

Joan Emory

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Question: Your name is Joan Emory?

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: And you were born?

Answer: In China.

Question: You were actually born in China?

Answer: Don't ask me how old I am.

Question: I won't go there.

Answer: Good.

Question: So your formative years were in China then growing up as a little girl?

Answer: Right. My father was British and my mother white Russian.

Question: And what did your dad do?

Answer: He worked for the Shanghai Power and Light Company which was the utility company owned by an American firm that gave power and light to Shanghai.

Question: What did your dad do with them?

Answer: He was an accountant. He did figures and I don't know if you want me to go anywhere with it?

Question: I'd like to know about the people and who they were, your dad, yeah.

Answer: Well, perhaps I should begin with the war in 1937 when the Japanese started bombing and so forth.

Question: OK.

Answer: I was a small girl and you don't remember dates and names, what you remember are events and I remember my mother was very frightened of the bombs falling and took us to hide underneath the stairs. It seemed to me a game at first being very small but I remember we kept a canary out on the porch and it died from the concussions. Anyway the men stayed behind in Shanghai but my father bought passage for my mother and I to Hong Kong, women and children were evacuated then. He could only get us third class there was such a crush of people going and I remember going third class to Hong Kong. I still have nightmares of horrible bathrooms and food coming down the table and soup spilling in my lap so it must have been pretty bad but when we got to Hong Kong there was no place for us to stay and my parents were young they didn't have much money but people donated houses and we stayed at a house on the Peak. Somebody's house, some rich man's house, it was very beautiful, but I remember at that time there was a great hurricane, it was very eventful, but my memories are waking up in the morning one morning and seeing my shoes floating on the floor there was so much water in the room. But anyway we went back to Shanghai. The trouble subsided. I gather the British gave the Japanese more concessions in the handling of the international concession which was, the international settlement, rather, which was owned

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by, well there was the English part, and the French part, and so things went on for awhile but there were small tightening.

The war was going on in Europe, it was beginning, and things were becoming harder to get. Shoe leather was harder. I remember mother and my father had a pair of my shoes soled in automobile tire, and I remember thinking how terribly ugly they looked when I went to school but now my grand daughter wears shoes like it and thinks they are the height of style. And other things were that gas became very hard to come by and there were all kinds of adaptations on the automobile. They were running them on alcohol and stuff like that and suddenly everything was belching black smoke. But then my father didn't have a car to drive to work anymore or they didn't send the chauffeur and the car, and he took to riding his bicycle to work. And he dropped me off at school and I remember going through the crowded Chinese streets sitting on the back of his bicycle and feeling very insecure because I didn't have very much confidence in my father's bicycle riding. And about that time every one was sporting string bags to carry their groceries in, because food also became very scarce and everybody would stop and buy groceries and stuff like that though we had servants. All foreigners then had servants, I guess more if you were wealthier and so forth but you didn't run your household without servants in China. They were cheap enough to have and I remembered thinking to myself I can now run my house which my mother needed three servants to run. Same thing, and I think I do it more efficiently. But anyway about that time they started rationing and my father was in charge of the ration tickets for the Chinese workers who worked for the Shanghai Power and Light and this.. where the Japanese had already begun to take control. This is after Pearl Harbor and somebody broke into the office and stole a lot of the coupon books and so forth.

And my father was blamed for it and the Japanese wrote a little thing against his name and the eventual way we were punished was that our family went to concentration camps. We weren't allowed to get Red Cross parcels for awhile. That was his punishment because and of course the theft of the ration tickets the Chinese didn't need them to live on and so forth. When the Japanese had their war in 1937 and attacked Shanghai on the outskirts they didn't come into the international settlement but they raped China. They treated them terribly and I remember that people started coming in you saw more and more beggars. I never saw people as hard up as the Chinese were, as beaten and broken down by fate. I've seen a woman begging on the street come up to the rickshaw her breast was bare and she was holding the baby to it but the baby was blue. The baby was dead.

