INTERVIEWEE: R. MABEL HAYNES

INTERVIEWER: Rose Horowitz

DATE: June 9, 1992

RH: Today is June 9, 1992. We are in Mabel Haynes's home in the Elysian Park district, in Los Angeles, California. My name is Rose Horowitz. On behalf of the Old China Hands Oral History Project, I am interviewing Mabel to see how she became an Old China Hand.

Good afternoon, Mabel. Thank you for letting me come over. How did you come to be in China?

MH: I was born there. I was born in Shanghai.

RH: At home?

MH: At home, at 25 Baikal Road in the Yangtsepoo District. In the year nineteen eighteen; I mention this because it was the year when World War I ended, and my family had often told me that I was a peace baby.

RH: Okay, Mabel, you said you were born there. Can you tell us how your parents got there and what your family life was like in Shanghai?

MH: Oh, yes. My father came from England, Manchester, I believe. I am hesitant about the details concerning my father because I have to reach way back into my memory and recall what my mother had told me about him, because he died when I was barely seven. I understand he represented his family in the

textile business, and I understand also that he was a manufacturer's representative for many textile firms.

I recall going to Switzerland about twenty-five years ago specifically to meet a cousin of his who was to tell me many stories about him, and specifically to say that once he left for China the family knew that he was lost to them. She grew up with him and she knew him to be absolutely enamored with things Asian. His upbringing, his studies, his education was in the arts and humanities, I should imagine, because he was a linguist and a historian. He had attended the Edinburgh University and came to China with that kind of educational background, hardly a suitable background for a businessman, but it was a means for him to reach China. He had persuaded his family to allow him to represent the family.

The family in England had come from Europe--Romania--and they were well-to-do, thriving, energetic, Jewish people in the wheat and, later, textile business. This I got from my mother. So I suppose his home style and upbringing was fairly easy and privileged, but he came to China to meet goodness knows what all in his fate. One thing he did do was to marry my mother, who was Japanese. As I talked to this cousin of his in Switzerland, she said, "No wonder he married her, he was so besotted with things Oriental. I couldn't have imagined him not marrying someone Oriental." Later, when my mother in fact went to England and met the last of the living relatives of

his, one said to the other, "Well, no wonder Jackie married her. Look how adorable she is." Well, she wasn't that adorable or pretty, but she was tiny and neat and compact with a beauteous smile, and people took to her.

RH: She was a lovely lady!

MH: To tell you, though, about their life . . . So, having married her, they begot, I think, six--oh, yes, six children. I say "I think," because there were two other pregnancies that ended in miscarriage. Those miscarriages occurred between the sister older than I, Debbie [Mrs. Deborah Buchman], who is almost six years older than I, and between my birth and my brother's birth, so that there is almost six years difference in age between my brother and me.

Well, with their six children, they, as I understand, had a nice household, a good life, happy enough, well enough established. My father always had his business problems, according to my mother, and there were lots of things he had to do and try to achieve, even going into the Chinese interior to set up representation for his superiors in the interior. She described how once he announced that he would have to settle in some inland county. She simply packed up the household, lock, stock, and barrel, put everything in carriages, horse-drawn carriages, and with one servant, I think, took off for some other inland city and set up a home.

RH: You don't remember which it was?

MH: Sorry, I can't say for sure, but it was, according to my mother, absolutely Godforsaken. There was just nothing, nothing there, and if she hadn't taken a servant with her, she never would have pulled through. I think they had to settle for accommodation in a Chinese countryside type home. Well, that must have occurred perhaps when Debbie was born or before Debbie's birth. Anyway, on returning to Shanghai, my father and his family lived in Elgin Road, and my sisters talk often of their life there and their companions and neighbors, all Shanghailanders like themselves. But I was not born until the family moved to Baikal Road. I recall living there for a whole eighteen years, and I recall in my early days wishing that I didn't have to stay in this one house the whole time. My friends were moving away and having household changes, and I envied them the change in locale or just the experience of moving away. But I was told that I was born in that house, and later when my brother was born, he was born in that house, which means that my mother never went to a hospital. She survived all her births as natural births. She had the assistance of . . .

RH: A doctor or midwife?

MH: A midwife, that's right. She had her favorite midwife who pulled her through. She must have had a doctor for certain prenatal care, but at home it was the midwife who came. So she did say always that she was very lucky, very happy. God gave her all these children, no geniuses but no idiots. And

she used that word "idiot" with a purpose, because in those days it was really uncommon, in her mind at least, for large families not to have one or two backward or retarded children. Now, we have better pre-natal and birthing care.

RH: Mabel, do you remember anything about going to playgrounds, friends', school, any interaction with other children, whether foreign or Chinese?

MH: Oh, yes. It's time to move on to that. Because we were in this house in Baikal Road, which was a very gracious three-story semi-detached house; that is to say, we had another house identical to ours attached on the other side of us. There were six homes, two in a row, and we had the last house, the back of which looked out onto two Chinese row houses with an alleyway in between. One of the houses was a Chinese school, it must have been a private school, and the center house in that Chinese alley was lived in by the owner of those two row houses, and we could look out onto his back garden, which was really a most wonderful, gracious, good-looking Chinese garden, a typical, fairly austere garden. I remember that distinctly from looking out the back window of the upper story of our home. Then, if I looked out the side window of this back room in the upper story of our home, I could look out onto the Studley Avenue Park. I think it was called the Studley Park. Next to our rows of homes were two long rows of low cottages, typical English-style architecture, low cottages, two-story with a good patch of green garden in the front.

Now, this was known as Studley Avenue, and it led directly into a public park. It was a small neighborhood park, the center of which had a green playing field. We didn't play any organized games but we could run around and play rounders and chase and scream and shout. It had the typical Chinese-style built Rondavel--we call them carousels now. There were two of those with straw-pitched roofs I remember well, and it had a lovely path all around the perimeter of this little garden where we could ride our bicycles, and it was there I learned to ride my two-wheel bicycle for the first time. One end of the park had swings, and it was there I learned to swing as hard as I could and fly off the seat to see where I landed. That's how we had our little competitions to see who could land the farthest away. That seemed to be a favorite pastime. The other end of the park had a sand pit. I believe there were two sand pits, and the one at one end had a lovely summer house over it, or close by to it, where the little young toddlers collected and played in the sand, and all the Chinese amahs who brought the toddlers there morning and afternoon sat gossiping, knitting, and falling asleep while the children happily played. I was in amongst all that melee. I never had anyone take me to the park, except perhaps now and again when one of my sisters was around, because I was the loner in the family. But it was simple to walk to that park and meet my play friends.

RH: Do you recall any names?

MH: Actually, I can't recall now who they were. They were from school, my school and the public school and the kindergarten school that was not far from where we lived. There was a municipally run kindergarten school where my brother attended, but I never did go.

RH: What was the name? Do you remember?

MH: It was called the . . . Let's see . . .

RH: Yulin Road?

MH: Yes, Yulin Road Public School, Kindergarten School. It was Yulin Road, a municipal school, excellent, excellent beginning school, judging from the friends I know who went through there and judging from my brother who had a really good grounding.

RH: Where did you go?

MH: I was sent to the Shanghai Jewish School, SJS as it was called. That was a school for the Jewish community. I think fees were not required, or else voluntarily submitted. We were not well-off in my family, so no doubt my schooling was free, I should think, all through my school years there. The first school was in a home, I believe, somewhere in Dixwell Road or North Szechuen Road, in that area of Shanghai. It's too bad I can't remember the name, probably Dixwell Road. I could take a bus directly there from Wayside. Also, I think there were streetcars, but I believe I could take a bus all the way to school. Then later we moved from that building, that house

converted to a school, to another house, a larger house. I recall it was quite a large Shanghai, British-style home, very adequate, very roomy, with large staircases. So, from floor to floor and room to room, all the classes could be held from kindergarten on up to form 6.

RH: Do you remember where that was?

MH: That is where I'm confused.

RH: Still north of the creek?

MH: Oh, yes, it's still in Szechuen Road, North Szechuen Road, Dixwell Road, not far from where the Boys Shanghai Municipal School was.

RH: Then that was Szechuen.

MH: Yes, Szechuen. Those days there for me were not very happy days. Schooling was all right, it wasn't exhilarating. We had a very small playground and I don't think we did any sports as such. We did calisthenics, we had singing lessons, and we had some dance instruction. It was a very unimaginative type of education system, but I muddled through. I hated math but I learned all my timetables, and everything that I had to learn or could learn by rote I did. Poetry was by rote, history was by rote, geography was by rote. (chuckling) It was not imaginative. Our headmistress was, I think, the wife of somebody in the municipal police force. Perhaps he was in high command in the police force because . . .

RH: Do you remember the name?

MH: Yes, the headmistress, she was a Mrs. O'Toole. I can't tell you her first name, but she was an enormous woman with hair piled up high on her head. She couldn't have been very old but she looked ancient to me. She was very tall, very large of girth, and she wielded a cane freely. She really liked to whack people about. I can still to this day see her midriff rippling and shaking as she'd whack, bring the cane down on the palm. (chuckling) She didn't whack around the legs, I don't think, or not that I can recall, but she certainly made people hold their hand out and submit their palm for . . .

RH: Did you ever have that happen to you?

MH: Well, no, indeed not. I was so scared, so absolutely petrified by the thought of ever being whipped or hurt, and so petrified of the humiliation that would befall me. I could almost foresee what it would do to my makeup if ever I were to be caned, so I dodged very well. I don't know how, but I dodged. As I say, that's probably why I learned everything by rote so well, because I had the answers there; which if you didn't give, is when you were caned. So that was Mrs. O'Toole.

Then she had a niece. She sent for a niece from Ireland. I guess people were leaving Ireland and it was very convenient. She sent for this niece from Ireland whose name was Bridie O'Connell. She was a most beautiful, beautiful Irish-looking girl. I say Irish-looking because you know the looks of an Irish girl: jet-black hair, gorgeous skin, blue eyes, blue-green

eyes, lovely smile. She was not very much better as a schoolteacher. Goodness knows she must not have had much training, but she went through all the paces and did what she had to do to instruct us so that we could qualify for the goal of our education in those schools, which was to pass the Cambridge examinations. I think most of the British schools set their curriculum by the standards of the Cambridge University, and it was a question of sitting when you reached the right age and the proper level, sitting for the preliminary exams and then the junior exams and then the senior exams. And if one passed the senior exams with sufficient credit, merit, one I think automatically then matriculated and was ready and could be accepted at Cambridge University without question, I believe.

