

## Key Information

Name: Hugh Mitchell

Age: ?

Current Cabin: 100

Date of Interview: October 16, 2014

Interviewer: Robin Temple (Puget Sound)

## Ethnographic Preface

None

## Transcription

Robin: I'm about to ask you basically what you already asked me. How long have you been living in Salmon Beach?

Hugh: Okay, I have a kind of unusual history I first moved to Salmon Beach in 1974. And I've left a couple times but I've always come back. I've lived in six different houses during all these periods of time in my life.

Robin: Can you tell me more about it? When did you first come?

Hugh: I first came in '74, I'm sure Andrew took you through the historical [house], the one that's on the historical register?

Robin: Oh, yeah.

Hugh: If you want we can look in there 'cause there's nobody in there right now.

Robin: Yeah we could look inside, I only saw the outside.

Hugh: Doug's there I might even get the key. So that's where I first lived. And, um... I only stayed there about a, my closest friend, he and I were in the Peace Corps together, lives right next door and still does, anyway I was there about a year and I had left the Peace Corps before I wanted to because of the draft, they wouldn't let you stay three years, so I always had the urge to go back to where I spent, so I left and went back to Micronesia for a couple more years on my own, and got a job teaching, so, and then I came back, and when I came back I had a little money in my pocket, so the two of us-- there was three of us that are still on the beach that were in the Peace Corps together in Micronesia, which is kind of a story in itself,

Robin: I'd be totally willing to hear it, I think it's relevant.

Hugh: I don't know how to explain that, one of them had a shop at the other end of the beach, and he says I'll take off the roof and build you a small place, 'cause you see you can travel and always have a place on Salmon Beach, so, and Kelly, the other person, Ed and Kelly and I were all in the Peace Corps together-- they build a small place for me.

Robin: Oh that's really nice!

Hugh: Yeah, so I lived there, I had that for quite a while-- it's no longer there, it went in the earthquake. So I was living there quite content, it was 14 by 24? With a sleeping loft, and then I met a lady and we needed more space, so we lived in two different places on Salmon Beach during that and then we, as we said, moved up the hill and got married, and started having a family. But the same time I still had a place on Salmon Beach, because that was always basically mine, even though it was in his property, in his shop. So I always had a place to come back to and would bring the kids on the weekend a lot, and so forth. And so that went on, and then when we got divorced I immediately had a place to go to, and my kids were familiar with it. And so I stayed there for a while, well I stayed there there for three or four years, but they started getting bigger and a 14 by 24 wasn't big enough, so I moved over to 102, rented it, and was there for three years or so and then it went up for sale, and I didn't want to buy it so I moved back up the hill, and, which was good with my youngest who was starting high school and it made it easier, and then I was there for a few years and then about the time I retired from teaching this place [100] came up for rent so I've been here for three and a half years. So as I said it's kind of a, it's a little different story than most people on Salmon Beach, they either stay or they go. So that's my story.

Robin: Can you tell me about Peace Corps and what brought all three of you here?

Hugh: Ah, oh, boy, Peace Corps, if you have to ask me the five highlights of your life it would be in the top five. Being a parent being number one. What brought us all here? Well, Kelly came first, and then I moved out here, and then Ed moved out here, so that, you know, 'cause we all knew each other. Um, I can only say for me, the world makes more sense to me if I can walk on a path to get home, and I first had that experience living in the islands. It's a very content feeling, it's a very, it is, I use the word loosely, a community, where you know most everybody, at least, close to you, which is very similar, which we had in the Peace Corps. So, I guess in a lot of ways it reminded us of the islands. We all lived on three different islands, that doesn't have anything to do with the story. We all met in training and then went our different ways after training was over.

Robin: Do you want to-- I don't know-- has it felt like a community the whole time you've been in and out, throughout the years, or has it...?

Hugh: You know I've gone through different periods of time where I thought it totally wasn't, because... everybody went-- because there was a parking lot. And everybody had to get in their cars and go to work. But I think over time I see more of it as a community even with that. I think I was more idealistic thinking I was back on the islands where a ship came every six weeks and that was our only contact with the outside world. But for the most part it is a community for sure, particularly-- there's two ends of the beach and you know there's 75 houses, or this is a hundred, so, I have rare contact with the people down at the far end. The people you come down the steps with, I know everybody, can interact with everybody. We have a lot of children now so you're watching the children grow up, which makes that-- gives that more of a sense of a community. I think if it were like a retirement, everybody would be 55

and over, and they do call them retirement communities, and they serve a purpose, but it's more inclusive if you have all generations, and a lot of children.

