

INTERVIEWEE: HEINZ J. PULVERMAN

INTERVIEWER: Rose Horowitz

DATE: July 24, 1992

RH: It is Friday, July 24, 1992. This is an oral history on behalf of both Cal State Fullerton on the Old China Hands Project and at the request of Rachel Benjamin of HUC Skirball Museum in Los Angeles. I, Rose Horowitz, am interviewing Heinz J. Pulverman in his home in Santa Monica, California.

Thank you for doing this for us, Heinz. Could you please start by giving us some part of your family background, how and you and your family came to China, and what it was like over there?

HP: Well, let me start at the beginning. You asked about my family's background. In fact, the Pulverman family lived in Berlin since about the seventeenth century, I believe. The name Pulverman I guess would be translated into "powder man," meaning gunpowder merchant. It was actually given to my great-great-great-grandfather by Frederick the Great. But that's where we came from.

My father had a somewhat unusual background, in that he was a German Army officer, unusual for Jews. After the end of the war, he became what you might call a commodity broker.

RH: Was this the First World War?

HP: Yes, after the First World War, became a commodity broker, although that's probably too sophisticated for what he was doing. He would buy straw and hay while it was still growing and then sold it to the German Army, which of course at that time was still operating on horse back.

RH: For the cavalry.

HP: Yes. He was doing that until 1933 or maybe 1935, when the army of course would no longer deal with Jews. Well, it was probably until almost 1937 when they started discriminating. We had intended, of course, to leave Germany and had decided to go to Australia.

RH: I have a question, Heinz. You say 1937, could you give us a little background of how you lived in Germany and what changes you saw? Was it upper middle class? It sounds like it.

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HP: Yes.

RH: In Berlin. Also, what changes became obvious to you and your parents and siblings, if any, after the Nazi came to power, because you were right in Berlin where the action was?

HP: Well, I don't know if I would classify us as upper middle-class, I would say probably middle-class would be a better characterization. We lived in an apartment in Charlottenburg, which is in the western part of Berlin. My father operated this business, which required a great deal of travel, and he operated it pretty much out of the home. Berlin, as you might know, was an international city and so the excesses of the Nazis were not felt as much in Berlin as they might have been anywhere else, and I don't know if our lives changed that much until about 1937 when my father was first beginning to run out of business opportunities. I think he had some other clients, but gradually business went down to such a degree that he began looking into where we could go.

I attended a public school, which was the Grunewald Gymnasium, which is now called the Walther Rathenau School. I have visited it since a couple of times. I belong to the alumni association. But we didn't feel many of the excesses, except that the business opportunities, business slowed down. We used to have, which was not that unusual, we used to have a maid, a live-in maid, which wasn't that expensive in those days. Of course, we were no longer allowed to have what was called an Aryan maid, and so things were going downhill.

My parents had decided to go to Australia and we applied at the Australian consulate for permission to go there. Since those things were apt to take a couple of months to mature, we had booked passage for the four of us, my parents, myself and my sister. And my father, who didn't think that a commodity broker was exactly what they were waiting for in Australia, decided to go on what then was called *hachsharah*, which was a training camp by the Jewish community, I suppose, and he was supposed to learn poultry farming, which seemed like a better occupation. I know it was about the High Holidays, or just before the High Holidays in 1938, when we got a letter stating that we had applied after a deadline which no one knew about previously, and that we were refused permission.

RH: This was to Australia?

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HP: To Australia. So my mother, who was and still is--she's 101 years old now--a shy person, sent me down to the shipping line. I was sixteen years old at the time . . .

RH: Which shipping line? Do you remember?

HP: It was an Italian shipping line.

RH: Lloyd-Triestino?

HP: Yes, to get our money back. No, it wasn't Lloyd-Triestino. It was a travel agency that [dealt with Jews]. I asked for our money back and the man said, "Where else would you like to go?" I said, "Where else can we go?" He said, "Well, you can go to Shanghai, go to China." This was where Lloyd-Triestino comes in, because it went to China and that was . . .

RH: Just like that?

HP: Just like that. That was the extent of our decision making. My father, who then returned, and my mother never said anything about me having done that, because at the time the feeling was, "We've got to get out, no matter where."

RH: And this was before *Kristallnacht*?

HP: Right. Not very much before. I would say this was probably in October of 1938. So we had four tickets to China. We had decided to leave about November 20, to pick up the Lloyd-Trestino ship *Conte Rossi*, I think it was.

RH: *Conte Rosso*.

HP: *Rosso*? Yes, in Venice. Then, of course, *Kristallnacht* happened. The day before that my father had received a postcard summons from the Gestapo to appear.

RH: A summons!. Was it the day before *Kristallnacht* or the day before you were to leave?

HP: The day before *Kristallnacht*. He received a postcard summons from the Gestapo. Somehow or other it had gotten mis-delivered and he received it

about four days later than it should have been delivered. And then *Kristallnacht* happened, and so we at that point decided to accelerate our schedule and leave . . . I guess the eighteenth. We were supposed to leave the twentieth and we left on the eighteenth. But since *Kristallnacht*, my father and I never slept at the apartment at night and never slept at the same place twice. We had various relatives . . . And the reason for that was because we had by that time rented one of our rooms in the apartment to a gentleman who was an American of Polish descent and he was in Germany teaching English. The day before *Kristallnacht*, two uniformed police officers came to our apartment asking for him, and he happened to be out working, and they said they would have to search the apartment--no such niceties as a search warrant at the time--and they came in and of course we shivered in our boots, but they didn't want us, they wanted him. They said, "When he comes back, have him come down to the school down a block. That's the assembly center." And when he came back we told him that and suggested that he disappear. He said, "No, I'm an American and they won't do anything to me," and he went down and he was never heard from. He evidently ended up in a transport where they took Polish Jews and transported them to no man's land.

RH: To the border, right.

HP: And no one ever heard from him again. In any case, we . . .

RH: He was Jewish then?

HP: Yes. We, after spending the next week or so just floating around . . .

RH: In Berlin?

HP: In Berlin. We left on the eighteenth and . . .

RH: By train?