RH: It was London.

MH: Oh, was it London?

RH: Yes, the matriculation was for London but the exams were set by Cambridge, and the final name for what you called the senior became the school certificate, which was the equivalent in our American level today of a thirteenth grade.

MH: Oh, that's good. I'm so glad you had that straightened away. Well, when I was through with the Jewish school, I think I was thirteen, all of thirteen, and far too young to leave. So I made application to go to the Public School for Girls in Yu Yuen Road. By then our family was better off financially and so

I was accepted and went straight into form 6, which was a mistake, I should have gone into form 5. But the headmistress there, having reviewed my entrance test and the work I had done previously at the Jewish school, hesitated about my capabilities. But because I had taken the Cambridge exams, she let me go on into form 6 where we would have then sat for this final exam, the senior exam. Well, all I got was my school leaving certificate. I didn't get beyond that out of the Shanghai Public School.

RH: Now, in all this time in Shanghai, were conditions stable? I remember before we began this afternoon you mentioned so many different things. Can you speak about them now?

MH: Oh, quite so. This so-called happy schoolday life was interrupted when I was about eleven, by the Troubles, we used to call them troubles, the troubles. The warlords were always fighting. I heard of Chinese fighting elsewhere in the outskirts or in the interior or in the country, and then there was some great big outbreak of serious fighting very close to Shanghai. And since we lived in Yangtsepoo, close family friends, the Jacobs, Noel Jacobs and his wife Dora, insisted that we evacuate this house in Baikal Road and come and stay with them in the French Concession for safety.

RH: When was this? Do you remember the year or which kind of fighting? Was it the '27 civil war? Was it the '32 Japanese invasion?

MH: I think it was the '27 civil war. I don't think the Japanese were involved at that time, as far as I can recall. Really, I had no idea why people were fighting, what it was all about. We went to stay with the Jacobs for perhaps a week or two, I forget. I felt upset that there was all of this trouble, and when we went to bed at night we could hear artillery fire crackling away in the outskirts of the Chinese . . . What did we call the perimeter? Nantao?

RH: Nantao is the Chinese City.

MH: Oh, the Chinese Settlement. We called it the Chinese City. All I knew, that it was there. Troubling though the whole aspect was, still in all I felt safe. I thought, well, this has nothing to do with me, it's not coming anywhere near me, it's not my fight, it's nothing. You know, I just physically felt quite safe. And this is another overall feeling that I had all through my stay in China, that nothing touched me, I was untouchable. (chuckling) We were British and there was a British consulate and there were all these British people to help and advise and take care of us, and the Municipal Council was mostly British, so I felt very secure in all of that.

RH: Did you go back to the other house?

MH: Oh, yes, we went back to the other house and resumed life there again. One funny thing about it was my mother, who was told to pack in a hurry to get us over to the Jacobs' home, went up to the attic, got a great big bed sheet out, went to the trunks in which we had all our winter clothing, packed and

bundled up that heavy winter clothing. Now, it wasn't wintertime. She could have taken the cutlery or the silver, other more valuable things and more necessary things, but in her panic that is what she did. It's just one of these things that sticks out in my mind and we often laughed about it. Otherwise she was a very resourceful person.

I'd like to tell you about being British. You know my mother was Japanese and married this man from England who was Jewish. I don't think she knew anything about what she was getting into, but there was this deep love. He had seen her when she got to Shanghai and lived in the Astor House Hotel. She went there with a friend of hers who was in the employ of the Russian consul, the consul general--consul, I guess it was. My father lived in the hotel and spotted her and sought her out. My mother said it just ended up very naturally that they should get married. Little did she know that with all her children that she would be left, after a marriage of twenty years, she'd be left with the eldest daughter being barely sixteen and the second fourteen and the youngest child one year old, one and a half. There had been a firstborn, a boy, who died before he turned thirteen of typhoid. That played a big part in my life because typhoid fever was a horrendous disease to get. My father had instilled in all of us to be absolutely careful of where we went, what we did, what we ate, and to wash our hands. He had us wash our hands thoroughly before meals. In fact, we had to bathe and be all dressed up and

pretty and whatnot before we came down to dinner. That was a whole lifestyle of its own.

My father was not very religious. Although he had a good proper religious training, he wasn't religious until the children started growing and he said, as she put it, "Mama, we have to do something about this." So my mother was given Hebrew instruction by a rabbi and she was very well-equipped to carry on all the Jewish traditions. And there she was strictly following all the high holiday traditional rituals. I remember, I guess I was five, or four or five, sitting around this enormous dining table during Passover and my father going through all the rituals of the Passover service and singing in his deep baritone voice.

These are all vague but very precious memories of something solid and traditional: My mother all through my lifetime, especially particularly right after my father died, saying that "this is the way your Daddy would have done it." Sometimes she'd say Papa and sometimes she'd say Daddy, "This is the way Daddy did it. This is the way he would have wanted." She is the one who never let me forget that Daddy was so British and strict and proper in his lifestyle and his values, that she was there to augment them and see that I was not bereft. Because I guess she felt that he had given a lot to my siblings, who now tell me all the marvelous things that happened in their lifetime with a

father and a mother, which I didn't have. Now I realize why my mother tried to orally let me have what my father's absence was denying me.

So that is why I have this British outlook and upbringing and not much of a Japanese lifestyle at all, except for what she could bring into that, what she did bring into the house through visits to Hongkew where she would like to shop. That was where the Japanese settled, the Japanese communities, and she would make her forays regularly to the Japanese stores and also visit a sister she had in Hongkew. Another sister was an aunt to me, dressed in her Japanese clothes, speaking good English, a very nice aunt to me. So that's when I had a knowledge and a feeling for things Japanese. But I never learned to speak Japanese.

RH: What about Chinese?

MH: I didn't learn to speak Chinese. I wasn't very bright in that respect. I guess, you know, I could understand it. It never occurred to me that I could speak it. I could understand it and I could get through, speaking to the local Chinese, and perhaps always understand what my mother was saying in Japanese to our Japanese housemaid. That's another story on its own, the fact that we had a Japanese housemaid, who we later called our housekeeper. It's a saga in and of itself. So there we were, a strange family. I think ours was the only Eurasian-British-Japanese-Jewish family in Shanghai.

RH: Possibly so.

MH: I never thought about it in Shanghai. It never dawned on me. It just didn't occur to me to dally over that uniqueness. I just mingled at school with my lovely Russian-Jewish friends at the Jewish school, and then later at the public school with a whole motley of friends, German-Eurasian, French-Eurasian, Italian-Eurasian, and then an Italian girl who was the daughter of our orchestra conductor. Paci? Wasn't that right, Paci?

RH: Yes!

MH: Yes, I loved that young girl.

RH: Have you still kept in touch with her? I remember her.

MH: Oh, no. No, she was younger than I.

RH: She was, I remember her from school.

MH: We had a fondness for each other, I think, because I was a prefect and she'd hang onto me.

RH: What did you do after leaving school? Did you go to business school, college?

MH: After school I went to a business school.

RH: Which one?

MH: Mrs. Corneck's Business School. She ran a Pitman's College, I think. She ran the school for business under the Pitman regime, and that was a well-founded business school regime from England. She taught us typing and shorthand.

RH: Did you take any bookkeeping, too, from her?

MH: Yes, slight, but, you know, I never cared for that. I'm not one for math. But she gave us an excellent, excellent grounding and so I was ready to take a job and went from small jobs to finally a very good one.

RH: What was your first job like and how did you fit into it?

MH: Oh, the first job was the most amazing thing you'd ever want to hear. (chuckling) It was with the China Missionary Bible Society or some . . .

RH: The British Bible Society?

MH: No, it was some . . .

RH: China Inland Mission?

MH: No, it hadn't any single mission. It was a conglomerate of all the missions and it was a publishing house, publishing company. And jobs were so hard to come by that I applied for it, they liked me, they took me, they didn't ask what my religion was, I didn't tell them, it didn't occur to me to tell, and there I was in the midst of all these very, very Bible-thumping missionary types.

RH: What year was this?

MH: I wish I could remember. It must have been '35, '36, '37, I don't know.

RH: Before the '37 fighting then?

MH: Oh, yes. You asked for my first job, and that was just a six-month job. Then eventually I moved to an excellent job with Andersen, Meyer & Company, and that's a saga in and of itself, because they were manufacturers'

representatives, an enormously wealthy and far-reaching business house for China. I learned a lot from them. They put me in their pharmaceutical department.

RH: This was import-export?

MH: They did import-export and manufacturing. In Shanghai they manufactured for General Electric, lamps and so on, lamp bulbs. They manufactured for Parke-Davis certain of the basic products under the Parke-Davis label. They manufactured for Johnson & Johnson. This was all out in Yangtsepoo, factories in Yangtsepoo.

RH: Was the office in Yangtsepoo, too, where you worked?

MH: No, the main office was right in the heart of downtown Shanghai . . . I forget the road, Szechuen Road? I'd have to go by the . . . There was the museum on one side and . . . I wish I could remember.

RH: Peking Road was off . . .

MH: Peking Road, yes.

RH: Museum Road went off Peking Road. Would that have been it?

MH: Well, behind. It was something like two blocks away from The Bund, you know, behind. There were other firms of a like nature in that vicinity, British firms.

RH: Did you enjoy working there and did you make a lot of friends?

MH: Well, at Andersen Meyer I enjoyed it very, very much. They sent me to Hong Kong. Their Hong Kong branch was having a hard time filling some secretarial positions in their Hong Kong office, and Andersen Meyer canvassed the various secretaries in their Shanghai office to transfer. Now, I felt it a great honor that I was transferred from the Shanghai head office to the Hong Kong branch, but in fact it wasn't so much that the honor fell to me, it was just that the others who had first dibs at the opportunity turned it down. Because one had a fiance, the other was married, the third had a husband who wouldn't think of it, and with children, so they didn't transfer. So it fell to me as a young, unattached person, greatly happy, ready for the change. That's when I went to Hong Kong and worked in Hong Kong for all of three years for Andersen Meyer.