Robin: When did they put the parking lot in?

Hugh: There's always been parking lots, they weren't always paved. When we first came here the road you came down was rough and rocky and there are two parking lots and neither one were paved, and the roads weren't paved and there weren't very many people actually living here, and most of the houses-- none of these houses were like this, except that one [pointing], they were all more like the old time fishing shacks that were here. In fact there was a third parking lot that came down through my garden, and was a real long trail, looked like a forest but it only held about four cars, but it's-- they developed that property up there and that parking lot disappeared. So, yeah. They often refer to those era where we were in was the hippie era.

Robin: The hippie era?

Hugh: You know, we weren't necessarily wanting to work very much, and you could buy a house for 1500 dollars or less, 500 dollars, and of course wages weren't nearly as high, and a rent was hard to anything so if you only worked part of the time you could have a good living. Particularly if you were single. So it was a very fun place to live. But people, it's human characteristic, start building bigger and nicer houses. And so, you know, that's what we mostly have here now. It's that progress, evolution of man? Evolution of human beings, and you start having children and need more room, so.

Robin: Mm-hmm. And college professors move in.

Hugh: UPS has always been a real part of here.

Robin: Really?

Hugh: There's two UPS professors here now, and this house was built by a UPS professor.

Robin: Oh wow!

Hugh: There's almost always been UPS professors living here, and there are a lot of graduates now, they're probably in their late 30s, 40s? What we *don't* have here now, and we used to have a lot of, was UPS renters.

Robin: Oh, have prices gone up, or?

Hugh: Well probably, yes, I'm sure prices have gone up, and when something comes for rent it usually is found internally, somebody on the beach or somebody like me who's been on the beach wants to come back. So they kind of have first place. There's one house, 102, in fact it was the last place I lived in, I think for 30 years it was always UPS students, so once one left they just,

Robin: Yeah, I live in a house like that that's close to school.

Hugh: Yeah you live in a house up there, it's probably just passed down word of mouth. But that's the one thing we don't have right now is any college renters. Maybe it's 'cause of expense. College renters-- I'm trying to think, unless they're at the other end and I just don't know about that.

Robin: I'm jealous now, this would be a nice place to live.

Hugh: Yeah you can see, yeah, it is. If you want privacy you can have your privacy, if you want to interact, some people love the interaction and people being on their decks talking back and forth. And some people kind of like their privacy and that's honored.

Robin: Okay. Are there a lot of quiet people on the beach, or just?

Hugh: It's a little of everything, yeah, for sure. There aren't any people in their 20s. Well, if you buy a house, you see, that gets expensive.

Robin: Oh, for sure.

Hugh: You're in that generation that's really gonna, has to suffer right now with the way housing is.

Robin: Yeah.

Hugh: Well, you're still in college, maybe it will change. People in their late 20s and so forth, it's hard to buy a house. And, in history there were even more people in the great depression, the 30s than there are now.

Robin: Really?

Hugh: Well, you could come down here and they had all these fishing cabins that these guys owned that didn't cost anything, you literally could fish off the deck. There's only back one or two if you walk the trail from one end to the other, there's actually only one there that's on the other side, but there were a lot of [houses] even on end of the trail. But it makes sense, it was a very reasonable place to live, hardly cost anything. And then it slowed down, and then my generation started moving in in the late 60s and early 70s, the boom started again in population.

Robin: Okay. Do you have any stories you want to tell about the hippie era? That's not a very good question.

Hugh: No that's okay, I'm not a storyteller, that's one thing. It was pretty much, if you wanted to have a party you could have one.

Robin: Every night?

Hugh: Every night, or every weekend, you know for sure on the weekend, it was pretty impromptu.

Robin: Yeah I noticed that sign, "chance of partying"

Hugh: Yeah, there was that era. People still have parties here, you know, and maybe the people younger than I have more, I don't know. There's a wonderful New Year's Eve party, we go from-- it's a progressive, there's five houses here. So we don't have to leave, we don't have to go up the hill, you go from one house and are there 45 minutes or an hour and go to the next house. We have that, we have the St. Helen's party,

Robin: St. Helen's party?

