

Interviewee:	<u>SONNENBERG</u> , Charlotte	Date:	November 28, 1994
Interviewer:	Liesl J. Loeb		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

## SUMMARY

Charlotte Sonnenberg, nee Lichtendorf, was born in Bad Neuenahr, Germany January 22, 1910 into a middle class family. The Nazi boycott in 1932 and the Nurenberg Laws affected her life and her family adversely. Charlotte met and married her husband Doctor Herbert Alexander in Leipzig. On November 10, 1938 (*Kristallnacht*) Charlotte and her husband were driven out of their apartment and her husband was sent to Buchenwald. He was released because Charlotte obtained tickets to go to Shanghai. They sailed to Shanghai on the SS *Conte Biancamano* in March 1939.

On arrival in Shanghai they were taken to a camp in Hongkew. They found work at the American Presbyterian Mission in Tenghsien in a hospital run by the mission. Charlotte describes in great detail their pleasant life in the mission, their relationship with other Jews and the patients. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese took over the hospital. All the missionaries were either deported or sent to concentration camps. Her husband was put in charge of the hospital. Civilians were trapped once the war ended, the Japanese left, and fighting erupted between the Chinese National Army and the Communists.

Charlotte relates many riveting details about their escape to Hsuehowfu and the death of her husband. She continued alone to Tsingtao and worked as a teacher at an American Catholic Middle School. She left China in 1947 – on a troop transport – to Philadelphia. Later she met and married her husband Henry Sonnenberg there. She talks about her impression of and life in the United States as well as her love of China.

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#### SUBJECT HEADINGS

Holocaust Jewish (1939-1945) Germany  
World War (1939 – 1945) – Personal narratives, Jewish, female  
*Kristallnacht* / *Krystall Nacht*  
Jewish refugees – China  
American Presbyterian Mission – Tenghsien, China  
Military occupation – China  
Escape from Tsingtao, China