They were exceedingly good to me. You know, today you take working conditions under the Western system, where benefits are so hard to come by and they are meted out under union, if you're lucky, or other regulations. With that firm, Andersen Meyer, there was no question. I was employed, I was a good employee, I was loyal. They were wonderful to me, and to all of us. They transferred me by an Italian liner.

RH: Do you remember the name?

MH: Not at the moment. One of those liners that went back and forth, you know. The Italians, the French, and the British had their respective ships plying the

oceans from Europe and crisscrossing the China waters. On this Italian liner I was sent first-class. I had a cabin to myself. Really, I couldn't have been happier or treated better.

RH: So you spent three years in Hong Kong.

MH: Three years in Hong Kong.

RH: What was your comparison of Hong Kong to Shanghai? Could you give us that?

MH: Oh, I found life in Hong Kong duller. It seemed to me to be rather stodgy. (chuckling) I remembered my young days having the gall to say I found it stodgy. I liked the climate. I found excellent quarters, and that was again through the Kadoories. When I say "again," it's because I have neglected to say how many times the Kadoorie family, Horace Kadoorie particularly, helped out. And once I was in Hong Kong, Horace sent word to this Institute for Women, it was called, a very prestigious, elite place for unattached women just to live. I was able to live in this house--hotel more likely--at the bottom of the peak on Hong Kong Island. I had friends there.

Well, Andersen Meyer were good to me. They transferred me there, paid for my passage, looked after me, let me have all my holidays paid. I got ill . . . I wasn't very ill, I developed sciatica through too active sports and a bad back, and I was hospital bound for all of three months because of this defect, and they paid my salary all the while. They let me come back to the

job. They had hired somebody temporarily only in my place. That was just an excellent, excellent personnel system that they indulged in.

RH: And did they bring you back to Shanghai?

MH: No, I asked to come back to Shanghai because . . . And they allowed me and I came back to work in the Parke-Davis office when the war broke out.

RH: Which war was this, '41?

MH: No, when the Second World War broke out.

RH: Thirty-nine?

MH: In Europe. Things in Hong Kong were not stable, and when the Japanese were getting closer and closer to their goals in China, women and children were being sent away from the island of Hong Kong.

RH: Right, this was early '41.

MH: They were being sent to Australia mainly. Now, I would not have qualified to be sent to Australia because I was not 100 percent Caucasian. I forget the word they used . . .

RH: Pure European descent.

MH: Yes, something like that. It was announced in the newspaper that people should register to be evacuated, only those who were of thus and thus, such and such parentage. Well, it didn't bother me that there were these stipulations because I never in a million years would have gone off on my own when my family was in Shanghai. And since I was transferred from Shanghai

I simply asked Andersen Meyer to send me back to Shanghai, and they permitted that.

RH: Before you returned to Shanghai, do you have any more to add about Hong Kong?

MH: Yes, I ought to say that going to Hong Kong on my own, I'd left the family, I'd gone off on my own, I was in my element. I didn't have to report where I was going, who I was seeing, what I was doing, what dresses I was wearing or not wearing, what I was ordering and buying. All I had to do, my conscience told me, was to save my salary so I'd have enough to send home each month and save enough for my Christmas vacations and just be happy. I was very happy because there was a Jewish club and there was a badminton club. When I say the Jewish club, it was because there you met just one segment of the community. When I played badminton, it was with the entire community of Hong Kong. Without a doubt, the strict upper echelons of the British who were 100 percent European descent met in their own clubs. I was in and out of there a few times as a guest, but not a member. But there were many other places where we could enjoy and participate in sporting activities. I swam in one of the big swimming pools. Swimming was my delight. And I played hockey--not for too long--for one of the teams there and met a nice Scottish family who lived . . .

RH: If you can't remember where they lived, just tell us about them. And I do have one question, what was the dating or boyfriend situation?

MH: Oh, yes, I was going to bring that in. Well, this Scottish family, it was just a husband and wife. They were childless and they'd have me over often. He was in charge of the farm in Hong Kong, the farm on which Hong Kong depended for milk particularly. And they had young people at their home always, and dances, and I met a motley of young girls and young men. Now, in those days I hadn't the remotest desire, even thought, of marriage or dating. We never dated as the people do now steadily. Whoever asked me out I went out with, and that was fun. Different fellows would have a need for a partner for a ball or a dance or an occasion, and if I was asked I went. I was hardly ever at home on a Saturday. Now, it's not a matter of being promiscuous, as they would say today, we just went in a group. One day so and so would be taking you and bringing you to an outing, and another day another fellow from the same group would do the squiring, and that was the extent of our dating. Until later on there was this one young man who made his presence very, very, very much felt and I seemed to be his steady. This was toward the end of my stay in Hong Kong. It never could have been very serious, and when I left to go back to Shanghai, he, having stayed on in Hong Kong, was killed by the Japanese who invaded the island in December 1941. So much for that. But overall, the dating was just happy types of outings for

me. We went to the ballrooms. The hotels had their dinner dances every Saturday night and I would be there with our group.

RH: Formal?

MH: Formal. Oh, yes, that was the thing that . . . You know, now it seems so incongruous, but of course you dressed for these things. At this hotel/hostel where I lived, we had to be dressed properly for dinner, not formal but properly for dinner. And certainly when we went out on the weekends to dance it was formal, and that's where I had my heyday as a youngster. I had by then turned twenty, and then I think I had my twenty-first birthday in Hong Kong. I had my heyday there, going to the silk shops, selecting material from bolts in the store, taking the yardage to a tailor around the corner and having him sew up a dress for me, on my meager salary. Life was very simple in those days for us.

Well, Hong Kong provided also the seaside and we had our beach parties regularly, too, in the season. That was an occasion for our group of girls and boys to go out and swim. We didn't barbecue in those days, we took a packed picnic lunch or supper. We didn't booze either. We never took beer to those things. It was just a wholesome, happy, outdoor type of life.

During this time, however, I became politically more aware. I understood more then about the haves and the have-nots, the disparity in the wealthy British, European, Chinese, and the poor Chinese and the

downtrodden, and more aware of the business inequities. Then, returning to Shanghai at holiday time, I also was able to see how different life was and the overall commercial aspects were for people who had made it and could make it and those who hadn't and would never, ever have a chance to. Also, then I became more conscious of what was happening in the politics in China, the wars with the warlords, the troubles with Chiang Kai-shek and those at first with Sun Yat-sen and his problems with his family and the aspiring politicians for power in China, and then the aspirations of Japan and their all-pervasive intrusion into China. Slowly I became conscious of how unstable things were, and that is why I mentioned that in fact that sense of instability living in China really was pervasive all through my life, because prior . . .

Now I've jumped the gun. Prior to talking about these bad times, the war breaking out in Europe and the Japanese incursions, there was also the troubles in China. In Shanghai there were the troubles with the strike, the workers' strike. There was an overall heartbreaking strike of workers, labor forces, which as a youngster I knew about, but which when you read about now were really despicable. And the troubles between the various Chinese factions, and then with the Japanese coming into Nanking.

RH: You say Japanese. How did it pull you? Did it tear you? Because you said your mother was Japanese, how did that affect you?

MH: Oh, not in the least, you know. I was so British.

RH: You didn't feel pulled in two directions?

MH: Absolutely not.

RH: As far as you were concerned, you were British and the Japanese were these foreign element that were breaking into China?

MH: Oh, yes.

RH: You had the same feeling the rest of us did. The reason I'm asking, of course, is because you were half Japanese.

MH: Quite so, but that's where I try to say that my mother told me that "Daddy would have liked it this way and Daddy would have done this and Daddy would have done that," and, "Your family is in England and you will go there for your education," she thought. Apart from certain aesthetic and cultural traditions that my mother offered or showed us, you know, that my mother brought to the family, they were just cultural. There was no other feeling for Japan or the Japanese. And as a matter of fact, I detested the Japanese males for some reason. I found them very aggressive and offensive, even in the Japanese community in Hongkew.

RH: That attitude was very prevalent in Shanghai. Everybody liked the women and most of us felt very uncomfortable with the men.

MH: And it's a funny thing, I don't know if it was a learned attitude or if it was just there.

RH: You picked it up from the others, like us.

MH: Or if I picked it up from the others, I just don't know, but there it was. And I don't think my mother cared one way or the other how we felt or what we said or did, because I think she, too, felt much the same way.

RH: As you did?

MH: As we did.

RH: You came back to Shanghai much more conversant with politics, with socioeconomic conditions. When you came back to Shanghai, what was different? Did you notice things in Shanghai that were different from when you had left?.

MH: Well, I was older. I was more interested in . . . Let's see, I was less interested in the heretofore frivolous lifestyle, I think, and I continued working for Andersen Meyer.

Did I mention that in '37, our house had been bombed? The whole front facade of the house was gone. Strange, of all those homes there, ours was the only one that received a bomb or a shell or something right down the front of it, so that . . .

RH: Was it looted?

MH: Partly, yes. Oh, yes, it was looted, certainly, because I went back there and yes, it had been looted. I didn't find any of my own particular treasures. We were able to move away only our heavy furniture, certain things, the piano.

My sister, Esther [Bloomfield] never left Shanghai, I think, because she

was working for the telephone company. Esther is the oldest. She was working for the telephone company and they kept her back. They let her go late and had her come back early because they needed her in her job. My sister, Jean returned early after being evacuated to Hong Kong in '37. That's right, Jean returned to Shanghai earlier and was scouting around for a place for us to stay. She met a Shanghai French-Eurasian lady. I think her name was Vincensennavich. Incidentally, Jean met up with the daughter of Vincensennavich in the Anaheim reunion.

RH: They were Spanish? He was knighted by the Spaniards.

MH: Is that who he was?

RH: Yes, and he worked for the Spanish consulate.

