

H. Terry Adcock Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Terry Adcock served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia from 1961 to 1963 in community development (Colombia I).

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

H. Terry Adcock

June 22, 2019
Austin, Texas

By Julius Sztuk

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

SZTUK: [00:00:01] Today's June 22nd, 2019. My name is Jay Sztuk, RPCV Fiji 1974 through 1976, and today I'm interviewing Terry Adcock, who is a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia from June of 1961 through July 1963 working in community development. Hi, Terry.

ADCOCK: Hi, how are you.

SZTUK: So let's start with you with your background. Tell me about how you grew up and how you came to to be a Peace Corps volunteer.

ADCOCK: [00:00:40] My pleasure. I was born here in Austin, Texas, interviews in Austin, and I was born here. And I went to school here all the way through university. My parents were we're both from here. They both went to Austin High School. And I grew up in the south side of Austin. And that in Austin, if you were north of the river, you had a certain attitude. And if you

were south of the river, you had it. And I was the South Austin White all the way. So I grew up in the area very early on in my university and actually a little in my high school. I was very active in politics and was extremely active in politics. I was I was a volunteer for Moree Maverick. I was a volunteer for Ralph Yarborough. I was a volunteer for everybody in the world because I was very active in politics. And so when Kennedy started his primary campaign, Lyndon Johnson was his opponent. Lyndon Johnson lived in my precinct, and Lyndon Johnson was not my candidate. Jack Kennedy was my candidate. And so I campaigned for him all during the all during the primary, did telephone banking, did the whole nine yards for Kennedy. I was a delegate to the Travis County convention of among the Kennedy delegates. So when Kennedy announced that he was going to do the it was was going to do the campaign I was in like where I was I was ready to go and I campaigned for him.

ADCOCK: [00:02:40] I got telephone banked for him. I took people to and from the precinct voting area. I was transportation for them, mowed the lawn once. Oh, well, the other person told me couldn't couldn't vote because he had to mow the lawn. I said, you go vote Almagor. So so you're talking to a real political junkie and a, you know, huge fan of Jack Kennedy. And so when he announced the Peace Corps, my ears just went up. I just thought, OK, I'm ready, let's do it. I can I can do this. And so I I signed up. I had math, I had a math background. I was a math major. And so I signed up to be a math teacher. And I told him I didn't care where. Just send me, I'll go wherever you want to send me. And so I took the test and there was the test involved in it. So it was it was, you know, a fairly selective sort of thing. But about I guess it was in May, I'm not quite not quite sure of the date, but I got a call on the telephone and they said, would you like to go to would you like to go to Columbia? And I'm thinking, well, what will I be doing? And they said, community development.

ADCOCK: [00:04:05] And that sounded great to me. OK, I can do that. Said, can you be can you be ready by by June twenty twenty fourth to get on the plane and go and I say yeah I can do that. No problem. Like you were ready to go already. Ready baby, baby, baby. Ready. So our, our training

surprisingly was at Rutgers University and everybody asked me why Rutgers. And that's because they had the best language training lab in the United States. And then they brought great professors from all over the country, including the father of the American Community Development. Richard Posten was one of our professors. I mean, we had we had top drawer. We really did. Shriver came several times. He was there. He was there at Rutgers all the time because we were one of the first ones in training. And so. Know it was a big deal, also, Bill Moyers was the was the assistant, his assistant and Bill was there very, very often. So we had a lot of attention and we were pretty cantankerous group. We sent petitions because we didn't like the way the training was. And I'm looking back and thinking, why on earth would we be upset with these wonderful professors? But we were we should petition after petition.

SZTUK: [00:05:29] Ok, so you were not only the first group to go to Columbia, but you were one of the first Peace Corps groups to be trained.

ADCOCK: [00:05:36] And we were the first ones to go into training nobody. And there was no Peace Corps volunteer that hit the ground for training before you. Yeah, but we didn't get into the side. And I'll tell you that story in a little while.

SZTUK: [00:05:50] Ok, so before we go overseas, how did how did your family feel about you deciding to join the Peace Corps?

ADCOCK: [00:06:00] Where they weren't? I want to thank the Lord for my for my father because my mother did not want me to go. She was determined that I should not go. My advantage was, is that by that time I was I was 21 and so I could make my own decision. But I was living at home and my mother did not want me to go overseas. She just knew I was going to catch some horrible disease. And so she did. But my dad was like he always was. He always was supportive of me. No matter whatever I wanted to do was fine with him. If I wanted to if I wanted to vote for Kennedy rather than Johnson, that was fine with him if whatever I wanted.

SZTUK: [00:06:45] So had your family traveled much at all?

ADCOCK: [00:06:48] We traveled, but all in the United States. We took a trip to Mexico, but. Right, you know, right over the border, we didn't we were not big travelers. We were traveling big travelers in the country, but. But not in not overseas. So but my dad just, you know, whatever you want, do whatever you want. So I. I really that was that was the that was the rubbing point. And the other way that we went my mother over is, is that I'm I'm I'm now I'm still a member. But I was a member then of St. Martin's Lutheran Church, which was right up the way from where my my mom and dad went to high school. Austin High School was located on 12th Street on Rio Grande. And my the church ended up at Fifteen Fifteenth Street in Rio Grande. And my pastor commissioned me to go to Colombia. He did? Yes, in the chapel with my fiancée and my mom and my dad. And that's what that's what really my mom did say. And the pastor said, it's OK. It's OK. Right. And so that's that's how I got, you know, got parental permission, even though I didn't need it at that time because I was already 21.

SZTUK: [00:08:04] And in your training, tell me about the training. What did it consist of?

ADCOCK: [00:08:09] Language and language and community development, American history, South American history. Oh, and then we had physical training. We most of us had never done soccer in our lives. So we were we were taught to do soccer and we had physical and we had physical exercises to strengthen us so we'd be ready to go overseas.

SZTUK: [00:08:34] And so did you speak Spanish at all before that?

ADCOCK: [00:08:38] You wound up a lot, but I wouldn't say not a word. And I grew up here and I had an opportunity to take Spanish lessons and I never did. So I, I was I was, you know, a newbie. So I but I, I worked really hard because my dream I took German in college because I was going to go in the scientific career. And so I needed German for that. But it was really,

really difficult for me. I had a hard time with foreign languages. I just wasn't good at it. And so what I did was I worked extra hard. I really I really, you know, I would I would do everything I was supposed to do in the other courses, but I really was bearing down on Spanish.

SZTUK: [00:09:31] Did you have to pass a proficiency exam?

ADCOCK: [00:09:35] Actually, no. But I know that our professors were reporting on us, OK? And and we were we were not just training. We were training and selection. There was eighty five of us, I think, you know, about eighty five and they selected only sixty two of us.

SZTUK: [00:09:53] So they screened some out.

ADCOCK: [00:09:55] Yeah, and when I talked about the physical, the physical training I was doing. Soccer and somebody hit my shin and I got a hematoma on my chin and ended up in the health clinic and Rutgers University and I knew I was going to be selected and I was really, really sad. I was a sad, sad puppy and all the good all my friends, you know, all the Peace Corps came in and just broke DROs. I think eventually the hospital told them that they couldn't come anymore because I knew that I was just I made no no bones about it. I was I was absolutely convinced that I had just been selected from the programs of the injured, but I made it OK. The other thing I did, I did. I was really I was really, really pleased.

SZTUK: [00:10:43] And the did they bring any any folks are native Colombian's in to tell you about the culture?

