

EAST CAROLINA MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #68

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Methodist Missionary to China

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Interview #1

I had been interested in China for a long, long time. I don't know when I first became interested in China, but when I was quite small, I felt that I would like to go there sometime and work. It was when I was a senior in high school that I let it be known to some people that I really was planning to go to China and help with some missionary work. My family, of course, knew that I was interested in China and they didn't try to influence me; they didn't say "You know you can't go." I went on to college and while I was in college. . . .

[Where was this?]

I was in Searcy, Arkansas, in Galloway College. I was born in Hazen, Arkansas, but we moved to Searcy when I was ready for the sixth grade. The rest the family had been there for many years. The college that I went to was a woman's college. It was called at the time Galloway College, but later it was united with some other Methodist colleges in the state and another group bought the college so that college is not there now, it's another college. I was always interested, I don't really know what stirred my interest in China. It may be that somebody had come through and talked about China or maybe I had read something, I just don't

remember. It seems to me almost as far back as I can remember anything, I was interested in China. So I went on with my preparation. I finished college work at Galloway College and taught for a year, and then I went to Scarritt College. You know about Scarritt, I guess.

[Yes ma'am I do.]

I was there the last year that it was in Kansas City and the first year in Nashville, Tennessee.

[Wow!]

Our class was the class that helped move it to Nashville and it was really a very interesting thing. So, I really don't know specific things that caused me to think about China, but that just always seemed to develop in my thinking. When I went to Scarritt, at that time they had a certain age that you had to be before you could go into mission work, into the foreign field. At that time we talked about foreign missions and home missions. So, they let me go, take my work there with the idea that I would have one year of some work in the States before I went. But before I actually graduated, in my senior year there, they said that I could go on to China at that time. I said "Well, I thought to work one year in the United States, it wouldn't hurt me anyway from what I'd like to do," and if I went and they made an excuse and let me go a little early, and anything happened that I didn't keep on, they're liable to think "Well, we shouldn't have made any change in this." So, I was invited up to a mission school in Kentucky, Sue Bennett College in London, Kentucky. So I went up there to be there a year, but before that year was out, some things developed in China and made it. . .well I couldn't go on out to China at the time. You see in 1911 China overthrew the Emperor, and they were trying to work out a democratic thing and this was in 1926 and there were a lot of things going on at that particular time. There was some unrest as they were working. I don't need to go into details, in fact I don't know if I remember

very much about the details. So I continued to study, teaching up at Sue Bennett for four years. So I didn't get to China till '29, 1929. My first year there was in the language school in Peking. They had a wonderful language school up there. They had people from many many countries. Some of them were people who had come for mission work or church work, and some were business people. But anyway, people who wanted to live in China

[So you went directly to Peking when you left Kentucky?]

Well no. Of course, well as far as work was concerned. Of course, I came back to my family in Arkansas, and then I went to China. I believe I arrived there on the second of September. I went out when some of our active missionaries were returning from furlough. The school in Peking didn't start until, I don't remember the date either, the last of September or the first of October and we got out there on the second of September so we had several weeks before. There were two of us who were going up to Peking, so some of the missionaries in the different cities and the rural areas around Shanghai invited us to visit them, which made it very nice when we were going way up to Peking to have a little feeling of contact with regular people. And so, we did have about three weeks or so, and had a very good time down in the Shanghai area. Then we had a year in Peking and that was a wonderful type of experience. It was a good school for helping us to prepare for different kinds of work. Of course, it was the language that we were there for, but we also had some special study of history and we were taken to a few places to get acquainted with some of the places in China. We were permitted to have some one thing that we could do at some church or organization. Our time was to be given to the language study, but if we wanted to do something, and of course most of us did, it happened in my case that I had an English class, an English Bible class with some of the young people. That year in Peking was a wonderful year, as we learned more about the history and the place of China.

After we had been there a year, we went to the places The both of us were to work in Shanghai in what was then called McTyeire School. It has a different name now since the war that we just had. I guess war isn't the word, anyway since the Communists have taken over, there have been some changes. We were there for a while. Those three pictures that I have up there on the wall are from Peking. The long altar that you see in the top one there is the center of the universe according to the Chinese, and in the center of it up there, it says that China is the center of the universe. In fact Jhongguó(?) really means the central country, Jhongguó(?) is the Chinese name for that and close to that altar. There was a temple and the one on the right there is supposed to be of the temple. You can get a little view of it over the altar as you go some little distance away. And so it is just one of the places in one of the lovely parks.

That reminds me that I have heard some people say that now since the Chinese Communists have taken over, that people can go into these places and see the old royal places. Well, we could do it in 1929, that's not just something that the Communists have made possible because we were able to do that a long time ago.

[Were the Chinese people able to do so or just out-of-country visitors?]

No, I think there were Chinese people, too. I have no memory of any kind of feeling that

[That it was restricted.]

That it was restricted. I don't have anything to prove that at all but I'm sure that there were. . . . There may have been a lot of Chinese that didn't go in I don't know, but there were certainly some that did. It was opening up; they were trying to make this you see a democratic country, that was one of things that they were working for. Peking is one of the most wonderful

places I think you have in the world. Their history goes back so very, very far and some of the things that are built or made are really very wonderful. For instance the Great Wall. . . .

[Yes ma'am.]

I'm sure you know all about that, which was [built] several centuries ago, I can't remember right this minute what date that it was finished, but it was worked on for a long time and, of course, we were able to go out there sometimes, too. Then after we had our study in Peking, the two of us, went back to Shanghai and taught at the McTyeire School.

[What were you teaching at this time?]