I've seen children in the street with their stomachs bulging out with beriberi because when I was first driven to school, it was down on Market Street, you could see all these things and you'd see children lying in the street dead. There was no way to feed all those people, ever. And I remember one time when I was driven to school by a chauffeur and I looked out on this Market Street where you see everything. Food being sold, hogs being taken to market and ducks hanging, Peking ducks hanging around. And people having their ears cleaned and teeth done all that on the street, but I remember having the thought as a child, that there was no way anyone could get enough food to feed all these people and to see that everyone was alright. I thought not even God could do that. And it wasn't until many many years later we were living in San Diego and I went very late one night to one of those vast grocery stores wandering down the isles and I was quite alarmed I found that suddenly I'd found the food that I now I knew where it was. Well anyway I was saying, yes the Chinese had all been driven into the international settlement and China because of the deprivations of Japanese. The terrible things, the countryside razed and all that. They were defenseless. There was no way to help them. They were so poor, they had nothing.

I remember seeing a fireplug dripping a line at a time and I've seen six people squatting on their haunches waiting with little buckets to fill them just to get water. They didn't have anything you know. They slept on the street.

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Well anyway, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the way we found out in China, in Shanghai, was they bombed the two ships that were in the harbor. One was an American ship and the other was a British. The American ship I think was a normal

Question: Transport ship?

Answer: Yeah. There were American sailors, I think it was called the Wake or something, I'm not sure. I know the sailors were interred and eventually some of them ended up in the war camp but not off they were put there later on and they came to (inaudible) camp.

Well the period after that became very troubled because the Japanese now had us in their clutches but they didn't immediately put us in concentration camp but they made it very difficult. That was when rationing came out and my father.. they would suddenly blockade the roads and you might be going somewhere in your car or rickshaw and you would have to sit in your car or rickshaw 2-3 hours at a time and then they'd open up and let you through. There was no reason for it. It was just to show authority.

And then we got this announcement we would be sent to camp. Meanwhile we had been told to wear armbands and we wore armbands with a number on it. And the British always liked to organize things so there was an organization called the BRA, the British Residence Association, and they worked with the Japanese in arranging things and doing and they were the ones who told us we'd be going to concentration camps and so forth. I believe there were eight camps in all. Smaller ones within the city, but Lunghua Was the largest. It said there were around 6,000 British in Shanghai.

The Lunghua had 3,000 people in it and there were very few Americans, a few missionaries, mostly British, but also free French and Belgian and there were some Jewish people but only if you had British passport so there were a few Jewish people but otherwise the Jewish people were not interred only if they had citizenship, British citizenship. We were told that we'd have to get ready for concentration camp and they sent us a notice and I have the notice if you want to see it, but it said to take our bedding and two suitcases each and dental stuff and like that. Immediately in Shanghai businesses sprang up and my mother just called a packing company and they came and packed our beds and between the mattress and the springs they put food and stuff like that. And then they wrapped it all in these, the Chinese are very efficient at wrapping things, and they were shipped ahead taken up and then we were told to report to the country club the next morning and there everybody met.

But I must say that before that had happened three Japanese came to our house. They had already impounded our car, the family car, and they took that away and put it through a metal press. I hear everyone who had a car they mashed it in a press so your car became three inches high. They were very short of metal and they intended to ship this metal back to Japan to make airplanes but as it happened they didn't, so after the war you could reclaim your three inch car if you so desired but that is what they did with those. But in the meantime they came to our house with the three Japanese all in uniform with their long swords going down and they itemized everything in our house of value, wrote it down on a piece of paper, and on everything they put a little sticker. I still have two little blue and white pots with the numbers on the bottom they stuck there. It must have been very good glue because they never dropped off. Then you had to sign that you were now responsible for this property because it all belonged to the Japanese government and if you sold it or got rid of it they could you know cut off your head or what ever. By then, they were very frightening and so in a way we were almost glad to go off to camp because everything had become so frightening, the car, the food was short, anyway we went to the former country club, sat there, and then buses arrived and we got on them and drove off to Lunghua Camp.

I remember sitting in the back of the bus with a bowl holding my small turtle in it and I was thinking how stupid children are because what on earth would you do with it, when I got there I released it into the pond, but anyhow that is what I went to concentration camp carrying a

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little bowl with my turtle in it. It was quite a drive because Lunghua Camp is not in Shanghai, it is out in the countryside, it is near the Lunghua Pagoda and the airport is in the distance, not as close as it was in the movie, that what's his name made.

