00:39:45] Right.

GILMAN: [00:39:45] And the ones who were very bright could catch on very quickly and they would help some of the other kids. They all slept upstairs on wooden, on wooden slats, you know, and they wash their own clothes themselves. They were. They ironed their own clothes, white shirts, khaki shorts.

KLEIN: [00:40:11] Right.

GILMAN: [00:40:12] White shirts were always pure white, always well ironed. So they did a lot of good stuff to keep themselves there.

KLEIN: [00:40:19] And was the, like form one? Was it split to 1A and 1B?

GILMAN: [00:40:24] Not that I remember.

KLEIN: [00:40:25] OK. All right. Because sometimes they would put the better kids in A and the rest in B. The other difficulty that American teachers often have going into the situation is traditionally the Ghanaian students are fantastic with rote learning. And the American teacher comes in and wants to have them think and discuss. And do you recall?

GILMAN: [00:40:56] You know, in science and math, it's a little bit easier because you're not, you're not talking about, you know, interpreting a book or something like that.

KLEIN: [00:41:07] Right.

GILMAN: [00:41:08] So you're just trying to get across the concepts of the math and concepts of the science. What is, you know, oxygen? And I tried to do a lot of, I tried to set up a lot of experiments. I sent off for some of the, some equipment that to be imported that we could use, like beakers and Bunsen burners and stuff like that.

KLEIN: [00:41:31] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:41:31] So we could show the students to some of the things. And electrolysis of water and that kind of stuff. So we tried to, tried to do what I thought was, so they could actually see it happening and physically touch it and so forth. Not everybody, they couldn't. It was only like in the front of the room. Um. As we went through the syllabus I tried to do, to show them the, um, what was the, how this actually works, so they can see it. Um. The rote learning.

KLEIN: [00:42:18] You know, if you gave them.

GILMAN: [00:42:19] I didn't have a, I had a sense. Yes, it was much easier for them to learn by rote.

KLEIN: [00:42:23] I mean, they could memorize long passages and not necessarily understand that the content.

GILMAN: [00:42:30] I had, it was more of a sense that the kids. The brighter kids caught on very, very quickly, and a lot of kids just weren't going to get it. And so there was a lot of, um, tried to help encourage a lot of help between the students too, outside the classroom, so that they would be working with each other a lot to help each other.

KLEIN: [00:42:54] Was there a point in the first semester or two where you had a sense that you were actually teaching, you know, you were achieving something? Although obviously you were somewhat dissatisfied.

GILMAN: [00:43:08] Yeah, I thought I was, I thought I was doing an OK job.

KLEIN: [00:43:11] Right.

GILMAN: [00:43:12] But I thought, I thought that I just hadn't any skills in doing it yet.

KLEIN: [00:43:17] Did you test? Did you do regular testing of the students?

GILMAN: [00:43:20] Yeah, we did. We did exams every so often. And I, you know, I created the exams. I tried out. And what I found out was that very, it was very different in their writing. Of course, their command of English. One of the big issues was between the different students was their level of English understanding.

KLEIN: [00:43:42] Right.

GILMAN: [00:43:42] As you know, many of the students didn't speak much English at all. So they were trying to pick up English along the way as they were learning the subjects.

KLEIN: [00:43:52] Right. You mentioned these, I mean, Dunkwa was not a prestige secondary school.

GILMAN: [00:43:57] Right. But even so. Even so, um. You would have one student. The whole village would get together and pull their money to send one student, the best student from their village, to school. And that's all they could afford. And so there was a lot of, although the kids had a lot of fun, they were, you know, so forth. It was a, um, it was, they were highly motivated to try to learn. They were not there to screw around. They knew that this was their passport to, you know, to success or not. And they were, they were very, uh, they felt not privileged so much, but they felt that it was good to be there.

KLEIN: [00:44:41] Did, um, how did Don's experience match up to yours as you settled into becoming teachers?

GILMAN: [00:44:50] Don was, Don was more in. Actually, Don got more involved with the students and teaching and took, went on the lorry trips, a couple of lorry trips with them, to northern Ghana and so forth. And I was teaching but when I, when I wasn't at the school doing teaching, I was taking off going on my own trips.

KLEIN: [00:45:11] OK.

GILMAN: [00:45:12] So he was more involved with the life of this a little more than I, more than I was.

KLEIN: [00:45:19] Did you feel guilty about that?

GILMAN: [00:45:21] At the time I didn't, because at the time I was involved with.

KLEIN: [00:45:25] Your own life.

GILMAN: [00:45:26] My own life. Looking back on it, I say, I said it would have been nicer for me to have been less involved with myself and more involved with the students.

KLEIN: [00:45:35] Yeah. Was there a point in the first half year where you woke up one day and said, oh my God, I'm in the Peace Corps, I'm in the middle of Africa and I'm doing it. I mean, is there any sense of that?

GILMAN: [00:45:48] There wasn't any sense of that. It was just a matter of day to day, of trying, getting stuff done. And, you know. Um. You know, then on weekends, of course, we'd sometimes get on and take the lorry up to Kumasi. We'd do our shopping for European type foods, like a bottle of liqueur every so often, and something like that. We'd go shopping up to Kumasi and there were a lot of Peace Corps volunteers up there. And there were the expatriate. There were places to stay with Peace Corps volunteers or other places.

KLEIN: [00:46:33] Right.

GILMAN: [00:46:34] And so that was a socializing with other volunteers. We didn't really get to meet, besides Don and I when we were in Dunkwa, we were the only Peace Corps people around there besides you. Some people would drive through going to their school like yourself.