ADCOCK: [00:10:50] We relied on Dr Elgeda from I think it's Duke University. And he was he was a proficient in everything. He knew Columbia. He knew Argentina. He knew he knew every all of everything that Bolívar did. He knew. And so and he he was the one that enculturated us to the to the things that we would face in Colombia. Like he told us that we had to smoke. And I, I had never smoked in my life. But the the Compazine knows the farmers looked a little askance at people that didn't smoke,

didn't smoke. And they also looked askance at people that didn't drink. So we were told that we had to I tried to do it and absolutely couldn't. So I finally I finally got talk to somebody who was our doctor in Bogota. I got him to give me a slip that said that I was allergic to smoke. And it what's my excuse?

SZTUK: [00:11:57] So I wonder how much that meant to the farmers.

ADCOCK: [00:12:00] You're probably not very much at all, but it made me feel better if I could show them the certificate. So, you know that that's that's how I did. But that's one of the things that they taught was a culture, know. And so we came and prepared us for what we were going to face in terms of the culture of the country. And he also made sure we understood that if we were if we were assigned to the northern part, that has a completely different culture from the southern part of Colombia. And so we differentiated those for us and that kind of thing.

SZTUK: [00:12:38] And the training lasted about three month?

ADCOCK: [00:12:40] It lasted two months. We were there from June 25th to about August, I think the middle of August of 1960, 61 in August of 61. So middle of August. And then we went home and and we had oh, I can't remember. There was a week or two, but we had we had a break and I got to say goodbye to everybody and that kind of thing, because you didn't know whether you were going to be selected or not. So basically, when you when you went there, they didn't know what you come home at the end of the two months and be home forever. OK, so they sent everybody home so that you could say your goodbyes and get on the plane and go back to New York. And we went we went back to New York and we we spent the night there and then we got on the train and went to Washington, D.C. And in Washington, we met Kennedy. We met we met Lyndon Johnson, the person that I didn't vote for. But in fact, I had my picture taken with Linda. You went to the White House? I went to the White House and also went to Linda Lemon's office, the vice president's office. And we had all of the Texans had their picture taken with with Linda. So I somewhere in one

of my trunks, I have a picture of me and Linda and I, I did not they did not take pictures of of our meeting with Kennedy. But that was very impressive because it was in the East Room. And he really his his speech was really, you know, inside. I was saying, yeah, I did the right thing. I, I really, really, really did the right thing.

SZTUK: [00:14:35] I bet that was something. Do you remember anything?

ADCOCK: [00:14:38] Not anything particular except how how. And I think the reason I don't remember a lot is because I was so excited about being there and seeing him. So that was really cool.

SZTUK: [00:14:49] I wonder if there's a recording of that somewhere.

ADCOCK: [00:14:50] There might there very well might be, because American University has a really good library of various things, and I bet his. Is in there somewhere, so because there were there were news, but I think television news people were there, so there should be records somewhere.

SZTUK: [00:15:11] Well being than you were the first Peace Corps group to ship out. That would have been big news.

ADCOCK: [00:15:16] That was big news. Yeah, big news. And even if the press wasn't there, even in Austin, Texas, had know they were there. They were there. I remember them being there, but they were in the background. So we didn't pay much. We were all focused, of course.

SZTUK: [00:15:32] And so then when you found out that you were one of the ones selected to go, that must have been a big relief?

ADCOCK: [00:15:39] I was I was so pleased. I was I was just so happy because I really didn't think I was going to make it. I really if you do see my face, you would just laugh. But that was the saddest fact you ever saw, because I knew I was God. And so and there was one guy that I'm I didn't see

anything wrong with any of the ones that were not selected. OK, but there was this one guy from Texas that I really, really, really wanted him to go because he was he really seemed to have a grasp on it. He was younger than I, but he was the he was really with it. And he got deselected and I never knew why. So anyway. But I see him all the time. I see Nicki all the time. Do. Yeah, I see. Quite often because he's he was good friends with Darryl Young who went with me down there so and and was from Texas and and as he's pictured with me and Linda. So Yeah. So and then after that then we, then we got back on the train and went back up to New York and had lunch on a boat with Miss Colombia, a Colombian and Colombian ship. And we had a dinner with Miss Colombia. And then we went out to at that time, I don't know why it was called, but it was it's now JFK Airport. And that's where we flew out. And there was a five hour delay for us to get off the ground.

ADCOCK: [00:17:18] And we flew directly into one of those constellation planes from New York directly. We were supposed to go to Panama and then go we went the whole way to Bogota, Colombia. That was a long, long flight. We didn't get into wait wait past midnight. And then you were asking how what was my impression? Right. Of right. Well, we were assigned Colombian families. Excuse me. I have to be a little horse this year. We were assigned we were assigned Colombian families and all of our families. We did five hours at the at the airport in Bogota waiting for us to come in. They were waiting for us. Now, they there was a few at the airport, but most of them were at the American Hotel in Bogota called Hotel Thinking. And the and the room was filled with Colombians. They were everywhere. Just everywhere. And I found mine, I mean, really fast. And it turned out that David Crosier, who was also a volunteer, he was from Missouri, I believe David's family lived next to my family. So we all went to families of the two Peace Corps volunteers on the weekend. They would take his places to, you know, to acclimate us to Colombia. And so David and I went went everywhere together. David then later on was in a tragic airplane crash and we lost him and we lost and we lost Larry Reedley, who was also a volunteer.

SZTUK: [00:19:11] This was during their search.

ADCOCK: [00:19:12] And this was this was this was about a year after we went into our slides because we did not go into our site when we got there. I like we went to the Rockefeller Foundation Experimental Agricultural Station outside of Bogota called Tibiatatá.

SZTUK: [00:19:33] It was that an extension of your training then?

ADCOCK: [00:19:35] And so they extended it. And the reason was that the legislation had not been passed. We were working on an executive order in March. And so, you know, when the annual with the five every five years we get the Peace Corps gets its back together and, you know, whether it is a Republican or Democratic. Here the president is either a Democrat or a Republican, because if it's a Democrat, you celebrated in March of the fifth year and if you're a Republican, you celebrated in September when the legislation was passed. OK, because the conservatives, both Democrats and Republicans, dragged their feet on it. And some of the guys in Congress, I have pages that shows that they said that it was the Kennedy kiddy corps. And so we stayed in and debated until such time. But we were getting training at the time. The the agricultural people were coming in and talking to us about the various crops because they were right there at the agricultural stations. So they came in and then the president of Colombia come out, who was the one that made the pact with Kennedy for the two 1/2 Peace Corps come in. So but the president didn't they? Yeah. This come out of nowhere, was there? And a the staff staff officer for the full term, Senator Fulbright from the Fulbright Committee came because he was on sabbatical and he brought his wife and she sat in the back and he said kind of up front and make and talk to us about what they were doing with the Fulbright scholarships and all that kind of thing.

ADCOCK: [00:21:32] And I kept looking back at her and saying, I know that lady looks like a lady. I know. So I finally got really brave and I walked back to her and I said, I hate to say this, but you look exactly like Shooty father. And she said, she's my sister. So we met 1500 miles. Wow. So anyway,

so and they and they were very nice to me, I was up in the cold climate and they were in Bogota and I was only 35 miles north of Bogota. And my and my sight in my sight was just 35 miles north. So I would come in from time to time. And when I did, I could get a hot shower and and hang out with hang out with Americans and particularly someone I knew well because I knew her sister. I mean, come on. So I had that was really one of those interesting occasions that you don't expect.

SZTUK: [00:22:31] But how long did you live with the host family?