Question: Spielberg.

Answer: Right and I think the thing I have against that movie by the way, is he made so much of the Japanese Zero's and how great they were. He didn't say they had been used to destroy Chinese colleges and make them into rubble, and they had destroyed the city of Suchow Which is like Venice all canals and built on it, they just demolished it, they went after the history of China and they ruined everything they could and that he didn't bring out, that's what they used their little zeros for and they had no opposition because the Chinese had no airplanes and the country was broken up with warlords. Well anyway the airport was not that close as in the movie but you could see it in the distance not that it had any planes or was used much then. The Japanese didn't use it for their planes much.

Well when we got there it Lunghua Camp was a former Chinese university, and as you see in the picture there I don't know if it shows it but it had been bombed by the Japanese too. And there were buildings in the center of it that were complete rubble, just concrete and re-bar sticking out and so forth and that's why they could use it because it was abandoned. But they had sent men ahead because there was no water and it wasn't really fit for use. They sent a truck in to bring us water but the early men who came to Lunghua built sheds and boilers where you could boil the water. You can't drink the water that comes out of China wells or creeks unless you want instant death because it is just cholera and.. all kinds of things. The water had to be boiled and they set up these sheds and they were great big (congs?) where you heat the water then they had to do some work.. and I think we came in the third load of people. We went to camp in April, 1943.

Question: Who all was with you from your family, just you

Answer: and my father and mother, myself and my younger sister.

Question: So your whole family then, I didn't know if they separated you or not.

Answer: Well, as you see, it had been a college, the buildings were dormitories and they were just like long corridors with these rows of small rooms and they were in G Block where we were 6 blocks to a side so probably a dozen rooms on each side and that would be 24. Probably 48 people because it was only two stories, 48 families I mean. And then once you got there your beds were there because I mean the rooms were empty. There was a light hanging from the ceiling and there was a bare bulb and you were informed that if you plugged in any appliances you could be you know shot or dead and so forth. So I have a thing from my mother do you want me to read what she wrote about the camp?

Question: Is it fairly short? If we have time at the end I'll have you read it.

Answer: Yeah, ok. Well.

Question: Now at this time because you were seven years old cause you talk one time of hiding under the stairs and you saw that as a game, at this point as a seven year old did you think this was scary or do you remember your perspective?

Answer: The Japanese frightened me when they came to our house, I've been frightened of men in uniform ever since, well I'd also seen pictures of the German's and I'd seen. The way they dressed and the way they acted was frightening. It's strange but the Japanese were

