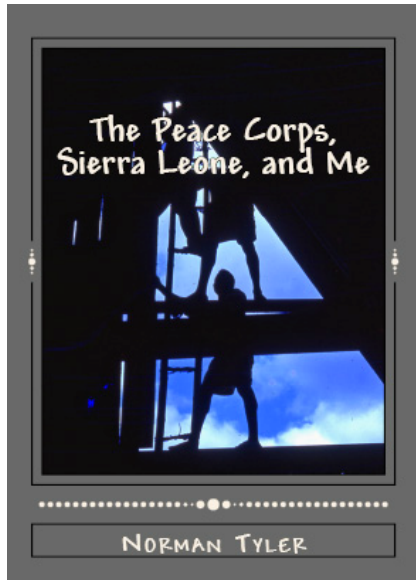


The Peace Corps, Sierra Leone, and Me



Carefully crafted with beautiful details

By [Marie T.](#) on October 26, 2015

"Additional resources to thoroughly enjoy this story were exactly where needed: several clear maps, pictures with people, places and things described in the text, a recipe for a favorite peanut stew, a list of references on the complicated political and military history of Sierra Leone, and side bars with the author's reflections of changes over the 50 years since this experience. One such reflection is about the many animals that were part of the author's household and how differently animal interactions are viewed. The chapters are logically arranged and there is a list of the side bar items, similar to an index. There is a brief account of the Ebola virus outbreak from 2013 - 2015.

"The author was an exceptionally young volunteer, only 19 years when he departed the U.S. He seems both intelligent and wise, recognizing that it was his status as a white foreigner which gave him credibility with construction projects on which there were always more experienced local personnel. He notes that his decision to avoid all alcohol caused the unforeseen consequence of 14 dental fillings. When returning home, traveling through Italy, he describes wine as a "graceful complement" to meals and reversed his abstinence!

"Although the author's experiences are mainly with other foreigners, what a busy schedule he maintained, despite considerable challenges with vehicles and living conditions that included at least 4 different cooks for the compound of 3 - 5 mostly male volunteers....one cook was sent to jail for a year. The cast of characters includes a variety of foreign aid agencies, Lebanese merchants, American military pilots who emergency land near his home and take the author for aerial views (a picture provided), and foreign missionaries as well as dozens of incoming and departing Peace Corps volunteers.

"The reports of his vacation through Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon are tributes to youthful enthusiasm and endurance. He traveled mostly alone and shares experiences from locals as well as other travelers in central Africa. Readers have an exceptional treat with the additional story of his friend, Jeff Mareck. It includes a particularly poignant account of the simple funeral service for Dr. Albert Schwitzer in Lambarene, Gabon. Readers are given a follow-up of the author's 50 years as an architect who learned to listen to clients and assist in the construction of communities, as much as buildings. Respectful personal and professional compliments to his architect wife and his parents are refreshing, as are his appreciations for the donated photos of fellow volunteers and their continuing friendships. There is a little overlaps, mainly in mentioned administrators, with David Gerald Mill's "My Heart Is Like a Cabbage", also published in 2015, by a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone in 1962 - 1964. Both author's were fortunate to survive incidents when volunteers were provided vehicles inadequate to the conditions. This memoir was a delight - heavy with details, but structurally sufficient to glimpse an idealistic attitude that thrived on practical experiences. Those experiences both grounded and enhanced a life of service in several communities, over many decades. Read this and be inspired."