Hugh: Yeah, whenever St. Helen's blew up, on May 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>, they build a volcano and have a party down at what we call the gap down there.

Robin: Oh, that's fun.

Hugh: Yeah, it's kinda fun. In fact, the guy that gets the most credit for saying when this mountain would blow up actually built this house. He was a UPS professor as I said earlier. He was kind of the spokesman for a group of people who got it within a few hours. And then we have a 4<sup>th</sup> of July party, it's called a rowboat race, all kinds of craft now, they start down there at that end and go all the way to number 1. Have kegs of beer down at the end, and people at night gather and set fireworks off their decks and so forth. Nobody's going to come down here and patrol us.

Robin: You're on the water, too.

Hugh: We're on the water, yeah, we can watch what's going on in the other places. And it's a great place to raise a family.

Robin: Yeah, I bet.

Hugh: You know the kids are going to be watched, looked after, you know your neighbors. Most people don't lock their doors, I don't lock my door. If I'm going to be gone for a long period of time I will do, but normally I don't.

Robin: So it feels like a safe space?

Hugh: It's very safe, and kids can run back and forth and go in people's houses.

Robin: Do you think people move here because of that?

Hugh: Some do, yeah definitely, choose to wanna raise their kids here. Then it becomes a choice and sometimes people leave-- they may start their family here and then they have to make a choice when the kids, y'know, gotta go up the steps twice a day, and that's, you have to work that out.

Robin: Is that a big problem of living here, just figuring out the steps? I see them and I'm like how do you handle medical emergencies, do you carry your groceries the whole way?

Hugh: Well, there is a fireboat.

Robin: Oh, okay.

Hugh: And hopefully it can get here pretty quickly for medical emergencies. And sometimes the firemen just come, they can get down here in 15 minutes, they have to come just the regular way. You carry your groceries, but it's also healthy. You carry a smaller load, that make sense?

Robin: Yeah.

Hugh: You leave part of your dry goods or toilet paper in the car until you got time to carry it down, so we shop more than most people. Seems like I'm always in the grocery store because I don't want to carry very much at once. Originally, back in the community-- oh, man, when it first got going they actually had a grocery store and a post office.

Robin: Oh, wow. When did that change?

Hugh: I don't know. But there's pictures of it, you could rent rowboats. It was the Foss family and they had-- they rent rowboats, and you could, had a post office and had a little grocery store.

Robin: So that was before your time here?

Hugh: Oh yeah, that was in the 20s and 30s. Some of the first people here and particularly that built the historical ones were Chinese laborers, that built the-- there's a tunnel right there. I don't know if you've ever been on the train?

Robin: I haven't gone this far south on the train, I normally go the other way.

Hugh: Okay, well now, we'll wait here, there's lots of freight traffic.

[There is a break where Hugh answers his phone. Meanwhile a train has begun to come around the bend in view of the porch]

Hugh: --Tunnel there, freight train to come through for you or an amtrak. Some of the Chinese laborers that were brought in to build the tunnel built real quick places here, I mean real small shacks. Like it has it in it now but the historical shack had actually no studs when I was in there. They used some newspapers and stuff for insulation and I pulled some out it was 1908 or 1910 or something.

Robin: Wow!

Hugh: Yeah so, they were some of the first inhabitants, and a lot of old-- that sounds like, let's see if we can see a sea lion. Um, a lot of old guys, it was a place for a lot of guys, fishermen, they lived in Ruston, they worked for the smelter, they'd come down here and fish and get away from their families or their wives and drink and just fish. So you kind of always think there was that set of people here for a long time, that set of individuals.

Robin: So were there people who lived here full time and people who just came to fish a lot in the beginning?

Hugh: Yeah, right, yeah

Robin: And now mostly people live here full time?

Hugh: Mostly everybody's full time. When I first came here in the '70s there weren't many full time residents. Then that's when that era changed that, yeah, for sure.

Robin: And the hippies decided to live here full time.

Hugh: Yeah, it was cheap, you had a house, and all of a sudden they started makin' em nice houses, yeah, absolutely.

Robin: Let's see, I feel like I should have more questions. I'm a little scared because Andrew's going to listen to this and be like "Robin!"

Hugh: Oh, he is?

Robin: You should send him messages.

Hugh: That takes some time, then, he has to listen to all this.