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very short only about five feet tall and they all have bow legs, because Japanese ladies used to carry the babies on their backs in like a sling. And they carry the males until they were maybe two years old, well with your legs stuck around your mother's back you got bow legs or maybe they also didn't take enough vitamin D, who knows. But the Japanese that I remember were five feet tall, bow legs and a long saber sword that dragged behind on the ground, and that's how they looked with their little forage caps and uniforms. And they were very fierce and frightening, but going into camp, it was for me a bit of an adventure because I'd gone to an English school and I was kept very rigidly in place so to go to a concentration camp and be able to play with children and run out and so forth. At first I thought it was wonderful like going on a holiday. And there was things to do. We didn't have enough food to eat and uhm, so people built chatty stoves. You get a can and you put clay in it and you put bars through the middle and then you go to where they made these water boiling things that were fired up with coal, and eventually after using the coal they'd put the pile on one side and I remember they called it looking for clinkers. You'd sit on this great big pile of used coal and you'd look through for pieces with bits of black in it then you'd carry them home to daddy and he'd put them in the stove. And I became in a year or so when I got hungry I would uh.. my mother would let me make pancakes on the chatty outside by myself. I don't remember how come I was so good at it because I don't think I could do it now, but I would make pancakes on the chatty and fry them and we'd have them to eat. But we were always hungry. I remember going to bed and dreaming of food because in the morning the delivery of food came. There were two inmates that'd bring the food along in a wheelbarrow and they were big congs. For breakfast we'd have green tea and rice. Rice, rice gruel and we had more or less the same thing for dinner. And you did get worn down there really wasn't enough nutrition so people really wanted those Red Cross parcels. And you were always hungry, always thinking of food, so you'd get a bit of fat and do this flour and stuff up. But I think people had brought a lot of food and extras in their bedding. And at first people were more fired up, nobody believed the war would last three more years, everybody said it would be over in three, of course, the Americans and the British would beat these shrimpy little Japanese by that time. No one understood it would last so long but it did and by the last year they were getting very desperate. There were fights among.. disagreements and people didn't know how it would all end. And at that time it got bad and I remember the children were all breaking out in impetigo which is a skin disease and they only need treat them with potassium permanganate so I remember everybody was covered with these large purple spots you know from the permanganate solution and so forth. We didn't have medicines and stuff like that. There were a couple of escapes and the Japanese got very nasty after that. They punished the rest of us for that. I only found out about this later on but we had been forbidden radios and in fact they were confiscated even before going into concentration camp. You had to go and hand over your radios to the Japanese authorities. But someone had taken a radio into camp. It was in D block which was more or less where the upper class lived and so forth, and the older people and the people with money lived in D block and someone had taken in a radio and it was supposedly hidden in a child's pull toy so the Japanese didn't find it. So there was some kind of underground rumors and stuff that would come out but. That's how we knew Russia was holding out against Germany and were getting some news and then we heard rumors that they had taken people from the Haiphong Camp and moved them out. Haiphong was a smaller camp in Shanghai and then we were told they were going to take us from Lunghua And ship us to Japan and we were going to be put around the airports to deter the Americans from bombing Japanese airports. And we were told to get ready to leave so then all at once and unexpectedly came the news of the atom bomb being dropped and it was all at once we only had very few guards, fifteen guards I think, because Lunghua Was out of the country I mean out in the country and I think Japan was short of fighting men so our guards except for the commandant were young, I think one was only nineteen, and all at once they disappeared, they were gone, within two or three days and we were sitting out in the country by ourselves and we heard the road had been bombed. The road out there so there wasn't

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any way to get back and meanwhile you'd lost communication with, oh who was there to communicate with everyone was in camp with you. Well the villagers, the Chinese had stayed away from the camp while the Japanese were in control but now they came to the gates and brought greens and stuff and people began to trade back and forth. And I must say that my mother being very proud of her clothes and her looks and so forth had gone into camp not with her box full of food but with it full of clothes and you say, how can you eat clothes. Well by the third year of the war the girls who had gone in younger were now running out of clothes and so were the other women and my mother's clothes came in very handy. And she used them to trade with Chinese villages but we were able to trade her clothes for bits of food. And then people drove out from Shanghai and arrangements were made where you hired someone to take you home again when you had no money to speak of but things gradually came together. And in the meantime, since we had no food, the Americans flew over and they dropped parcels, food packages, out of their airplanes. Now I remember that the parachutes were colored, in my memory they were all colors, but I know they were red. They were beautiful parachutes, red with white ribbing, because one woman who was attractive, I think she was also white Russian, they cut them up afterwards and you could bargain for pieces and she brought a piece and they said she had a dress made and appeared at the club which had reopened in this parachute. Nylon was new to us and we'd never seen it before and it was fantastic you'd give anything for a piece of red nylon. So anyway I remember still what was in those kits. They fell down in steel drums and the men would run out there from the camp and bring them in and there were GI rations in there too and we eventually got a box with a can of butter. By that time you had forgotten what bread and butter even tasted like and you thought could I have ever eaten this delicacy, what was it like, and cake, no cake, no cake, never. So they were foreign and very different and this was like eating food from a foreign planet and I remember that and I always felt very very grateful to America and the food and the feeling that somebody cared. So we did eventually go back to China and at that time we were still British citizens. And Britain remembered we existed and gave us a free ride home to England. Because our house had been lived in by a Japanese family during the war, and when we got back there all these things we'd signed for were missing, stolen and gone and it was in a state of disarray and there didn't seem to be much to do but to go off back to England. So we sailed on an English troop ship that hadn't been yet dismantled and I remember the harbor was also mined still so a destroyer went ahead of us in case we blew up. My mother was praying all the time because she wasn't sure about this. And I remember on our trip back to England we went through the Suez Canal and by that time there was an outbreak of chickenpox and my sister was very sick and so we weren't allowed ashore but they did allow us to get off at some day camp or what ever it was which was handled by the Australian Red Cross. And we were taken ashore and treated with some kind of thing and there was a table with donated items, pajamas, and another one was shoes and I was eager by then to have some clothes. I remember I went and rooted and got a pair of striped pajamas and I found two pairs of shoes I thought were so lovely and they fit and it wasn't until I got back to the ship they were both for the right foot but. I still have my Australian wool army blanket the Australian soldiers blanket, it says from the Australian army. They were very nice too, the Australians, and they suffered. In World War II they lost a lot of men also and we did get to England and when we got to England I remember riding through London and seeing how bombed it had been. They had a hard time. My mother's sister was there in Oxford and they were all very glad to see us because one thing they did do for us they gave us three years of ration coupons so relatives welcomed us with open arms because we handed over all the ration tickets and then we booked passage to America. We went back to America and my father reported into his company and what did they want him to do and so forth and they did want him to go back to China so he went back there and eventually my mother, sister and I joined him back there again. In time I went to school there at the Shanghai-American school. It was a nice couple of years and so forth 'til the Communists started advancing and I told my mother this time I said I don't want to sit out another war in