KLEIN: [00:46:49] Yeah, I was further out by 30 miles or so, and I would stop by.

GILMAN: [00:46:54] Yeah, the, um. But my remembrance is there was teaching, was the students during the breaks when school was over.

KLEIN: [00:47:07] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:47:07] They would have all their, all their bags and packed up and their suitcases and their trunks waiting, waiting out in front for the lorries to come pick them up to take them back to their homes for the time. That was a big deal.

KLEIN: [00:47:25] So during your first year there, you tended to, you would often on a weekend would.

GILMAN: [00:47:34] Take off.

KLEIN: [00:47:35] To take off and go up to Kumasi.

GILMAN: [00:47:37] Or somewhere else.

KLEIN: [00:47:39] Down to Takoradi.

GILMAN: [00:47:40] I didn't go to Takoradi so much, but Kumasi, yeah. And then at the, it was unique there because at the end of the first semester.

KLEIN: [00:47:48] Right.

GILMAN: [00:47:48] The Ghanaians, when we happened to be there, they were changing. They changed semester, when semester starts and stops.

KLEIN: [00:47:57] Right.

GILMAN: [00:47:58] So they actually had a month and a half of break in December. So I was there, taught for a couple of three or four, three months or so, and then they had a whole month and a half off or two months almost before they started up again. So. I don't.

KLEIN: [00:48:21] Do you remember what you did?

GILMAN: [00:48:22] Yeah I remember what I did. I went to Timbuktu. I took the lorry up to northern Ghana and Mali and up to Mopti. And went, floated down the river on the barges and.

KLEIN: [00:48:37] Travel alone or?

GILMAN: [00:48:39] Mostly alone. But there were Peace Corps volunteers pretty much everywhere. So like in Mopti there were Peace Corps volunteers. And even in Ouagadougou, which is up in, which is a way out of the way kind of place up there, there wasn't a Peace Corps volunteer, but there was an American guy that was up there and we could stay with him. And we found somebody to stay with all this. I didn't know where I was going to stay every night. You know, you don't know where you're going to stay the next night.

KLEIN: [00:49:12] But you were footloose and fancy loose.

GILMAN: [00:49:15] I was footloose and I was going to going to experiment and explore and see how far I could go, what things I could do.

KLEIN: [00:49:21] And you enjoyed that?

GILMAN: [00:49:21] I enjoyed it, yeah. I took a lot of notes and took photographs and that kind of stuff.

KLEIN: [00:49:27] Now, so there was this couple weeks of teaching. Then there was the big break.

GILMAN: [00:49:34] And then a couple of months of teaching, then a big break. Then I came back and taught the rest of the year. Then the summertime. Then we had summer break. Then the second year.

KLEIN: [00:49:42] OK, let's stay within the first year. Do you recall what was your contact with Peace Corps during that time, the Peace Corps staff?

GILMAN: [00:49:53] The major contact with the Peace Corps staff was only really when I would go to Accra occasionally, and they had a big three-story building, was it?

KLEIN: [00:50:04] Uh huh.

GILMAN: [00:50:04] For the Peace Corps volunteers, like a youth hostel set up for there. And it was all nice, a nice place to stay and so forth. Beyond that, the Peace Corps staff had very little to do.

KLEIN: [00:50:17] You didn't have visitors that you recall?

GILMAN: [00:50:20] Not up there. The biggest thing I remember is we had a big trunk of, a whole trunk of books arrived, one for each of us, with uh.

KLEIN: [00:50:28] It's supposed to be a book locker.

GILMAN: [00:50:30] A kind of foot locker, which we were supposed to give out to people or read or do something.

KLEIN: [00:50:35] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:50:36] We did take a couple of trips up to. The kids loved, it was great, Shakespeare. Of course, as you said, they could, they learned how to memorize. And so there was a Shakespeare troupe that was coming through Kumasi. And so we took the lorry up and went for an afternoon and they saw Shakespeare. And it was a, and it was a great experience for them because, you know, they would mouth all the words, tomorrow

and tomorrow and tomorrow, and you'd hear this echo out in the audience, these kids.

KLEIN: [00:51:09] So let's go back to the school setting. It's a boarding school setting and very often the faculty have additional duties like a house master or a sports master. Do you recall any activities like that?

GILMAN: [00:51:27] Don and I were house masters. We had other activity. We were supposed to take care of the dormitories, make sure that there were the lights out at night.

KLEIN: [00:51:38] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:51:39] Make sure things were cleaned up, cleaned up and so forth. And I think we, let me tell you the experience we had there about. A lot of the kids had never had, um, we were having problems with the toilets were always dirty.

KLEIN: [00:51:54] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:51:55] Because the kids were used to squatting.

KLEIN: [00:52:00] Right.

GILMAN: [00:52:00] And so they would be standing on the toilets. And so the story was the head, the headmaster. I have to tell you about the headmaster first. So the headmaster was a short man, right? Part of his duty, he felt, was occasionally to cane the students. That is, to discipline the students with a stick.

KLEIN: [00:52:22] Right.

GILMAN: [00:52:23] And so whenever the new student would come up to join the school, it was his, it was his decision whether the student got in school or not. He was the arbitrator of whether he accepted the student or not.

KLEIN: [00:52:39] Right.

GILMAN: [00:52:39] He only accepted students that were shorter than him. Because he didn't want the kid to turn around and beat him up. So he told us, he said, listen, Don, the kids are not, the boys are not being messing up the toilets because they're being nasty or anything. They just don't know how to use them.