Robin: Well, I think he might read my transcripts. Oh, there's a thing I'll have to have you sign at the end so they'll put it in the library.

Hugh: That's okay. Andrew's house-- you should ask him, find the history of the character that built his house.

Robin: I understand he brought a disco ball? That's about all I've got.

Hugh: Oh that's right, I forget there is a disco ball in there. There's been a lot of characters here and he was truly one of the characters, that had that house built. It's obviously one that was torn down and totally built over. There's a lot of them. I mean, like this one we're in and that one there they're totally been rebuilt. Totally torn down and started over.

Robin: Does that happen often here, or?

Hugh: Now it's changed. That happened for a long time, from the 70's through-- for about twenty years it was happening quite a bit. Now you have to be a little more careful because of the Shoreline Management Act. So if you're going to add on or do anything you have to figure out if you want the city involved or not, and all their restrictions and regulations so. Everybody has a footprint, so you can't build any more on your footprint but you can go up.

Robin: Okay.

Hugh: But if you did it legally you'd have to go through the city, and a lot of paperwork

Robin: So do people kind of avoid that a lot?

Hugh: Yeah, they do. So there hasn't been much major build. People do small things to their house and try to get it quickly and get it done as fast as possible. But what people build now is very good, it's very solid. We're fortunate to have an electrician on the beach, he came down in the 70s and decided to become an electrician that really, all of a sudden made houses started getting safer from that viewpoint, so.

Robin: Was there electricity before here that was just?

Hugh: Oh, you know, old fuses and wires, so now everything has a 200 amp service and is safely. As you walk out, as you walk out, you'll get almost to the steps if you look up there's the tallest house on the beach. If you look on the roof there's the first solar panel now, it's just been put in. There's somebody that's their expertise.

Robin: Do you think that will take over, and be the next thing?

Hugh: Oh, I don't know about that. A lot of people still burn wood. If you have a boat, you go out and look for logs. In the old days that's all they did, was burn wood. They had these little small houses and they had these little um, basically tin and they could burn anything. Driftwood, bark, or anything. And places were real small and real tiny and they would heat up real quick. I don't know-- they weren't very safe, there are some houses that are gone. As you walk along there are some places that burned down, or there were slides, that's why there's gaps. You can't ever build again now on these, wherever you see a gap there will never be a house. The city won't permit it. There are still people that that's their favorite way is to heat by wood. Think if you walk behind Andrew's house he's got a small pile of wood so he's kind of trying to do it both ways.

Robin: Which one do you prefer?

Hugh: Well I don't have a boat, and I don't want to get a boat...

Robin: That makes sense.

Hugh: Yeah, I don't know, they think they're saving money, but I don't know that they are. If you consider you've gotta have a boat, and gas, you gotta go chop it, you gotta get a chainsaw. It is going into the air. When the power goes out it's nice, because you've got to keep warm. There's more than one person down here that's deaf, that's my age, and I'm sure part of it is her loss of hearing is attributed to using chainsaws a lot. I'm sure of that.

Robin: I'm imagining how much chainsaw chopping is required to go deaf.

Hugh: Over a period of, a long period of time, and have big old speakers and music blaring. Well that's, you know, your generation have earbuds, I don't know if that will have any effect on hearing.

Robin: We'll probably have our own damage.

Hugh: I'm wondering if will you be more prone to arthritis or less prone because of [makes typing gesture]

Robin: I think just tendonitis from being like this all the time [makes a computer pose]

Hugh: Yeah, you know, surely there's somebody out there planning studies of how that's... Although, I don't know, women-- a lot of people had to make their living typing. It's not that much. Actually, it's easier than a typewriter.

Robin: Right, it takes more finger strength.

Hugh: Yeah, the electric typewriter was a big breakthrough. I know that all sounds ancient.

Robin: I believe we have my mom's in the basement from when she was in college.

Hugh: It was an electric, I bet.

Robin: Yeah, it's a Selectric. And then we have my grandma's real typewriter.

Hugh: Well, it's a wonderful place to live. And there's the water. That's obvious, all the benefits of the water.

Robin: Mm-hmm. I heard from Andrew that the water side is the front, and the other side's the back.

Hugh: We always consider this the front of our house. And we do get storms. They always come that a-way, right straight up the narrows, straight from the bridge. So it can get pretty rocking and rolling at times down here. Most of the houses are built high enough now, but there were houses that used to be lower. At certain high tides, when everything was working right, the high tide was that water would get in the houses. 'Cause there's 15 foot changes in the winter, which is a pretty dramatic change.