HP: By train to Venice, and the postcard summons had said that "if this does not reach you at the address given, at least give us your forwarding address," and in Shanghai my father sent the card back saying, "I now live in Shanghai, China," which may or may not have been a very smart move at the time, (chuckling) but we felt they probably had enough . . . Well, I guess they weren't interested at the time in following us. In any case, we came to Venice

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with ten mark each, and since we had to stay at a hotel living in Venice with forty marks was not that easy, and we obviously couldn't go to a restaurant.

RH: Did you manage to sell any of your things? Or did you just walk away from everything there?

HP: Well, we managed to have some things packed and shipped to Shanghai.

RH: And they arrived?

HP: Not all of them, but . . .

RH: But you did get some?

HP: Some. Well, mainly clothes and a few items of furniture, but not all of it arrived. One dining room table that my mother liked, that didn't come. Somebody evidently felt that they liked it better than we did, but we did get some.

As an aside, I went back to Berlin the first time in 1973. [I returned to] the apartment we lived in, it was too late [in the day] and I couldn't enter. I rang the doorbell but no one answered

RH: It had not been bombed? It was still there?

HP: Yes. I could literally look in from the street, and the same furniture was still in there.

RH: Your household furniture?

HP: Yes. Well, we had a dining room set which was black oak, heavy furniture, and I could still see that from outside. But be that as it may, we went to Venice. We had to somehow make do for two days, and my mother sold a bracelet and we went to a delicatessen and bought some salami and some Italian bread. But you can't very well walk into a hotel carrying those things and so I remember I had a heavy raincoat and I was carrying the salami and rolls under my raincoat, and that's what we lived on for the next two days. Then we got aboard the *Conte Rosso* and, of course, from that time on everything was paid for for nineteen days.

RH: Did you have to go first-class, or did you travel tourist?

HP: No, we traveled tourist. We had one cabin. Nineteen days later we arrived in Shanghai. It was a difficult journey. We stopped at a lot of places. My father had a cousin in Singapore, and we happened to be there on Christmas Eve in 1938. It may have been that we left a few days later, but it was Christmas Eve, and I was surprised because we were at Raffles Hotel and had dinner there. All of a sudden, they said, "Get up! Get up!" And when we arose, the orchestra played "God Save the King" and that was the end of the party. We got to Hong Kong. Between Singapore and Hong Kong we encountered a very severe typhoon, which left most people seasick. I had been seasick before, so I managed to get some food for the rest of the family. Anyway, we arrived in Shanghai.

RH: What were your first impressions? Or had you already been acclimated, to some extent, by seeing India and Singapore and Hong Kong?

HP: I don't think acclimated is the right word. Well, no, I don't think we knew what to expect. I know that after we went through the Suez Canal and stopped overnight in Massaua, which is an Ethiopian port, and it was very hot as they had no air conditioning on the ship at the time, and I went up on deck because I was hot and couldn't sleep. There was a young Italian man perhaps a couple years older than I was and he asked me something in Italian and I indicated that I didn't know how to speak Italian. He said, "Do you speak English?" And we managed to hold a conversation with my four years of high school English, and I came down to my parent's cabin very excited and said, "I've had my first conversation in English."

RH: So you did not prepare, studying English.

HP: I had four years of English in high school.

RH: In high school, in the gymnasium?

HP: Yes. Well, two years in the gymnasium and then two years in the Jewish high school.

RH: I see.

HP: My parents had taken some English lessons in some Jewish community center, and so we weren't unprepared as far as language is concerned. But of course we expected that everybody there spoke Chinese and had absolutely no inkling

of even one Chinese word. I remember very vividly that when we got into the Customs shed in Shanghai, and of course being sixteen everything seemed like a big adventure and I wanted to see what it was like, and I ran over to the door and my father grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and said, "You don't go no more than a half a meter." That experience is something, when I think back, that that must have been so difficult for my parents, because coming to a new country where they didn't speak the language or they didn't know what to expect must have been the most traumatic experience anybody really can have.

In any case, on board ship as we were going up the river, some H.I.A.S. [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] official had come aboard, the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee [AJJDC] and had interviewed us and handed out room assignments. When we got through Customs, there was a truck and we were somewhat unceremoniously boosted up the tailgate with our luggage. We had a slip of paper in our hands which said, "Kingpin Terrace." We showed that to the driver and we figured anything with king sounded like it had to be pretty good, so we took off to Hongkew and Kingpin Terrace, which turned out to be a Chinese home which had been bombed out [during a Japanese air raid] and had no roof and was totally uninhabitable. So the driver realized what it was and he took us to the . . .

RH: Embankment Building?

HP: Embankment, yes, where there was a camp, a high-rise office building with some floors being given to the refugees with a couple of sheets strung across for some privacy. We were there for, I think, two months.

RH: Did you know anybody in China? The only people you had known in the Orient, as far as I can make out, were these cousins in Singapore.

HP: Correct.

RH: Did you have any notion of anybody who was already there, either who had already gone before you or were already living there?

HP: We had no notion of anyone who had gone before us, or anyone living there, except to this extent: My father had established some kind of a relationship to Albert D. Lasker, who was the chairman of the [U.S.] War Shipping Board in World War I and the founder of Lord & Thomas, and had written him in America quite awhile before that hoping for an affidavit to come to America.

Mr. Lasker replied that he had already granted too many and was unwilling or unable to do what we wanted, but he promised to send us \$1,000 [about \$10,000 in today's purchasing power] to Shanghai if we would let him know when we got there.

My father also had the name of a fellow by the name of Ginsbourger, I forget his first name, because nobody ever called him anything but Mr. Ginsbourger. He lived in Shanghai and he was a man in his seventies at the time.

RH: An American or a Russian?

HP: No, he was a Frenchman, but he was born in Alsace-Lorraine and spoke German and French, because when he went to grammar school it was French, when he went to high school it was German. And amazing in the sense that even at that age he could shift from one language to the other without ever getting hung-up or anything. So my father contacted him, and Mr. Ginsbourger said, "I have a summer house in Tsingtao that I'm going to. Why don't you come with me and see if perhaps there are some better business opportunities," because in Shanghai it looked rather bleak.

RH: And that's what took you to Tsingtao?

HP: That's what took us to Tsingtao.