ADCOCK: [00:22:34] But actually with the family, we just went on the weekends and we just spent the weekend only spend what we had when we stayed in the dorms in the in the agricultural station. OK? Yeah. And so and we. And it was it was eight men in a room and there were six there were 62 of us. So it was pretty crowded and but it was a it was good because they took us up into the mountains where some really, really, really poor people were. And the Women and Care had a project to build houses for these people. They were living in in crates and they were living in shacks and up in the mountains because the rich people didn't live in the mountains. They lived down on the down of the plane. And so as a result, in Colombia, they call it the sabatina, which is the blanket, OK, slap on a label with that that all the rich people have down there. The poor people lived up in the mountains. They gathered wood, they gathered other stuff, and they bring it down to sell the into the town. And Kiir was doing a project to use Cinram a box. Excuse me, I will turn that off. Get right back at it like that, you know? OK. So they care had cinder blocks that they made with a simple hand machine, what it was, it was sand, cement and water and it was like adobe bricks, but it had it had the cement in it. So they were much stronger and they didn't and they didn't melt as much in rain. And so we were we went up and made several blocks and helped the help the people. And that that was a really good acculturation for us in terms of dealing with extremely poor people, very poor people. So then then we were we were saying everybody was to.

SZTUK: [00:24:46] What was the name of your site?

ADCOCK: [00:24:47] It was named Cogua. It was in the same department where Bogota was. But Bogota, we had like Washington, D.C., headed the federal district that was not part of the department. They call what we call states. They call departments. And so it was in the Department of Cundinamarca and it was a little municipal called municipality called Cogua. And so my partner and I, Buster Lewis, and a promoter of ICSOM, common knowledge community development promoter from the from the government, made a team. We were we were the Peace Corps team and we went team to cobble together all through. All three of us went in together. And he was from he was from the north. He was from the north part. So he was from a hot, hot country. And he was up in the cold country and freezing to death, just cold all the time. But he was very he was a very good he was a very good guy. He didn't stay very long because of the cold. But he was he was an excellent and he was very good for us because he was a little older than both of us. And my partner was Buster Lewis from McAllen, Texas. So Buster has his picture with Lyndon as well. And Buster was here in Austin going to the University of Texas. And he and Bruce Lane, who was from Westlake, but part of the Austin metropolitan area, the three of us all went through training, all went through selection and all made it to Columbia.

ADCOCK: [00:26:31] So there were three the first three volunteers from this area went to Columbia. Yeah. So so Buster and I were partners for all but six months of our of our time in country inside. And so when we got there, it was raining, which normally didn't go well all the time. You could pretty well most days it would. It would rain really. Yeah. And it was raining but but the priest had all of the schoolchildren out on the plaza with their American flags and their Colombian flags and the and the municipal band had to learn The Star-Spangled Banner so that when we came came we had both not only email Nazionale but the other. And that was I was impressed that they're really going they're really going all out. I found out later, about ten years before we got there, a group of engineers I don't know if there was a Corps of Engineers. It was just a private company. I never did find out. I built a hydroelectric dam north of us and the river ran

to the south and ran through, ran through the town, and they had it dammed up and it was hydroelectric. And all of the people in my in my municipal love, those engineers, they thought those gringos were wonderful. And as a result, we got that we we got part of that switch, which was really nice.

SZTUK: [00:28:17] Were you the only two volunteers in that town?

ADCOCK: [00:28:20] We were in our area, in our area, in an area of about I would say seventy five miles a circle. There were about eight or ten volunteers. They put a lot of them near Bogota. And that was because that's kind of the way the division of Acción Comunal wanted it for their promoters of of them. We were split into two groups. One group worked with the government and the other group worked with the cafeteria, which was an organization for CAFI for coffee growers. And the cafeterias were the were the ones that were in the coffee country. And so our volunteers that ended up in the coffee country also had promoters, but they were promoters for the cafeterias. They were not government employees. And we were all paid at the same level when we got there. But they kept increasing our salaries because the the the monetary the monetary difference between what what we what we were what we were earning and working in American dollars was like this was, you know, even Steven. And then afterwards our salaries went way up because in in terms of Colombian peso

SZTUK: [00:29:52] Compared to what the Colombian.

ADCOCK: [00:29:53] And so they finally they finally knocked us back down to to that so that we didn't get a constant dollar salary. We got a constant Colombian peso salary. And so but at first that caused a little friction because, you know, and we felt bad. And and if if Promotor, you know, if we needed. Something we you know, we gave him some some basis because we were we were earning more than we really needed for our housing and for our food and for everything else.

SZTUK: [00:30:28] So now the promoter, this is a Colombian person who

ADCOCK: [00:30:33] Colombian national who was hired by the government and actually not only the government, but the government division in the Colombian government. And that government division had a lot of different divisions. But one of them was the division of community development, which they called Acción Comunal.

SZTUK: [00:30:49] Someone's here liaison with the community?

ADCOCK: [00:30:52] No, no, no. He he worked as a team. We were we were trying to keep both the team. And so the three of us would go out to every every time we had a home, every time we had a meeting, all three of us would go. Sometimes the promoter would talk first and sometimes Buster would talk first. Mr. Adcock did not talk first because some straight talk was still struggling with the language. So Buster was my crutch because he spoke beautiful Spanish. Oh, he was from McCallan. And so in order to survive, he learned Spanish. OK, so he was he was good. He was really good at it. So he was my crutch. I very I very rarely made any kind of talk at all, but I got better at the language. I mean, there's no question about it. But between the two of us in terms of public speaking busser was better. So he would usually handle that. What I would handle is the details of how to get the thing a home to organize. There was only one really functioning Acción Comunal Hunda, and it was not it was connected to the government in that the government had given them the accreditation so that they could be up on vaccine going out, but they didn't have a promoter. So basically when we came in, the first thing we did was get to know this. Now, this was a little part of a little part of our municipality. It was called LA. Plus, we left the Little Plaza and La Plaza de La was unlike all of the other believers in the municipal municipality, the town Central had six grades, the the providers, which are just little villages, and that made up the made up the whole municipality that the leaders had two grades in, in every one of the providers except La La which had four.

ADCOCK: [00:33:02] And when we left they had six. And the priest had told the the guy who was a doctor, he was a compliance specialist from Bogota who

had a little finger a little weekend home out in LA last week. And he he was the one who formed Lunda and he was the one who was the president of the room when we got there. And then his his goal was to give it to a farmer. And so he gave it to a campesino. About three months after we were there, they elected a from among the people who made up the hunt. They elected a farmer by the name of Antonio. The doctor was Antonio Kouros. And the the the next president was also Antonio, but he was Antonio fortepiano. And Antonio was just a wonderful he was he had six children. He formed two acres, two and a half acres of land and provided for his children. And he was the president of the Sudan. He was he was a very, very wise, wonderful man. And so we used a lot. Plus, we love as our training ground to train other hunters in in other the other arenas. And so we had them all coming in. And we happened to have also living across the road from where Dr. Cross was, was the he was a captain in the in the army who specialized in printing. And he printed up certificates that were in color and with the Colombian flag, with a yellow, blue and red flag and a certificate that said that you had passed you had passed our trainings. Our training session did a lot.

SZTUK: [00:35:05] And you have a printer or was he going you

ADCOCK: [00:35:06] No, he was always doing it. His printing press in the military, it was it was printing over in Bogota and bringing them out. Wonderful it was, and and as a result, we got a tour, Buzzacott in Life magazine, because we were one of the first ones that had a project going OK, but our project was actually a lot less wingless project. They had a book that had washed out the bridge and they needed to put a new bridge in and we were helping them through the bridge. And Buster got his picture in Life magazine with a long and accomplished, you know, behind him, OK, and which was a great picture. He was really, really wonderful. And so and of course, as you said, the American the American press was just delighted with us. You know, they were they were all over us all the time, really.

SZTUK: [00:36:01] They'd actually come down?