KLEIN: [00:53:02] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:53:02] And so if you teach all the kids to sit on the toilets, it would be, we're going to not have this problem of cleaning the toilets all the time. So Don was in there. And so I remember this one day with Don. Don was giving the talk to the, we had 15 Ghanaian students around us. He was standing on the toilet in the stall and I was in the back listening to this thing. And he was saying, listen, this is a European instrument, the toilet. In fact, it's the WC, the English word. It flushes things over a little ledge. And he says, if you use the European instrument toilet in the European way, if we all sit on it, then we won't get messy. And obviously, if someone messes up the toilet seat, the next person's got to stand on it. He's not going to sit on it, and so forth and so on.

GILMAN: [00:53:53] And so if, so one of the Ghanaian students, I guess he'd been sort of looking through the windows at us. He said if us Ghanaians use that European instrument in the European way, our long African penises are going to dangle in the water. And that was a kick. That was such a kick.

KLEIN: [00:54:12] Yeah. Other than the housemaster responsibilities, did you do any?

GILMAN: [00:54:18] That's about it. We had, we had that. We.

KLEIN: [00:54:20] Did you get involved in the sports at all?

GILMAN: [00:54:23] Just to watch the students. We had.

KLEIN: [00:54:25] But you didn't coach or anything.

GILMAN: [00:54:26] I wasn't coaching anything because you had the, we had an athletic coach, the Ghanaian guy. And he was, he was a good, athletic young man and was teaching the kids to do soccer and so forth. He did an excellent job.

KLEIN: [00:54:40] But on a typical school day, I mean, you were only teaching maybe 2 hours, 3 hours. How did you, what did you do?

GILMAN: [00:54:53] I was preparing for the, preparing for the next class. I was grading papers in the evening.

KLEIN: [00:54:58] In the little blue books.

GILMAN: [00:55:00] Yeah. And I was setting up the, setting up the, doing the laboratories, the science lab kind of thing. The blackboards were exactly that, of course, they were boards painted black.

KLEIN: [00:55:14] Right.

GILMAN: [00:55:15] And so cleaning up the place a little bit. The, um. Teach. Do that. Have lunch. Go back teach again. Come back in the afternoon. Prepare. Read a little bit. Evening time, we would have dinner. And usually Don and I would sit and talk. Or we'd, we would read Shakespeare together, to each other, take parts. And I remember we went through a couple of books, Shakespeare books like that.

KLEIN: [00:55:52] Were both you and Don at that time playing guitar?

GILMAN: [00:56:02] Don played the guitar and I had a banjo.

KLEIN: [00:56:06] Talk about that, I mean.

GILMAN: [00:56:09] I had a banjo and we didn't, we did. So I don't remember too much of us singing that much, but I did. I did do. I had the banjo and I was into playing that and the Ghanaians sometimes liked, you know, we'd play a little bit.

KLEIN: [00:56:23] You ever try to perform for the students?

GILMAN: [00:56:25] Occasionally I guess, but not that much.

KLEIN: [00:56:26] I mean, formally.

GILMAN: [00:56:27] Yeah. Don put on, actually Don put on a play. They had the students put on a play.

KLEIN: [00:56:32] Yeah.

GILMAN: [00:56:33] During, I forget what year it was.

KLEIN: [00:56:35] Right.

GILMAN: [00:56:36] And I ran the, uh, I ran the stage and the lights and, you know, and created the lighting effects and all that, all the scientific science kind of stuff.

KLEIN: [00:56:47] Right.

GILMAN: [00:56:48] And Don did the play and so and we did it downtown, ended up doing it downtown. So that was.

KLEIN: [00:56:54] Oh, you went into town to do it?

GILMAN: [00:56:56] It was, yeah. The play was actually done on a stage and we set up, or in a room, we set up a curtain and put lights on it and dimmed the lights and all that stuff.

KLEIN: [00:57:07] Did during that first year, did you, uh, you don't, there weren't that many other faculty members. Did you?

GILMAN: [00:57:16] There I think there was a woman.

KLEIN: [00:57:18] Must have been a woman.

GILMAN: [00:57:19] A woman. A teacher.

KLEIN: [00:57:20] Right.

GILMAN: [00:57:21] But I frankly I don't, unfortunately I don't remember.

KLEIN: [00:57:24] Do you recall particularly getting to know Ghanaians, I mean, having any Ghanaian friends, personal friends, you know, rather than just someone you work with?

GILMAN: [00:57:36] There was, um, in the, it was a really wasn't a village but at the bottom of the hill before you get to the main road was a small village and there was living a Ghanaian but he had actually studied in the United States and studied anthropology and we got to know him. But that's kind of, he was more, he had a little bit of more American. We did get to know, I think it was more in the second year than the first year, we got to know. Dunkwa was on the railroad tracks, and so it was, it had a lot of ministry type, little small ministry type people there, young men who ran the ministry offices in town.

KLEIN: [00:58:25] Right.

GILMAN: [00:58:26] And they were all, so we'd get together with them on a Sunday afternoon and drink palm wine downtown at someone's house.

KLEIN: [00:58:34] Right.

GILMAN: [00:58:35] And, um, drink palm wine. And they called it Sherwood Forest. And we would have. And they would, and if anybody spilled the palm wine, they would have a trial. And someone had to be a defendant, and someone had to be the prosecutor. And they had. And Don would play the guitar. We'd sing and so forth.

KLEIN: [00:58:57] And this is all young men.

GILMAN: [00:58:59] All young men.