RH: How soon did you leave?

HP: We were given an apartment on Seward Road in Shanghai on the Hongkew side, which was a Chinese building. I think there were four rooms in it and each family was given one room. The bathroom facilities, I think there was one room which was the toilet that had consisted of a bucket with a toilet seat on top, and every morning the honey-bucket brigade came to empty it. That was the sanitary facilities. In any case, since we arrived in Shanghai pretty late in December and it was cold, As for the heating, it was a charcoal stove. Anyway, my father went to Tsingtao in March of 1939.

RH: He went ahead of the family?

HP: Right. He went ahead of us to scout the situation. Tsingtao was the summer port of the then U.S. Asiatic fleet, which was based in Manila, and because

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in Manila the summers were too hot, the navy transported all its dependents to Tsingtao during the summer.

RH: And the Germans once had a naval base in Tsingtao? Then the Japanese took it over from them after the First World War, and eventually the U.S. fleet moved in.

HP: Yes, right. One of the consequences of that is that my parents found a Chinese houseboy who had been trained under the Germans and spoke German.

RH: Which made your mother feel very comfortable.

HP: It made my mother very comfortable, and she never learned Chinese. She did learn some English, but she was able to communicate with the houseboy. So we went to a building, or a house, with about . . . I'd say it probably had eighteen rooms. We dubbed it Villa Eva, which was my sister's first name, and when the navy arrived I went down to the port with a sign that said Villa Eva . . .

RH: And rented rooms?

HP: Rented rooms, a boarding [house]. So we rented rooms to navy families, and during the summer I slept under the back stairs and the rest of us slept in various nooks and crannies.

RH: Like living out of the suitcase.

HP: Right, and the rest of it was rented. Of course, during the rest of the year I had two rooms to myself, but they were too cold to really enjoy them. (chuckling) Incidentally, I have been back and seen that house in 1991, and I don't think it has been painted since we left. But each room was occupied by a Chinese family, each door had a lock on it, a padlock. The people were very nice and asked me if I would stay for dinner in the room that I had occupied, which I didn't, but in any case it was still there. It had deteriorated quite a bit but it was still there.

RH: It was still standing and still being used.

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HP: Yes. So we got to Tsingtao, and since I couldn't help that much in the boarding house, my mother of course was the manager and my father helped, and my sister was too young. She was about three years younger.

RH: What happened to your schooling, yours and your sister's?

HP: Well, I had graduated from the Jewish high school in Berlin in June of 1938. My sister hadn't, and so the only girls' school there was a convent school run by the Sisters of . . . I don't remember exactly religious community, and she went to school there.

RH: In English?

HP: In English, and she learned English there and she speaks with less than an accent than I do. She eventually also became a sort of a student teacher there and spent most of her time there. Well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

I was apprenticed. There was a German jeweler, Bruno Hauber, who had a fine jewelry store on the main street, which was Shantung Road at the time, it's now called something else, and it is now a . . . The whole building--it was a six-story building--is now a department store with one elevator. But in those days we had the ground floor and I became an apprentice. What I really wanted was to learn how to manufacture jewelry, but it never got to do that because I was the only one in the store who could speak . . . I could speak better English than Bruno Hauber or another German by the name of Fritz Denzler, and so I ended up being the salesman because I could kind of talk to people.

RH: Were most of your customers American Navy?

HP: Most were American Navy people. There were some English people.

RH: Who came for summer vacation?

HP: Came for summer vacation. Of course, by that time the war in Europe had started and they were careful because they were dealing with the enemy.

RH: Dealing with the enemy. Ah, because you were German, I see.

HP: We did quite a bit of business there. It was fine jewels, manufacturing jewels and watches, and they had an agency for Movado Swiss watches. So I was

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working there from about 1938, I would say, to the beginning of 1942, and of course . . .

RH: Yes, after Pearl Harbor.

HP: After Pearl Harbor, the business went down; so I left and I started teaching English. Because for some reason, of course, the Chinese thought that learning English from someone with a white face was better than learning it from someone with an Asiatic face. I taught at home, and then when that didn't seem like the best way to do it I rented a room. I said I was teaching at the YMCA. I really didn't have a contract with the YMCA, but I lived on Kwantung Road, I think it was, and I rented a room there which at one time had the administrator working there. It had a huge desk and bookshelves. I rented that and I was teaching probably from eight o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock at night, with maybe an hour off for lunch. I may have occasionally had an hour or so where I didn't have anybody.

(tape is turned off)

RH: Okay, we're ready to go on again.

HP: I taught English there. I even had a couple of Germans. In fact, there was a couple who wanted to learn German, and I taught both of those languages. And since my father had gotten quite ill by that time, he eventually died in China of cancer . . .

RH: Did you know it was cancer at the time?

HP: Oh, yes; he was told that he had cancer.

RH: What kind of doctors did you have?

HP: Oh, there was a German doctor, Dr. Eittel, who was a staunch member of the Nazi Party, although he always maintained that he was not anti-Semitic, and after the war it came out that he in fact came from a Jewish background. There was a German hospital, the Farber Hospital, *Farber Krankenhaus*, and there's a story connected with that. In any case, I taught until the end of the war.

RH: If you would backtrack and let me ask you two questions. What were your associations? I hear Germans and you were friendly enough with the Chinese and teaching them. Did you make a group of friends? Did you feel part of any sort of community? And then after you tell me that, how did you get on with the Germans?

HP: Okay, there was a strong and well-organized German community. I mean, ethnic Germans and Nazis.

RH: Yes, who had been there for a long time.

HP: They had been there for a long time, some since the time Germany owned Tsingtao as a colony. Our neighbors were a family by the name of Block who were friendly enough over the back fence but would never want to be seen . . .

RH: Saying hello on the street?

HP: Yes. In the jewelry store I had met some of the other people. There was a man who was a head of the Nazi Party by the name of Uhlvein. He, of course, would never talk to me when he came into the store and I was supposed to stay in the background. So we had very few German connections. There were, I would say, probably some seven or eight Jewish refugee families from Germany and Austria. There were a couple of dentists.

RH: How did you contact them? Did they know you were already there?