ADCOCK: [00:36:02] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. The wife came out and so and that's not the only visitors, but I'll tell you about that later. But we had we had tons because we we were so close. Now in terms of our village, our municipal municipality, we were 35 miles from Bogota, the capital of Colombia, but we might as well have been 350 miles away. We had one telephone. We did have electric lights thanks to the hydroelectric dam. Yeah. And we had water, but it came from a spring and went three miles past and, you know, open ditches, open mud, trench, trench from the spring and went past houses without any kind of sanitary facility. And then it would be steep in the reservoir that we had for the water for our town. And so one of our projects, I'll tell you about that. But but that's to tell you that while we were very close to her, you know, we're a cosmopolitan, terrifically cosmopolitan city. We were still out in the boondocks. We were really far out of the city.

SZTUK: [00:37:20] Infrastructure wouldn't extend very far.

ADCOCK: [00:37:22] No. Now it does pass my past, my municipal, but that's another story. So then we went we had but we had lots of visitors. So that's well, I'll tell later. But mainly what we did was that that was really successful. And then back from stores and Buster and I had to split up and going to different locations because we had 14 operators in this CBO and we were now having we were now having a fire sale. People now that we had the training everybody wanted to to because what they found when they went to law plus remember, they usually did that by foot so they might not get across the CBO. So when when we got them in to do a lot, plus Waler, they saw that they had four grades in their school and they had a chapel because the priest would not do math for them in the way that they had to come to the to downtown, to the to the church there. So they built a chapel so it would come out and give mass in there for later. And so here they see a chapel, they say, for grade school with four teachers and they are excited. And so we had like a fire sale. We had people wanting wanting us to come and help them with their food and do this and do that. We actually kind of split up a little from time to time in order to in order to meet the demand.

SZTUK: [00:39:05] So they were seeing the benefit of what we were doing and it was one side. And then they all

ADCOCK: [00:39:09] They all want they all wanted lo mismo. They did. So it was it was really cool. So then we were we were working very well. But we did have a lot of sisters. We had the the military war, the war college team. Really? Yeah. We got to see the colonels holding the doors for the generals. It was really fun. And we we we were five miles from a fairly, fairly good sized town called CPQ, which had a which had a salt mine. And in that salt mine was a cathedral. So we had a way to go after after we did a show and tell of what we were doing with the community, we had to wait to make things nice for them because we take them down to the cathedral in the salt mine and up above, there was a restaurant that was run by the owners of the Salt Mine, which I think was probably somehow government related. And and the restaurant was just a really nice restaurant. So we. We feed them and then we send them off to either to Bogota or to one of the other sites, and it depended on what time of the day they came. And then in addition to that, we had the secretary of the interior secretary Udall, and his wife came. His wife looked exactly like Doris Day. That was just to me. But we did we did the same thing for him. And the priest would would every time we'd have the little kids out with the flags and the and the band would play both the Indian you. But it would also play The Star-Spangled Banner every time they came and we had about we must have had at least seven or eight VIP VIP visits during the time while I was there. I could. Yeah. So anyway, so but it went well. I was I was very pleased with what we were doing.

SZTUK: [00:41:13] And did you and Buster you lived in in your own house you didn't live with.

ADCOCK: [00:41:18] No, we did. We lived in an apartment at first for just a little while. We lived in a pension and Buster and I said, we cannot live this way. We have got to find another.

SZTUK: [00:41:29] The pension is like a pension?

ADCOCK: [00:41:30] Yeah, it's just a little a little hostel kind of thing. And and we just weren't going to do that. So we found an apartment in a big house on the corner next to the plaza. And we were on the road to see pocket so that every every time the panel truck that went from from our village to the other, it ran right past our house on a gravel road. So we had the dust coming into our coming into our room all the time.

SZTUK: [00:42:04] So your living quarters was one room?

ADCOCK: [00:42:07] And we we had what we had is we had an apartment. We had we had a big room. That Buster and I lived in a smaller room that the promoter lived in at his it was his choice. And then we had a we had another small bedroom that we used as a closet, all three of us. We restored our clothes in there because it was there. No closets in the two rooms and the living room that you came through the Senate. But the adult was the was a farmer from potatoes. And we had seed potatoes in our living room. So you walk through the seed potatoes to get to the patio and then when you got to the patio, then you would either go right to the promoters room or left to Buster's in my room. And then there was a kitchen and there was actually a bath. And so we could water, of course. But if you lit up the stove with with with coal and and the coal was in I mean, the CPA, we we had a coal mine in our in our CPA. If you had coal then you could have hot water in your in your mouth for a little while. So that was so.

SZTUK: [00:43:16] And was there a family living in the rest of that?

ADCOCK: [00:43:18] And, and then and then the family lived toward that more toward the plaza. We were down from the plaza. So yeah it was and we had our own patio and, but their patio was with a big wall between us and they had a patio that was actually an extension of the two. And what they had done is in order to earn some extra money, they were renting this apartment and, you know, with the potatoes and the apartment and so

forth, they were living very, very well. So he was one of the it was one of the big dogs. And it was. Yeah, he was. He was a kid.

SZTUK: [00:43:55] You get close to that family?

ADCOCK: [00:43:57] Oh, yeah. Oh yeah.

SZTUK: [00:43:58] More than the landlord tenant. Really.

ADCOCK: [00:44:00] Oh yeah. Yeah. It was it was really kind of a family thing. We sit in, sit in the room and drink coffee with them and talking and the kids were old enough that they enjoyed, you know, talking with us and that kind of thing. And then in addition to that, we had a family, another family that lived right down the way from us. And they provided us with the food because we weren't cooking. We were we were we were busy. We were we were going full bore. So we would go in and have have dinner with the family. And and then we all we all three had we all three had horses because there was one leader that was over the mountains. We were eight thousand feet on the savanna that Bogota and then 2000 feet more to get over the ridge to go to the one that was the most distant. It was called Bottom Walthall, which means the highest, highest of high. And they didn't have anything. They didn't have water running water. They didn't have electricity. They didn't have a school. They were they were the poorest of the poor. But we. We were able to work with them because they they grew potatoes and that's the way they supported themselves and they took them down to see pocket, but they did it on on a dirt road that they had made themselves.

ADCOCK: [00:45:28] And we got them. We we got a bulldozer and helped them have a real road to get down to the highway that was paved. And then they would catch the bus and go into overtime and to see if I could sell their potatoes. So but that's the only way we get there. There was no road. So the only way you get there is you get on horseback and you go on these really steep road, very narrow paths. And these these horses were trained to be able to do that. They had a they had a pace that allowed them to be

sure footed up, throughput up through the mountains and in the very narrow trails with a drop off, you know, a couple of hundred feet down. Yes. So that's one of my memories. And we had to between the two between Buster and I, we had two horses. His was a big old red horse that he named, told him in for no reason that I know of, but except the Tolima was one of the departments of Colombia. And I think that horse was from Tolima. But there was the same kind of thing there that you had to walk on the horse had to go on a narrow trail.

ADCOCK: [00:46:44] So his mind was a flaco mine was skinny, and my fiancée at the time in Austin named him Charley as it charted class, but also became totally fine. But it's just terrible. So Charlie, Charlie and I told him and say, and I've forgotten the name of of the promoters horse, but the three of us will go up in there from time to time because they were so, you know, isolated and but most of them had family in Kowa. So they would send their kids during the week over that steep trail on foot to relatives down in cold blood. And then they would go to school and COGA and and most of them were close enough and war that most of the kids from Palo Alto actually had a better chance of an education than the other believers because they were to get six grades of school. So they were they were what we call Willott. But when they got home, they had nothing. I mean, it was it was really it was really sad. I mean, it it really hurt my heart to see how what it difficult what a difficult life they were living. You know, they would they had kerosene, so they had kerosene lamps, but they would they cooked on the floor,

SZTUK: [00:48:13] The kerosene stove or?

ADCOCK: [00:48:15] I don't know if I become fire because that was the area where the coal came from. Coal came from Pottermore out of coal and potatoes all came from that that that area. So and that was it was a pretty an experience for me because, you know, I was like I was a suburban kid in Austin, Texas, and I never said I'd seen that poverty, but it was over in East Austin. I mean, it was never touched my life at all. And it really touched my heart to see the people living in that kind of difficult.