MH: Yes, that's right, and so this Vincensennavich had some real estate connections, and she said to Jean, "There is a house that if you don't snap up right away will be gone. I recommend you take it for your family." And Jean did make a down payment or whatever and snapped up this house in Verdun Terrace, 67 Verdun Terrace. It was off Avenue du Roi Albert. And I can see by this letter that the Japanese consulate sent me to that residence that it was called Lane 125. There were several lanes. Verdun Terrace comprised lane after lane after lane of attached houses.

RH: They were identical.

MH: They were identical, except for the corner houses. We were number 67. I had happy times there, very happy times. So I came back from my sojourn in Hong Kong to Verdun Terrace to work for Andersen Meyer. By that time, let's see, my sister Deb had left for the United States, so there was just Esther, Bob, and I in the house with my mother.

RH: Where was Jean? Jean was married?

MH: Jean had married when I was still living in Baikal Road. When we were still living in Baikal Road, I think Jean had married and gone away to live in Bubbling Well Road in a nice home that maybe was available for lease because her husband was with the police force. He was with the . . . What were they called?

RH: Shanghai Municipal Police?

MH: Yes, police. He was non-uniform in this special branch. He was in a special branch.

RH: Those were the detectives.

MH: Yes, the detectives, and I never saw him in uniform. He was never in uniform, he was with the special branch. So they lived in Bubbling Well Road.

RH: And you lived in Verdun Terrace.

MH: In Verdun Terrace, yes.

RH: And you went back to work at the same site near The Bund for Andersen Meyer.

MH: Yes, near The Bund. Andersen Meyer, yes.

RH: And then came Pearl Harbor. Can you remember the day?

MH: Oh, yes, very well, Pearl Harbor. In Shanghai we called it December 8. Elsewhere in the world it was December 7, December 8 will always stick in my mind. The night before, we had all gone to a Japanese restaurant for dinner--this was in the French Concession. Why or how there should be a Japanese restaurant in the French Concession one wonders now, but obviously the Japanese families were beginning to see the way the wind was blowing and they made incursions into areas other than the Japanese settlement. But anyway, here was this Japanese couple serving us dinner and being very congenial. While the war in Europe was going on and the Japanese were fighting elsewhere in China they were very congenial. Little did we know, and who knows if they knew, that by morning or early dusk the gunships on the wharf would have been blown up and that Pearl Harbor had taken place.

RH: Did you hear the explosions?

MH: Yes, I'm pretty sure I did, as I think back now. Certainly on the radio we heard of all the dramatic news and I was worried. I was scared, I was worried, and I remember huddling by the radio, and I remember Jean's husband phoning to say don't worry. In fact, he came around to see how we

were and to tell us not to worry, everything would be all right, that we had the upper hand, nothing would be wrong, the British stiff upper lip.

RH: That was comforting.

MH: Right, it was comforting. It was very good of him to do all that and to tell us to stay put and not worry about the Japanese or the situation, that all was in hand.

RH: Then how did it affect you and when?

MH: Then there were these proclamations on the part of the Japanese to say that they had taken over and they were in charge and that we were not to worry. They were the liberators, they were the liberating forces, and they had come to liberate us, not to crush us or to be enemies. They played that line to the hilt, to tell the Chinese that they were liberators. The Chinese, of course, might have on the outside agreed that they had come to liberate them, but indeed they felt on the inside very, very, very resentful toward the Japanese.

RH: Did you?

MH: Oh, yes, I did, but I did what I was told, what we were all told. And I went to work, and things at work were normal for awhile. Then, one day, the whole building was taken over by the Japanese Navy. There was a gendarme and a very high naval officer. I can see him even today in his blue serge outfit with a great big blue cape, quite tall, quite resplendent with his cap, his peaked cap, going through all the departments, looking us all over, and going

into all the rooms where we had our stores. Now, I worked in the pharmaceutical department and we had a nice supply of medicines that would be distributed to the pharmacies around town, against their orders, you know, the commercial business. Well, the Japanese put seals on the stores, they smacked their seals against everything, everything, everything. In other words, everything belonged to them and we were not . . . We were there to work and do what we had to do, but not touch anything, not take anything away. So, indeed, we were enemies. They were not liberators, they were our oppressors. But that's not the picture they tried to present.

So everyone stayed at his post and did his job in the company where I was, which was strictly a commercial company, and more particularly in the utility companies. Now that was most important, in my mind as I look back now, the gas company, the electric company, the telephone company, all these Japanese had their supervisors and their department chiefs sitting in every office throughout all these buildings saying, "Carry on, do your work. All is well." But all the while, indeed what they were doing was learning how the operation was managed. They learned all the procedures, studied, got everything down pat, studied what the systems were, and when they felt confident was when they clamped down on all aliens, people of nations at war with them, and started to put them away in camps.

RH: Did they come to your house at all?

MH: No, they did not come . . .

RH: They did not come in? They did not put a proclamation on your door and stickers on your furniture? They did that to us.

MH: I don't recall that now, as a matter of fact.

RH: They did that to almost all enemy residences. They got a list from the consulate or Residents Association. I know they came to us.

MH: Yes, they probably did.

RH: You don't remember that, though? You may not have been home. You may have been out and not noticed it when you came back, could have been at work.

MH: Could be, yes. But I know there was this great big thing, and there was a big to-do in our household because we had a sewing machine. It was such a prized item and my mother on no account wanted to lose our sewing machine. So, during the time of the Japanese occupation, regardless of barricades and blockades and the curfew, I got into a rickshaw--it might have been a pedicab but it seems to me it was a rickshaw--with this sewing machine, and took it to the home of our Swiss friends. There was a Swiss family, the Mottus, and the eldest sister Cecile had married a Getz, but I think she had left Shanghai. Yes, she had left Shanghai with her Swiss husband, but the second sister Iris was working for the Swiss consulate, and we took this machine to her.

(chuckling) I don't know how I managed that, but it was something. And, really, after the war we got the machine back.

RH: Mabel, what about the Japanese housekeeper? What was her status with you?

MH: Oh, yes, dear Kitty. Kitty came to us when she was a young teenager. My dad had the habit of relying not solely on Chinese servants, but having a Japanese companion for my mother. I believe there were two or three others before Kitty, but Kitty came to us in her teens when I . . . I don't know my age, but Esther was maybe fourteen and Kitty was about the same age and they sort of . . .

RH: Your father was still alive?

MH: My father was still alive. Her name was Keia, her Japanese name was Keia Matsumoto. She didn't know a word of English but she soon learned. My father didn't speak Japanese, so in the house they had to learn English pretty quickly. Now, Kitty grew up with us, being my mother's principal domestic help. When my father died, my mother said to Kitty, "Well, I'll have to send you back now to your village in Japan." My mother got her helpers or sent for her helpers through friends from the village or the province where my mother herself was raised. So she said to Kitty, "Well, you know I can't afford you now, times are bad, you'll have to go back." And Kitty said to Mother, "Don't send me away. You have this one-year-old child. Your Daddy has just died. Keep me, send the other servants away. Reduce your

budget by sending the others away. I will be worth more to you than all of them put together." My mother took her up on that, and really, until later when we did have an additional local servant, Kitty held the fort. She became a constant companion to my mother and a help, and in fact took over. She just about took over, so much so that she raised my brother almost as though he was her own child, sometimes to the resentment of my mother, she told me later, but my mother was so happy for her help she relinquished all power, as it were, really.

RH: So Kitty moved with you to Verdun Terrace?

MH: Kitty moved, Kitty survived . . . I think Kitty had to return to Japan once when we had our troubles, then she came back, I believe. But she went to Verdun Terrace. She went with us to the Jacobs' home when we all evacuated. She went to Verdun Terrace with us and stayed there. And when the Japanese took over and they tried to come and question my mother and take her or send her to camp--I think there was a question of that--Kitty was there bristling and calling their bluff and saying, "How can you treat a person of your own birth, and a woman at that, and an old woman with no helpmate, how can you be so unkind, war or no war?" So whoever came to the house was always stifled by Kitty's forbearance--that's the wrong word, Kitty's . . .

RH: Attitude?

MH: Attitude, yes. So it seems they always went away with their tails between their legs and . . .

RH: And she remained in that house through the war?

MH: She remained in that house through the war and until I returned from camp. She helped. She helped with all the packages, the parcels that were sent to camp, and she remained. When I came back from camp, she . . .

RH: But you haven't gone yet, so tell us about that.

MH: That's right, yes. Well, so there we were in Verdun Terrace, and there I was with Andersen Meyer. The Japanese had come and they'd taken over. When they learned all the ropes, they took over. So I was without a job, and most all of us higher paid people . . . Maybe the Japanese kept some Chinese, I don't know, but there Andersen Meyer one day announced that they would pay us off and they were permitted to. We went to the office and one by one we lined up and received six months pay, I think, a severance pay--it was a handy amount of cash to come by--and a letter. I think I have somewhere a letter of recommendation, a referral to say that I worked for them. So that was the end of my relationship with Andersen Meyer, but really not the end of my longstanding memories and everlasting gratitude to this firm, which was a Scandinavian firm, by the way. They had representation of companies around the world, mainly American, but they were basically a firm of Scandinavian founders.

Then came a life of no work, of relying on the British Residents' Association and the British government to send us stipends every month, and then the announcement by the Japanese that we would be put in camp. Before that the Japanese tried to identify all the alien nationalities, alien to them. We called ourselves Allied. The Japanese were of the Axis party, and we referred to the Nazis and the Italians and the Japanese as Axis countries, and the people on the other side of the war, the Allied nations, the British and Americans and Dutch and the Belgians were the Allied nations.

RH: Were you identified as such and had to wear an armband?

MH: Yes, and that was one of the few things . . . The first of the many things that the Japanese did to show their occupation status was to try and identify all people alien to them with red armbands. This was to diminish us and humiliate us in the eyes of the Chinese, but in fact it had the opposite effect because the Chinese looked up to us and had more esteem, it seemed to me, for people wearing these red armbands, because these people were on the side of the Chinese, who hated the Japanese. So I wore my armband with the letter "B" marked on it and a number on it. I think the number was 134. I don't know what I've done with that armband. I may have it ferreted away somewhere, I don't know. So the Japanese then began taking people away for questioning, people they suspected of possibly spying.

RH: Any people you knew?