English is all we'd be able to. Didn't have enough language to teach anything else, and we were supposed to have half of our time studying the Chinese language and half the time working in the college. But it really so happened that it took more than half of our time to do a lot of the things at the college. But anyway, we continued to work there. They had a plan for the study of Chinese for five years and we went there all the time. We didn't have enough time for Chinese study, but we did have to keep working on it. In fact, we had to keep working on it so long as we live there, because Chinese is really a difficult language.

[I would think so.]

Well, when you think you about all the kind of characters that they have. Now, I have been in Japan since I could be no longer in China and in Japan they had used the Chinese characters. But they put beside it what the sound is in Japanese. They have a number of little signal [?] things that show you what the sound is. So, if you are singing a hymn for instance in Japanese, whether you understand what it is or not, you know that in the meaning of the character you've got the sound all right. But, that's not true in China. If you couldn't read the character, why. . . .

[And a slight inflection would give it a completely different meaning wouldn't it?]

Oh yes, especially in Chinese. In the national language, which we studied in Peking, there were four different inflections. Suppose you just take the word mada waka do [?] for instance, you can do, do, do, do [said with different inflections]. Entirely different meanings, and different characters that would have those same sounds. So, you really have to work on that. But, when I got down to Shanghai of course we were teaching English and having to help in various kinds of ways in the school. I was there for only three years and that school was a very interesting school. It started out, I don't remember how many years before, for young people who came from what most people would call high class families. And back in those days they didn't have school for them, they had to do their studying at home with special teachers and all. Some of the missionaries said, "Well, we're trying to help all the people that we can learn about Christ and Christianity" and they had worked in various ways with people in different places. And they said that these people need to know about Christ, too, and so they started this school, and they managed to get some students by promising the parents of these students that if they would come, they wouldn't let any man come on that campus. They came, they stayed two weeks, at least when I was there they stayed two weeks, and then they would go home for a weekend.

[So it was entirely a girls' school.]

It was entirely a girls' school. And I know they told a story of one of the bishops, American bishops, going out and wanting to go into the school and they wouldn't let him in because they had promised that no man could come on that campus. Well, by the time I got there that had all changed. But they started out by trying to help the better educated, higher class, people. Also, and this was not that they didn't want the other people who know about

Christianity, but they thought that all kinds of people ought to have a chance to learn about it.

And, so it was really a very interesting school.

[Now was the school right in the heart of Shanghai, the business part of Shanghai, or was it out?]

Well, the original one was. When I, and I'm sure that city had grown probably a lot in those days, but when I was there it was out near the edge of the city, a very big lovely campus and all. So, well it kept developing, and it really was a wonderful school. I visited it in November, the last of November of this past year and I'll tell you something about that later if you want to know. We had in our college, Sunday school and church services in the college itself. There were so many students to go down to some of the churches and they weren't so big, so we worked there with them. We tried to do what we could to help them in all sorts of ways.

After I had been there three years, one of the missionaries in an old, old city thirty or forty miles from Shanghai was very, very ill and had to come home. So, they had to make some changes and send somebody else down there, because they had just one missionary in that school. So, they sent me down there and I had some of the responsibility for teaching and also for helping the principal of the school.

[What city was this in?]

Well, in Shanghai dialect they called it Sungkiang. It was down toward Hang-chou about thirty miles down there. So, I was down there for a good many years. In '37, I think it was, the Japanese invaded that area of China. They had already been up in the north and that particular summer we needed to do some repairs at the school and well, just several things. So I didn't take a vacation I stayed there and we got a lot of things done. Before school started there were about ten days that I could be away, and so I went up to Shanghai to spend ten days or so with my old

friends back in the school where I had been before. Well, before we got into Shanghai, our train met a train coming back, and I saw people sitting up on top of the cars, and hanging onto the entrances and all, and then I learned that the Japanese had invaded Shanghai, and these people were trying to get out, and here I was on the train just going in. And the main entrance, the main place where you usually got off in Shanghai, you couldn't get into that station so we got into another station in another part of the city and I finally got out. I got off not very far from where the Christian hospital was, and I know some people there. So I walked up, got up there and they said they would take my baggage, they'd get my baggage to McTyeire school where I was going, but there wasn't any way for them to take me. So I started out across the city, part of the way on rickshaws and part of the way on trams.

[By yourself?]

Yes.

[With the invasion going on around you?]

Well, you see in Shanghai at that time and all the years that I was there, we had an International Settlement and a French Settlement and a Japanese Settlement and then the old city of China, which was real Chinese. So I didn't find it too hard to get out to that place, but it took me a little while. So I didn't get back to Sungkiang in ten days, I was not able to get back for about a year and a half because I couldn't get back until after they had, they were going in, as far into China as they could and they got over a lot of it.

[So you were there for a year and a half?]

Yes. But, I had plenty of work to do. I could help out. I taught at McTyeire School, but at this particular time we had a lot of refugees who had come into the International Settlement, and there was one big church there, Moore Memorial, that was just crowded with people who

had come in to get away from the Japanese Army, because they thought that since this was an International Settlement they'd be all right. So, they needed some helpers there, so I did a lot of work down there and then there were a number of places where refugees had come in some of the big stores or buildings, and they had made some places for them to stay and some of us had to go down, and I did go down and help with feeding and getting things for them. So I was there for at least a year and a half, I can't remember exactly how long it was. That was quite some experience. When I got back to Sungkiang there were limits on what we could do. We couldn't start up the school again just like it was, and I think that there were about nine bombs that had fallen on our school. And one, at least one, had hit our house, the house I had lived in.

[Well now when you went down to Sungkiang which would have been around the 1934 period, how many Americans were there down there?]