SZTUK: [00:48:48] What were their houses?

ADCOCK: [00:48:50] They they were made they were made of adobe. Adobe. But but we got we got the same from Abram over there by going in a jeep from Zipaquirá to up to the there their little dirt road. And the jeep could ride on that. We got the simpering victim and then there was a couple, a new couple, OK, and they needed a house and they were going to build it of Adobe. And we said, no, no, no, make it simpler. And the bricks last longer and they don't melt that. And you don't have to paint all the time and you do have to paint them, but you don't have to paint all of that. And so we we did it. All we did was we showed them how to do the simple Amber and brought them Seemap.

SZTUK: [00:49:38] And they made both the house and they were.

ADCOCK: [00:49:41] Yeah. So I think of all the all the areas of that CBO that was the one that really got me. It, it touched me. I was I was just it was terrible. It was really tight. So then Buster left.

SZTUK: [00:50:02] After how long?

ADCOCK: [00:50:04] All but six months. So the first part, the first part of the sixty three, he left and went to work with the cafeteria. So he had an experience I didn't have.

SZTUK: [00:50:14] Oh, he was still in country, still in Peace Corps but he had a different job.

ADCOCK: [00:50:19] He went to and the reason we did that is because another contingent of 60 volunteers came. And by the way, both of them I don't think I've mentioned this is the thing. We were all male. It was an all male contingency contingent and one. And then the next one that came in also was all male. OK, so and so what we we're doing, we're getting replacements. So if the guy came in and took them and started helping

me, but he didn't, he really was unhappy. And he finally left after about two or three weeks. He wasn't there very long at all. He was he was not he was not happy with the whole thing. So they they sent him home at his request. He requested it. And they say, well, and then I got my next volunteer and my next volunteer was Roberto Ramirez from Ponce, Puerto Rico. And he did 12 years of English and didn't speak a word of it. Not a, not a word. And my Spanish went zooming through the ceiling because I had nobody to speak English to most of my time. It was total immersion man. I was immersed in it. And when I left, I had minimal professional proficiency from the Foreign Service, but in Spanish. Oh, and Roberto loved Roberto. Everybody loved Roberto. He was he was one of these, you know, bum, bum, bum, bum veal he didn't think about, but they loved it. They loved him. He danced all their dances. And of course, I was taken so so I didn't have any problem with women thing.

ADCOCK: [00:52:10] But Roberto was single and he was he was keen to Uluru's. Boy, he was old and I so I left it. I left the municipal in good hands. I will tell you one other little story about that. And I'm through with the thing, unless you've got questions. But we we finally decided that we really needed someone to provide us with dinner when we came in because we never knew when we were going to come in. So the new promoter promoter was Umberto Rodriguez. And Umberto was was from the Savannah Bogota. So he was you know, he was acclimated. You he had no problem at all. And he was he was much older than than the two of us then. Bustan, I am much older than Roberto. And so he was he was big dog. Well, he got us a maid. And so we had we could have dinner when we got there, all we had to do was just go to the market on Saturdays and buy whatever we we needed and keep it in the because it was cold enough that maybe for refrigeration. And so we and we kept and we kept that all in the closet that I talk to you about, that that's where we kept our food. We kept our food in the closet. And then she would take it and put it in the kitchen. Well, it turns out that the lady was pregnant and we didn't know it. Memento didn't know it either. And we were all caught by surprise. And the talk in the village was just it was the gringos that did it.

ADCOCK: [00:53:56] But it turned out very well because she was she was not one of these shy people. If they if they said something like that where she heard them, she corrected them right away and told them the name of the guy who had gotten her pregnant. Yes. So and she already had a child. She had her child with her. But it was the business that she was in Barbassa that caused the song. But then so I left them. I will say that in the middle of that, I had I we would come from Bogota in a converted school bus and and we would end up inside pocket to change to the panel truck with the wooden benches that took us the five miles from seat pocket after Kowa. OK, and while we were there, there was nothing to do. And so we would go to this little store down the way. And it was run by a woman and her two daughters. And we got to know her two daughters. And they were just delightful, delightful people, great friends. And they introduced us to two guys who wanted to go to the United States, their father's room on pretty big. Forms in the area and they wanted to go in first learning they knew English because they had in school, but they wanted to learn it well and then go up to Madison, Wisconsin, and study animal husbandry. And so my dad worked for the gas company here in town and I sent them here so that my dad could.

SZTUK: [00:55:35] Oh, you did?

ADCOCK: [00:55:36] And he he was he was the representative for the Restaurant Association. So we got a restaurant, jobs in Tex Mex restaurants here in town. And then what happened was, is that they collected South Americans from everywhere. And they would meet at my parents house and have parties with my with my fiancée and my fiancée, OK? And I wrote I wrote I wrote my parents in Spanish and one of them could read it that said, hands off of my fiancée the that, you know. So we had I had a bunch of people then that I knew in Bogota and even in Lima, Peru, that I knew because I was I was there with you know, I was they would they would send me pictures and all sorts of stuff, and then I would go see their families and I would sometimes stay with their families and so forth. So I had I had a large number of of of additional friends that were made, but also the the family for Buster. I told you all the family we had families when

we came in, we took us on like weekend. Well, they kept they kept in touch with Buster and Buster, kept in touch with the family and the family lived in China, which was just south of pocket and was a bus stop on the on the bus route from Bogota to see pick it up. And so from time to time, we would stop there and begin with volunteers, a hot bath. You could you could buy us for a hot bath. Hot bath. We were yours. We do whatever you want and give us a hot bath. And so they tell you that they were they were very, very nice. And I'm still in touch with one of the daughters. The daughter was a little sweet on Buster, but they never amounted to anything but but she was sweet on them. And she got married, has two daughters. And one of them looks exactly like the mother of the of the family that had collected.

SZTUK: [00:57:55] She's still in still and

ADCOCK: [00:57:57] She's still young. We talk all the time on the phone, so. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And Una Mesclun, what a mix of English and Spanish because I hear her English is as bad as my Spanish is. And so we just kind of mix it together and make it work. So but anyway, that was one thing that we did have going is, is that any time we wanted to and there their eldest son was in was in San Francisco going to school baseball, I think. So one of the he was going to one of the colleges and and so we we stayed, we stayed in his room. Buster and I would stay in his room from time to time when it was raining. Yeah. We get there. And because it rained in the region all the time, it might be raining and we wouldn't want to get back out, go to the bus and get all wet. So we wait till in the morning and we could catch the first bus that came from Bogota out there before, you know, before we had to work. So many times when we go into Bogota, we come back. And our job was in Bogota as well, because the because it was a division of the government, all the government agencies were required to cooperate with the division, the accident coming out of the community development division. And they had they had pipe. They had they had steel for four schools. They had all sorts of things. What they didn't have is the money to hire people to put it together.

ADCOCK: [00:59:31] And, well, we trained in the hunters was we they they had plenty of maestros, you know, people that were artisans who could do the stuff. And so they would bring them they would bring the materials out and we and then the painter would put it would put the materials together. So then they did the labor and the and the government did the the hardware. And so it worked very well. But in order to do that, we had to go into Bogota, put on our suits. But you had to wear a suit when you were when you were going through put on your suit to go in. And then we would we'd spend the day going from. Government agency to government agency to get materials and stuff and funny story, and that's all the funny stories, but they had a coffee there, they would boil it down and it was cold and they called it kind of like an espresso. But it didn't have that. It didn't have the grounds on the bottom. It was it was pure, pure coffee, strong coffee. And then they would put and then they would put four or five teaspoons of sugar in it. OK, so that and you have a little tingle in the morning, then you have a little tingle when you cut into the office and a little Kimoto before you left. I have a little chat afterwards candid about your family. Did your business check. They did a little more, had another time to say goodbye and went to the next government agency, which you have a little to little chat and do your business.

