Burger, David. Personal interview. 27 Nov. 2014

It was exciting that I had a Peace Corps volunteer in my family and I was able to interview him many times. It was fascinating to learn about the early Peace Corps from my grandfather who lived through it. I learned about his training, what it was like to integrate into the Thai culture, what types of projects he worked on and what his everyday life was like as a volunteer. He shared his recollection of meeting Shriver’s helicopter on a soccer field. The US ambassador was flying separately and was supposed to meet Shriver and the volunteers for a formal reception. The ambassador’s helicopter had to make an emergency landing in a rice paddy. While waiting for news on the ambassador, Shriver took the volunteers to a local restaurant and got to know them over a friendly, informal dinner.

My grandfather also lent me some of his Thai artifacts for my display.


"Peace Corps Volunteers and Sargent Shriver at Helicopter." 1962.


"Visiting With Thai Family in Ubon." 1962.


I used two photos depicting David Burger and Roger Parent’s meeting with Sargent Shriver. They show that Sargent Shriver was a very grateful and caring leader and he would travel the world to meet and get feedback from the volunteers. I included one photo of members
of the first group of volunteers to Thailand meeting Sargent Shriver again at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Peace Corps. This showed that Shriver continued to promote the Corps throughout his lifetime. I used three of the photos to depict my grandfather's daily life in Thailand.


This telegram was sent from the Peace Corps office to David Burger notifying him of his assignment and where he would report for training. It shows that there were some delays in starting the new Thailand program.


This news article tells about my grandfather's appointment in the Peace Corps. It is important to my research because it is an original news article from the time and it describes the early mission of the Peace Corps and my grandfather's training as one of the first Peace Corps volunteers. My grandfather has saved this clipping for over 50 years.


This site provided some of the photos from Parent's book: The Making of a Peace Corps Volunteer: From Maine to Thailand. I used four images for my board: 1) Sargent Shriver and the Ambassador to Thailand meeting with students at Roger's school, 2) Roger fishing with students, 3) the photo of the Thailand group taken while they were in the University of Michigan training program, and 4) the postcard that Shriver sent to Roger's parents after he
visited Roger in Thailand. I also found an encouraging letter that Shriver had written to Roger just prior to the visit. He wrote to tell him that he might not get to meet him on the trip but wanted to update him on the status of the Corps. It is honest assessment of the challenges faced by the program and by the volunteers. Throughout the letter, Shriver expresses his optimism and genuine interest in the volunteers. This letter helped me to understand the Peace Corps challenges from Shriver himself and gave me a glimpse of his leadership style and the personal way he related to the volunteers. I included these images and letter in the section of my board describing Shriver’s visit.


This is the speech that Sen. John F. Kennedy gave introducing the idea of service in developing counties. It was important for me to read the entire speech to understand his remarks to the students in Michigan.


This book helped me understand the life of a Peace Corps volunteer. Parent explained how the early volunteers were trained and shared interesting stories of his time as a volunteer. Parent was in the same group as my grandfather. They met Shriver in Thailand and then again in Washington D.C. 25 years later. I compared Mr. Parent’s impressions of their visit with Shriver to my grandfather’s impressions. I also found the picture of the postcard Shriver sent to Roger’s parents after the visit to Thailand in this book.

The Ad Council produced a very effective advertising campaign for the Peace Corps from 1961-1991. The slogan “The toughest job you’ll every love” became very well-known and helped recruit volunteers to the Peace Corps. This site provided graphics of the iconic advertisement.


This website included a portrait of Sargent Shriver along with his death notice that gave an in-depth summary of his life. I used this portrait for my exhibit.


This source provided two photographs used on my exhibit: 1) President Kennedy handing the signing pen to Sargent Shriver after signing the law creating the Peace Corps and 2) Shriver at the Khyber Pass which connects Pakistan and Afghanistan. I wanted to use pictures from around the world to show Shriver’s extensive travels as he introduced the idea of the Peace Corps to leaders of developing nations.

This website provided the newsreel of President Kennedy introducing his Peace Corps program. From 1929-1967, newsreels were shown before feature films in movie theaters. It was a popular way to present the news visually before everyone owned televisions. Motion pictures drew large audiences so a newsreel would reach many people. This newsreel would have informed the public about the newly established Peace Corps and may have been a way to reach potential volunteers.


This original photograph and caption was saved by David Burger and shows his group of volunteers arriving in Thailand. Because it was printed in a major national Thai newspaper, it shows that the arrival of the Peace Corps program in Thailand was important news.


This site included a photo gallery of images taken on Sargent Shriver’s travels and I used the photo of Shriver greeting children out his car window in Turkey in the center of my exhibit. I knew that Shriver’s travels were extensive, but I was very impressed to read on this site that, by 1963, he logged over 350,000 miles to 35 countries while visiting Peace Corps outposts.
http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/RSSPP-028-010.aspx

"This important archive contains correspondence, schedules, reports, press releases, news clippings, guest lists, pamphlets, photographs, albums, and scrapbooks about Sargent Shriver’s overseas trips to visit Peace Corps volunteers and representatives, and to meet with country leaders throughout Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America. Many of the 1961 trips were focused on trying to gather support and invitations from country leaders."