MH: No one I knew. I had only heard of a Mrs. Toeg, I believe, but no one I knew. Later there was an American who was taken away out of camp, but I didn't know him then, I knew him in camp later on. So the Japanese were taking people away into Bridgehouse, taking them away for questioning, coming by, picking up people in the middle of the night. My sister's husband would have been one of them, except they made a mistake. There was some cross-identification, they went to the wrong house, took a different person, and he escaped being hauled off, I understand. So we heard of Bridgehouse and this other apartment house where the Japanese were taking people away for questioning to their quarters.

Then they clamped down by saying that all single, unattached men should be interned. We were lucky, there was no fighting around Shanghai, and men who could prove that . . . We were there in Shanghai because the men had escaped bearing arms against the Japanese. I understand in Hong Kong the Japanese took all people and called them prisoners of war because they considered that all people there had borne arms against the Japanese. In Shanghai, we had this civilian status of never having borne arms against them. Which wasn't really very true because there was the volunteer corps, and the volunteers did bear arms and go out to the perimeter to guard at the perimeter of the settlements. But when the Japanese came closer to Shanghai, they discarded their uniforms and arms. That was a story in itself. This big

scurry in the night to get rid of uniforms and arms so the Japanese wouldn't catch any of them in that attire so that they would not be eligible for imprisonment. So we were all considered civilian internees, and in fact these camps that we went to were not called prisoner of war camps, they were not even called internment camps, they were termed civilian assembly centers, CAC.

RH: Can you remember how you went?

MH: Yes, I just want to tell you, though, that the Japanese first took the men, the unattached men. Let's see, I might be wrong in saying unattached men, because there was Noel Jacobs who went off.

RH: His wife was away.

MH: Oh, that's right, his wife was away. That's why he went. Yes, so indeed he was an unattached man. And my brother Bob went. They went in parties of I don't know how many, but in droves. I don't think they were all taken in one day.

RH: Did they just go from their houses or . . .

MH: No.

RH: Do you remember how it went?

MH: Yes, I think Bob had to assemble at the British Residents Association; the BRA, as it was called, did all of the negotiations and gave us all our instructions. They very wisely approached the Japanese and said, "Look, if

this is what you're going to do to us, let us have a hand in the assembly and in the organization." And they really smoothed the way, and for the Japanese, too. So, when this warehouse in Pootung was ready, and that was the first place of accommodation that the Japanese could hit upon, they got the men to go there. My brother Bob was given his instructions by the BRA to pack this, that, and the next thing, no more than so much and no less than . . . I think whatever you could carry, and a trunk and a bed. We got Bob together and off he went with his rucksack.

RH: How did your mother feel? How did she take it?

MH: Well, she was brave. She was very brave. "That's how it's got to be. You'll be all right," she said. "You know you're all together with everybody and the British are looking after you. You're not military." She was very hopeful about everything.

So he went to Pootung. My sister Esther and I were on the list to go to Yangchow. Again, all this internment was done in stages as they found places to put us. So Esther and I were to go to Yanchow. My sister Jean, because she was married to this man employed by the Municipal Council, was to go to the Yu Yuen Road School building. That was the Girls' School, the school I had gone to.

RH: The one you had gone to?

MH: Yes, the very school I had gone to. Then, around this time, my mother broke her back. She had gone to this market, as she usually did, once a week or twice a week. Where was this?

RH: Was it the Seymour Road Market?

MH: Yes, the Seymour Road Market! Oh, yes, the Seymour Road Market. And our drill was that she would go to the . . . That's how it was. Yes, she'd take a pedicab to the Seymour Market. She had a favorite rickshaw coolie. It's awful to call them coolies, but that's the term we used. This rickshaw puller, her favorite, he'd come for her, take her there, wait for her, and bring her back. And sometimes I would go on my bicycle and trail her back and help her with the load. But this day, I forget how it was, but on this day she had gone . . . This market was a great big open market with several floors. She'd gone to her usual stalls, made her usual run. She was up on the top floor, and just as she was about to step down the staircase from the top floor, she slipped and fell on her . . . just fell on her rump, her fanny, and felt a terrible pain, and what had happened is she had fractured her rib, she had fractured her spine, and her rib bone just poked out of place and so on. I don't know how it happened, but either I found her there or the rickshaw coolie came to get me to say that this accident had happened.

RH: And she was still there in the market?

MH: Yes, and I do recall that we'd got her on the rickshaw and she was pulled home, driven home . . . I don't know if it was a rickshaw or a pedicab--isn't that stupid of me? But there I was on my bicycle trailing her home. We got her home and got doctors and so forth right away, and she was taken to the big hospital, not the General Hospital . . .

RH: The Country?

MH: The Country Hospital, and her fracture was set. She was in a cast, a plaster of Paris cast from her neck all the way down to the top of her thigh.

RH: You brought her home by ambulance?

MH: Yes, we did, but it was a time before she even got to the hospital. Anyway, she suffered terribly through that, and I was looking after her. Then, when we were asked to go to camp, there was this . . . Oh, my goodness no! Her accident happened after all of Esther's things and mine were sent off to Yangchow. That's it. We had our departure date and we had to send our goods and chattels off ahead of time to the assembly point at The Bund, to be shipped to Yangchow. In fact, Mother's accident . . .

RH: Was that A or B . . . Yangchow A, B, or C? There were three. You don't even remember?

MH: I don't remember.

RH: Did Esther go?

MH: No. So, when this accident happened we immediately advised the authorities, and I suppose the Japanese consul to say we couldn't possibly leave our mother, and that's when they came and verified that she was in this plaster of Paris cast and that she would be absolutely at a loss without our help. So we got a reprieve, as it were, and permission for both Esther and me not to go to Yangchow. So we just bided our time and then eventually all our stuff came back from Yangchow. When we were advised that we could pick them up or they were sent to our home, I don't know which, the stuff that we had packed, you know, had been looted. Our boxes came back absolutely empty, the locks broken. Some people said that in fact all of the stuff was looted even before it reached the Yangchow camps.

RH: Yes, we hear both versions.

MH: Others said that the internees in Yangchow, knowing that this stuff was being sent back, felt that they ought to raid . . . you know, they had a right to raid our trunks and take the supplies from us because their need was greater than what ours would be eventually. So the stuff came back without perishables. I think our clothing was still there, I just don't remember.

So we lived this quiet life under the Japanese with the barricades and the blockades. There are many books written about it and I think others would have given a better accounting of those days in their oral history reports.

Then, finally Esther was told she had to go. Oh, they had to make a selection between the two of us and they picked Esther, who was the elder, I think, and let me stay. Maybe Esther and I elected it that way, I forget, but I stayed on with Mother. It made more sense because I had been nursing my mother all along. I had received some training in how to handle a woman in a plaster of Paris cast, you know, and the prognosis was that she would be in this cast for six months at the minimum. So Esther went off to Lunghwa, and then finally the cast came off and my mother got better, but I just stayed on and on. Periodically, the Japanese would come in to see how things were, and when they did, why, Kitty would say, "In no way is Mrs. Bloomfield ready to be without her daughter. Absolutely not." We still had the cast in the house, and my mother would don the cast which had been cut open. My mother would don the cast again, (chuckling) to show that she was still unable and feeble and so on, and needing a brace as it were. So I stayed on for all these many months until finally the Japanese said, "No, this is it, you must go. You're the last of the people on the list," as it were. I think they sent for me to go to the consulate and told me this news and gave me the date and said I should be ready and a truck would come by and take me to camp. The truck came by with a letter borne by the man in the truck telling me that indeed that truck was for me. And I have this letter still to this day, and it's dated August 3, 1944.

RH: The camp they took you to, was that the one your sister had already gone to, or was it a different one?

MH: No, luckily that had been settled, that I would join my sister in Lunghwa. Because I guess it was on the record that my brother was there, too. He had in the interim moved from Pootung to Lunghwa. At Lunghwa Camp, there was a period when the inmates were making representation to the Japanese constantly to allow more men to Lunghwa, because Lunghwa was populated mainly by families with children, older men, older couples, and insufficient numbers of husky men to do the hard work at camp. Many of the families were saying, "Look, let us have our relatives who are in Pootung transferred to Lunghwa." The Japanese didn't pay much attention to these pleas until they themselves had to move people from Yangchow. I think the camp in Yangchow, for some reason or other, was dispersed.

RH: A and B were, C remained. This is why I asked you. A and B were brought down.

MH: Oh, yes, I see. I was not aware of this.

RH: Because you were out.

MH: That's right, and so it happened that they had to make room in Pootung, so they displaced the single men, the eligible men from Pootung to Lunghwa and other camps to make a place for the people from Yangchow.

RH: We're already now in Lunghwa Camp. Esther was there before you, and you were about to say something about her.

MH: No, I think was to say that Esther had told me that while I was not yet in the camp--she was there--the camp authorities put out the word that those inmates who had relatives in Pootung who might be eligible to join them should make application. So Esther applied for Bob to join her, and Esther had a very close male friend, a Richard Black who was in Pootung, and she got someone else to apply for him, I believe. So both Bob and Richard Black were transferred ktp Lunghwa and that was so helpful because it was good to have those males there to help us. So eventually when I got into camp, Dick and Bob were already there.

RH: What was it like in camp? Can you explain where you stayed? Were you in a dormitory, how you ate, what it was like?

MH: Yes, I went straight into a hut, to a space right next to my sister Esther. People were very accommodating when they heard that Esther's sister was coming to join her. The person in the space next to Esther moved across the way and I was able to put my bed and my trunk and my things . . .

RH: Was this a large dormitory? How many people? How many beds?

MH: This was a hut. The camp comprised of buildings. The camp was in Lunghwa, an abandoned agricultural school for boys in the good days under the Chinese regime. The Japanese took the campus over for their infantry,

as I understand it, and the Japanese occupied the premises for quite awhile. They erected stables. This is what I understand. These stables were converted to huts for the internees. The school buildings were substantial brick multi-storied buildings which families with children and couples lived in, but the single women and single men and stauncher types were put in the huts, so I went into the hut.

RH: Mixed or segregated?