KLEIN: [00:59:00] And was, the exchanges were all in English?

GILMAN: [00:59:04] All in English, yes, because they were all young bureaucrats basically.

KLEIN: [00:59:08] Right.

GILMAN: [00:59:09] And they spoke English. Dunkwa was also had a fairly strong expatriate. They had a, they had a big alluvial gold mining operation there. So they had, they had a fairly strong, um. They had a hospital, a Ghanaian doctor, and we got to know him. He invited us up. But they also had a bunch of English people there who worked with, who worked the gold mine or the alluvial boat in the middle of the river. Got the boat.

KLEIN: [00:59:43] Did they have their own club?

GILMAN: [00:59:44] They had their own club. So every so often we'd, maybe once a month or twice a month, we'd go out there and they'd have, they'd have a movie show and a swimming pool and a club and that kind of stuff out there. That was, you know, of course, that was not Ghanaian. That was basic expatriate.

KLEIN: [01:00:00] Yeah. Do you recall any sense of, you know, how did the British people react to you, I mean you're Peace Corps?

GILMAN: [01:00:11] They were very, people were very friendly to us.

KLEIN: [01:00:15] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [01:00:15] And being in the Peace Corps and they're very helpful. They were helpful as far as I could tell. We were always friendly with them. They, you know, they didn't know quite what we're doing there if we weren't making a lot of money.

KLEIN: [01:00:29] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:00:30] Most of the people I run into mostly were, you know, they were there because they weren't necessarily they had, they felt this was. I'm talking about the expatriates there.

KLEIN: [01:00:40] Right.

GILMAN: [01:00:40] Except the guys who ran the, a couple of guys that ran the place, but the rest of them were technicians and mechanics and that sort of thing that felt it was an opportunity for them.

KLEIN: [01:00:51] How did you and Don get around when you decided to go to in town or any place?

GILMAN: [01:00:57] Went to the town, we'd walk. Generally walk. Occasionally the lorry would go into town. We'd catch the lorry into town.

KLEIN: [01:01:03] The school lorry?

GILMAN: [01:01:04] School lorry. But overall we just generally, we didn't have our own cars or anything like that, so we'd walk. If we go to Kumasi, we generally would hitchhike. We'd get on the road and hitchhike. And usually what that meant was a lorry would be coming by and he would pick us up. The lorry being the transportation of all the people, a lorry, a truck with right across the back people would sit on.

KLEIN: [01:01:25] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:01:26] And you know, there they'd always want to put us up front in the front seat and we'd always want to say, no, no, no, we don't have to do that. You have to end up in the front seat anyway.

KLEIN: [01:01:38] So coming to the end of the first year, I can't remember. There's usually a mid service conference where all the volunteers are called together.

GILMAN: [01:01:52] I didn't recall.

KLEIN: [01:01:53] You don't recall that at all. It may not have happened. But by the end of the first year, had you had much contact with the other people you were trained with or the other Peace Corps in the country?

GILMAN: [01:02:07] Yeah, because I'd go to Accra and we'd meet people there and I'd go to Kumasi and there were people there.

KLEIN: [01:02:14] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:02:15] I didn't really. I got to know a couple of people a little bit, but I was not. I was not that involved with, you know, being part of a Peace Corps community per se.

KLEIN: [01:02:31] I mean, did you have a sense that other people were having a better experience or worse experience than you?

GILMAN: [01:02:37] I thought people were about the same. I thought that they were all in fairly. They were, the government was taking care of them, that they were. There were a couple of people, I think, who had some problem. One lady, one girl left early. [tape break]

KLEIN: [01:02:56] One of the issues with Peace Corps was at times staff would express in different ways is that it wasn't enough just to be teaching, that you really should be involved in the larger community, get to know Ghana better. Do you recall that at all? Again, don't let me put words in your mouth. You know, being encouraged to do projects, to do more than just be on the compound.

GILMAN: [01:03:26] Don and I. Don and I had talked about that and we talked about it more in the sense that there is a sense of wanting to leave something behind and say I've been there kind of thing. And how important, was that really important or was it important to do our, to do our job to teach? And so we didn't get involved with any projects.

KLEIN: [01:03:53] OK.

GILMAN: [01:03:54] I was, if I look back on it in truthfulness, I would say that I was there to teach. And to travel and get to know the land. That's what I was doing. I was doing my teaching, doing what I needed to do. I wasn't, I didn't go out of my way particularly to do too much in the community. And when I did have extra time, I used it to travel.

KLEIN: [01:04:27] You felt it was yours to do?

GILMAN: [01:04:29] Yeah. I look back on that and I say, that's probably not necessarily the best thing.

KLEIN: [01:04:36] Well.

GILMAN: [01:04:37] But that's what I did.

KLEIN: [01:04:38] So your recollection is that it was pretty much an individual thing you were doing. You were not necessarily constantly aware of being part of a bigger Peace Corps.

GILMAN: [01:04:51] Except that I felt that, you know, that it was a, what do you call it? It was, there was a whole infrastructure.

KLEIN: [01:05:01] OK.

GILMAN: [01:05:02] There was, you know, if I needed help, that was going to be fixed. It was, there was an infrastructure there that if I needed it, it was available. And the other thing is, by that time, in the second or third year, there was, you know, you could travel just about anywhere in West Africa and find a Peace Corps volunteer within a couple of, within an hour's walk somewhere.

KLEIN: [01:05:25] Through the first year, how was your health?

GILMAN: [01:05:28] Fine. I had no problem at all.