ADCOCK: [01:01:10] And then another team, though, and you're out the door to the next agency. But the time we went to five of them, pretty well wired, you know, completely wired with sugar and caffeine. Yeah, I know. So yeah. But back to back to it though. So we didn't do a lot of travel, but we took, we took to the farmers with us so we would take them in from the various windows if we were doing for a specific counter or if we were doing something for the whole town, then we would just have a few people that would come. But normally if we if we were going into overtime, we would have the whole whomped out with us and we would go to all of the agencies we needed to get to to get them all the supplies they needed and get a date certain, which was never certain, but get a date certain to get the materials or whatever. And then and then they would and they would put together they put schools, they put they would put in infirmaries on to the school that they already had so that the nurses that worked in the and

the mayor's office could go up and go there. The mayor's office had nurses and doctors, the doctors team regularly. The nurses were always there so we could take the nurses out. And and and they would they would then people would come in.

SZTUK: [01:02:31] And they would have a facility to work out?

ADCOCK: Yeah.

SZTUK: So that's what your projects were. You were doing this small building projects and water supply projects?

ADCOCK: [01:02:37] Road projects.

SZTUK: [01:02:40] All types of projects?

ADCOCK: [01:02:42] All types of projects. The biggest project we did was done after Buster left. We Buster not planned it, but it was the one where I told you the water came from the spring and went past the houses. We will get internet pipe and we will. And you didn't have to dig very low because there was no frost. So we all you had to do is get below where the plows would plow up the pipe and we dug ditches, we dug and we dug ditches with plows. And then and then the people would dig it. And we dug three miles worth of of Triche basically, and where the trench had been. But, you know, we would try to avoid various things. And then and then we put the pipe and then we had an idea who pipe who promised us that they would give us a coordinator because our water was dirtier than the dirtiest water in Colombia, which was in the in the Magdalena River, down below us to the east, to the west of us. Our our water had more amoebas. The. No kidding. Yeah. So we needed it. And and of course we had 8000 feet. So you had to just boil water to, you know, to death to have water that you could drink and not get amoebas or something like that. So at that point I've been a little bit of a farewell and headed for Bogota, and that's when they found I had the whip worms. So I get to spend an extra I got to spend an extra month with arsenic tablets that in order to kill the worms in my

vision, turned blue. When I looked at you, I was looking to you as if I had blue. Blue sunglasses. Yes. For a moment.

SZTUK: [01:04:37] Oh, no kidding.

ADCOCK: [01:04:38] No, but I never had any trouble after that. I never had any stomach issue. Well, I had some stomach issue, but minor stomach gets used compared with Whipworm. So that I will say about Peace Corps Peace Corps. During my time we had excellent health care. I helped my health care came from a doctor, a well-known doctor in Bogota, and he had a famous name because one of the presidents with sunbath and he was some bad doctor. And he was an excellent doctor. He was really wonderful. So I got to tell you that I'm on health. I got to tell you stories. RELISTOR Buster gets gets a case of herpes, but it's it's the it's the yellow jaundice that comes from from drinking contaminated water somehow or another. Sometime during his time, Buster gets hepatitis A report that said you're sorry, hepatitis don't like it, but please not have hepatitis. And he turned completely yellow. And I get on the phone, I go to the only phone in town and I call and Lucia Quave, who was the one who was there paying his family. And all of a sudden I see this billowing cloud of dust coming. And it's Lusia in her in her station wagon coming to get her booster so that booster can go to some to some parents, the hospital in Bogota. And she took him all the way into Bogota. Yeah, so they did. They took we had we have wonderful relations with IA.

SZTUK: [01:06:32] Where it sounds like you had no trouble at all being accepted by the local folks.

ADCOCK: [01:06:36] And we had an advantage, too, in that we were in which we came to our to our village through the bishop's office and set it up. So we came to the priest with the imprimatur of the of the bishop. OK, so our bishop was very our priest was very conservative. I thought he would let them have a mass of lights. They had a chapel. He was very conservative, but he liked the he liked the gringos. And so and the fact that we had the bishop's park was really was really good. It was it was kind of an opener,

you know, for us. OK, so that's that's true. That's true. The time when I get ready to come back, do you have any questions or anything?

SZTUK: [01:07:23] Well, you know, we we we talked about your impression when you landed in the country and now you're getting ready to leave. How did how did you feel about that?

ADCOCK: [01:07:33] Well, because I was I was going back to my fiancée and I seen her twice. I before the rule that I think I caused about not going back to the United States while you were a Peace Corps volunteer. Yeah, that was not in place when I got there. And so my fiancée was in by that time, was in college. And she wanted me to come to their to their big prom for her sorority. And so I flew up and went to her her prom. And and I think that's what caused them to say, no, you can't go back to. But then I flew to Mexico and and then she came down with my parents, came down and we met at Christmas the last Christmas before I left and 62. And I guess I got to see her twice, but I was ready to come back and see her. So, yeah, I was ready. And she was she was way I'm sure she was going to happen. But anyway, so

SZTUK: [01:08:39] It must have been hard to leave your friends there?

ADCOCK: [01:08:40] Oh, what it was it was very difficult because because we I was very, very close friends with the with the care director of the Care Peace Corps Project. There was a there was a Peace Corps director and there was a clear director and Krieger was the cure director. And and I got really close with the family because they had a lot of daughters and the daughters were about my age. And, you know, and so it was that it really leaving the Krieger's and some of the families that were from the ones that had gathered in Austin here, I had a lot of people that I really was going to miss when I left. So, yeah, I was I was thinking about that. But I was I was ready to go. Yeah, I'm good. I was.

SZTUK: [01:09:28] And did you keep in touch much with any of those people?
Laughing Oh yeah. I know you you mentioned the other.

ADCOCK: [01:09:35] Oh yeah. Well, and then my wife and I went back in 68. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Five years after.

SZTUK: [01:09:41] Yeah. And you met somebody?

ADCOCK: [01:09:43] Oh I saw all of them. I was really. Oh yeah. It was, it was Dambusters and I, I did what I felt was the thing to do. I took her to every big city in Colombia by plane, OK. And at that time Avianca was owned by the government. So the plane fare was still very cheap. And so we flew into Bogota. I took her out on a on one of those converted school busses. OK, we flew first. You know, we flew my. Yanked from place to place, but when we were on the ground, she got an experience of Peace Corps with the busses, with the busses. Oh, yes. And of course, with me, my niece, I'm six foot six, six foot six. And my knees were up against my nose in those little converted school busses. And, oh, I do have one story to tell. And so anyway, so I took her to all the places that I had been. I took her to I took her to where I took her to see Potgieter because the guys that had gone up with my parents were back and were back in seatback, you know, so she'd been with them all that time. Right. We all we came back and we had a big party and it was really nice. We really had a we had a wonderful time. They got she got to meet all of the community leaders. She she got to meet the the cigar smoking 85 year old priest. She she got the food. She got the full trip.

ADCOCK: [01:11:16] And but it was a very difficult time because that was 68 and that's when Bobby Kennedy was was assassinated and we'd already gone through Kennedy's assassination. I got to tell you, that was like having someone in my family. I mean, I was I was bereft for a long, long time. It hit me hard. I mean, it really, really hit me hard. I was and she could have told she my mom, my ex-wife. But we're still friends. And so she could tell you how bad off I was because I was bad off in November of 63. But I was also devastated in 68 when Bobby was assassinated. So and I was there in Colombia. And I you know, I told you my Spanish was good, but these people were excited about the fact, you know, they were they were like

me. They were in shock. So when they were talking, they were talking fast. And I was trying to listen. And the best way I had with with her was to translate El Tiempo, which was the only newspaper at the time in Bogota. And I read off to her all of the things that had happened and that sort of thing. I translated from Spanish and English for her. So but it was that that was the sad part of it. But the rest of it was an absolute delight. And today I met a friend of mine from my church and from Barbara's church. My what? My ex-wife, I met her today here and I had met her in 68 because she was up in Boston, which is on the north side at the Mediterranean.