There was one minister--he was quite old at that time--who had been there for a good many years and his residence was right close to the school where we were. And there was one other person who was in evangelistic work, not in the school but around there.

[So there were only three of you missionaries there in Sungkiang then?]

Part of the time I was there there was another person--American--who came and taught music in the school, but most of the time there were just two of us.

[You felt a little isolated after being in Shanghai where there was a fairly large colony of you, didn't you?]

Yes. Well, in a way, but I was so interested in what was going on learning about the place and all of that, that I didn't feel lonesome. I went back up to Shanghai every once in a while for something, and sometimes some of my Chinese friends came down, and some of my missionary

friends, too, came down to visit me and to see about the place there. So we had some very very nice times there.

[But the school had just completely closed for that year and a half or so while you were in Shanghai?]

Yes. There was a lot of destruction that went on in the city, much of it was destroyed, and our school was outside of the ancient city and that part of it was not destroyed as much as the old, ancient part of the city was. Well, during that time that I was there After a while we got the school started again, and, of course, we did a lot of things we did in the churches in the community also. This reminds me of something I hadn't thought about in a long time. One time, Bishop Moore got back to China and he visited some of the places where we had worked at that time, it was Southern Methodists before we joined up. And he came down to see us and in my bedroom I had a nice picture of the head of Christ and several bombs had fallen on our place and there were a lot of places where windows were destroyed and where there were holes, but that picture was not injured at all and he used to use that sometimes in his sermons about how that head of Christ, the picture of Christ, was not injured during all that went on there.

Well, I stayed there for a number of years until '37, I believe it was. No, that's not right, because that's when they came in. Well, after a few years I was asked to go up to Nanking to teach in the seminary. And of course prior to that time I had had more language study and, of course, we had used our Chinese language in many ways. Most of our actual teaching had been in English and so I went up there to teach. The New Testament was the field I was to teach in and I was able to teach there for a while. America got into the war you know while the Japanese were in China. They had been there, all that bombing going on, practically five years and when America got into it, we were sort of hindered in some of the things that we could do. After a

while we were brought home and I was home for two and a half or three years I've forgotten exactly how long.

[Well, that was the first furlough you had had since going out there in '29 wasn't it?]

No, I came home in '36, '35. Ordinarily the first term was five years and after that you stayed six years. But I had been asked to go down to Sungkiang because of this change, and so they asked me to stay an extra year, so I was out there six years, and I had been home for one year. And this was another six years for me out there when it came that I had to leave, but that was because of the conditions and I couldn't do anything. So, well, I was pleased in the way that our school had grown in Nanking, the women's seminary. At that time we had the men's seminary and the women's seminary. They were very close together and sometimes there were certain things that we did together, but they really were two very separate institutions. There was a time a little later when some of the students from over in the men's seminary, came over to take some classes with us and one or two of their teachers came over to teach and I was asked to do some teaching over in their seminary. But, by the way the seminary is opening up this month. They've had a few things going on there but they're really opening up the seminary again.

[Are they really?]

This month in February I was told, and I'm so glad that they can. I had a letter from a friend that said that they needed some books and various things because a lot of things had been destroyed and they'd like some new books, too, to commence on. I'm going to try to get together some things to send them.

[Well, there have really been some changes in China since the death of Mao then?]

In the last few years, yes. When I was out there in November of this past year, I planned to go to Nanking but there were so many things that I got into in Shanghai and I was limited in

my time there, not because I didn't get permission to go, but because all of that was worked out after I got to Japan, and I had to come back at a certain time. But I had a wonderful, wonderful time there, while I was there this last November. I was in Nanking then at the women's seminary, and it was very interesting. We had students here from all parts of China and of course during these thirty years or more we have lost contact with a lot of them, because they don't know where we are to get in touch with us, and we don't know where they are. Some of the people in Shanghai I am in touch with and hear about a few places, but not very many. Well, we had to come home then and we had special ships that came for us. Some people had come home before, but a few of us had decided we'd stay and see what we could do. So they managed to get the U. S. Government to send out a ship, because there were a lot of business people, too, who had stayed over.

[What year was this?]

This was '42 I believe, in the fall of '42. So we had quite a long time coming home.

[Well you were fortunate to be allowed to come out safely, because wasn't there always a danger that you'd be interned by the Japanese?]

That's what everybody felt. I was in Nanking which at that time was the capital of China. Peking had been the capital; Nanking had been the capital, Peking again. But Nanking was the capital at that time and things were going along a little better in a big city like that than in some of the smaller places around China.

[But it was under Japanese control was it not?]

Oh yes and we didn't know what we could do. Yes it was under their control. For a while we couldn't get out, we were kept right in our own places.

[Well after December 7, 1941, how were you treated by the Japanese?]

Well the Japanese wanted, I guess, we heard different things, you can't always tell, but at least some of them wanted us to know that they were not against us individually. But, we couldn't get out and go anywhere, we had to stay where we were. We were able to write notes to some of the people in our group if they lived in another place and let some Chinese person take them. As a matter of fact, when America really got into the war, we were at conference, an annual conference, which was a few miles up the Yangtze River from Nanking, I don't remember just how far we were. When we came back down we were taken to our homes, but we couldn't get out and do things unless we got special permission. But one of the missionary men was given permission occasionally to come around and give news to all the rest of us, of any news they had. One time some of our missionary friends were in Nanking, I don't remember now exactly what the occasion was, but they got permission from the government to let us come up and spend the night with them, it was not very far from our place. It was a strange feeling when you got up there and hadn't been out in a long time. You were pulled up in rickshaw, you had to have somebody to take you you know, but anyway we had a good time with them that night.