KLEIN: [01:05:29] OK. And there's a long break between first and second year in the school pattern. Almost two months, at least two months. What did you do during the long vacation?

GILMAN: [01:05:43] Again, I had met, when we were going at the university, during our introduction.

KLEIN: [01:05:51] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:05:51] I had met a couple of the, a couple of professors there who were from South Africa, and they had left South Africa because of the apartheid. This is white people, these were white guys who didn't, who left and wanted to teach. So they were teaching in Ghana. And so I decided that I got the name, but I got to know them a little bit and got the names of some people that they knew in South Africa. And I decided to take off for the summer. And I flew to actually Rhodesia and hitchhiked from Rhodesia down to Cape Town and back.

KLEIN: [01:06:35] You were aware that that was against Peace Corps policy?

GILMAN: [01:06:39] It was through the Peace Corps that I did this with Peace Corps. They knew I was doing it.

KLEIN: [01:06:43] Leaving to South Africa?

GILMAN: [01:06:44] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:06:45] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [01:06:45] In fact, they gave me a second passport. I got a, I got a, I have, I got two passports, one for the Ghanaian and one for, one anyway. So they gave me, I got a second passport so that I wouldn't get a South African visa on my passport.

KLEIN: [01:07:00] Well, related to that, now that during the first year and even into the second, there was a certain amount of political tension about the Peace Corps in Ghana that, you know, with times there were accusations

that Peace Corps were spies. And Ghana was moving sort of between east and west.

GILMAN: [01:07:25] Right. We saw that. We saw it because there was a young, all the students who had the Young Pioneer leader who was not from the school, who would come out and organize the students and have Young Pioneer meetings and so forth, bandanas and sort of like a Boy Scouts kind of thing, which was a.

KLEIN: [01:07:40] How did that affect you directly, do you recall?

GILMAN: [01:07:42] It didn't affect me, except for the students looked at this and said, you know, to some extent they liked it. They like the idea of it. To some extent they had no choice. They had to do it. They look on it like here's a little bit of propaganda. They didn't, they had to put up with to do this. It didn't affect me that much except that to go to South Africa, I had to get, I had to get the visa through the post. So when I came back.

KLEIN: [01:08:18] Right.

GILMAN: [01:08:20] The, I remember that they got me into the downtown and a bunch of local, what looked like workers, but they were people who got me into and say, well, would you ever go to South Africa? What would you do to go to South Africa? They knew I'd been there.

KLEIN: [01:08:35] Uh huh.

GILMAN: [01:08:36] And so they had to, I had to discuss. I could never tell them exactly. I could never say that I'd been to South Africa, but they knew I'd been there. And so we had, I said, well, I had to explain why I went there in order to see the apartheid people that were fighting the apartheid down there and understand what these people were doing and so forth. Not that they understood. But I remember I got a grilling from the local, some local people there.

KLEIN: [01:09:04] Who are friends of yours?

GILMAN: [01:09:06] Yeah, there was not a, it was not unreasonable and they weren't being nasty to me, but they were just wanted to know what I was doing. Did anyone at any point, a student or faculty or other friends ever say, well, are you a spy or?

GILMAN: [01:09:22] Yeah, in fact at this meeting they probably asked me if I'd been a spy or what. They probably did. None of the students did. But just that that one meeting was, and they, you know, and I said, no, I'm not a spy. I'm just me trying to learn about the life and people.

KLEIN: [01:09:37] Right. So, OK, you did the South Africa trip.

GILMAN: [01:09:42] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:09:43] And managed two passports and so forth. Now you're coming back for the beginning of the second year. Do you particularly recall starting your second year?

GILMAN: [01:09:56] I recall, and to me it's just one big, one big, um, you know, doing my thing there at the school.

KLEIN: [01:10:08] So there wasn't any sort of self-reflection about, you know, I'm achieving what I wanted or going into the second year, maybe I want to do this before I go back because now I know it's just another year.

GILMAN: [01:10:29] I was doing a lot of personal growing up at that time.

KLEIN: [01:10:36] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:10:39] The, you know, I think I thought I was fairly mature. I thought I was doing good and so forth. And but as I look back on it, I think I had a lot of self-interest. I wasn't, I wasn't very overall quite compassionate. I felt I was doing good things, but I wasn't going out of my way to become involved with a lot of stuff.

KLEIN: [01:11:08] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:11:10] And you know, as I said, why did I do that? I say, well, that's just who I was at the time, I guess.

KLEIN: [01:11:15] Yeah, it's perfectly reasonable. Do you remember the Peace Corps staff asking you to go out to Sefwi because there were two women who were assigned there your second year? It would have been their first year.

GILMAN: [01:11:32] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:11:33] To kind of help them settle in.

GILMAN: [01:11:35] We did. I remember Don and I went out there a couple of, once, at least once. I remember going to. I remember going out to see you once I think, you are out there.

KLEIN: [01:11:42] I, well, your first year, it was my second year there. But then Barbara and Elaine were there.

GILMAN: [01:11:51] They were there and we went up. I don't think we were necessarily very helpful though. I think we just went out there and said hello and spent the evening. And but, I mean, in terms of actually being helpful, in terms of.

KLEIN: [01:12:03] Well, you were veterans at that point.

GILMAN: [01:12:05] Yeah. But they were, uh, as I remember, they would come by and stop by Dunkwa when they came back and forth to Kumasi, that kind of thing.

KLEIN: [01:12:15] Because they had a jeep.

GILMAN: [01:12:16] Yeah, they had a jeep and so forth. I guess, I didn't know that. I forgot that.