This was a fascinating primary source. I learned so much by reading the reports of Shriver’s travels to introduce the idea of the Peace Corps to foreign leaders. I learned how the leaders responded to the idea and what they told Shriver about their unique needs and concerns. I found the photo of Shriver meeting the Burmese Prime Minister (Photograph, Sargent Shriver and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu O) that I used on my exhibit in the leadership section.
This website about Sargent Shriver’s wife, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, included many photographs of Sargent Shriver. I used two photographs depicting Shriver’s extensive travels while introducing the Peace Corps to developing nations. I used “Sargent Shriver and Tibetan Family, 1961” and “Sargent Shriver in Turkey, 1964” on my board. The first photo depicts how Shriver met not just with leaders but also villagers, and the second shows that he adapted to the local customs, pumping water at the well outside of his host’s home.


I used this paper to find the Alan Guskin quote, which I used in my exhibit under the idea section. Guskin was a University of Michigan student who witnessed Kennedy’s campaign speech in Ann Arbor. A year later he became a Peace Corps volunteer in the first group sent to Thailand alongside my grandfather, David Burger. This paper was important because it described the students’ reactions to Kennedy’s call to service.


This memoir was written by Sargent Shriver’s son, Mark. Mark described growing up around his dad, which helped me understand Shriver’s personality and dedication to service. This book also included personal photographs that I could not find on the Internet.
This book was extremely helpful to my research because it was written by Sargent Shriver. I used this book to understand Shriver’s philosophy of the Peace Corps in his own words. It described the challenges he faced in starting the organization and expressed his determination despite the critics.

This is an essay Shriver wrote explaining the first two years of the Peace Corps. It was helpful because it explained the early challenges that he faced.

This was a handbook that taught new volunteers about how to integrate into their countries and helped me understand what volunteers faced as they began their service.

I used this source for the image of the Time Magazine cover featuring Shriver, which I displayed on my title board.

This was an important speech for my research because Vestal was a staff member of the early Peace Corps. He described how Shriver recruited talented people to run the Corps. He also explained what critics called the Corps ("a haven for draft dodgers", "Kennedy’s Kiddie Korps").

"A Volunteer in Thailand/Peace Corps Volunteer-

This is an early Peace Corps newsletter from 1962. I was excited to find this because it included many stories written by members of the first group to Thailand. They had been in the country for less than a year and the articles described their jobs, daily lives and adjustments to living in Thailand. One of the articles was written by Judith Guskin. She is the wife of Alan Guskin, who witnessed Kennedy’s speech in Michigan. A year after the speech they joined the Peace Corps together. Judith described flying with the U.S. Ambassador to meet Sargent Shriver, my grandfather and other volunteers in Northeast Thailand. Their helicopter was tossed in a storm, ran out of fuel and had to land in a rice paddy. Meanwhile Shriver’s helicopter arrived safely and while they waited for the Ambassador to catch up to them, Shriver took my grandfather’s group of volunteers out for dinner. It was so interesting to hear three different accounts of the meeting with Shriver from my grandfather, Roger Parent and Judith Guskin! I found another surprise.
The newsletter also included a photo of my grandfather talking with Thai farmers on their way to market.

Wagner, Megan. E-mail interview. 15 Feb. 2015.

With this primary source, I could compare Megan and David’s experiences as volunteers, and learn more about the Peace Corps today.


I used two photos of Megan with her students in Guyana on the “Today” section of my exhibit.
Secondary Sources


This source gave me an understanding of the culture and politics of the Sixties, when the Peace Corps was established.


This tribute to Shriver describes his work to integrate the schools in Chicago, while on the Chicago school board.


This book provided background on the Cold War prior to the 1960’s and helped me understand the politics and foreign policy of the time.


This source described the idealism of youth at the time of the early Peace Corps and discussed how some volunteers had more success than others at reaching their goals.
This website provided an excellent map of Guyana so I could picture where Megan Wagner lived in Guyana.

This source included many stories of returned volunteers and described how the organization evolved through the Sixties and Seventies.

This book helped me understand the mission of the Peace Corps.

This article included the photo of Kennedy delivering the speech that launched the idea of the Peace Corps on the steps of the Michigan Union on October 15, 1960. I used this photo on the ideas section of my board.

This was one of the only books I found that was very critical of the Peace Corps. It was written in 1978 when the Corps was relatively young and was considered very controversial. It argued that volunteers were put in jobs they were not skilled to do or were not being effective in their service.


<http://http://web.colby.edu/zgmitche/thailand/>

I found the map of Thailand that I used for my exhibit on this website.

It shows where Ubon, my father's home village in Thailand, is located.


From this obituary I learned that Shriver had served as president of Chicago's board of education.


This website helped me understand that John F. Kennedy introduced the idea of the Peace Corps to the public, and he chose Sargent Shriver to develop and promote it.
"Peace Corps About Us" Peace Corps. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/>. This website provided the chart of volunteers’ jobs, the emblem of the Peace Corps and Peace Corps timeline, the mission statement, Peace Corps Service quote, and “To Be A Volunteer” quote that I included on my exhibit.

"Peace Corps Today." Peace Corps. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. <http://www.peacecorps.gov/today/>. This website provided statistics on the number of volunteers and countries served over the years which included under “legacy”.

"R. Sargent Shriver." - John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum. Web. 3 June 2015. This site provided information on Shriver’s personal background including his marriage to Eunice Kennedy and his work in the family business at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago during the 1950’s. This information is included in the leadership section of the exhibit.


Sabato, Larry. The Kennedy Half-century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy. Print. This was a good source for providing history of Kennedy’s campaign and his early days in the White House, including the plans for the Peace Corps and how they were developed.

This book is an authorized biography of Shriver. It helped me learn about Shriver’s childhood and about his public service throughout his life.


I used two maps from this site for my exhibit, one of South America, to show where Guyana is located, and one of Asia, to show where Thailand is located.