Robin: Were the houses not built with that in mind?

Hugh: Probably not, they were just thrown together quickly. They weren't-- not as much value. And there are people that have raised their houses since they've been here, which is a pretty complex operation but it is possible to raise your houses or move 'em forward. Some people, the bank here is pretty stable but if you walked all the way down to the other end, number 1 or 10 or 15 you can actually get rocks often tumbling down, it is much less safer. And they've had slides. Someday we'll all be gone because of the slides.

Robin: This whole place?

Hugh: Yeah, you know, but I try not to worry about it. Hopefully it's a hundred years or two hundred years. But we do have to deal with storms, we do have to know that there can be slides there. Particularly if there's been a really lot of rain in the winter, and then freezes up and we have more rain, all of that ice turns to water, causes the hill, so.

Robin: What do people do to defend against that? Is there anything you can do?

Hugh: Against a slide? Some people have moved their houses out a little bit, so if the slide comes it would go underneath. Right before you get to the steps you'll notice, there's a couple houses there that there's a gap 'cause that's been a slide area, so if the slide comes it will hopefully slough off into the water and not take any of the pilings.

Robin: Is that part of why you live on this side?

Hugh: It feels the safest to me, and my closest friends are-- Yeah, I truly have lived in all parts of the beach, and this is my favorite part. And my closest friends are all right here, so that's the key part.

Robin: When we came down here first and Andrew brought us, we met Kelly briefly and he talked about how he thought that the two sides of the beach were divided because there were two parking lots.

Hugh: There has been, and at one time-- and it also happened when we bought our property. The North End from '43 on was owned by the Parks Department, and this end from '45 on was owned by an individual. So this end was purchased first. So they had to negotiate. So there was some tension during that time. So um, yeah it seems strange there's a Salmon Beach North and a Salmon Beach South and each has their own governing body, but that's how it evolved.

Robin: So, wait-- which side are we on now?

Hugh: We're in the south. Some people used to call this the Deep South. So, yeah, this is the south end. But up until-- I don't know when that is now, the early 80s, there was only one improvement club. Improvement club, they put in so much money a month to-- you know, you've got to have common laws, common agreements to take care of things together.

Robin: So the whole community-- oh!

Hugh: That could be that sea lion.

[We pause to look at a sea lion, I'll omit some sea lion based conversation]

Robin: So wait why is it called Salmon Beach, do you know? Is it just because there's salmon and it's a beach?

Hugh: That's a good question, I've always assumed that. Supposedly the Puyallup Indians were the first ones to come here. They would come down here and it was easy to get salmon and they would pick blackberries. That's what I was always told when I first came here. And then there were the Chinese laborers and the old-time fishermen who came down here. There's kind of, you can see those three groups and then the biggest-- now here comes a train, it'll go through the tunnel in a minute. I can see a light, can you see a light under the bridge?

Robin: Oh, yeah!

Hugh: It's stopped for some reason, but. So I assume that's why it's called Salmon Beach. There's hardly any salmon. Rare that anybody catches a salmon off the deck.

[I pause the recorder until some wakes stop crashing against the deck]

Hugh: There was a thing called streaking, do you know what streaking is?

Robin: Wait, streaking, where you just run naked?

Hugh: So we reversed it. We knew when Amtrak would be going to Los Angeles so we all went out and stood right by when the train comes out of the tunnel, and so the train streaked us. That's how we did that. There was nothing to do in those days, I guess.

Robin: I mean, streaking trains, having parties.

Hugh: Yeah, it was a good life. But I guess eventually most of us settled down and got married, jobs. Raised families.

Robin: Have about the same group of people stayed here since then?

Hugh: Bill, Kelly, and I all came together in the 70s. We moved in together about the same 3 or 4 months. There are some people who've lived here, well, 40 and 50 years, some people have lived here 30 years. We sold 6 houses this year, so there's a turnover, too. There hadn't been many sales for a while, of course the housing market was down, you know.

Robin: Yeah I saw a couple of signs out, before.

Hugh: Yeah they've been out there for a while. Those people buying plan on staying for a while, I would think.

Robin: I have a question that's not super related to what we've done in class, but that's the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, right? Which collapsed?

Hugh: There's two of 'em, right, looks like there's only one but there's two there.