KLEIN: [01:12:20] OK. So second year you're teaching.

GILMAN: [01:12:24] The same kind of thing as the first year, teaching for me.

KLEIN: [01:12:29] Any particular travel during that year?

GILMAN: [01:12:32] No, they didn't have, because the thing that Timbuktu and so forth was, uh, was because we just had a real long break that first year.

KLEIN: [01:12:39] Right.

GILMAN: [01:12:39] So the second year was a normal break. And so I remember we probably just probably went to Accra or something like that.

KLEIN: [01:12:45] And your role pretty much continued second year, essentially teaching?

GILMAN: [01:12:50] Teaching science and math.

KLEIN: [01:12:51] And being the housemaster, but no larger circles. You had some friends in town.

GILMAN: [01:12:57] In town we'd see on some Sundays and for the, uh. But I didn't really get to, I didn't get involved with the local politicians or the local chief, even though the chief was a young man and had just, had been, he had studied in the United States, just gotten back. And I just, we didn't get to them. We went to a couple of the festivals and we got to, we were invited and we went to them and so forth. But I didn't, I didn't really spend. The only thing I did do is I did do some, there was a school in town that was teaching, that was starting up, another school.

KLEIN: [01:13:41] Oh.

GILMAN: [01:13:41] Of course. And I went there and helped them out a little bit.

KLEIN: [01:13:45] How?

GILMAN: [01:13:46] Just talked about some.

KLEIN: [01:13:48] Was it a private secondary school?

GILMAN: [01:13:50] It wasn't secondary. It was just a private school.

KLEIN: [01:13:53] Training college?

GILMAN: [01:13:54] Training college.

KLEIN: [01:13:55] Oh, okay.

GILMAN: [01:13:55] And so teacher training, I think or something.

KLEIN: [01:13:58] Was that at your initiative?

GILMAN: [01:14:00] So I don't know. They asked us to come let them know and see if we could help out.

KLEIN: [01:14:03] Oh, and it was all Ghanaian?

GILMAN: [01:14:04] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:14:06] So what did you do? Did you teach science to them or?

GILMAN: [01:14:10] I think I taught some math. It was only a couple of times.

KLEIN: [01:14:15] Oh, all right, all right. As you're getting near the end of the second year, what do you envision as your future? I mean, you know, you're going to, I assume you're going to, your choice is to leave Ghana, not to try for a third year.

GILMAN: [01:14:32] Yeah, right. Again, I got out of school here on the Stanford and not knowing what I wanted to do so, but knowing that I thought I'd better take the opportunity to get some traveling and experience for myself. And then so I'm at the end of the second year, I'm saying, well, you know, what do I do with my life now?

KLEIN: [01:15:03] Right, right.

GILMAN: [01:15:04] And I didn't know what I wanted to do there either. So I had decided to. I thought I would go to. I thought I'd hitchhike basically, go across the continent to East Africa and see if I could get a job in East Africa teaching for another couple of years in East Africa.

KLEIN: [01:15:25] OK, let's stop at that point. Let's go. Do you recall, usually at the end of the your Peace Corps service there's what's called the termination conference? The group gets back together and you talk through your experience. Do you remember that at all?

GILMAN: [01:15:44] No, I don't know that.

KLEIN: [01:15:46] Your group was, it had become traditional, but only for a short time, was, uh, met with Kwame Nkrumah before you left.

GILMAN: [01:16:01] Yes, we did. We did welcome back Kwame Nkrumah. But that was more like herding us into the, into his compound.

KLEIN: [01:16:09] Flagstaff.

GILMAN: [01:16:10] Flagstaff house and meeting him on the bus. And running in and doing that and then leaving. To me, it was, it was very nice, but it was just.

KLEIN: [01:16:22] But this was Nkrumah. You know, if you lived in Ghana in those years, wherever you turned, you would hear about him. Any special impression or?

GILMAN: [01:16:29] I thought, I thought he's the guy. My impressions of him personally, no, because I didn't, I just saw him a little bit.

KLEIN: [01:16:37] Right.

GILMAN: [01:16:38] But as far as the people thought of him, I felt the guy was, had really done a lot of good stuff. I felt, I mean, I felt there was a little bit of self-aggrandizement there. Kumi Nkrumah, The Big Man, kind of thing.

KLEIN: [01:16:55] The Redeemer.

GILMAN: [01:16:56] The Redeemer and all that stuff. But it was my sense, as they taught us in training, you know, that's part of the deal, right? And so I felt that he was, I felt that he had done some very good stuff for the country and that the people liked him. The people felt it was worth, it was good.

KLEIN: [01:17:18] During your second year, it was when Kennedy was assassinated.

GILMAN: [01:17:25] Second year was the Kennedy assassination.

KLEIN: [01:17:25] Can you recall how you heard about it?

GILMAN: [01:17:28] Yeah, I remember about that, very definitely. We were, we were walking.

KLEIN: [01:17:34] You and Don?

GILMAN: [01:17:35] Don and I were walking from the school with a bunch of students in the town. This is about, this is about a mile and a half hike kind of thing.

KLEIN: [01:17:43] Right.

GILMAN: [01:17:44] Down the hill from the school to the main road and then into town, up the hill again into the main town. And we were coming down the hill when the students came up to me. And he said, Mr. Gilman, I'm very, very sorry. He said, your president was just killed. Your president was just killed. It was like, he felt it very personally, just as if Nkrumah had been killed and had died. And I said, woah. And that was, that was a shock to everybody. And so. I do, I remember we were, we were certainly for a day or two, we were feeling very, uh, connected and sorry and grieving about that.