HP: Well, when we got there, some of them had been there before us and some came later. Word of mouth. It was a small town and I think at the time it had about 250,000 inhabitants. When I got back, it had some 6,000,000 people.

RH: Of those 250,000, how many would you say were called foreigners?

HP: No more than 400 or so, no more than 400 individuals.

RH: More individuals than families. I remember being there as a child on a summer vacation and we rented a house on the beach when I was like five years old, so it's all very vague.

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HP: Yes, I'd say no more than 400 individuals. There was a Russian Jewish community which we joined.

RH: Did they have a real *shul*, or was it just a rented room for like holy days?

HP: No, they rented a house and they did have services on the sabbath and they had High Holidays. They did not have a real rabbi. They had a *mashgiach*, or whatever you want to call it, and his name was Mayer. He was living in the house and the services were in that house. It was a rented house, I am sure.

RH: And he was the jack-of-all-trades, did everything?

HP: Right. I don't know what training he had. People kind of gave him the courtesy of calling him rabbi, but I know he was not a rabbi. But he was the leader of the community. The president was a Russian Jew who worked for American Tobacco Company and I don't remember his name. In any case, there was a Jewish community of sorts that we joined and went to services with them. It was kind of an unusual association because the Russian Jews, who had come there in 1917 and 1918 after the revolution in Russia, had by that time established themselves, and of course we were a danger and perhaps sometimes a drain on resources.

RH: Okay, one more question about this. Did they function in English or in Russian? And how did you communicate, in Yiddish or in English?

HP: Well, Central European Jews or from Germany don't speak Yiddish. But I did learn some Yiddish there by necessity.

RH: There?

HP: Yes. Not very much. My mother would never . . . She would look down on Yiddish. My father also accommodated some, but they by that time had learned some English and so the communication was in Yiddish and English.

RH: But there wasn't a closeness?

HP: There was no closeness. No, there wasn't any. But some of the European Jews did not participate in the Jewish community activities. But we did form some friendships, none of which incidentally were maintained after we left.

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RH: That was the end of it?

HP: That was the end of it. Occasionally there were some people that had managed to come through on the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and as it happened there were two classmates of mine.

RH: From Berlin?

HP: From Berlin, who had come and somehow or other had heard that I was there. Both of them stayed with us, one for maybe six or seven weeks. His name was Kobiter and I have no idea what happened to him. Another one, Trucholski, who is now quite well-to-do and lives in Pittsburgh and has a factory that manufactures potato chips. He came out to California once to see us, but we did not maintain that. There was no longer really a community of interest.

RH: Now, how did Pearl Harbor hit you? How much did you hear and when and how?

HP: Well, Pearl Harbor, of course we did not have a shortwave radio, and newspapers came from Tokyo and from Peking and they were . . .

RH: Of course, if you don't mind my backtracking, I think we should specify that Tsingtao at the time you got there was already occupied by the Japanese.

HP: It was occupied by the Japanese.

RH: Was it the gendarmes or was it the naval landing party? Was it army or navy?

HP: It was army and navy.

RH: Army and navy, both?

HP: Yes. The most vivid memory I had was that a couple weeks before Pearl Harbor I had gotten to the point where I wanted to volunteer, because I was at that time nineteen or twenty--nineteen years old--and I wanted to try and volunteer for the British Army, which of course my parents objected to.

RH: Whom did you contact for that?

HP: I went to the British consulate to see if I could volunteer. I had an interview with a man, and he must have known something was up because when he talked to me he said nothing. I wanted him to take an application and see if something could be arranged, and he absolutely refused to even take my name. The following Monday morning--this was on a Friday or a Saturday--the following Monday morning I got there and there were Japanese soldiers standing in front of the British consulate, and I was turned away.

RH: And that was Pearl Harbor Day, December 8?

HP: Yes, so that's the first time I found out, and I'm certainly grateful to the man, because if my name had been in there it would . . .

RH: You would have been in trouble.

HP: Right. So, anyway, we continued living in the house for awhile.

RH: Nobody bothered you? Nobody came by and took any information on you? No Japanese police or anything?

HP: Well, there was a registration.

RH: No armbands to wear?

HP: Yes, eventually, but I think that was probably sometime late in 1942 that they required all foreigners to wear armbands. Tsingtao was a backwoods, really, and while things in Hongkew probably got quite sticky, nobody bothered us because it wasn't important enough.

RH: There weren't enough, really, and they had it under control.

HP: Right, yes. In 1942 they required all foreigners to wear armbands designating their nationality.

RH: What about color?

HP: All the Germans were to wear a red armband with a white circle and a swastika, and since we at that time still had a German passport, they issued us a . . .

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RH: Even with a J on it?

HP: Yes, but they didn't know what the J meant.

RH: And they gave you a swastika to wear on your . . .

HP: And they gave us a swastika armband.

RH: Do you still have that?

HP: No, which we refused to wear it. And very soon after that the Germans passed a law that took German citizenship away from us. So the compromise was that we'd wear a red armband with a white circle and a J instead of the swastika. We only wore that for, oh, maybe a couple of weeks. Then, when we were no longer German citizens, they decided to give us a white armband, which signified neutrals and enemy aliens. Enemy aliens, like American and British civilians.

RH: They had white.

HP: They had white armbands.

RH: This is the exact opposite of what happened in Shanghai where enemy wore red and others wore other colors.

HP: Oh. No, they had white. So they gave us a white one which had Japanese letters called yu-dai-ya.

RH: For Jewish.

HP: Jewish.

RH: This was the first time they used that, you know? Do you still have that one?

HP: No, and the reason I don't have that one is that when I applied for compensation in Germany, that was proof.

RH: Oh, you sent it along?

HP: And I sent it along, so I don't have it.

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RH: Thank you. Just a minute, please.

RH: Heinz tell us what to you during the war in Tsingtao.

HP: The story of the armbands, the first time we hit the street with the armband yu-dai-ya, we got stopped a couple of times by Chinese or Japanese who wanted to know where that country was. Of course, there not being an Israel at the time, that was a somewhat difficult explanation, but eventually they stopped bothering us. We wore those armbands all during the war.

RH: During the war? To the very end?

HP: Yes. At that point then I was still teaching at the Chinese Y.M.C.A., but my parents had to give up the house, as it didn't make sense to keep a house that was too large.