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a concentration camp and she didn't want to leave and my father wouldn't but we went to.. we left we flew out and my father followed on the last ship to leave Shanghai and after that the communists had it... so.

Question: The time of the camp was that; it sounds like your family was fairly well to do in the social structure and then moving into the camp I assume that broke the social structure to a certain extent. Was that tough on your father to be now a prisoner vs. a business man or how did it effect the family that way?

Answer: Well Britons believe in a stiff upper lip and in a way one felt they almost welcomed this adversity to show their stuff. I remember in the dining room in the beginning they had song fests and you sing row row row your boat and all this stuff. When I was small I went to a small British school. My father wanted me to speak with a British accent and be very British. Every morning there we sang, God Save the King, so you see one didn't give way under these circumstances at first in the camp the British women organized everything. We only had two bathrooms in the dormitories, in G Block. There was a ladies bathroom downstairs and the men's bathroom was upstairs and our room was right next to it and all night you'd hear the doors inside the men's room banging back and forth. And there wasn't enough water, you'd have to flush the toilets with a dipper and all kinds of stuff. It's in my mother's notes somewhere. And the first people seemed to take this all in stride and then the women organized and said once a month you should clean the corridor, your section. And there was also a big washroom, concrete sinks all around and there you could go and either wash your clothes, no showers, no baths, it was just sponge bath and that was your duty. The women had to do that. The floor, and then the washrooms and the ladies toilet. Once a month you got one of those duties. Someone would come along and say this was your thing and so forth. My mother didn't go along with it towards the end she said her wrist was hurting and so forth she couldn't mop the whole corridor, she could mop the section in front of her door, but she couldn't mop the whole stone corridor with a huge mop and so forth so. There was a terrible fight and then everybody got away with moping the section in front of their door. It was hard because people didn't have much room inside the room so they put empty boxes right outside the door. So you had a corridor where you had to dodge all these boxes, suitcases, every room had its own pile of suitcases outside, you didn't have an open corridor to mop. And it was territorial in a way so there was that. My mother broke the rules you see, that wasn't the British way you were supposed to do your best and in a way the women also welcomed the adversity. They gave up on their looks, they put their hair in pin curls and tied a handkerchief around and then they wore pants. They looked like hell.. to speak of. But my mother had naturally curly hair and she couldn't iron her clothes but she put her blouses under the mattress and her skirts to iron them and she emerged with this curly hair and this nicely pressed blouse and skirt and the women hated her. You see that wasn't the right sort of thing, so that made trouble, but in the end it was alright.

Question: You were there three years, what did you do all the time, I mean did they make you work?