MH: No, these huts were absolutely segregated. There were three rows of two huts each, so we had six huts. The two huts in a row shared a common roof. It was tin, corrugated roofing. The sides were flimsy, gabled panels of wood. You could see the daylight through the wood slats and you could see daylight through the roofs, but the camp authorities did a good job of trying to modify and rehabilitate the stables to living huts. Now, because they had been stables, you can picture where the horses' heads would poke through, and so fortunately we had those holes covered with windows and panes. So every two beds' space had its own window, and that was nice because the hut was low-slung. The sides were so low and the windows set so low that we could step right out of the window into the outdoors instead of having to go to one of the two entrances at each end of the hut. So right outside our space, outside our window, Esther and I established a nice little patio area, you might say. In the summer, in the good weather, it was an ideal place for us to sit and fire

up our chatty, the chatty being an Indian word somebody conjured up. It was made of an old kerosene can to hold whatever would burn, and we were able to cook up extra tidbits on this chatty.

So I came into the camp and straight to Esther, set up my bed, a Simmons bed. The bottom half of a Simmons trundle box-bed, and thank goodness it was a trundle box-bed because the top of the spring mattress lifted up and I crammed it with foodstuffs. The bedding I tied up on top of that between that and the padded mattress, so I really made the most of what allowances they limited us to.

Esther was the hut captain. Wouldn't you know, she had in no time . . . No sooner had she got into that hut when they made her captain. She's sort of a born leader and she remained the captain of that hut all through the time I was there. Because the camp was separated by location, there were the huts and the different buildings where each person lived, and each building had its building representative who reported to the camp representative, who reported to the camp commandant.

RH: Did you ever see the commandant?

MH: I can't recall really seeing the commandant, because by the . . .

RH: So you had no contact with the administration?

MH: No, not really. We had contact with the guards who came to do roll call, but the commandant himself, I don't think I saw maybe until the very end of the stay.

RH: What was the food like, or did you cook your own on your chatty?

MH: Oh, hardly. Well, we cooked as much as we could, but the food . . . When I got into camp, the first job that was assigned to me . . . We all had to do our little bit, assigned a camp chore. The first chore that was given me was to be in charge of doling out food to the second sitting in the dining room, so that I would present myself at noontime and dinnertime, maybe for breakfast, I forget. I forget when our breakfast . . . Yes, three times a day, I guess. I'd go to the dining room, stand there, wait for the food in vats to be brought in, and wait for the man who was in charge of the whole proceedings to come and tell me how much I could ladle out to each person.

This man was brilliant. He was absolutely a genius. He'd come, eye the crowd assembled . . . You see, not everyone would come to all the meals. Some were sick, some couldn't bear the smell of the food, some had others collect for them, so he would eye the crowd assembled in front and look at the contents in the bin or vat, take his ladle and dip it in the vat and shake it till he got to the level of food in the ladle that was adequate, and say, "This is how much you can give each person."

RH: And it worked?

MH: And it worked down to the last dribble of food. I'll tell you, he was just brilliant. Every time. He'd say, "Today our rations are better, today we cooked more, today there are less people present so you can give them a ladle and a quarter." Or, "Today you can give them only this much solid and that much liquid and the ladle can be only three-quarters full." I think the ladle was maybe a cup and a half in capacity.

Well, the first day I went to do this, I saw the crowds in front and all the younger people came, lined up with their enamel plates. The younger people were first, it just seemed that way. There were tables in this dining room, family-style tables, you know, just tables with a bench on either side, and people had their customary places. So the first tables would come up for their food and then it would end up with the last of the lot, the people in the back tables, and they were always the younger men. Then the men, they'd be the last to bring up . . . They brought up the rear and they'd be the last to get theirs.

RH: And when did you eat?

MH: After that, after that. I think I put a bit aside for me. And then, when the men came, by the time they came . . . My vivid recollection of my first serving of a meal was to look at the ladle, look at this hulking hunk of a young man, skin and bone, holding his enamel plate out in front of me, and pouring barely enough food onto his enamel plate to cover the bottom of his

plate. I was choking with tears. I really had a hard time. That was the most dreadful, dreadful hour or half hour or whatever, and I carried my food back to my space in the hut. By the way, the dining room was very close to the huts, so I had not far to walk, and I went there and I said to Esther, "I cannot do this job. It's just too difficult for me," and I wept and wept and wept. And she just didn't have too much to say, I don't think. She might have said, "Look, everybody has got to do a job. Somebody has got to do it. You're on the list to do that so just buckle up and do it." You know, buckle down or whatever the word is, you just do it. So I did that for about a month or two or three, till I thought I had done my duty at that chore. It seems that people detested that chore.

So I went back to the office, you know, our own administration, the camp administration, and asked for another job. They said, "Well, it's customary that able-bodied, unattached women work in the hospital." So that's what I did, I went to work in the hospital.

But you asked about the food. I can't remember what the food was. It was always a watery stew or watery soup. I don't know what was in it except . . .

RH: Did you get bread with it?

MH: We were doled or issued . . .

RH: Or rice?

MH: Yes, we got rice. At the meals there was rice. The rice was in vats and it was cooked quite well, and it was pretty clean because we had a system for cleaning the rice. And there was always burned rice at the bottom of the vat. You know, you can't cook rice if you cook it well without it being burned at the bottom, and I would scrape that bottom bit of burned rice out, and that's what the men who brought up the rear would drool for. It was just extra food. Nobody else got it, but it was their perquisite more or less to receive that rice at the end. Yes, there was rice and then there was this watery soup or stew. I don't know what was in the stew. Esther can tell more because she worked in the hospital kitchen.

The general kitchen received what came in in the rations that the Japanese sent. The rations at first were better; they got worse and worse and worse. It was cabbage and turnip--a lot of cabbage, I remember, and turnip. And people talk of potatoes. I don't know, there must have been potatoes. Ballard, in his book, *Empire of the Sun*, talks of sweet potatoes. I don't remember sweet potatoes. If we'd had that, that would have been such a treat. I must talk about Ballard, by the way, later on. Remind me. So those were the meals, and they were smelly. The meat was high. It was always just rank, but you ate it. You just had to, otherwise there was nothing else. What we cooked on our own chatty was what we were able to save or scrounge or save from our monthly packages.

We received parcels every month from contacts in Shanghi. Each person was allowed ten pounds through the Red Cross. We were lucky because the Swiss were in Shanghai and the Swiss oversaw what the Japanese did for the internees and oversaw the Red Cross. So we did receive a parcel of ten pounds each. Esther, Dick, Bob, and I received ten pounds each. Esther received hers through the telephone company, Bob and I received ours from Kitty and Mommy. I think Horace Kadoorie registered one of us to receive a parcel, but since we were spoken for, I think we used Dick's name. I think that's how it was, so we got one of his packages. With those packages, which contained sugar, flour, peanut butter, and, by the way, the peanut butter we made at home. I learned how to make it at home, roasting and grinding peanuts, you know, before I was in camp. And lard. Lard had been rendered down at home and sweetened, quote, unquote, having been rendered down maybe the third or fourth time, with apples, anything to take the lard smell and taste away, lard that we could put on our bread.

Now, this bread was . . . I can't tell you, it was about, say, five inches long and maybe four inches across, four inches each way and five inches in length, and it was very dark bread, made from unbleached flour, I suppose very healthy. It was good and brown and crunchy, except there were no preservatives of course in the bread, and probably no salt, and so it would mildew and mold and deteriorate almost immediately, especially in the center.

So, when you got the bread, it really wasn't edible. We cut the edges, the end slices, and the center slices which were moldy and soft and deteriorated we would slice very fine and put out in the sun to dry. And this went on for days and days, we'd dry out our bread. That made it quite crusty. Or sometimes we'd toast it if we were lucky. If we were lucky, we'd toast it and save it for, you know, iron ration times. We use this word, "iron rations," that was for a rainy day, for the day when the crunch came and the Japanese deserted us or whatever and there'd be no food. So that was how we all ate and that's what we did. Those who were lucky had chattys, those who didn't were helped out by others, and amongst us [there was] a good lot of banding and sharing. I know Esther always brought home food that she had cooked on the embers of the hospital kitchen. She got this job working as a cook in the hospital. The camp authorities, our own authorities, were really admirable. We had such a great lot of good-thinking, well-planning men.

RH: Who were they? The people from business or the missionaries?

MH: Oh, we had such a cross section. The missionaries did their bit. We had missionary doctors and teachers and nurses. They did wonders. We had the doctors, you know, the private doctors from Shanghai in our camp. Dr. Burton was one of them. Who doesn't remember John Burton? And we had bank managers. There was one, Smith, W. E. B. Smith, I believe. He was an absolute gem as a leader of our camp. There was another man--oh, his

name escapes me now--but he was from Jardine, Matheson [& Company] or one of those firms, one of the tycoons, quote, unquote. Butterfield & Swire, we had those executives from these companies who really knew a lot about administration, and so they organized us. The Japanese had all the work done for them.

I'd like to say, you asked about the commandant. The first commandant that Lunghwa Camp had was Mr. Hayashi. He was exceedingly good to the internees. He had explained to them, I understand, that he was a diplomat in England and was taken in as an internee, a diplomatic internee by the British. He said that they treated him so well, so properly, so correctly, gave him every diplomatic recognition and benefit without stinting in any way. When he was returned to Japan on an exchange of diplomat procedure, he determined when he was given this job to be commandant for Lunghwa that he would treat us as well, he would return the favor.

RH: Which he did?

MH: Which he did, and therefore the camp was set up in such an orderly, properly good way. The internees who took leadership of the camp were given a lot of benefits. They had to make representation, of course, but they were allowed . . . Those who had certain instruments . . . There was a piano brought in. Because somebody said they owned a piano, the piano was sent in. Books were sent in--you know, the internees who had these things in their home. I

understand the Ezekiel family had their own cow because . . . Somebody had a cow, I thought it was the Ezekiels because they were kosher.

RH: No.

MH: No? Well, whatever, someone brought a cow, and then there were goats. We had goats. There was Elise Andrews who was very clever with . . . She lived out in the country and she had goats, I think. She was in charge of our little farm because that was the thing she liked to do, and she ran our farm. We had goats, and the milk from the goats went strictly to the children. All of that food, food for the children and food for the sickly who had to be on special diets, was doled out through the hospital kitchen.