RH: They chose to? They were not thrown out?

HP: No.

RH: Did they put any stickers on your front door or on your furniture?

HP: No. We moved to an area called Iltis Hook.

RH: Oh yes. One of the few things I remember.

HP: We rented a house there, terribly small, but I remember it was in the middle of the woods, really. But it was about seven or eight miles from downtown, from the city, and the transportation at the time was buses. Since they had no gasoline, they had to get charcoal stoves on the back and they had to be cranked every now and then and it was rather unreliable transportation. They didn't start early enough in the morning or run late enough at night.

RH: But you had more than we had. They took all our buses away.

HP: Oh, and so, since I was teaching downtown, I ended up on a bicycle, which was a reliable mode of transportation, but at night it was not the best thing. There were no streetlights, there were blackouts, and there was a Jewish dentist, Dr. Eisenberg, who had an office, oh, maybe ten blocks from there which had waiting room. He lived outside town, too, but his office had been

broken into several times when he was away at night. A Chinese family had owned the house and he just had the front room where he practiced. So we came to a solution: Instead of going out to Iltis Hook every night I stayed in Dr. Eisenberg's waiting room and slept there at night, and I went home for the weekend. The Chinese family used the bathtub to keep their fish, and the toilet was not the cleanest, but in any case I was young at the time and survived. I remember one hot summer night, it was sticky and I felt like . . . really that I wanted a bath, and it was dark and it poured like the dickens and I just went outside and stripped and then the rain washed me off and I felt very good.

RH: Quite a shower.

HP: Yes. Then the end of the war, nothing happened. We heard about the atom bomb . . .

RH: You heard about it? Did you by now have a radio, or was it word of mouth?

HP: It was word of mouth. We didn't have a radio. It was too dangerous because people . . . when they found a radio, they'd get killed. So we had heard rumors of the atom bomb, we had heard rumors of the . . . and of course we saw the Japanese freighters and heard the local news that we did get two or three days later, four days later sometimes, which spoke about the Japanese victories. But when we looked at the map, they were advancing backwards.

RH: Right, I remember that. I want to stop for a minute and ask one more thing, but this happened recently. I recently interviewed someone who was interned somewhere up in Shantung peninsula, that they came . . . British, American civilians through Tsingtao for that. Did you have any knowledge of that?

HP: Yes.

RH: Can you give me any information?

HP: There was a civilian prisoner camp in Weihsien, which was about a day's journey on the Shantung Railway. We were aware of that because some of the people that we had known in Tsingtao had been transported there.

RH: But you didn't see any others coming down to the port and in by ship?

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HP: No. I had some personal experience because my sister . . .

RH: You knew where Weihsien was?

HP: Yes. When my sister was at the convent, she brought home a girlfriend of hers whose parents lived in Shanghai, so she had no family there, and she brought her home sometimes on weekends, an Italian girl. Her name was Candida Toscani and her father was the Commissioner of Chinese Customs, which had been merged with the Italian government.

RH: Right after Boxer Uprising.

HP: Yes, and of course when Mussolini turned out of office, they became enemy aliens and Candida one day was transported up to Weihsien. She was about my age and I fell deeply in love with her, and then she was taken away. I did meet her once again when she was repatriated home.

RH: After the war?

HP: No, it was still during the war. They did repatriate her.

RH: They did an exchange from Weihsien?

HP: Yes.

RH: Do you have any idea when that was? Did they send the ones to Shanghai or to Japan?

HP: No, they went through Tsingtao, and I think it was the *Kungsholm*, which was a Swedish ship . . .

RH: Right. I know the *Gripsholm* came. So the *Kungsholm* came, too?

HP: The *Gripsholm*? I think it was *Kungsholm*. And Candida came to the railroad station and we had maybe a half an hour together and promised that we would be eternally [faithful] to each other, which of course we were . . .

RH: Not?

HP: You know, we were not, and we lost contact. This is another aside, really. In about 1988 I saw an article in the *Los Angeles Times* mentioning a United Nations camp in Ethiopia, which was headed by a Candida Toscani, an official of the United Nations. Well, there weren't that many people with that name, and so I wrote her and asked her through the United Nations . . .

RH: Was this the same girl? And it was?

HP: Was this the one? And it was, and we reestablished contact. She came to America to visit. She visited my sister and I and we . . . She had been in America, but only on the East Coast. I told her that I could show her California. Anyway, she came here and we took a trip together through California. I showed her Death Valley. She wanted to go to Yosemite but it was too cold at the time, and we went up to visit my sister in Sacramento and my mother in Oakland. My mother is not lucid. She doesn't recognize anybody.

RH: Does she still live in her own home?

HP: No, she lives in a convalescent . . .

RH: A Jewish home?

HP: No, in a German home, for many years. She doesn't recognize me, and she doesn't recognize my sister most of the time, but she recognized Candida for some odd reason.

RH: Oh, this happens.

HP: Because she lives way in the past.

RH: This happens. She's back in the past and that's a face and a name . . .

HP: She didn't remember her name but she showed very clearly that she knew her. Anyway, last year I went to Europe and visited Candida. I stayed with Candida and we went to Italy and France and she showed me . . . It was a very interesting trip with a native tour guide. She has since retired from the United Nations and lives in Switzerland. But we determined that romance was not any longer in the cards and we've been good friends and I hear from her quite regularly. We talk on the telephone. Oh, where were we?

RH: I was asking you about the camp. Now, if you would like to spring forward again to the atomic bomb and how you heard about the end of the war.

HP: Yes. We had heard rumors of a bomb that had been dropped on Tokyo, but nobody knew anything about atomic or nuclear.

RH: You heard Tokyo, not Nagasaki or Hiroshima?

HP: No. At that point, the Japanese apparently wanted to stifle rumors of any impending collapse, and how does an oppressive force do that? They tried to create another type of [diversion] and they rounded up all the Jewish men in Tsingtao . . .

RH: Including yourself and your father?