ADCOCK: [01:13:03] And we flew in to Cartagena. And then we wanted to go see Kalsu Zubac, who was was from our church and was a Peace Corps volunteer. We went to see her and she was with Bill Leuchtenburg, who was with one of the Peace Corps leaders. But we had Peace Corps volunteers who were leaders for the rest of us. And they would they would do a circuit. And so we went to see her. And Bill then took Kalsu and Barbara and I from Berkeley to Santa Marta, where we had a hotel. And so now I'm seeing Kalsu two day after. And I had not seen her. I had not seen her since 2000 and 2001 or two. We're both Stephen ministers. And so it's a it's I guess I better tell them, Stephen, ministry is basically pastoral care done by trained laypeople. And basically what you do is you go and you listen and walk through the people with crises so they have a crisis. You walk through it with them and you meet once a once a week for an hour. And so in a way, Kalsu was trained, was a trained minister, and I was a Stephen leader, which is the ones that trained the Stephen ministers with the 50 hours of training. And so I had not seen her since since that time. And so it was just like old home week to down. OK, now,

SZTUK: [01:14:43] Well, how how did your Peace Corps experience and affect your your life after you returned? Did it influence your career?

ADCOCK: [01:14:56] You changed everything. OK, I was in it for science when I was there, OK? When I came back, I was ready to do community development and I decided that I wanted to do it was in San Antonio where they have

blocks, they had blocks. They don't have them anymore, but they had. Of people living on a square block in refrigerator crates with with one faucet, water faucet, maybe electricity, but maybe not. It was like being in Bogota again. I mean, it was that same I was determined to do that. But Kennedy was assassinated. I wanted to get some government and economics. So when I came back in September, I love 60s, 63, I, I went back, I had my degree was in mathematics, but I was intending to go into science. But when I got back, that was not even not even in my own interest. No, I wasn't interested. I was definitely communicate about. Well, but then Kennedy was assassinated and they put a freeze on all government employment. But it just so happened that they knew everybody knew that it was going to be temporary, the freeze was going to be temporary. It was just until Johnson got a hold of the controls of government and so forth. And then the freeze would be all. So the central personnel personnel for for the government was the U.S. Civil Service Commission. It's now the Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Civil Service Commission was retiring. And the reason they were hiring was that they knew that they were going to have to hire people. Real soon after the freeze came.

SZTUK: [01:16:43] They were staffing out?

ADCOCK: [01:16:44] They were staffing and they were already and they'd already been told by Johnson to hire, to hire volunteers. And so and and I kind of blanched at that. I said I I don't like to step ahead of other people. And they said, well, your score is good, so don't worry about that. And said, we're under directive, we're going to hire, we're going to have Peace Corps volunteers. And so are you interested? I said, yes, I need a job. And and HUD was still under under a freeze. In fact, they were under a freeze after I actually went to work in February of 1964, they were they were under freeze and so they weren't hiring. So I will move to Dallas and work for the Civil Service Commission in Dallas and got married before that. I got married. Well, no, I got married after that. I started on February 1st and February twenty ninth. We had our wedding here in Austin, St. Martin's Press. And then we went back. Then I took her back and I had already had an apartment and everything. But the only thing I didn't have,

which she was a pianist, so I had to card her her piano. But fortunately I had Peace Corps volunteers that I knew in Dallas and they helped me and some of my and some of my friends that I had already made it, the U.S. Civil Service Commission. And they carted the piano upstairs and into the apartment. And God bless them, they carried them back down when we found a house. And they also did that. So I was I was very connected to the Peace Corps community in Dallas back in the day. I mean, we're talking sixty four.

SZTUK: [01:18:31] Yeah. Must have been a small community.

ADCOCK: [01:18:33] That was very small. There were just a very few of us. But, you know, there were there were there were quite a few volunteers coming back by that time because by the end of by the end of sixty three, they had they had volunteers all over the world. So there was enough people that it was nice. It was like still still hanging on to a little bit of my experience.

SZTUK: [01:19:02] And it was. And what did you end up doing eventually. Did you stay there at OPM?

ADCOCK: [01:19:06] Well, what happened was, is that I, I stayed there long enough to really get into personnel management and it suited me. It was it was my kind of thing that I could do. I knew how to like I kind of intuitively knew how to do personnel management. I just knew how to do it. And so I, I really took to it. But it was clear that U.S. Civil Service Commission was not going to was not going to give me the kind of career path I really wanted. And so of a guy that I knew, I I helped form the Society for Personal Administration in Dallas with the federal minister. You know, I've been to organizing for two years. I mean, organizing I did in my sleep. So I organized the Society for Personnel Administration. And one of the guys was a representative for personnel in Dallas, for the Department of Agriculture. They did consumer and marketing service. And that had a. A whole string of things and meat inspection, it had poultry inspection, it had a fruit and vegetable inspection, it had cotton grading, it had it had meat grading, it had it had food stamp. It was a huge agency. And they had

consolidated three personnel offices into one office in Chicago. So my boss was in Chicago. What happened was, is that the guy who was the personal representative and was a member of my society first demonstration and we got to be good friends when he left, he recommended me. And so they they they took me up to Washington, D.C. and interviewed me and put me in Dallas. And so I left Civil Service Commission. And from the rest of my career, I was with the Department of Agriculture. And so and and I was one of the places where people when they were coming through Dallas, if they were a Peace Corps volunteer, they came through our house, you know, through our house. That was just what we did

SZTUK: [01:21:21] Over the years. You ever had occasion to talk to some young folks that are considering going into the Peace Corps were on their way out and what?

ADCOCK: [01:21:28] Oh, oh, the Peace Corps. What advice do you give them? I give them give it a chance. I say you're going to have really there's going to be some really tough times. You're going to have really tough times, but. Pushed through it and you'll be fine. I said, I look at me, I said I barely speak Spanish. After all that two months of training, I still can barely speak Spanish. I said, you can make a go of it. You can do it. And so I would always encourage him because I was a life changing experience for me was just it was the best. He was the best. It was it was a wonderful time for me. You can tell it still right there, because I. Yeah. And and also because I am on Facebook with the with the mayor's office of in Cold Water column called In the Market Colombia. And the mayor is the grandson of the first farmer. His last name is Valero and William Fulbright, who is the mayor. And his grandpa was was the president the first president of the a lot of sweat. And I got to see him first in 2008 because we went to to Cartagena to get the Peace Corps back from 82 to to 2000 to 2010. There was no volunteers. But the blessed ambassadors from from Colombia would have us to their residence every five years. When we came for the reunions, there was wonderful. It was just marvelous. And

so the last time in 2006, the new ambassador, Senora Baako, said it's time to get Peace Corps back, said the violence.

ADCOCK: [01:23:36] The reason that we were gone was because of the violence, the violence to tamp down in this big cities so we can send them to the big cities. So let's have a conference. So in 2008, we had a conference in in Cartagena and then the Peace Corps was very good. They made a deal with the Avianca. The airline was no longer there was no longer the one. It was no longer a national airlines. It was a private airline. But they made a deal with them to get us to this closest city we could get to to our to our village. So they sent me to Bogota. I had had dinner that night with with Vicki, who was the daughter of Buster's family and the one that was sweet on Buster. And we had we had dinner. But when I got back to the hotel, I had the worst case of altitude sickness I've ever had in my life. And I've been up in fourteen thousand feet on on Elkridge in Colorado. But this was just awful. So for the whole day, I was dead in in an authentic and Darma sleeping it out. And then at five o'clock I woke up and I was fresh and I was I was acclimated and everything was cool. So I get in my car and I go to Kuga at night, OK? I drive up there, park on the plaza. The plaza when I was there was graveled.