Answer: Well my father worked. He was.. I remember his hands were cracked from working in the lime. We had to do our own cooking. There were these big kitchens and meals had to be made for three thousand people. There was a carpentry shop. The rooms were bare at first and then they put shelves up to hold stuff. The Japanese gave us permission to plant and then in the last year to make separate individual gardens. They were kind of easing up then. They set up a school maybe the teachers weren't all that great but they hadn't been a teacher before. I liked to draw and I always sat in the back drawing and I had a very volatile French woman, I guess she was teaching French, and when she saw what I was doing she exploded, picked my books up, and threw them out of the window. Well, so we had but I

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was going to school and they had boy scouts and girl scouts and that kind of thing and there was a man who organized evening entertainment where they had song fests and stuff like that so they did all that.

Question: So you basically formed your own community. They put you in this compound and then you recreated structure within it.

Answer: There were two Catholic priests in the camp, an older one and a younger one and I remember they volunteered to dig the drainage ditches because we had open sewage running around and that was no picnic that job. And they dug those and stuff like that. There was a lot of work, just upkeep to do and then there were the deliveries of the water, food and all and those had to be taken and then somebody had to report to the guards on this and that. If a man escaped, it wouldn't be easy to escape because there was nothing but empty countryside all around, it was planted with stuff but its flat land and there's no where to go really and Shanghai itself was occupied with the Japanese.

Question: What were the guards like, did they keep the intimidation up the whole time you were there?

Answer: In the beginning they were hard they'd pull inspections in the middle of the night, and if some people left their children sleeping and didn't bring them to the door for that they got beaten up, slapped around and so forth. The chief guard would wear white gloves and he'd be very bossy and so forth, but that stopped. They must have realized the war wasn't going their way so they eased up after that. And then later on one of the younger guards was even friendly. Some of the younger girls were talking and I remember listening and went nearer to him and seeing his sword and him telling us when they won the war he was going to be governor of Los Angeles. I was wondering why America and not England but then America was becoming more preeminent in the war, but we had American sailors in the camp too so people got to know them and all that so.

Question: Do you hold an animosity towards the Japanese culture today or was that war?

Answer: Yes, I do because I don't think they were ever sorry for what they've done and they were brutal. The stories were brutal I've heard. General Chennault of the Flying Tigers after the war he came to speak to the Shanghai-American students and so forth. But I heard of him before that, and I knew many of the pilots that flew for him were Chinese. And if the Chinese pilots were ever caught or captured by the Japanese.. There was a story of one that was, and to make an example of him it was said they put him in the village square and they did him the death by inches where they cut off little sections of your skin, an ancient Chinese torture. So they made terrible examples of the Chinese who resisted.

My mother had three sisters and the youngest married an American man and he worked for the OSS. Now he got her out of China before the war, but he himself worked for the American government up in the one part of China that was never taken over. The name escapes me at the moment. That one part never fell to the Japanese, it's the city, well he worked with them he was a radio telegraph operator and he stayed there during the war and worked for the Chinese and he talked about it afterwards. It was hard. The Chinese suffered very much under the Japanese. I guess they thought they could take over all of China but they were so needlessly brutal because there was no resistance, just peasants and so forth. How can you say that is wonderful they have been given their reparations.

In America every time the anniversary of the atomic bomb comes around you hear this breast beating... how can we do this and all this sort of stuff. Well if this hadn't been done many more American servicemen would have died and maybe people in camps all over Asia would

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have been dead too and why?. Why wasn't it justified. I feel that it was. I don't understand why this breast beating because I haven't seen other cultures beat their breast and certainly the English don't apologize for their mistakes and they've done some brutal things too. In the Boer War, which I never heard about, we just glossed over that and you read it they did some nasty stuff to the Boers. And in India they put down their rule very firmly. I read about in India some local prince resisted and I think they killed many of the British population and the British came back and this fort where they had taken over and where they had killed women and children. They brought in the men who had done that and they forced them to lick the floor where they had done that with their tongues because they knew Indians had this thing with purity of the body and so forth. But to teach the lesson that they couldn't kill British civilians that way. So they didn't and of course the British also kept their amoral superiority on moral ground. Americans are always trying to be nice, to be buddies. English have never tried to be buddies. They just tell you right off, you know I'm better than you and you'd better know it. And it sort of comes across that way and the Asians and many people don't appreciate someone that wants to be their buddy, they understand better the person who just has caste. Well the British have always been terrible snobs so that's the way it is, yes.