HP: Including myself. My father was so ill at the time that they left him alone. It was pretty much near the end. So I found myself in the Chinese prison, which was a couple blocks off Shantung Road, and which was Japanese-run. In Chinese prisons, of course, [there are] no individual cells. They had two rooms which contained about twenty feet of straw on the floor and it was so crowded that everybody had to turn at the same time because otherwise there wasn't enough room. There was a toilet in the corner. I remember Mr. Mayer the *mashgiach*, who had ulcers and was moaning all the time. It wasn't exactly the most peaceful experience. But about two or three days later we noticed that the guards had changed from Japanese to Chinese.

RH: Had you any way of telling whether they were the nationalists or the Ta Tao?

HP: Oh no, these were the puppet regime.

RH: The Ta Taos, right.

HP: So they were now Chinese guards. Most of us could speak Chinese and not Japanese, and we started bantering with them and persuaded them to leave the cell doors open--not the corridor but the cell--so at least we had somewhat more room. This was merciful, since in Chinese prisons, of course, they don't feed you. Food has to be brought in from the outside. My mother had one of those carriers and the rolls always had a note in them and sandwiches and so we were fairly well informed of what happened, as much as they knew, because at that time they didn't know the war was over. But Chinese guards

took over. A couple of nights they left our cell doors open, and that was probably about the sixth or seventh day, and we said, "What would happen if we walked out of here? Since the cell doors are open, why isn't the gate open?" And they said, "Well, try it," which we did.

RH: Who was the first, do you remember?

HP: I don't remember.

RH: Were you among the early ones?

HP: I was among the early ones, but we all walked out in a body.

RH: As a group?

HP: I don't think it took more than a few minutes and it became a victory parade. We walked down Shantung Road and people were cheering us in Chinese.

RH: Yes, as though you were the Americans coming to rescue them.

HP: So we were out, and then a couple days later, all of a sudden there were three American soldiers in uniform. And what had happened was that they had been air-dropped in Weihsien and were rather bored with the whole thing and decided . . .

RH: They came to the big city for some action.

HP: They came to the big city for some action and they walked down Shantung Road in Tsingtao. There was a sergeant and two PFC's and the Japanese insisted on surrendering to them, which the Marine Corps general didn't like because he wanted the surrender. The Marines landed maybe a week after that, the Sixth Marine Division, which was, oh, 20,000 to 22,000.

RH: Did you meet any of those Marines?

HP: Yes, and I noticed, for example, that when they landed, while they did pull into the harbor, much of it by LST's driving in sand. I saw a huge truck one day and I asked what it was and I was told [it was] a shoe factory. It was a shoe repair facility. I mean, the Japanese Army wore sandals and here there was an army that had . . . The contrast was so marked.

In any case, I had been teaching the day that they came, and my last class was over at ten o'clock, I think. I had to go to Dr. Eisenberg's waiting room to sleep that night, and people . . .

RH: This was after you had been let out, of course, from prison?

HP: Yes. I resumed my teaching.

RH: And living at the same place.

HP: Right. And of course the streets had been empty, and here were hundreds, thousands of Chinese milling around, and I kind of pushed my way through them. The lights were on by that time and the Marines had taken over the Japanese high school, which had been the German high school before that time. And as I was fighting my way--not fighting, it was very friendly--

RH: Shoving.

HP: Shoving. I came to a guard, a Marine guard, and he looked at me--and I'm the only white face in the crowd--and he said, "Where is the university?" which was the most incongruous question I could think of at the time, and I said, "Why do you want to know?" He said, "Well, there are so many Chinese people and I must have a course in Chinese. I want to be able to talk to them." So we got to talking, and his name was Joe Cohen and he was from Brooklyn. I invited him to our house the next day and he met me with a jeep and we drove out to my family and then we had him over for dinner, what little we had. He came back and brought these five-pound cans of chili and chocolate and sweaters and God knows what else. He was the chaplain's assistant. The Sixth Marine Division had an assistant division chaplain, a Rabbi Berman from Chicago. So I met Rabbi Berman the next day and he knew all about me. Because apparently intelligence was such that they knew all about the Jewish community and the names and the addresses and had been wanting to get in touch with us. The fact that I was there and could speak English . . .

RH: It was a great help.

HP: It was a big help.

RH: So you became sort of a liaison in the community?

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HP: Yes, and I soon after that gave up my teaching job and started working for the United Nations Relief Administration.

RH: UNRRA [United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Association]?

HP: UNRRA. But I still maintained my relationship with Rabbi Berman. Sometime after that, Berman was relieved; his tour of duty was up. He was a lieutenant commander and the division then was downgraded to a brigade, which only had one brigade chaplain, and that would be Chaplain Mayberry. I remember he was a Protestant chaplain, but the High Holidays were nearing and we heard that an army chaplain from Shanghai was coming to arrange things and I was asked if I would meet him. I remember going when he came. I can't remember his name.

RH: Al[vin] Fine?

HP: No, I don't think that was it. Anyway, we took a tender out to their flagship and met the navy chap in charge of the area to arrange for this. I think his name was McShaughnessy. He was a Catholic chaplain and he was nice. He was always talking about religion and the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement and what he would do to publicize the fact for Jewish servicemen stationed there.

(tape is turned off)

I remember when we left him we had been talking about the New Year and the Day of Atonement, and when he shook hands with us to say goodbye, he said, "I hope you'll have a nice Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur." So the army chaplain held services one day on Yom Kippur, but the rest of them were held by the Jewish community for them.

RH: For the Americans?

HP: Yes. I also remember that I met a Lieutenant DiGrassi. He was the head of the intelligence, a G-2, and he was in charge of rounding up the Germans and Japanese civilians in order to repatriate them. I was introduced to him by Rabbi Berman and he was glad he found me. He spoke German, but all of it learned in school. He was pretty good at it. He had a list of the Germans but he didn't know where to find them, so we became rather friendly, and I

remember that he rounded up the Germans to show them the movies from the concentration camps.

RH: He already had those?

HP: He had those and he wanted to show them, but he didn't say that that's what he wanted them for. He sent a notice to all the Germans that they were to at a chapel at a certain day at six o'clock at night, and they thought it was going to be sort of a friendly session and it wasn't. Some of them decided not to come and he kept all of them there and sent out groups to round up the ones that hadn't come. Then the Germans saw me, and at the time I was wearing . . .