[Were your quarters where you lived, did you have any of the traditional American quarters that I'm familiar with in the Chinese cities with more or less a house with a walled-in yard. Did you have this?]

That was the Chinese way of doing it, to have the walled-in places. Our seminary was walled-in, but a lot of places were. . . .

[Were you free to use the yards and grounds or were you confined entirely to your home?]

Well, after the Japanese got control, no we didn't go outside unless there was some reason that we needed to go see the doctor or something they'd give us permission to do so.

[You stayed directly in your house rather than even going out in your yard?]

On campus we went out for our exercise and all, but we couldn't go in and help with the school while we were there. That was an interesting experience, but we didn't know what was going to happen. That city was under the control of the Nationalists, or had been under control of the Nationalists Guards, and so they were very careful. Now there were some Chinese who didn't last long there, but they tried to make us feel, tried to make the Chinese feel, too, that now that they were in, gotten Americans out and all of that that it was going to be a good place to be. So for a while, people felt sort of free about doing things. Well, we came home, took us two months.

[Were you somewhat surprised that they released you and allowed the American government to come and get you?]

Well, I didn't think too much about that, because it had happened in some other places. I think that they probably might have been glad to get rid of us, I don't know. Some people did stay, but we were there and we weren't allowed to do anything in the seminary or do any work of any kind. We didn't know what was going to happen but we didn't I don't remember feeling frightened. When we got our exercise, we did it about dusk, walking on the campus and around. As I said there were walls around the campus. We had a pretty big campus', it was very nice. So then we came home. We had to stop in Shanghai while people gathered together there, and we were two months on the way from Shanghai to New York. They didn't want to stop any where where someone was involved in any phase of the war. So we were in southeast Africa, is where we changed. As a matter of fact, maybe this was part of the reason that we could do it,

some Japanese were coming from America and the ship brought them that far and the ship brought us that far.

[It was kind of an exchange.]

And so we were in southeast Africa for four or five days and the Christians there were very kind and helpful to us. They had us come to their churches, they did various things for us those few days that we were there. The Northern Methodists had some work there, but in this particular group I happened to be the only Southern Methodist that was on this ship at that time. We were just all together, we didn't make any separation. Then our next stop was in Rio de Janeiro. We were there for a day and a half I think, and we stayed in different places. I was invited to stay in one of our Christian schools and had a very interesting time there.

Then we came on up to New York and when we got into New York and when we got into New York well, we had some American officials who were on the ship with us, they had gone out that far I guess with the Japanese. We had meetings all the time on the ship and talked about things, and they used to come to the meetings and all. We had different kinds of meetings. Then before we got off the ship, they saw each person and they had gotten all the information I think they could have out of anybody that was coming out at the time. I guess that they wanted to be sure that we were real Americans or for America or something, I don't know what. I was on the ship after it got into New York almost three full days before I got off. They had a whole stack of stuff laying out and I went in and I think there were about three men around, and they had all these questions and everything, but I finally got off. But it took about two months to get home that time.

[Were they trying to pump you for intelligence information as to what was going on in China?]

Well, it's hard to know. Of course they did ask you for a lot of things and I think they were trying to be sure that you were

[Not a subversive yourself.]

Yes, and I happened to be . . . oh, what's the name of it, an organization that's not in favor of war?

[Pacifist?]

Well pacifist, but that wasn't the name of it, there was another name. I think that was one reason that I was one of the last ones to get off, because we used to meet sometimes on the ship and have meetings and some of them usually were there. Whenever you got together or around, somebody was there listening to what you were doing, and since my family started with an "M" there must have been some reason that I was one of the last ones to get off and I think that was it, because I had been in some of those meetings. Oh why can't I think of the right name of that organization! It'll come to me after awhile. Well when we finally got home, when we were in New York, people from The Board of Missions met us and took care of us, and one thing that they did was to take us shopping so that we could get some clothes that we needed. In fact, there's one person here now who was working in New York, who lives next door to me, and she's the one that took me downtown and helped me find some clothes that I could wear. We had several days in New York. Then I came on back to Arkansas where my family lived. Well when I got back to Arkansas, of course, a lot of people wanted to hear about China, what was going on and all that sort of thing. Then the next January I went up to New York to study. I thought I would like to go to Union Theological School. My special master's degree at Scarritt was in New Testament, but I decided it was time that I did something more on religious education. So I got my masters degree in religious education up there and when that was over I

couldn't get back into china. So I kept studying for a while and after a while I got a Doctor's degree. Just about the time I finished that, I was able to get back to China. As soon as we were able to go I made an effort to be on the very first ship that I could get on to get back there. I went back up to Nanking.

[Was that around '46?]

I believe it was '46. I went back up to Nanking and we were trying to get the Seminary going again and oh, there were many people who had gone out west ahead of the Japanese armies, who were beginning to come back. People had suffered so during the eight years of war. You know eight years of war, we in America don't know what it is to have war in our own country. Our fighting is somewhere else. There were just many things to be done, so we were busy as we could be trying to help with this and that and also to get the Seminary started again. Things were going pretty well, a lot of things were very difficult and people were suffering a lot, but there was a good spirit in all of us that were trying to get back into things. Three years after that, the Communists came into control and I was there a short time after the Communists came in. The Communists tried to make everybody feel that everything's going to be all right for them, they didn't need to worry about anything. It seems to me that it was six months or so that I was there after the Communists came in. Things came along where we couldn't do much of anything as it was and so it seemed that it was time to leave.

[So there wasn't immediate suppression of operation by the Communists when they came in?]

Oh, they tried to make you feel that everything was going to be all right, everything's going to be wonderful. Of course I don't really know what happened, but I was told by some that people seemed to get that feeling, they began to feel very much at home and they weren't so

careful about their speech and that they would say various things and then every once in a while somebody had said something back there disappeared, and I'm sure that they were hung and things like that. As someone said in the article that I've just been reading recently, he was talking about what the Communists had been able to do. Many things that they had been able to do, as he said, there were some things that weren't what you would approve and . . .

[You made a very brief comment just now about saying that the Communist said and that everything was going to be all right and people began to feel more comfortable and spoke out, and every once in a while someone would disappear. No Americans disappeared did they?]

Not that I know of.

[You're talking about the Chinese who were speaking too freely that disappeared.]

Yes, and I don't what all the things that I heard, I didn't know if they were really just on facts or just happenings, you know how people talk about what's going on. I don't remember how long I was there after the Communists came in.

[Well were you all ordered out or did you voluntarily decide that you weren't accomplishing anything?]

We decided that we ought to leave.

[Had they issued mandates as to what you could not teach and what you could not do and this, that, and the other that led to that decision?]

Well, in our school, I really don't know whether they did or not. I don't seem to remember that. It took us some time to get started, and it was not in exactly the way we'd been going before, but we did get organized again and our school there had been a two-year program and during the three years that we were there before we had to leave, we thought that we ought to become a four-year seminary, women's seminary. The men's seminary was four years, and so

we worked on trying to get that worked out. In fact, while I was in the States studying in New York, the thesis that I was working on was about how we could change the curriculum in this school and make it a four-year college. So we in our teachers group there and others we talked about that during those three years. But it came around and we saw that we couldn't start anything right then.

[So you don't recall though whether the Communists were actually supervising what you could teach or inspecting what you were teaching?]

No, not while I was there. They used to come and visit us and look around at things. During those times, see, I was just there six or seven months after the Communists were in full control and they were trying to make people feel friendly toward them. One of the interesting things was that, as I said awhile ago, that some of the men students from over at the men's seminary came over for some of our classes and I was over there for some of theirs. One young man there seemed very bright and very interested and he listened very carefully to me, to anything that I said. He studied what I asked him to do and all of that, and I thought that he was quite bright. And then one day in class, I don't remember now because it's been so long, it was something that he said made me think "Well brother, you're not really what I thought you were." It was something about that we ought to get our message to all the people, and that there were just maybe one percent of the Chinese at that time who were Christians, and there were many, many people that we ought to get to. Not to just try to get it to the higher people or something like that. It was something along that line that he was saying. The way he talked and all made me feel a little strange. Of course I said to him, this was in class, that Christians were trying to help all the people as much as they could, learn about Christ and all, but there were some limits in the numbers that we could do. I don't remember the details and that, but I remember well

when I left after that class was over, I felt well sort of pent-up and thought "Well now who is he, what's he saying." He had come down from north of there and had said that the Communists had come in and he had gotten away from them, had been able to get away, and came to the seminary and wanted to study in the seminary. The seminary took him in and gave him his education and his food and everything free. Well, when the Communists came in later, he was one of the leading Communists.

[So he was planted there.]

Yes.

[I wonder if they didn't make a point of planting them around everywhere possible where there were American's teaching, to more or less keep track of what Americans were teaching and what they were up to?]

Well, I think that that was probably true. Not only where the Americans were, but where other people were, too. They probably had people in various places, trying to find out what was going on. So, I was there for a few months after the Communists came in and all of us felt that. . . . The American government sent out a ship for people. As I said awhile ago we had a lot of businessmen in Shanghai, and [they] decided that they couldn't stay any longer. Also there were a few missionaries scattered around. Well, then after the Communists came in and took over, I was back three years after the war and couldn't work anymore.

I came back to America with some of these people, and I was invited to go to Japan. There were several places where it was suggested I go and later on someone suggested that I might go, but I thought The Board of Missions know a lot about these different places and who they could get for different things so I talked with them some and we finally decided that I was to go to Japan. When I told some friends that I was going people said, "What! You're going to

Japan, when Japan spent eight years against China when you were in China! How in the world can you go to Japan?" and I said, "Well, I think they need Christ as much as anybody else," and then I said that I'm sure that there were many Japanese that were not in favor of all that was going on. So anyway I got back to Japan. The place that they asked me to serve was in a training school for Christian workers. It was a women's college and I was very glad to [work there]. Then I had twenty years there at that college when I went back just a few years after the war was over, I guess it was about four years after [the war was over] because I'd been three years in China and one year back in the States. We saw a lot of the things that the war had done for Japan in destruction and all that sort of thing. So, well it was very interesting to be there. At that time we had, I don't remember exactly, about eighty-five students, I think, that were there for different kinds of Christian service. One of the things, the biggest group was preparing to be kindergarten teachers. The kindergartens in Japan . . . they're everywhere now, but they were started by the Christians. It was one way that they got into the homes and all of the people. This school where I have been was one of the first ones to start anything and has been one of the leaders in that field. But just after the war, I think there were about eight, eighty-five students, I don't remember exactly. Then it began to grow and some of the people in the United States helped us with getting some buildings up and getting things going better. So several buildings were up and the number of students increased. We also had a Christian Education Department for students who do different kinds of Christian work.

Well, I had been there twenty years. I left there in '71 and I was invited back in '75--two of us [were invited] had been there, worked in that field. They were celebrating their ninety-fifth anniversary and they asked us to come back and they did a lot of nice things for us. We had a good time. They said something about who could come back for the hundredth anniversary and

we said well, we'd come if we could. We said to each other, "I guess they thought we wouldn't be able to come back for the hundredth anniversary so they make specialty of this ninety-fifth anniversary." Some of them had been away a few years longer than I had. But we were invited back for the hundredth anniversary, too, in November of this past year, and we had a wonderful time there. So there's been many many changes and growth in the school. When I was there, I don't remember exactly, but I think that maybe three hundred students was as many as we had fully. But now they have over nine hundred and they are doing various kinds of work. One of the things that we did while I was still there was to get the Christian Education Department into a four-year college, I was working in the Christian Education Department. Then we had the two different studies in the Kindergarten Teacher Education, a two-year course and a four-year course. We had to have kindergarten students in the school for these girls to practice with you see, so we had a kindergarten also. Those in the Christian Education Department did their practices in the churches and places like that. It has grown, as I said, a great deal, and now they even have an extra year above regular college for the ones who are in the Kindergarten Department, it's really a very fine institution.

[Well when you first went to Japan, this was several years after World War II was over, of course, how were the Japanese people reacting to the effects of World War II. Had they put all of that behind them psychologically, or were there still some indications of what they'd been through?]

I'm sure that there were many people that didn't feel the same way about things, but there seemed to be an effort to go ahead and build towards peace. You remember the treaties we had with them were based on that and they weren't to have any soldiers, war equipment, and all that sort of thing, but now the United States has almost helped them into that--changed their minds. I

think that the majority of people, perhaps, were glad that the war was over and they could go ahead with things. You see, the United States helped them a lot after the war was over to get things going again, and some of us who had been in China sort of wished we could have helped the Chinese more. We were not adverse to them helping the Japanese after the war, we just wished that they could have done more for the Chinese.

[For the Chiang Kai-shek government or for the Communist government?]

Well we think, I think and some of the others did, too, that if they had helped us some-- [helped], the Chiang Kai-shek--that things wouldn't have turned out like they had.

[Well, you hear from time to time some commentary how oppressive the Chiang Kai-shek government was did you see any indications of that?]

Well, I suppose it was like most any other country, people in different places in life got more help or less help than others did. We know that's even true in the United States. I was reading something the other day about attitudes towards Negroes. Something comes up they're likely to get punished when someone else gets by with it and all of that. So I'm sure that it was not the same with everybody, but I think that they were really trying to do something to help. Of course, we were not really in a place where we could learn for sure what was being said and done, but I got the impression, some of us got the impression, that the Chiang Kai-shek and his government wanted to work things out in a good way. The people who were, and it was said that some Americans were in this, they wanted to have the government made up of Communists and non-Communists and have certain of the Communists have these particular places and some have these. Some people felt that the ones that they were willing for the Communists to have, one of them was education, that was, well it just couldn't work out that way to make the government divided with those two different groups who had different ideas and everything.

[The ideology was just too opposite.]

As I said, it was just some things that you heard, you didn't have all the information and so I don't know. But I had the feeling at that time that Chiang Kai-shek and his wife were trying to do something. And then they said that there were some people in the government who were trying to do things to get them more money.

[That's true.]

Well, that's not something special about them and I don't know. I mean there was no way for me to find out.

[You didn't witness any type of oppression?]

No. So it's hard to know what happens and all.

[When you were first talking about your year in Peking and your language training and everything, something occurred to me for the first time in all the interviews that I have conducted. The church really has quite an investment in each one of its missionaries by the time that he or she gets down to being really a useful worker. The amount of training and expenses that is involved in placing a missionary in the mission field, I would think would be considerable. Do you ever have, is there ever a problem of missionaries going into a mission field and realizing when they get there that they're in the wrong corner of the world and want to go home?]

That may be true, I don't know.

[I've never heard of anyone comment on that at all, of missionaries going to say being assigned to China, Africa or somewhere, and going, and going through all the training and everything, and getting on the mission field and realizing that this is the wrong calling and that they made a mistake.]

Well, I don't know of any individual that did that, but I have heard of some people who just stayed five years, and after five years did not go back. Of course in some of the countries, it didn't take long to get the language. China was one of the hardest, and then, too, we had many Chinese who had studied English and there were ways that you could work together about some of these things. It took a lot of time and study to teach in Chinese. After I went up to the seminary, I did my teaching in Chinese.

[And I imagine you had been there for several years before you really felt comfortable in your ability to handle everything.]

Well, as a matter of fact I wasn't there for so terribly long before we were sent out, had to come back to America because of the war, and had just three years after that. It was quite a little problem from the time I went up until I left the last time, but there were about three years in there that I was not there. We had a man at the school who was very, very good, he was a Chinese man who worked in the school. He was pretty good in English. He didn't really talk in English much, but in those days a lot of people had their language just reading. Just like it used to be in the States when people studied another language, they oftentimes would just learn to read it instead of to speak it. There was one of men in the office there that used to help me with my work. I would write out what I wanted to do in classes and give it to him and then I would have a time with him when he would help me get this back into good Chinese. Sometimes I read certain parts of it in Chinese, and sometimes I would just talk about it.

[Right.]

But it did take a lot of study, the Chinese language is not easy and as I told you about the sounds awhile ago, I think I did, didn't I?

[Yes.]

Inflection and all you could very easily make a very bad mistake. You had to really work on it.

[Well, when you were in Shanghai and some of the other large cities, Nanking and what have you, you were not part of the International Settlement. Most of the American business people lived in the American Settlement. Did you have any contact with them at all?]

Oh, in Shanghai our school was in the International Settlement, and some of the other schools from other countries--mission schools--were in that part of the city. And then we also had some things in the old Chinese area. This time when I was back there, [I] went to see people walking around and [to] see the main part of downtown. Of course, I wasn't in the position to decide where I was going to stay. All of this was worked out through the people who made these plans for us. Well, it was full of Chinese people. The only people that I saw there that were not Chinese were visitors, tourists, and some of them were in the same hotel that I was in. We had, I think I told you this before, a guide and a chauffeur that took us various places, but oh, the streets were so crowded, oh, terribly crowded.

[Could you pick where you wanted to go, or would they only carry you to certain places on your tour?]

They had some places that they wanted to take us and some, for instance, that would show us the things were being made and manufactured in places, the sales of different kinds of thing that they had and all of that. But they took us to where we asked to go. There were just two of us, and as this man in Japan--he was American, I think he may have been British--made the arrangements for us, and he made us a tour group of two. And so we were able to do things on our tour group really just as we wanted. And another thing about it was that one of the women who worked to show people around who came in the travel bureau was a graduate of McTyeire

School where I had been years and years ago, but she was there after I was. But anyway, [at] the prep school there had been a friend of mine from the time I first went out there, and she got her to go to meet me. Of course, they had somebody else to come to meet me--the government did. But we were able to go almost anywhere we wanted to. Of course when you went in a group, you just went where people planned, but since there were only two of us in this group, and I was the one that had lived there. The other person with me--we had worked together in Japan. We didn't have any trouble.

[Gave you an opportunity to go around and see some of the landmarks that you knew from earlier years.]

That's right. We got together with this person who had been at the school for so long, but oh, how she had suffered during the war. She didn't talk about it, but some other people told me about it. But she had us come out. We were at her place several times and did things together, but she had one meeting out at that school.

[And it is still in operation?]

Oh yes, but it's not a Christian school, I think. And it's for boys and girls too now, it's quite different. But the buildings are the same, there're not as well kept as they were forty years or so ago. But one afternoon she had, I don't remember how many, oh twenty-five maybe, of people that had been in junior and senior high school when I was there many, many years ago, come in for tea one afternoon. We had such a nice time together and I was able to see all of the school and new things, so that made me feel very much at home.

[I don't even know how to phrase this question, but the students as you knew them, back during the thirties and early forties, of course you were teaching them in a completely different setting. You were teaching them in a Christian school during a nationalist period and when you

went back last year, of course, they had, should we say, matured during the past thirty years under Communist rule during the major part of their life. How did this affect their outlook toward you as an American and all that you represented as opposed to what they had been indoctrinated with for the past thirty years?]

Every time we came in contact with the Chinese anywhere, if we were out on the street with them they were very friendly, and certainly in the places where we were staying they were just as friendly as could be. The Chinese used to be very friendly with the Americans, but of course these were much younger now. I didn't have any feeling at all, anywhere I was, that there was any feeling against me as an American. There were just huge crowds on the streets. Sometimes on the sidewalk in what used to be the International Settlement, there would be maybe four people either walking along, or going along on bicycles, and right behind them would be that many more, and over here on this side would be the same thing and there were very few cars that you saw in the daytime. There were a few more around at night, but they did have some buses and then we had this car was taking us around. I didn't feel anytime, anywhere, anything that made me feel that I wasn't welcomed, it was all very nice.

[I don't imagine the masses of the Chinese people get caught up in the ideology anyway, do they?]

Well, much more than they used to, because they've been in school and been taught these things. Many of the people that you talked to or heard about, if they were planning something, you could see that it was along the line of what the Communists had done. Now in the school where I had taught, way back in '30 to '34, they had taken a lot of boys in there, and while the Gang of Four, you read about the Gang of Four?

[Right.]

And by the way, there was a lot of them on TV when I was out there about the trials and all. The Gang of Four made things pretty hard for the people in the school there. But since then, they have been able to make things a lot better, and they are coming along.

[I was wondering if the Communists had tried to completely destroy all emotional or psychological or religious ties of the training that these people had gotten prior to the takeover.]

I think there was a period that that probably was true. But it doesn't seem to be true right now with those who are in power. But, of course, you never know how soon things will change around, and now that I am corresponding with a few of my old friends, I am trying to be very careful of anything that I write that might cause any trouble to them, [I] wouldn't like anything to happen. But the things out at this old school that I knew as McTyeire School, things were pretty bad for them for awhile. I got the impression that the Gang of Four was trying to pull down everybody and make them do what they wanted them to do. Now whether that's true entirely, I don't know.

[You said that you were in the International compound when you were in Shanghai. I've heard various reactions to the relationship between the business community and the missionaries as far as there not being any closeness there at all, and in some cases, animosity between the American business people out there to make money, and the missionaries out there to try to teach the Chinese people. What was your experience along that line?]

I didn't have any personal feelings about anyone feeling that way toward me or toward our school, but just like now you have a lot of people here that are concerned about Christianity and many of them who are not and many of the people out there from other countries were there to make money and probably didn't do much about church work and things of that sort. Of

course we had churches, part of the services were in English, but I don't remember any arguments or anything like that.

[You traveled in, what we would say today, you traveled in different social circles I imagine.]

Well, just like it is here. We have a lot of people in the United States that are wealthy and have a lot of business and so forth, but don't do much about

[On the surface you would think that here American nationals halfway around the world and this was a rather small enclave of them, with all the masses of Chinese, that it would kind of draw them together in social circles was why I was exploring that.]

Well, I think that's true. Well there were a lot of people that we had contacts with that were in the business world.

[When the Japanese invaded in 1937, and you [were] telling about going into Shanghai as the people were fleeing, and you said that later the Japanese, even after the war began, were careful in how they treated you. Did you witness anything of that initial invasion in '37, any problems with the Japanese as far as the way they reacted to the Americans being there, the missionaries being there?]

Well, you see when I went into Shanghai, as I said I was going to be there for nine or ten days, I got into this International Settlement, and then I was not able to get back for a year and a half until after they had gotten everything between Shanghai and where I lived, Sungkiang, and the past Sungkiang. So I didn't really get into any of it when the war was actually going on at the moment.

