

**Peter Schulhof**

**May 1, 2017**

**RG-50.030.0931**

### **Abstract**

Peter Schulhof was born on June 13, 1937 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. His father was Joseph Schulhof and his mother was Shalita Poras from Hungary. His parents met at a dance near the Polish border where they conversed in German. His parents spoke Czech with him and they felt Czech. His parents were assimilated and attended services occasionally. His father was an engineer and his mother was a homemaker. She was horrified when the country was occupied by Germany in '38 and wanted to leave as felt threatened. Their relatives felt they should stay as the occupation was just a temporary phase. Shanghai was the only place left for them to go as it did not require a visa. When the family requested an exit visa, the Germans assigned a value to their belongings and requested double the amount for them to obtain the visa. His father went to pick up their ticket and was told there were no tickets. The father had met the Director of Transportation and contacted him and a ticket became available. The family claimed they lost their Czech passport and obtained a substitute German document which proved helpful later. Their family lent them money and they took a train to Genoa where they required additional funds. Money was telegraphed to them from relatives in the US and Prague. Their ship took a month to go through the Suez Canal, Manilla and Singapore before arriving in Shanghai in May 1940. His father went to Japan for an interview with Lieberman & Weichi, a Swiss firm, as an engineer in Tientsin and got the position. They moved to the French Concession (division) of Tientsin. After Pearl Harbor, they moved to the British Concession. Other Europeans were interned by the Japanese but they were saved as his father worked for a Swiss company. Also, his father's salary saved them from starvation due to the scarcity of food. Peter could see the poverty when an old lady saved bits of flour that escaped the sacks. He attended a Jewish school where he studied English, Russian, Hebrew, math and Jewish history. He also learned Mandarin Chinese. They lived in a neighborhood with westerners and had servants. The mail from relatives stopped early on and there were no newspapers during the war so they learned after the war about their relatives' deaths in concentration camps and only a few survivors. One flew to them in '46 and went to Israel and Peter and family went to the US. His mother started gathering Chinese art and vases when they thought their visas were almost ready and later sold them in their store in NY. They had to abandon their summer home in northeast China on the Chili Sea, a 6-hour train ride from Tientsin, when they immigrated to the US on November 13, 1948. Others left mostly for Israel and also Australia, Canada, and South Africa. Peter and his family flew to Seattle via Alaska and took a train to NY. There was a reunion in 1995 of those from his European community in China and another in Australia in 2011. Peter has returned to Prague many times to see his old home and surviving friends and neighbors. Last year, with the help of his son, Paul, they placed his father's memoir along with photos and documents on Facebook on a page called, "Joseph Schulhof." Hopefully, it will explain aspects of the Holocaust to young

people. So far, over 100 have viewed the page. The experience left Peter questioning a higher power.