RH: Fatigues?

HP: Fatigues, and they were beginning to think that it wasn't a command performance, and in fact it wasn't. He had written a speech, and I corrected it and really rewrote it for him, and he gave that in German. And when they heard him talk in German they thought it was going to be a friendly meeting. But as they continued hearing this speech, they realized that it wasn't. I was sitting on the dais with him and a couple of other officers. They saw the films from the concentration camps and many of them were very ashen-faced by the time they got through. Then not too long afterwards they were repatriated on a ship and they made sure that Uhlvein, who was the Nazi, that . . . His children developed measles and he said he couldn't go because the children had measles and might infect everybody else. They said, "You go, and we don't care if everybody gets sick." And that was the end of the German community in Tsingtao.

Now, there was one exception. The German consul, a man by the name of von Zaucken, had been an anti-Nazi, although he obviously didn't show it. But I had met him at the jewelry store and he had more or less shown me that he was friendly and I was able to mention my father. He asked my father to come and see him at night at his home rather than at his office. My father and he discovered that they had been officers together in the same stretch at the Russian front in World War I, and of course they became big buddies at the time. My father sort of became the liaison between him and the Jewish community and he helped many people with funds that were from the consulate. By that time, I guess he felt that there wouldn't be any accounting, but he did provide funds for people that needed money.

He was not repatriated and he came to America. He left after I did, but I kept in contact. He was a man who had a law degree and a degree in history, a doctor's degree, and he went to Louisville, [Kentucky]. Of course, at that point the Germans, Hitler government, they did have some money in Tsingtao. I remember when we were in the jewelry store we were making customized gold cigarette cases for them and paid cash them so that they didn't look like tourists. In any case, I don't think that that lasted long. I visited him in 1949. I was married in 1949. On our honeymoon we went to the Smoky Mountains and visited him in Louisville and he was a teacher there at the time. But we did keep in touch. He eventually got his job back as a consulate official when the Germans established a consulate in New York.

RH: The West Germans?

HP: Yes, but he was never the head of the office, and I don't think he had too easy a time of it because it was known that he didn't go back to Germany. He has since died and I regularly get a Christmas card from his wife. His daughter had been here. She married a Jewish fellow and she went back to Tsingtao as a reporter. Anyway, I have kept some contact with them.

RH: Could you tell us how your family left and what arrangements were made, where you went?

HP: Yes. Well, when the Marines landed and I asked for reading material in English, I was given magazines and *Readers' Digests*. Every time I saw the name of an organization that I thought might be someone that could help, I wrote a letter. I must have written . . . oh, I'd say forty or fifty letters and the Marines mailed them for me so that . . . I got an answer from the International Students Association, that they would provide a scholarship for me at an American university. They also arranged for a scholarship for room and board with a Jewish fraternity and to let them know when I came there. So, on the strength of that, there was no . . .

RH: Which city would this be? Did they specify which city, which college?

HP: Well, yes, I knew at the time that it was at the University of Missouri, which I had to look up where Missouri was because I didn't know geography in America that well. Anyway, on the strength of that, I was able to get a student . . . There was no real consulate facility and I . . . There was

someone from Shanghai who had come down for . . . He came up to Tsingtao for a couple of days and he granted me a student visa.

RH: What kind of passport did you use?

HP: I got some kind of a . . .

RH: Travel document?

HP: A travel document from . . .

RH: From the Americans?

HP: No, I think it was from the United Nations. And on the strength of that, I got a student visa and I went to San Francisco where I had a cousin, and then went to Pittsburgh where I had an uncle. My mother and sister, we had quite some discussions, but they felt it was realistic for me to leave on a student visa and they wished me well.

RH: Had your father passed away before?

HP: My father had passed away. He was buried in Tsingtao in the Jewish cemetery, but it's no longer there. I tried on my recent visit to find it. But they came about three months later on a visitor's visa the same route.

RH: What kind of papers, again?

HP: The same.

RH: The same?

HP: United Nations, yes.

RH: Temporary U.N.?

HP: Yes. Then I went to Pittsburgh, and then from Pittsburgh I went to Missouri and arrived there and was given room and board at the Phi Sigma Delta fraternity house and the International Students Association provided the tuition. I lived at the fraternity house until . . . I arrived in about October

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of 1946, and in June of 1947 when the semester was over, they told me that I could come back.

RH: For another year?

HP: For another year.

RH: So what were you studying?

HP: Let me [finish] . . .

RH: Sure.

HP: Coming back in the end of 1947, they went through the formalities of pledging me in and initiating me in the fraternity. And I was elected president when I came back of the chapter, which I thought was a measure of success that I was elected. Of course, Phi Sigma Delta doesn't exist anymore; it's ZBT, like all the other Jewish fraternities. But I studied and I was interested in going into the rabbinate at the time, the reformed rabbinate, and on my . . .

RH: In Missouri?

HP: Well, Missouri, of course, it would have been free for me to study, and I took English and I took American history. I took some Spanish and I took Bible study. There was a Bible school which was founded by Protestant staff, but there was a Jewish professor, a Dr. Keifetz, and I took Hebrew with him and Bible studies with him. He arranged for me to go to Cincinnati to the Hebrew Union College. Then I came back in 1947 and I took a couple of journalism courses and I really hadn't . . . You know, I was still looking for the rabbinate, but in my own mind I kind of felt that really it might be difficult because I had several more years as an undergraduate and then three years of study at the HUC.

In any case, in 1948 I . . . Well, in 1947 I went to the Dominican Republic during the summer, because I wanted an immigration visa, and you can't apply . . .

RH: So you had to leave the country and return.

HP: I had to leave the country. I had reestablished contact with a high school friend by the name of Fritz Phillipsborn who now lives in Burbank. He got

me a visa to go to the Dominican Republic. The same thing for my mother, and my mother and sister came to this country from the Dominican Republic and I joined them there at the end of a semester. There was a Jewish community of some size . . .

RH: In Santo Domingo?