[They didn't actually come into the International Settlement then?]

No, not at that period. Now the people in the International Settlement had to be very careful, but you see it was not until the United States got into the war that they would come into there. Otherwise they would be stirring up the United States.

[They were very careful in avoiding that.]

Once or twice a bomb was dropped on one of the International Settlements, but it was said that it was accidental.

[Well, when you went back to Sungkiang, there were just a few Americans there, just three or four of you. Aside from your school, were there any other Europeans or Americans in that city at all?]

No, there were just us.

[But the Japanese were actually occupying the city?]

Yes, they were still in control and they sometimes came to our home. I was living there by myself in this house; it was right on the school campus. I remember one day some of the students--we were doing various things--wanted me to meet them over in the chapel and we were planning some kind of program. I don't remember now just what it was. Just as I started over there, I think somebody called me rather and said that there was somebody at the door, some Japanese. I went back and there were some high-ranking Japanese there at the door. We were talking, and I stood there and talked to them a minute, and one of them let me know that he wanted to come in. I hadn't enough experience to realize that I should have invited them in first. I said, "Certainly. Come in." Oh, I know what it was, we were going to practice for something, and they were going to come over to our place--the students were--because we had a piano there to practice on. And these people came just before some of the first ones [students] came over and they realized what was going on and they never came in, they went back. And these two

high ranking gentlemen were there for quite some time and quite often they would come and look around the whole place.

[Well, were they looking for anything in particular, or were they just trying to intimidate you?]

I don't know what they might have thought maybe that something might be planned or something. I don't think that they were thinking that we Americans were doing anything, but they might have thought some of the Chinese were. Most of them were very polite and if they came and wanted to look around, why we would take them around and let them see things.

[There was never any indication that the Japanese may have thought that any of the missionaries were aiding and abetting the Chinese?]

Well, I suspect that there were times when they thought [that]. I didn't know of any . . . can't remember any particular person that was accused of doing that but I wouldn't be surprised, because they were coming around to the places where we were, to see what was going on, and they might have been looking to see about what you were doing and what the Chinese were doing. We tried just to go ahead and do what we were supposed to be doing.

[Just kind of ignore the situation?]

Well, there wasn't anything you could do about it, so you just went ahead and....

[Did your work.]

Just like if it's raining and you've got something to do, well, you go ahead. You don't stop just because it's raining.

[One last question before I turn off the recorder. Here you were from Arkansas which is considered a fairly rural setting.]

Back in those days anyway.

[Back in those days. Although you had been in Nashville, which is a pretty good-sized town, and Kansas City, were you prepared for China when you landed there as far as, what was your impression, what did you think when you saw Shanghai for the first time?]

Well, it was just like some big city, because the ships that we went in on stopped there at the bund port which was part of the river that came into right down there at the International Settlement place and it looked like most any American city coming in that way. And of course, we were just there as I said we had about three weeks before we went on to Peking, and we did visit some of the interior cities. They were quite different. Of course, parts of Shanghai were quite different but we didn't see those.

[You weren't at that point awed by the masses of people even then?]

No, I think we were just so thrilled that we'd gotten there and thing were going along, and the Chinese people were so cordial, and so many of the Chinese Christians came to see us and invited us into their homes for meals and all sorts of things. It was such a friendly kind of thing.

[When you first arrived it was still the war lord period to some extent was it not?]

No. There were some places out in the interior [that] were, but the people that were trying to make it a democracy had really won out as far as battles were concerned. But I'm sure that there were some places where there was still some war lords.

[I've always heard that the Chinese, during this period, had such a low regard for human life.]

Did you get any statistics or any ideas?

[Well, the type of thing such as Chinese justice, of people being beheaded for very minor crimes and someone some time ago commented, and I don't even remember the nature of the

conversation that brought on this, but I remember hearing one time of there being a problem from time to time of bodies floating in the water causing sanitation problems, so the government offered a bounty for people who would find things like this and bring it in. So they had a problem of people actually disposing of other people just to collect the bounty.]

Well, I don't know about that. I think that when you get into the country, especially back in former days, you get all kinds of stories. My experiences were mostly sort of along the Chinese coast. I was back in further at times and there were many, many poor people in China, and there were a lot of people who didn't really have homes, places to stay, and many of them slept on the streets at night. I heard at various times that somebody had been found frozen to death during the night or something like that, and there were things like that. Occasionally we heard of babies being killed if they didn't want the little boy or another little girl or something, but that might have happened. We have mistreatment of many children in many places.

[Right here.]

Yes. . . .

[The easiest thing to do is comment on your visit to the church while you were there.]

The Sunday that I was in Shanghai the latter part of November, I went to the Moore Memorial Church which is the largest church there. When I was there many years ago I was told that it was the biggest church in Asia. As far as I know it still is. It's an institutional church. There were three services there Sunday morning. One at six o' clock and one at eight and one at ten, and about two thousand people were there for each one of them. The sanctuary is a very big one and it had balconies and high seats in the back and it was quite crowded. There were at least a thousand people in there, and then in the other rooms of the building, there were people who were listening to the service but were not inside the auditorium. The three services were led by

the same minister, and they had about two thousand at each one of them, six, eight, and ten in the morning. The people seemed so concerned and were listening so carefully to what was going on, and seemed to be so pleased by it. I was there at the ten o' clock service, and two of the people that I had known many years ago came up and sat with me in the balcony. After that, they managed to get a few others, and we had a good time together after the service, which I appreciated very much. Moore Memorial Church was a big institutional church and it's done a lot of things for a lot of people.