And I started to say, so Esther took this job. She was the second . . . There was a chief cook and an underling cook, and Esther was the underling cook for awhile. It meant standing over these hot, hot stoves, which were fired with coal. They were not ordinary stoves such as you'd have at home; they were just great bit squares of brick with a center that could stand the heat and an iron top which had an opening for the pans, the great big vats and so on. So Esther cooked this special food for the hospital patients as well as those needing special diets. Whatever was good that came in with the rations was skimmed off for the hospital, for the benefit of the sick. They had millet and rice and sago, I understand, and the better vegetables.

So Esther's perks from the kitchen was to be able to heat toast and so forth for herself on the tops of the stove after she'd finished her hospital cooking while there was still heat. Coal was so scarce that the minute you finished your cooking, why, you'd have to put the coals out, damp it with water, I suppose. But there were always embers and bits of coal that we picked out after sifting through the ashes, and also Esther was able to take little pans of whatever she would concoct for us and put on the top of the stove around the sides of the big vats, so that by the time she got off duty there was something hot to bring home to eat.

Well, she always considered in whatever food she was bringing home one Hank Behrens, Bob's good friend. Hank was off the *S.S.President Harrison*. He hadn't a connection in the world, as all the *Harrison* crew. Bob liked him, they were pals, and Bob would come and say, "Is there anything for Hank?" Hank was this tall, husky hard-working man, hungry, hungry, hungry, so that it would take so much to feed him, and there was always something for Hank. And I mention this not to say that we did this for Hank, but to tell you this because you know Hank. After the war when our family came here, we learned that Hank had been from Santa Barbara. He married a girl from Santa Barbara, he settled in Los Angeles. When Bob came to Los Angeles, he was in touch with Hank and they renewed their friendship. When Esther and I came to Los Angeles, Hank was married and settled in Long

Beach in a beautiful house overlooking the coast over there, and he had us over quick, quick, quick. We were to come to visit him and his family. And as we walked in the door, Hank put his hand on the shoulder of his elder daughter--I think she might have been eleven perhaps or less--and his other hand on the shoulder of the other daughter and said, "Come, I want you to meet this lady but for whom your Daddy would not be alive today." Well, his saying that overtook us, overtook me, that he would remember after all the passage of time and that he would say so to his daughter in such deep, profound acknowledgement, you know. Something that we didn't think about when we helped him. When I say "we," it was basically Esther. But I think it worth repeating here, that Hank, bless his soul, was such a profound, decent man to have said that to his daughters. It just made the bond between us all the tighter.

RH: Mabel, could you tell us about [Walter] Kerr? You said you had something about him, too.

RH: Oh, yes. Walter Kerr was an Englishman, employed in Shanghai by the Parks and Recreation Department--Parks and Open Spaces is what they called it in the Municipal Council. He was a great friend of Horace Kadoorie, because Horace loved the outdoors and horticulture and had this stupendous garden at Marble Hall. He was very friendly with Walter Kerr in connection with the horticultural world. Walter was in the Lunghwa Camp, one of the

earliest families, I think, to be interned, and he had the foresight to plant poplar trees in the open . . . let's see, in the driveway, the entrance to the camp, and here and there in the open spaces in the camp. By the time I came to camp, these poplar trees had grown. They were giving us excellent shelter and shade, in the summertime especially, which we needed so badly. And I learned in camp that when he sent out for the seedlings and the saplings and organized this planting, people were enraged to think that he could believe anyone would be in that camp that long as to need trees, you know, that the war would hang on that long. They had no conception that the Japanese would not have hung on as long as they did. We were all of that bent and mind that the war would end quickly, you know. We'd make mincemeat of the Japanese in no time. That was the outlook.

In any event, there was the foresight of Walter, and that's why I'd like to mention . . . Walter's wife was in camp and she was busy, busy, busy always with her fingers knitting. He had two daughters, Liese and Renata. We called the younger one Nati, and I remember with respect to Nati that she had malaria very badly. You know, by the time I had got to camp, people were so ill. There were so many elderly with serious illnesses, that if you had malaria, why, that was nothing. In the beginning, when you had malaria and came down, why, a big fuss was made of you and you were allowed to go into the hospital and be tended there. But that little twenty-bed hospital soon had

no space for the likes of people with mere malaria. So you stayed in your own bed in your own quarters and you suffered and had these high spells of fever and these low spells of shivering and cold, right there in your own bed in your own cubicle, wherever, open to the eyes of all your fellow inmates. If you were lucky enough to have a drape to draw across the front or the sides of your bed and have some privacy, you were fortunate. There was a Russian lady at the end of our hut who had more malarial attacks than any of the others that I can think of, and there she was lying serenely day in day out on her bed, never a whimper, never complained. She'd just lie there and suffer her malaria.

But what made me think of telling you about this malaria was Nati. Little Nati Kerr would, when she had her shivering cold spells, go out on the north side of our hut where there happened to be a great big rock. This was in the summertime, in the daytime, and this rock would be under the blistering sun and it would be so nice and warm. She'd lie on the rock to get some of the heat from the rock. We'd try to save her from this horrible ordeal of being out in the open on a rock, on a hard rock while she was so ill, but to her it was just a heavenly space. Those are the two outside of hospital illnesses that I encountered. In the hospital where I was a nurses' aide. I called myself in the end a bedpan expert. Well, it comprised of helping the nurses, who were mainly missionary nurses, and were they ever devoted and

good and superb, skilled nurses, with the kind of nursing skill that I've never seen again. They taught me really what caring nursing was. We had old people, feeble, unable to care for themselves at all, think, do, and move, but hanging on to life, and they taught me just how to handle these persons. There were youngsters who came in for accidents or stomach problems, but not many. Mainly there were people affected with spleen problems. I don't know why, there was quite an incidence of problems with the spleen.

I had night duty tours there, where I would stay in the hospital for a whole week doing my turn at duty at night, sleeping in the hospital in the day, working at night, and that was a period also when we had a water shortage and we had to empty bedpans and change the bed linens to look after a woman who was incontinent with maybe two inches of water at the bottom of the water barrel. I don't know how I pulled through that night looking after this incontinent lady, old woman, who died two days later, two days after I had got off night duty.

We made the beds, cleaned the floors, scrubbed, served the food, helped feed, helped dress, wash. I'm an excellent body washer now, a bed bath expert! Really, the missionary nurses made me an excellent, excellent nurse. There's hardly anything I will flinch away from or do if I know how. Many things they taught me how to do that are not taught today. So I was

grateful for that. I did not eat the hospital food though I was there working in the hospital. That was not one of our perks.

What I was able to do while I was on night duty was arrange for my bed, the bed I would have been sleeping on normally in my hut, to be sent to the fumigation center. There were bedbugs, you know, rampant, and there again our administrators were just so with it and so health conscious that they were able to build a little hut far away in a far corner of the camp where they brought in whatever it was, sulfur and so forth to fumigate beds, and beds were placed in this hut for the required period of time, two nights, three nights, you know, it went by the hours. And you'd have to make a reservation to have your bed go to this hut to be fumigated. So I arranged that when I was in doing my night duty my bed would be taken over to be fumigated. So, when I returned, my bed was rid of bugs that came from the woman who was next to me, who brought them in, no doubt, or who allowed them to run rampant in her bed because she was older and just not very sanitary herself. So I came home to a bed without bugs but with the most terrible stench--and that stench, I can still smell it in my nostrils now. If you know what the chemical is for fumigating bedbugs, you'll know what stench I'm referring to.

So life went on pretty well in the camp. I had my chores, I had my friends. We were a nice group of youngsters, for the most part, all very

sharing and helpful away from the foibles and the fits and the tantrums of the others in the camp. It's strange, I realize now that those of us who lived in the huts and those of us who were younger had no idea what was going on in the huts where the couples lived, where the couples with families lived, where the couples with the older children were, and of the problems and dissension that might have been and the little irksome things that went on.

We didn't know, at least I didn't know, and I had no idea about the youngsters also who went to kindergarten school and went through all the stages of schooling. Our teachers who were interned with us organized classes. My brother Bob was registered into a medical school, a premed school, in fact, and the degree he came out with from camp . . . He was given a certificate, and the curriculum of all the work that he had done that he could present to UCLA when he came here, it advanced him out of the freshman course, the freshman year at UCLA, it was recognized. Dr. Cater, in camp, who was in charge of that segment of the scholars in his education field, prepared his classes and exams and papers that were really the most precise, well thought out documents you could find anywhere.

In the winter we organized hockey games, in the summer we played tennis and softball, and some of the young men thought they had to keep fit and did jogging. I mean, it was ridiculous. There they were undernourished but still they had to be macho and jogged. I played hockey.

But really, I was so busy with our chores, keeping the living space in our hut clean and doing our hut duties . . . We had our turn of toilet duty. You know, you had not only to keep your own space clean but the area where we took showers and where the toilet cubicles were. There were six toilets, I believe, and three troughs for bathing and doing our washing.

We washed ourselves standing in a trough, for as long as we could stand cold water directly from the taps; and when we couldn't stand it, from water that we'd collected from the tea ration. The tea was doled out to us straight into our thermos, so we would save our thermos flask tea and wash with that. Unfortunately, our water came from a source right there in camp. The men had erected a water tower that had hit a briny streak, so the water was briny, salty, so you could hardly wash anything with plain soap. Not that we had anything other than plain, but it was difficult to wash in briny water, as you can imagine. So that was an added burden.

Drinking water came to us from the city. It was brought in a great big tank through the city services. The Japanese allowed a water tank, quote, unquote, into camp. The driver for that truck was an immigrant--I'm using that word now, but in those days a White Russian. He would bring in news of the war, furtively of course. People who were working, helping unload the truck and handled the engineering end of getting out the water to us would have furtive conversations with this Russian. So, when we heard rumors of

the war's progress, we'd say it was the news from the water tank. I think it came every week. Then, of course, we had rumors brought in or news brought in from the people bringing in the Red Cross parcels to us. We also had a clandestine radio, known only, to three people in camp, to the end of the war.