HP: Yes, but then it was Ciudad Trujillo at the time. When they first got there I wanted to stay only for the summer and wanted to go back, and everybody told me that was impossible, that nobody could do things like that. There were some people that had been doing it, but they'd be there for six or eight months. In any case, I called up the American consulate and made an appointment, got there, and it so happened that the consulate officer looked at my application and said, "Oh, I'm an undergraduate of the University of Missouri." He hadn't been there for three years, so we spent pretty much the entire time reminiscing about the campus, teachers, and people that we knew. Finally, he said, "Well, I guess you would like to get back for the fall semester." I said, "I sure would." So he said, "Well, if you have \$10 I'll cable for a visa number," which he did, and I had my visa about three weeks later. I wanted to stay the whole summer, but it turned out there was some kind of a minor revolution and there were some shots being fired and we decided we didn't want to get mixed up in . . .

RH: What about your mother and sister? They also got theirs?

HP: They also got theirs, and so we all went . . . They didn't get it that fast--they had applied much earlier--but we got it together at the same time and we left. As it turned out, the revolution came to nothing, but we went back to Pittsburgh and my mother's brother. Then I went back to Missouri, and that's when my mother and sister decided to go to San Francisco and start a new life there.

RH: And they've been in northern California since?

HP: They have been in northern California ever since. My sister married a widower and they eventually moved to Truckee and then to Sacramento. They live in Sacramento now and Mother lives in Oakland, has always lived in Oakland and had her own apartment until she got to the point where she just couldn't maintain it and went to the Eisen Home in Oakland, and she's still there.

RH: Now, I'm going to pick up one more thing. What courses did you take and what was your profession eventually. Would you care to tell us?

HP: Yes, I didn't graduate in Missouri because Mother was always harping on me to . . . She said, "Your sister has to get married first."

RH: And it was your responsibility?

HP: Yes, and college was a luxury, so there was no . . . There was a Hillel Foundation in Missouri but no rabbi yet to lead it, and I was tagged to sort of be an assistant Hillel director without there being a real one. Eventually somebody came, a Rabbi Sands, but I was his assistant and I was making 75 cents an hour at the time, which was the minimum wage. Through that, someone found out what I was doing. I was assisting at sort of the first holy services and I got an inquiry from Chicago from KAM Temple, *Kahilla Anshe Maariv*. They wanted to interview me and paid for my way to Chicago and then offered me a job as executive director, which was the secretary more or less. But with my background at Hillel behind me, and I left before I graduated and stayed in Chicago for three years and met my wife there.

An executive director at a temple is a twenty-four-hour job, seven days a week, which is not what a young married man really wants. So one of the members of the congregation suggested that I go into the insurance business, thinking that I knew a lot of people, and I did that. It wasn't really easy for me at that time, so I decided to go to California. I went out without my wife.

We had been here for a visit and she didn't want to live in San Francisco and so we decided to go to Los Angeles. I knew a couple of old friends from Tsingtao that had moved to Santa Monica. So, when I established contact, they then got me a room here and I came to Santa Monica looking for a job. Eventually, I didn't want to go back into the insurance business, but there was nothing else. I did have some background in it and so I went into the insurance business there and . . .

RH: On your own, or as part of a group?

HP: No, as an agent for Prudential. Eventually, after fifteen years or so I left Prudential on my own choice and worked for some other companies, but I was essentially an insurance broker for about thirty years and then retired at an early age, fifty-five, fifty-six, and went back to my first love which was in journalism. I became an editor for an insurance magazine here in Los Angeles for three years. After that I went to San Francisco to talk to a

magazine there, and they made me their southern California representative and assistant editor. I'm still holding that job, but it was never a full-time job, and I was free-lancing for awhile as a journalist and was able to make enough money to live. Then in 1983, I got a job as an editor in a publishing company that specialized in insurance located in Santa Monica, the Merritt Company, and I worked there for five years and then retired a second time, but I'm still maintaining my relationship with the magazine and still am on a retainer.

I no longer work for anybody else, but that provides enough of a retirement income for me to live and have time to get married again. My wife died in 1988 and I finally got married again to a woman I had known before. I got this condominium in May of last year and sold my house. She was an ex-neighbor three doors away, so now I'm moving back.

RH: Way back where you were?

HP: To the same place where I was. (chuckling)

RH: And how many children do you have?

HP: I have three children, two sons and . . .

RH: They're all here?

HP: They're all here. Well, they're both attorneys, one in Santa Monica, the other one in Santa Barbara, and a daughter who is a teacher and married to a fellow who is an accountant, and they live in Simi Valley now.

RH: So they're all close to you?

HP: Yes, with grandchildren.

RH: So you're prepared for the grandchildren to visit?

HP: Yes. My daughter has two, my son in Santa Barbara has . . . My daughter has a boy and a girl. My son in Santa Barbara has three girls and the one here in Santa Monica has one who is now just a little over one year old.

RH: And you get a lot of enjoyment out of them?

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HP: Yes.

RH: That's wonderful. So life, thank God, has been good to you.

HP: My fiancée is marrying me for my grandchildren.

RH: (laughter) I can empathize with that.

HP: But I'm moving to her house because she likes gardening and, of course, there's no grass here.

RH: Yes, she needs more space, right.

HP: So I'm maintaining this more or less as an office right now. We'll move into her house eventually full-time and probably rent this out. But that's the story.

RH: Well, I want to thank you. It's a beautiful story, and the really nice part is that there is a warm, happy ending for now, that you're doing well, and you have a future and you have your grandchildren and your health, which is amazing. It's just really amazing, all that many generations here.

HP: The relationship with Candida who came, my sister was always friendly with her. We really met her then after my wife died, and my sister who is a real romantic thought that she would be the one. But it turned out . . .

RH: It turned out differently.

HP: Yes, she has become a good friend, but she doesn't like living in America. As much as I like traveling to Europe, and I've been there three or four times, I don't want to live there.

RH: I can't blame you.

HP: In 1989 I took a trip. I rented a car in Frankfurt and drove down all the way to Munich and then to East Germany and spent some time in Berlin, which was a high point of my trip.

RH: Had the wall come down yet?

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HP: No, it was just a couple of months before that. I had some unpleasant experiences in East Germany, not anti-Jewish, more anti-foreigner. I can't complain. I think life has given me as much as anybody could kind of get out of it.

RH: I think that's a wonderful point to stop on.

HP: It has been my pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW