

**Time-coded notes for Interview with Martin Moses
June 26, 1988**

0:00 I was born in a small village near the town of Deutschkrone in Eastern Germany on February 5, 1928. My family had lived in that area for at least 350 years. We were the only Jews there. My first memory of the changes coming in Germany was when I was about 6 years old. Someone was taking me home and we heard the bells ringing because Hindenburg had died. Hitler took over as President. That was the real time of turnaround in Germany. Now Hitler had complete power; he was both President and Chancellor.

2:05 Before Hitler took power, my dad's occupation was that of cattle dealer and he also owned an inn. He had been an officer in World War One and had been awarded the Iron Cross, first and second class. We really felt no bad feelings against our family.

2:35 However, in 1935 my dad had an altercation with a Nazi and so an SS officer came from a neighboring village to put my father in prison. Since there was no prison, he was put in the building that was the Fire Department. People in the town saw what was happening and went to get the local gendarme who refused to participate in the imprisonment. He asked, "What has this man done?" Has he robbed someone? Has he murdered someone? and so my dad was taken our home by the gendarme, who stayed the night to assure himself that the Nazi would not come back. People themselves were not antagonistic, it was the regime.

4:10 I had a Jewish education. I was tutored by a person who came from the next village, as we had no school in our village. A little bit later, we moved to Schönlanke where there was a community of 150 to 200 Jews so that I would be able to go to a Jewish school. That was a very Orthodox community. It was one of only three town that had a matzos factory. Our family was Orthodox.

4:40 In Germany, if you lived in a small town and were religious, you stood out because your habits clearly identified you.

5:00 If you moved to a larger town you became more assimilated, you would blend in more.

5:35 On Kristallnacht, my Dad, like many other Jewish men, was taken to Sachsenhausen in Central Germany and kept for 100 days. My mother made an arrangement with the Gestapo that if they would release my dad our family would leave Germany. He was released on February 17 and our family left on March 26.

6:00 To leave, what was needed was money. We were forced to buy round trip tickets even though it was clear we were not coming back. We got on our ship, the SS Kumeruzu (ph), in Naples, bound for Shanghai. I traveled with a German passport, which was marked only "child". I was eleven. I still have the passport. I went with my parents.

6:55 There were about 120 Jews on board. We left many family members behind, about 35 close relatives - aunts, uncles, cousins -all of whom perished in the Holocaust. My Father had

been one of 14 children. His three brothers and three sisters perished in the Holocaust. We arrived in Shanghai only with what we could carry with us.

7:40 We had to leave all household belongings behind and just start over. We had been allowed to take 10 German Marks, each, with us. That was equivalent to about five dollars.

8:00 When we arrived in Shanghai, the Jewish Committee put us in a reception camp. Money was sent from American relatives which enabled them to move into a one-room flat in Hongkew. That was Japanese-occupied territory. However, in March of 1943, the Japanese issued a Proclamation ordering all Jews to move to Shausenroad (ph) Camp. It has once been a Chinese school.

10:00 The Joint Committee provided funds for each refugee to have one meal per day. This was channeled through local Chinese and also local Chinese advanced money to support the refugees with the ideas that it would be repaid later.

10:35 While I was there, I learned the trade of being machinist. My dad tried to put together a business dealing with furs. All business was conducted just in outside open stands.

11:00 The designated area for the camp was about two by three miles square; there were 21 streets. 18,000 people lived there. After the war, there were about 13 or 14 thousand people still living. Very few children were born because of the uncertain circumstances.

11:45 There was a Consul General in Tienstein (ph) by the name of Wiedeman. He was an old colleague of Hitler's and he tried to get the Japanese to murder the refugees.

12:10 However, the Japanese were afraid of the possible recriminations against them after the war so our camp did not become a concentration camp like those in Germany. However, there were beatings by the Japanese, living conditions were difficult, we couldn't leave and normal life was not possible.

12:30 We all kept hoping that it would pass. We listened to the Russian radio stations about the victories in Europe.

13:00 We also heard about the bombing of Hiroshima and heard the Japanese announcing the end of the war. Americans came in August/September of 1945.

16:30 I continued to live in China for three more years. Life was easier. I was 20 in 1948 and I had relatives in Chicago and so that's where I went. My parents didn't come until 1951 and they had to come via Israel because they were under Polish Quota Lists.

18:00 I do go back to Germany three or four times a year. I am a buyer of surgical instruments and most of those are made in a town near the German-Swiss border.

18:40 There seems to be no reaction to me on the part of the people that I deal with in my business. I suppose some of them realize I am Jewish. It seems that there just was not a Jewish community in that town.

19:00 I see people who are in their 70's and 80's and I just wonder. They had to be somewhere, doing something during that time.

21:00 I don't feel German at all. I have no allegiance to Germany or the German people.

21:30 The Jewish community in China goes back thousands of years. It developed because of the silk trade and apparently the Jews were completely assimilated. There was a large community of Jews in Thierstein, in Shanghai and in Hong Kong.

22:20 There was another group of Jews from Baghdad, very rich, the Sassoons/Hadroons (ph). They came in the 1850's in the import/export trade. A colony of Russian Jews came after World War One, in about 1917-1922. That was about 3000 people.

23:20 In 1938, after Kristallnacht, there were many Jews who came to China, including the Ashkenazi Jews. There were rabbis who came and also two complete yeshivas came, via Japan.

30:30 Of that community, all of the people were professional, educated, upstanding people. After the war, many of the Jewish community in China emigrated all over the world, to the U.S., Austria and Israel.

26:45 During the war our camp was bombed once by the Americans because the Japanese put their munitions factories by the camp to protect them.

29:00 The Chinese did not show any bad feelings to prejudice about Jews. Relations were good. And as for the Japanese, the fact is that they provided a haven for Jews, even though conditions were hard.

31:00 Now, I believe there is a great deal of antisemitism in Japan but I think that during the war the Japanese were looking ahead to the end of the war, when perhaps they would be affected by a backlash of attitudes on the part of Jewish financiers. Also, I don't think that the Japanese-German alliance was really a strong one.

32:40 I plan to take my son with me to Germany this year. I couldn't go to Dachau by myself because to get there I would have to pass through a town called Gunsburg and living there is the family of Mengele living in splendor.