There was a young man, Tom Kablitz. He was an American who never did . . . He was a young man with an American father and not an American mother, I guess he was Eurasian. He was never considered American because the American rules were that if by the age of thirteen an American-born did not return to the U.S., he did not have American papers. Tom Kablitz didn't have any American papers so he was not interned. So he worked for the Red Cross and brought us packages. I knew him in Shanghai, so he was a friendly face to see come off the Red Cross truck, and I would hover around and have a furtive word with him. In fact, he handed me a little package one day, which was a gift, a private gift from my then-fiance outside in Shanghai. It was a terribly dangerous thing to have done, but we swung it. When you're young you don't think about these things. So there's Tom Kablitz. He did come to this country. I wish I could find him or know something about him and how he fared on returning to Los Angeles.

RH: What about Ballard?

MH: Yes, you know, in camp, as I have said over and over again, our own people who looked after the administration of the camp were so imbued with the need to keep us going in all areas, mentally, physically, and even socially and hygienically. We followed such good hygiene and we were so careful in all respects to keep our camp nice and clean and neat and for all of us to be upstanding. That is the aspect I had of our camp. Except for one occasion when Red Cross parcels came to a certain group and they were not shared, that was the only time there wasn't outright sharing. The camp was run so very well, that for Ballard to have written his book the way he did and to have allowed that film *Empire of the Sun* to be depicted in the way it was, was really not a very kind gesture toward all of us who endured Lunghwa Camp in such an exemplary manner, and especially to those people who so bravely escaped from camp. Joyce Huxley, when she heard that Ballard's book was being nominated in London for Book of the Year by the London *Times* was incensed, as were all the other people in England at the time who heard of it and who wrote to the London *Times* privately and in the paper that this book should not be considered because it did not do justice to the other inmates of the camp. Joyce Huxley said, "After all, my brother risked his life. He escaped from the camp and he joined the allied forces. He escaped from the camp, the joined the British forces and he returned to camp when we were

liberated." She said, "How can I stand by and let Ballard's book and film go unanswered?" And she was right.

Joyce Huxley was talking about her brother Tom, and I'm very glad to have this chance to talk about that particular escape. Because with Tom was another young man, Mike Levy, who were very brave in this escape that they finagled. Now, I don't really need to go into it because I understand that Tom is less silent about his experiences. He had been, up until a few years ago, very, very against saying anything much about his experience--it made that much of a mark in his life. Now I understand that he's writing a book or a book is being written about his experiences, and in fact there's been a short documentary more or less on television, so I need not go into that.

RH: Could you tell us what it was like when you were liberated? You mentioned liberation. Tom came back at liberation.

RH: Yes. Well, you know, it was unexpected. We heard that the war was over. We really didn't know about the bomb or just what had happened, but we could not go back into Shanghai. We were told not to. The Japanese at that point were very proper about saying, "Shanghai has to be taken over and be under proper jurisdiction before you can go back. We are still there to maintain order. The Chinese populace is at boiling point. They could just be so overtaken by the fact of victory that if there were no armed presence to maintain law and order in and around Shanghai there would not be safety."

So the Japanese military stayed at all their points of duty to maintain law and order until the Chinese troops or the proper troops could come in to take over. And I believe this is historically accurate. The Japanese stood their posts and were spat at and berated by the Chinese.

RH: The way I remember it, from the city, was that the Japanese disappeared overnight. They turned everything over to their collaborators, the Tao-Tao, who in turn were chased out by the Nationalists, then came the Americans. It was in that sequence.

MH: I see.

RH: In the city where I was. But then, you see, in camp it was a different story.

MH: Yes, in camp it was a different story. Well, we were told we'd have to stay put until, you know, we were absolutely assured of a safe return to our homes, and that would be when the liberating army would be present. And lo and behold, we had a group of military come into the camp, Americans who said, "We are of the China Theater and we've come here to liberate you. We are taking over from the Japanese command. You Japanese guards can leave, we are here. We advise you not to go back home just yet until everything is organized for you to do so."

And with that group was Tom Huxley and Mike Levy. I don't remember Tom Huxley that much, really, that he was there, but I believe he was there. But Mike Levy I definitely remember seeing because there he was

in his uniform, bright and smart with a beret, I believe, type of cap to his uniform, there to greet his mother whom he had left in the camp when he escaped. Was she not in the camp?

RH: She was out and the Japanese kept guarding her house, expecting him to try and get in.

MH: Oh, I see. Well, who was it of his family that was in camp that he came back to?

RH: I don't know. We can ask. I want to ask his sisters.

MH: Yes, and your bringing that up, as a matter of fact, reminds me concerning the escapes, that my brother Bob came around saying, "You know, there is an escape being arranged shortly." It was all very, very, very, very hush-hush, of course, but he came around to Esther to say, "There's an escape and I'd like to go with that group." They were his buddies and he said, "I'd like to go with that group." And Esther had said to him, "Well, consider what would happen to Mother. She's outside."

RH: That's exactly what happened to Mike's mother.

RH: Yes.

RH: I understand, we heard. That's how we knew Mike had escaped because their house was being guarded day and night in case he tried to contact his mother.

MH: Oh, I see. Well, so Esther said, "Just consider what would happen to Mother and Kitty and the rest of us when you go." So Bob didn't go. And indeed,

those who were left behind in camp had a lot to answer to the Japanese. They were interrogated by the Japanese. And there was a whole segment of our life there that was taken up by the fact that there was this escape, and conditions in camp changed and people were questioned, and we were all confined and received only bread and water for some days.

RH: Then how and when did you leave camp?

MH: My sister Esther was told very fast that she had to come back quick to work. I don't know what kind of a job she had, but her boss, who was a Dane and was in Shanghai the whole time with the telephone company, sent for her. He needed her. He said, "Oh, I need you." This was in the . . . I don't know what division she was with, engineering maybe, I forget. He said, "I need you back." She spoke fluent Chinese and so she was a useful employee to have, so she had to go back to work almost right away.

I was still in camp when word came to me that there was a job that I could do almost right away. Horace Kadoorie had the liberating Americans, the command at Marble Palace. Isn't that what it was called?

RH: Marble Hall.

MH: Marble Hall, that's it, at Marble Hall. Colonel Buitrago was the colonel who came in advance of all the other American military to set up camp, to set up procedures, to set up office and so on, and he worked out of Marble Hall. He needed a secretary and Horace said I could have the job, you know, would I

like to come and work? I needed to work, so before I knew it I was back at Verdun Terrace and off to work. Off to work, working, and that was a quick transition from camp life into civilian life, again back at Verdun Terrace.

RH: How much longer did you stay in Shanghai? Did you marry your fiance?

MH: Oh, yes. Let's see, I stayed with the army and worked for the army all the way through the American military stay, and I got married in that time, and the Americans left and Chiang Ching-kuo was in charge and things, you know, were going from bad to worse. Then I worked for Globe Wireless, an American company that was a competitor to RCA and Mackay Radio in those days, telegraphic wireless, commercial wireless. I worked for them, and the Communists were getting closer and closer, they were taking city after city, and people were leaving Shanghai and there was a panic to leave.

I was married then and we had a visa to go to Australia. My family, my mother, my sister Esther were going to England. My brother had already gone to America, my married sister Jean and her husband had gone to England, but we elected to go to Australia because, after all, England was still under rationing and so. We wanted to start a new life in Australia. But I didn't want to leave until I saw the Communists take over Shanghai.

I wanted to experience the Communist takeover, which I did, and I was there for six months under the Communists and was able to get away to the U.S. on the *General Gordon* along with so many others. Esther, Mother, and

my husband, one dog, and I embarked for San Francisco on the *General Gordon*. Needless to say, I was quite taken up by the takeover of the Communists. In the first months that they were there, I was very impressed with their style of takeover, with their style of administration, with their style of treating the Chinese, the ordinary folk. I knew that they were taking the others off to be beheaded and to be humiliated. I knew that they were setting sons against fathers and family against . . . youngsters against the oldsters, because they wanted to have their style and their Mao's *Red Book* style of living inaugurated. I knew all that, but they brought with them such a change of political life that was such a contrast to what we had suffered under Chiang Ching-kuo, which was despicable, that I found that a very exhilarating time.

RH: Mabel, what made you join with the others to set up the Anaheim . . . ?

MH: Oh, that was just by chance, because I was in the group that met at my brother's house when we were talking of this possibility. Bob de Vries was so taken up with the Weybridge reunion that he had attended . . . which unlike the Lunghwa reunion held in London some time ago was strictly for Lunghwa folk, but Weybridge included all camps. Bob de Vries wanted to set up something like that in this area for all Old China Hands, so he met at my brother's home with some other key persons, and I was present. Then later, when they were trying to organize themselves, they needed a treasurer and Bob de Vries called me and said, in his style, he said to me, did I know of a

treasurer? They needed a treasurer badly and would I recommend a treasurer. And it was kind of a pointed way that he placed his question that I said, "Well, I suppose I could do it. Did you want me to do it?" And he said, "Why, yes." I said, "I suppose it means nothing more than just taking the checks and keeping track of the money and writing checks." He said, "Yes, that's all it will be." So I said, "Yes, I'll do it." And little did I know . . . (chuckling)

RH: But did you enjoy it?

MH: Oh, I guess I enjoyed the overall whole undertaking and the grand results of the whole thing, and I guess I could say I reaped quite a bit of benefit from learning about all the people who registered to come to the Anaheim reunion. And I'm very glad indeed that I had an input then that we could take you up, Rose, on your suggestion that we do an oral history. It struck me at once that if we did nothing else at that reunion but eat and drink and get together and get ourselves hoarse and talk, we should at least have some historical leftovers from that reunion, and this oral history project of yours would be that historical leftover. And at that time, I was so keen to get out the story of the prisoners, the young people who had escaped from Lunghwa. I wanted so much that that should be a record of our life, you know. Somewhere it should be recorded for posterity. Because I thought that Tom Huxley would never speak about it, I wanted that to be recorded, that I pushed for the oral

history project to go through, pushed along with you. I didn't have to push too hard.

RH: And now we've reached you!

MH: And now we've reached the crowd, yes. So that's the whole story.

RH: I'm so glad you did it. I'm so glad you've told us your story in your own words. Thank you very much, Mabel.

END OF INTERVIEW