Question: Wow, I guess fascinating isn't a good word, but the childhood that you grew up in and how it must have affected your whole perspective of life those three years being imprisoned and having to survive through that and the fear and as a young child really not understanding.

Answer: Well, it is nothing I ever talked about. All children want is to be like everyone else and when I went to the Shanghai-American school I wished that I'd been born in America and could come from someplace like one exotic Kansas, Wichita or whatever, to me that was very exotic and I never talked about camp very much to anyone because children don't want to be different they want to be part of the crowd.

Question: That's where you talked about, and again your age growing up and the shoes and when the rationing started and your dad had to put the tire soles on your shoes and again now that makes you different all of a sudden but everybody...

Answer: Well, I always felt different because my mother was white Russian and in the Shanghai community that was definitely put you on a lower class. When my father told my English grandmother that he was going to marry a white Russian girl she said she'd as soon see him dead at her feet because white Russians had a very very bad reputation. The irony of it was that my Russian grandfather was much higher classed than my English grandparents. He spoke five languages and he was the head of the imperial Russian telegraph service in Persia.. at the time that the communists first took over. And my mother herself had a very fascinating because they had to leave Tehran at night and go over those mountains and end up in Baghdad and in Baghdad the British had conquered Baghdad in World War I. They fought their way up from Basra at tremendous odds, and they were then organizing stuff anyway. They took all these Russia refugees, and eventually were going to ship them back to white Russia which was on the other side past China. But my folks, my mother and her father and all got off in Shanghai and many other white Russians came to Shanghai. It was a big community of them. They also thought they could go back one day but that didn't happen. By the time my grandfather came to Shanghai they were penniless. They had no money at all. Shanghai was full of other white Russian refugees and many of the white Russian girls, they were very beautiful, but there was nothing for them to do. They became whores and taxi dance girls so they got a terrible reputation but it was unavoidable. And once they were in China they couldn't get out because they had no passports. You could get what was called a Nansen Passport which was issued to people without any statehood but that wasn't easy and in China as I said you saw beggars everywhere. There were all kinds of beggars. There were

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permanent beggars and floating beggars. I mean there were beggars who belonged to the doorway. You'd see them there for years and they each did something. There was one man who'd always hit his head on the side walk and I remember he horrified me because he had this callus like a dinner plate in the middle of his forehead but they were all Chinese and the only time I ever saw a beggar that was a white man with blue eyes was a white Russian man. They had come down that low you had to feel so the British regarded being white Russian as being you know low class or whatever it was. It didn't matter what you were before when you lost everything you had, that was it, you know.

Question: Have you ever gone back?

Answer: To where?

Question: Shanghai?

Answer: No, I had the chance and these groups have gone back, my son and his wife have gone back, but I never have because I've gone back once. Well I felt I was born there, and I went back once, and I kind of felt if it got its hooks on me it wouldn't let me go a third time.. so I don't want to go back.

Question: Do you know if the camp is gone?

Answer: Oh no, it's still there, it's a school again, it's a middle school.

Question: Did your son go there?

Answer: No he didn't go to any place I knew. The only thing that he talked about was he lost his way and came about some people getting ready to barbecue a dog. The Chinese will eat anything. So.

Question: Well, thank you very much. Now you said your mom wrote some recollections. Did he write that when?

Answer: I don't know when she wrote it. Some of the (inaudible) doing it is rather abrupt so I was going to just you know.

Question: It sounds like your mom kind of was the head of the household in a way. Did she run the family?

Answer: Not really. I mean in what sense would you say that she ran the family? My father was bossy. He, you know. It was a different way of things. Women had to be feminine. Mother her looks meant everything to her because I think she felt that it mattered. Well, that is how the women survived, the Russian women, by looks. My mother had three sisters. Three of the girls married Englishmen and one married an American and of our friends and so forth many of them married well, they married Russian and English bankers. Well this didn't go over well with the English women who weren't as good looking, they tend to be toothy and also rather frumpy but in England it is always the men who look very stylish. They have wonderful tailors and so forth. Upper class English women it's the in thing to look slightly frumpy like Queen English who is the world's biggest frump as far as I'm concerned.

Question: Having been to London I understand what you are saying.