GILMAN: [01:18:48] The Ghanaians, all the Ghanaians were totally, were very, they were very compassionate about the whole thing. All the students and everybody was very compassionate. They felt very strongly for Kennedy and the fact that he'd been doing some things. That when Nkrumah had been in the White House, had been to the White House, that Kennedy held the umbrella for Nkrumah, which is holding an umbrella for the chief as a big deal. So he was showing deference to Nkrumah. And things like that, right? That they felt, they felt very strongly that Kennedy was a, had done a lot for them, and they felt, they felt very connected with Kennedy.

KLEIN: [01:19:26] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:19:27] Everybody did.

KLEIN: [01:19:29] Were either you or Don churchgoers, I can't remember.

GILMAN: [01:19:32] I didn't go to church and Don, I think, was Catholic, but I don't think he, I don't remember him going to church.

KLEIN: [01:19:37] So you don't recall if there was no.

GILMAN: [01:19:38] I think he mean, maybe he went to the Catholic Church.

KLEIN: [01:19:41] There was a Catholic Church in Dunkwa?

GILMAN: [01:19:43] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:19:44] Yeah. But at the time of Kennedy's assassination, there was no thought of, you know, finding a church to go to or?

GILMAN: [01:19:52] Not that I remember. Not that I did. It was more just talking about him.

KLEIN: [01:19:58] Yeah. Yeah. OK. And let's jump now. You finish your service. As you're leaving Ghana, did you reflect back at all on your own sense of achievement or what it had meant, you know, for the two years?

GILMAN: [01:20:21] I was, I was planning. I was, I was mostly moving on.

KLEIN: [01:20:29] Thinking what you were coming into.

GILMAN: [01:20:33] It might not be, it might not be necessarily strong, but one of the. When I, sometimes I have a dream nightmare. I don't dream at all. I go to sleep, I wake up, I don't dream very much. But occasionally I would have one and that was I had re-upped in Ghana for a second or third year. It was like, I'm stuck there. Like I didn't want to leave, that I am not moving on with my life kind of thing. This is later years. This is later years. This is like.

KLEIN: [01:21:04] After.

GILMAN: [01:21:04] Yeah, afterwards. So I looked back on the sense, and I wonder, I don't know why that is. I don't consciously have that sense of it, but I have that sense of I was marking time and not moving on with my life. And in terms of I think probably in terms of adventure and learning to be self-sufficient, yes, I was, I did a lot. But in terms of actually, um, I guess I would have to look back and say I was marking time there and was pretty much self-absorbed.

KLEIN: [01:21:48] But in many ways, there's no grand closure. I mean, to your two year, it's not a cycle where at the end of it you have a monument you can look to and say, this is what I achieved. Because, you know, school is ongoing and you're going to leave and it'll continue and yet.

GILMAN: [01:22:07] We had Sharon come in, of course, when Don and I. Don and I were there the second year and a third Peace Corps volunteer had come in and she was staying on after that, right?

KLEIN: [01:22:17] Right.

GILMAN: [01:22:18] And she lived in, she actually lived in the girls dorm. She wasn't in the dormitory. They had a second, like an office. And that's where she stayed, next to the girls dormitory.

KLEIN: [01:22:30] Right.

GILMAN: [01:22:31] And she was very much involved with all the girls in the school.

KLEIN: [01:22:37] When you left were other volunteers being assigned there or you didn't even know?

GILMAN: [01:22:42] I think there were, but I didn't, I didn't know them. We'd gone already. [tape break]

KLEIN: [01:22:49] We're talking about the end of service. And Sharon had come and was on staff.

GILMAN: [01:22:55] On the second year.

KLEIN: [01:22:56] Right. And she was staying on for the third, obviously. But there's no, as I was saying, there was no grand closure to having been a volunteer at Dunkwa, I mean, if you had done it.

GILMAN: [01:23:09] I had done it and I've gone on to something else.

KLEIN: [01:23:11] The next thing was?

GILMAN: [01:23:12] I'd been involved with the, you know, the girl in Accra, who was one of the volunteers in Accra.

KLEIN: [01:23:19] Right.

GILMAN: [01:23:20] A girl, we had become involved with each other to some extent.

KLEIN: [01:23:24] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [01:23:24] I went out to see her. And she and I actually traveled through, she and I traveled together through Nigeria and into the Central African Republic.

KLEIN: [01:23:36] Oh. Is this at the end of the service or?

GILMAN: [01:23:39] When I was leaving and she was, she was a first year so then she went back to Ghana.

KLEIN: [01:23:44] Oh, OK.

GILMAN: [01:23:48] Um. Yeah. I feel in that sense I felt that, I look back on that and here's this girl who's a very lovely girl, traveling with me, wanted me to become much more involved personally with her life in terms of maybe ongoing. And I just had no clue about that. I was on my adventure.

KLEIN: [01:24:15] Right, right.

GILMAN: [01:24:16] And she finally got fed up with me on that.

KLEIN: [01:24:18] Yeah. So after Peace Corps, I mean, you did lots of things in your life, but at this point, looking back, you know, there were three goals to the Peace Corps. One was to provide needed skills where requested, and that's the teaching you did. The other is to familiarize people in other parts of the world with America. And the third is to, you know, have Americans learn about other parts of the world. Have you, in the years following, have you done much on the third point, you know, to let the world know about, to let Americans know about other parts of the world?