Robin: Yeah, I've been over it, but like, didn't it collapse really famously in like--

Hugh: Yeah 1940s, early 1940s, call it Galloping Gertie.

Robin: Okay. Because I notice you can see it right through here.

Hugh: It was very interesting, we got to watch 'em build the second one. They had to bring in everything through us. They had to time something just perfect.. can't remember what it was bringing but it had to be the lowest tide almost possible so they could get underneath. They had to wait. So yeah that's the Narrows. You can find, I don't know, there's old footage but see how that's all open on the bottom? They

covered all that when they built the original one. So all this openness to you see under the cars was all like this

Robin: Just solid.

Hugh: So the wind hit it, and got it rockin' and rollin, and that's why they call it Galloping Gertie and underneath it there's air ventilation also, and they didn't think any of that through. Part of that bridge is supposedly in Alaska. They took part of that, saved it and moved it, and it's part of a bridge in Alaska. Part of it's underneath there.

Robin: I would have expected that part.

Hugh: At one time we used to have a lot of octopus here, and Jaques Cousteau came here and found the largest octopus he'd ever seen under there.

Robin: Cool!

Hugh: Now they're gone. Think they've been fished out. Used to have kids catch 'em and throw 'em on their deck. Don't know if it's 'cause they've been fished out or they moved on and the waters got warmer, but it was very common to see them here. Haven't seen them in years.

Robin: So wait did people fish octopus?

Hugh: It's a lot of work, so mostly the kids would get 'em and throw 'em back in. But there was a guy that came here every day that would go slowly along-- he didn't live on the beach, but it got to where we knew him, we didn't know him really but we recognized him. He was playing the tides and, obviously, no it's a lot of work.

Robin: He told us about the beach and environmental concerns.

Hugh: Some people will leave when it's, we've had a lot of rain and you can see it rushing out from the hills, but that doesn't happen very often. But that's the main concern, would be the bank behind us. But there's gonna be storms, that's just inevitable.

Robin: Are there problems from when there was the smelter?

Hugh: Most of that went the other way. Everybody down here got a small compensation in the suit, it was considered, I think they drew a circle, but 'cause most of the wind goes that a-way it really wasn't a problem at all. I shouldn't say this. It was somewhat of a problem, but.

Robin: Not one that directly affected you.

Hugh: I don't think so, no. And when it gets rarely does it get that-- were you here last year? Are you a freshman?

Robin: I was in Tacoma, yeah.

Hugh: We had a really-- for us-- really cold winter, it got down to 17 or 18. And for us that's an extra burden because our pipes are all exposed. And there's precautions that you have to take, you should try to insulate 'em and keep your water running, put tape on 'em. It's warmer here in the winter than it is up the hill because the water-- well, we're lower, but the water is we'll say 50 degrees, so in a way it's a little warmer, it's maybe more damper-- more damp? That's not a word. More damp. So there're times you can leave here and any time you get to the top of the steps there will be snow when there isn't snow here. But back to when we had that freeze-- there was, you have to do a lot so your pipes don't freeze. Everybody does, even that's-- I don't know where you lived, that you had to do anything other than leave the water running. You probably don't remember. And you're used to that, you lived on the east coast.

Robin: Yeah

Hugh: We're spoiled here.

Robin: You were a teacher?

Hugh: I was.

Robin: What did you teach?

Hugh: I did 18 years as a special ed teacher, and then the last years-- in some ways I taught about everything-- and the last few years I was in social studies at the high school level. I was in a program, after the Peace Corps I went into a program similar to Teach for America, Teach for America borrowed from it, it was called Teacher Corps. It was part of the Great Society. That's what I did.

Hugh: I'm what's called a Habitat for Humanity team leader, so right now I'm taking two or three teams a year overseas. It's important to me, but I've been real fortunate to be able to be overseas a lot.

Robin: Where do you usually go?

Hugh: I've done a lot in Asia. Southeast Asia, Southern Asia some. But I've been to three countries in Africa, and you know.

Robin: How many languages do you speak?

Hugh: I don't speak any other languages, well, you're only there two or three weeks, you always have a counterpart and you always have to have translators, so. It's a short hit. That was my original question, I was asking you about hanging out with people, I just have a bias for working with people and learning, you know, so I'm overseas three weeks I feel like I'm learning a lot more by working overseas than traveling with a tour group. Does that make sense? Yeah, so.