ADCOCK: [01:25:03] Now it had Britts, it had trees, it had a fountain. The road from Zipaquirá out of Cogua was paved. I mean it was like night and day. I'm walking up and trying to find Brito's to the people who own my my apartment. Nobody knew who they were. I went to person and it finally dawned on me, I'm talking to young people, OK, I need to talk to somebody older. So I go into so I go into the plaza and this this family, husband, wife and three daughters come toward me on the plaza. So I asked them, I introduced myself. I said I worked in the Peace Corps. I lived in that apartment right down there and pointed to the apartment because it was right off of the Plaza Point-to-point. I said, I live there in those house where the sun is not present. And they said they've gone to they went to see Paquita and then they moved up and moved to Bogota. So they're not in that. No. Four children. Nothing there. Now, that's OK. And so all of a sudden, the guy had been you could tell he'd been drinking.

All of a sudden he wakes up, he says, I knew a Peace Corps volunteer. I he said I was 11 years old when he left. And I remember his name. And I said, well, what was his name in Spanish? And he said, Mr. Day, I think it was me was well, in 2008. That was forty years after I had been there. And then I went back because I'm working with the Colombians Support Network, which are supporting peace communities in Colombia, where they don't allow in that community.

ADCOCK: [01:26:43] They don't allow guns, so if you bring a gun, you can't buy anything in that village. And if you want to buy something, you have to go out of the peace community and go somewhere else. Or if you want to hold it, you want the food, you want food or you want anything. And that has not made them very popular. So as a result, the guy that came here to talk about it said that he trained the president's five deep. I said, why in Spanish Why? And he said, Because they kill us. And six months later, he was dead, and that's when I joined. The Colombians support network because I was determined that those peace communities needed to stay alive. They really, really so then in 2009 I went back and and that's to tell you that I went back to Cogua and went with the family that I had met across there with some really good friends. And they took me on the gravel road that went to Pottermore. And every faval in the municipio had high school. Not six grades, high school, including bottom, although they had a high school, they had running water, they had electricity, they had a paved road down to the paved road to see Bagheera. It was like it was. And I was so delighted. And I will not give the Peace Corps credit, because the reason that it's the way it is is because in 1990, they changed the Constitution.

ADCOCK: [01:28:19] When I was there, the mayor was appointed by the governor and the only thing he wanted to do was to get out and find a better one to be the mayor. But then when they were elected, that's when everything developed. And everybody they have community centers. They have they have health health clinics all over the place. Is it is what I would have desired when I was when I was there for that that community. So for me, it was like the most joyous thing that you can ever see. And I see them on

Facebook all the time. And they have two huge, huge festivals every year. And people come from all over Columbia to there to festivals that they have in that little bitty town. And so and and the and the mayor is still my and he's he's making a good job of it because what he's doing is he is putting concrete over the paths that the Compazine used to get from one place to another. And he's concreting them and putting little ridges so that they can ride their bicycles or they can pull their carts. So so he has he has made he has made that that little town. But he was educated in Tulane. So his daddy and his daddy named William because he said he'd do better if he had an English name. OK, now, what else do we need to talk about?

SZTUK: [01:29:50] Well, it's if you have anything you want to add, we can add something or

ADCOCK: [01:29:58] Except that all of my all of my fellow volunteers have been bugging me to do this oral history. And I have had not done it. And they have just been giving me a heap of garbage. So now they can shut up because I'm not done it.

SZTUK: [01:30:15] All right. Well, thanks very much, Terry. It's been a great interview and I enjoyed talking to you. Thank you. This is just stuck on June 22nd, continuing the interview with Terry Adcock, because in wrapping things up, Terry remembered a very good story that must be included in this interview. So carry on.

ADCOCK: [01:30:41] All right. Well, Kennedy was was slated to come to fly into Bogota because they had named a a development, a housing development for him. It was it was called Kennedy. And and so and on the route from the airport to the to the Kennedy development, everybody had painted their houses fresh. They had put up banners. It was a big deal in Colombia because he was he was loved. He was really, really loved. So they got every single volunteer possible that they could get every one of them from as far as they could go, places where they couldn't get them. But they brought us all in and we were there when he came. He shook all

of our hands. God bless him one more time. He took all of our hands in the East Room when he when he said goodbye to us and shook all of our hands. And Jackie was there. And so then he moved on because he was he was he was the big cheese. But Jackie, come back and talk to us. And I had my conversation with Jackie Kennedy, and that was she said in Spanish to say, everybody speaks Spanish here. You know me to you. You've heard me blabber on. I said, I see, I see. Or muscle menos, which basically meant a little bit, but not a lot.

ADCOCK: [01:32:14] And then she laughed and said, stop. Yeah, that's fine. And that was my conversation with Jackie Kennedy. That's the only I guess I better tell you the other story as well. And this one is this one was with Humphrey. I told you people came all the time. Humphrey came for a Ford cooperative meeting for South America. Everybody in South America, they had cooperatives, came to Bogota, if, you know, they could afford it. And he was he was the main speaker. So they got volunteer. If one big if a big dog came into town, the volunteers in and around Bogota got to come in and be with them. So I'm I'm on my way in and I'm wearing my suit because I think I said if you came in to Bogota, you had to wear a suit and tie and probably an umbrella because it rained all the time. So we come in with your umbrella, you come in with your your suit. And I had my best suit on. I had just gotten it cleaned at the hotel taking Darma. That was my little splurge. That was where I spent my little salary that I had. I would get it cleaned.

ADCOCK: [01:33:31] So I had a brand new clean one. Of course, it got dusty in the panel truck, going to see pocket and see pocket to tie it. I was in a I was in the outside, I was in the outside with six foot. I had to be on the outside so I can put my knees out and put one knee in the aisle after everyone had gotten in. And she I think it was she it may have been Bush stop. But Fortia, this farmer gets along with chickens hanging upside down like chickens hanging upside down. And the seat that he chooses to sit next to is me. I move my legs out, he comes in, he sits down, and the chickens are very well behaved for the entire time. But they must have since their demise at the farmer's market when we got to the outscored outskirts of

Bogota. Because when he got out past me, because I was going into Bogota, this was on the outskirts as I move my legs out the chicken since their demise and deposited a large amount of chicken poop. Oh, my. Oh, my. Lovely. Okay, but. And when I had gone to get my suit and taken Nama, I had I had left a pair of gray pants.

ADCOCK: [01:34:54] Sometimes I would wear it was not it was frowned upon in Bogota not to wear a regular suit, but sometimes you can get by with a suit coat and a different pair of pants. So I had a pair of great pants that I had used previously in the hotel. Take ten dollar a winning, got the pants, went to the, went to the restroom in the hotel, in the hotel, taken down and changed my pants, put the dirty ones back into the, into the cleaners and went upstairs to interview with, with Humphrey. Humphrey was doing his, his weekly conversation with his, with the folks in Minnesota. OK, so and the and the meeting with, with Humphrey was absolutely wonderful. He would be he was so gracious and he, you know, and he he practically said nothing. He basically had us giving the giving the thing. And I really appreciated that. I felt that was very, very nice. So then at the end, we have a picture, OK, you have Humphrey, the medal guy in a suit, guy in a suit, Humphrey tan suit and a guy in a suit and gray. And that's my story. Those are my two two tails that I forgot to tell you. And now you're now you have them both.

SZTUK: [01:36:16] All right, Terry, thanks again.

ADCOCK: You bet.

[END OF INTERVIEW]