GILMAN: [01:25:07] Yeah, well. Um, let's see. After the Peace Corps I ended up in, I ended up doing a bunch of stuff with the school in Europe and ended up working with some of the military people, American military in Germany.

KLEIN: [01:25:23] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:25:24] As an expatriate. And I would give, I would sometimes give lectures to people there. I had slides and would show some of the slides. I wrote some articles which got published in the Stanford Daily, the Stanford newspaper. Years later, I talked to somebody who said that he'd read the article I wrote and he signed up for the Peace Corps and it changed his life. And I think, wow, great.

KLEIN: [01:25:50] Great.

GILMAN: [01:25:50] But as far as actually organized or becoming involved with groups or something like that, you know, I didn't get involved with that.

KLEIN: [01:25:59] And you haven't been back to Ghana and have not been able to maintain contact with any.

GILMAN: [01:26:05] I didn't try actually.

KLEIN: [01:26:06] Well, OK. Overall, what would you say was the effect of having been in the Peace Corps on your life?

GILMAN: [01:26:33] I would say that, that I've, I've always. The reason I stopped is, is that I really tried to figure out what is the, well, what's the difference between what I usually say and what might be the truth, right? Because that's why I don't know how to say this. My normal thing is, yes, it was a great experience I had. I did, uh, I did some good filling a slot as a teacher there.

KLEIN: [01:27:04] Right.

GILMAN: [01:27:06] I got, I had a lot of sense of my own ability to, uh, to face any kind of situation I wanted to face. I mean, travel anywhere. Um. I got to know a lot of different, different cultures and feel comfortable traveling among all kinds of different cultures. And what is the? I felt, I've always felt that I did something good. Therefore, I'm, I'm an okay person. I'm a, I'm a compassionate human being.

KLEIN: [01:27:43] Right.

GILMAN: [01:27:45] The, um. I say, what did I really learn there? And I think it was a sense of growing up, of learning to be self-confident. I think, I think I would say, I would say very, very much I was, I had a lot a lack of a sense of a lot of self-confidence.

KLEIN: [01:28:10] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:28:11] During that time. It didn't show it directly, but indirectly. And I was, I was proving myself, I was trying to show, to prove to myself that I can handle myself in these situations.

KLEIN: [01:28:24] Well, I certainly knew traveling to Timbuktu, you must have had some sense of achievement, hitchhiking.

GILMAN: [01:28:29] Hitchhiking around the Congo and things like that.

KLEIN: [01:28:33] As well as teaching where you'd never taught before.

GILMAN: [01:28:35] Yeah, and getting to know the people. The long lasting is, the long lasting that I felt that a sense of acceptance with other, for cultures, all cultures. But, you know, having grown up in Hawaii as I said early on, that was, I had grown up with that kind of sense of it wasn't a matter of understanding the importance of cultures and of different people. And, and, what I didn't, what I didn't learn at the time is how to get out of my own self, my own skin, and really, really connect, and really connect and with other people in order to help them.

KLEIN: [01:29:31] Right.

GILMAN: [01:29:32] I was, I was there to help people, but to help myself, right?

KLEIN: [01:29:37] Sure.

GILMAN: [01:29:38] And it was, it was not, it was not. I was not at the level of maturity where I could just put myself aside and say, how can I be of service?

KLEIN: [01:29:50] Well, you may just be being more honest than many people are, you know, because it's clear there's a self, there's a, you know, an individual role and purpose in doing it and there's a lot of personal benefit to it. And incidentally, you help and, you know, making the leap into someone else's shoes is not a simple process.

GILMAN: [01:30:13] That's true. But like Don, if I look at Don. Don was much more, he got more involved with the students. He went on trips with the students, took the trips students on a trip to northern Ghana and to Ouagadougou. He put on plays with the students. You know, I taught, and when I was through teaching, I went home.

KLEIN: [01:30:33] And some of that may well have to do with personality difference. And it's not like he's a better person than you.

GILMAN: [01:30:38] No, but at that time he was, you know, not better. But he was at a place in his life that. And he was Catholic. That's right. Very true. And he had grown up with the sense of a little more maturity in that sense than I had. I had struggled through, struggled through high school, struggled to make a living, and the struggled through, not struggled, but through Stanford was, you know. And I had not yet learned, I, my job was to figure out how I can make my way in life, not how I can be there for other people particularly.

KLEIN: [01:31:13] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:31:14] At that time.

KLEIN: [01:31:16] I don't know if there's anything else you want to add, but that's as good a place to stop.

GILMAN: [01:31:20] I'll just add one more thing or two.

KLEIN: [01:31:21] Sure.

GILMAN: [01:31:23] Walking down. One of the other stories I tell is, often people go, what did you learn in the Peace Corps? What's the difference? And I said, well, walking down the hill one time with the students, another time in the town, one of the young, young students looks up to me and, you know, and had said to me, Mr. Gilman, why did Europeans kiss? Because he'd seen that in the movies, right?

KLEIN: [01:31:47] Yes.

GILMAN: [01:31:47] And so it's one of those things when I say, well, what do you say to a young kid about why the Europeans? It feels good or whatever it is? Because they're, I guess he was young enough, perhaps, and also their culture is not quite quite that same thing. So. Well, it's showing affection. But anyway, it was like a fun, you know, those kinds of experiences you get as to the different attitudes toward life.

KLEIN: [01:32:14] Right.

GILMAN: [01:32:15] That you see in the Peace Corps.

KLEIN: [01:32:15] Yeah.

GILMAN: [01:32:18] That's about it.

KLEIN: [01:32:19] OK.

[END OF INTERVIEW]