Robin: Have you encountered anthropologists in the Peace Corps?

Hugh: Where I was the anthropologist had just left, he was there, he had been the first one, it was

pretty remote. So I inadvertently learned a lot from him. Because I was the second Peace Corps volunteer there and the first one had been there a year ahead of me, and the anthropologist was just finishing up most of his work, his field study. He shared a lot of information so I inadvertently, indirectly learned a lot from him.

Robin: That's good.

Hugh: Well, I remember there were only a couple hundred people and you could walk around the island in 20 or 30 minutes so it was an easy one to take in, easy one to be a part of. If you can stand the isolation.

Robin: Could you?

Hugh: Yeah.

Robin: Easily?

Hugh: Yeah, absolutely.

Robin: Not too dissimilar from the isolation here, or?

Hugh: Well, it reminds me of it, but I can go up there and get my car. But as I said, world makes more sense to me if I can walk on a path. There, okay, this train's going to go in first, they've had some sort of agreement.

[We watch the train]

Hugh: When you go past the chicken coop, did you see where the chickens were?

Robin: No, wait, there are chickens?

Hugh: Yeah, on your way out you'll come across a boardwalk, and there's a little house there at one end of the boardwalk? And you'll see that little house. And then right there there'll be three chickens. She teaches at UPS also.

Robin: There do seem to be a lot of animals here, I met a very friendly cat on my walk over.

Hugh: There's a few dogs, and a few cats, and those chickens.

Robin: Are the chickens an anomaly?

Hugh: They are, and those have lasted longer than they usually do.

Robin: How long do chickens usually last?

Hugh: Something will get 'em, either a dog or an otter, or

Robin: Otters get chickens here?

Hugh: Otters are pretty smart, we have otters that'll come in when people have tried to have chickens. Um, okay, now he's gonna disappear, it'll get quiet when he goes in the tunnel.

[We watch a train pass by. Audible train noises.]

Hugh: Now this is new, these are called davits that pick up the boats, when we came down here they all had little dinky boats, they all have ramps, Andrew has one too, there are not many left. [recording goes inaudible as we walk over to the ramp] It's also a great way to get your washer/dryer in, several people rent a barge to get your U-Haul truck on it and you pull up at high tide and unload it. So that's the best way to move, otherwise it's a real-- you've got to have friends with boats to move in or out. I mean, otherwise you're carrying a lot of stuff.

Robin: Down a lot of stairs.

Hugh: Down a lot of stairs. Now the other end doesn't have steps, there's a sloping trail. There's three ways to get down and the middle section from that parking lot has a-- I think it's much easier, a slope. Some people think the steps are easier. So that's the way it is. And the other end has garages.

Robin: Ooh, fancy.

Hugh: Yeah, I know. That used to be a real problem, vandalism of our cars, particularly in summer. That's why we have the gate there. That really has made a difference. Because you know, our cars were up there and we're down here.

Robin: Did any get stolen?

Hugh: Yeah, cars get stolen or if you had anything in them they'd rip it off, so people would often leave their cars open rather than get their windows broken, so that gate has made a big difference. Particularly for us in that parking lot. As I said in that other parking lot, not everybody but there's a lot of garages there. And that's the old problem, we don't have enough parking space in the summer on weekends.

Robin: You get like an influx of-

Hugh: You know, you invite your friends, you have a party, you want 'em to come down. Halloween's coming, my kids always said this was the best place for Halloween.

Robin: Do you get trick or treaters?

Hugh: Oh yeah, and they felt they got the most, not in terms of quantity but quality.

Robin: People get really nice candy?

Hugh: Yeah, they loved it.

Robin: Do people have Halloween parties?

Hugh: We used to and I understand we're having one this year. There's two parties next to each other, one will be for adults and the other for kids. But often kids are at the parties anyway.

[We talk about the X-Files for 5 minutes]

Hugh: When cable first came out, which was in the 70s, one person got cable here. As soon as he walked back up the hill then they just started, you can imagine. They quickly learned their lesson. They had to come back down and disconnect people who didn't pay their fee. I thought man, they are silly. Now cable tv is on its way out!

Robin: It's just easier to get it online. No commercials.

[We talk about Game of Thrones for 5 minutes; realizing that we've managed an hour and are completely off topic, I turn off the tape and wind down the interview]