

## Excerpts from the China Country Reader

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### CHINA

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Howard E. Sollenberger	1919 1947-1950 1950-1955	Childhood, China Director, Chinese Language Program, Beijing Foreign Service Institute, Chinese Language Professor, Washington, DC
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James M. Wilson Jr.	1925-1935	Childhood, Shanghai
John Stuart Service	1925-1933 1933-1941 1941-1942 1971 1973	Childhood, Shanghai Cherk, Yannanfu, Shanghai Language Officer, Chungking visit to China visit to China
Richard P. Butrick	1926-1932 1932-1941 1941 1941-1942	Consular Officer, Hankow Consular Officer, Shanghai Counselor, Chungking Counselor, Beijing
William H. Gleysteen	1926 1955-1956 1956-1958	Born in China Chinese Language School. Taipei, Taiwan Political/Consular/Economic Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
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Everett Drumright	1931-1932 1932-1934 1934-1937 1937-1938 1938-1941 1941-1942	Vice Consul, Hankow Chinese Language Training, Beijing Consular Officer, Shanghai Political Officer, Hankow Political Officer, Chungking Internment, Shanghai

	1943-1944	Consular Officer, Chundo and Sian
	1944-1945	Political Officer, Chungking
	1945-1946	China Desk, Washington, DC
	1953-1954	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
	1954-1958	Consul General, Hong Kong
	1958-1962	Ambassador, Taipei, Taiwan
Cecil B. Lyon	1934-1938	Vice Consul, Beijing
Ralph N. Clough	1936-1937	Chinese Language Training, Guangzhou
	1945	Vice Consul, Kunming
	1945-1946	Consular Officer, Chungking
	1946	Consular Officer, Nanking
	1946-1947	Language Officer, Beijing
	1947-1950	Chinese Secretary, Nanking
	1950-1954	Political Officer, Hong Kong
	1955-1958	Deputy Director, Office of Chinese Affairs, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
	1958	Director, Office of Chinese Affairs, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
	1958-1961	Advisor, Negotiations with Chinese, Poland, Switzerland, and Great Britain
	1961-1965	Deputy Chief of Mission, Taipei, Taiwan
	1965-1966	Diplomat-in-Residence, East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Paul Good	1940-1941	Childhood, Tientsin
Arthur W. Hummel, Jr.	1940-1945	World War II Experience
	1951-1952	Office of Information, Bureau of Far East Affairs, Washington, DC
	1952	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Hong Kong
Frederick Hunt	1941-1942	Consular Officer, Shanghai
Henry Byroade	1941-1947	Army Officer, China-Burma-India Theater
Walter E. Jenkins, Jr.	1943-1945	Training Chinese Army, Kunming
	1948-1950	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
	1953-1955	Political Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1969	Talks with Chinese in Poland, Warsaw, Poland
John A. Lacey	1944-1945	U.S. Navy, Chungking/Beijing

	1950-1956	Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
	1956-1957	Economic Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1957-1958	Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
	1960-1964	Economic Officer, Hong Kong
Edwin Webb Martin	1945-1948	Chinese Language Training, Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut) and Beijing
	1948-1949	Consular Officer, Hankow
	1949-1950	Economic Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1951-1955	Political Officer, Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
	1953-1954	Political Advisor to Talks with Chinese, Panmunjom, Korea
	1955	Talks with Chinese, Geneva, Switzerland
	1958-1961	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
	1961-1964	Political Advisor, Commander in Chief, Pacific
	1967-1970	Consul General, Hong Kong
John F. Melby	1945-1948	Political Officer, Chungking/Nanking
	1949	China White Paper, Washington, DC
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	1947-1950	Language Officer, Beijing
	1954-1957	China Watcher, Hong Kong
	1957-1961	Office of Chinese Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
	1964-1966	Deputy Principal Officer, Hong Kong
	1966-1968	Bureau of East Asian Affairs/Public Affairs, Washington, DC
	1968-1971	Deputy Chief of Mission, Taipei, Taiwan
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	1973-1976	Director, China Office, Washington, DC
	1976	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
LaRue R. Lutkins	1946-1948	Chinese Language Training, Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut) and Beijing
	1948-1949	Consular Officer, Kunming
	1949	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
	1950-1952	Political Officer, Penang, Malaysia
	1954-1957	Political Officer, Hong Kong
	1957-1961	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC

William N. Stokes	1946-1950 1972-1975 ---	Vice Consul and Economic Officer, Mukden Inspection Officer, American Liaison Office, Beijing Remarks on relations with China in Later Years
Harlan Cleveland	1947-1948	Director, UNRRA Mission to China
Robert Anderson	1947-1949	Consular Officer, Shanghai
Leonard L. Bacon	1947-1948 1949-1950	Consular Officer, Hankow Consular Officer, Nanking
Joseph A. Yager	1947-1948 1950-1951	Exchange Program, Canton Consul, Hong Kong/Peking (Peiping)
Richard E. Johnson	1947-1951 1951-1954	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC Economic Officer, Hong Kong
Philip W. Manhard	1947-1949 1949-1950	Chinese Language Training, Beijing Vice Consul, Tientsin
Richard M. McCarthy	1947-1950 1950-1956 1958-1962	Information Officer, USIS, Beijing Information Officer, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Hong Kong Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Taipei, Taiwan
Philip H. Valdes	1947-1949	Economic Officer, Chungking
Earl Wilson	1947-1949	Information Officer, USIS, Shanghai
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John H. Holdridge	1948-1951 1951-1956 1953-1956 1956-1958 1958-1962 1962-1966 1969-1973	Chinese Language Training, Foreign Service Institute (Washington, DC), Cornell University (Ithaca, New York), Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts) Chinese Language Officer, USIS, Bangkok, Thailand Political Officer, Hong Kong Political Officer, Singapore Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC Political Officer, Hong Kong National Security Council, Washington, DC

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John Wesley Jones	1948-1949	Political Counselor, Nanking
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Charles T. Cross	1949-1950	Junior Officer, USIS, Taipei, Taiwan
Jerome K. Holloway	1949-1950	Consular Officer, Shanghai
	1952-1957	Political Officer, Hong Kong
Harlan Cleveland	1949-1952	Director, Far Eastern Aid Program, Agency for Economic Cooperation, Washington, DC
David L. Osborn	1949-1953	American Information Office, Taipei, Taiwan
	1954-1957	Office of Chinese Affairs (Taiwan), Geneva, Switzerland and Washington, DC
	1958-1961	Political Counselor, Taipei, Taiwan
	1967-1970	Deputy Chief of Mission, Tokyo, Japan
	1970-1974	Consul General, Hong Kong
Lindsey Grant	1950-1952	Consular Officer, Hong Kong
	1955-1958	Economic Officer, Hong Kong
	1958-1961	Economic Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1961-1965	Asian Communist Affairs, Washington, DC
Ralph J. Katrosh	1950-1951	U.S. Military Assistance Group, Taipei, Taiwan
Robert S. Dillon	1951-1954	Operations with Nationalist Chinese, Taiwan
Harvey Feldman	1954-1955	Rotation Officer, Hong Kong
	1962-1963	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC
	1962-1963	Chinese Language Training, Taichung, Taiwan
	1963-1965	Political-Military Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1965-1970	Publications/Press Officer, Hong Kong
	1970-1972	UN Affairs, Department of State, Washington, DC
	1973-1975	Political Counselor, Taipei, Taiwan

	1977-1979	Office of Republic of China Affairs, Washington, DC
Paul Kreisberg	1954-1955 1956-1959 1960-1962 1965-1970 1977-1981	Chinese Language Training, Taiwan Political Officer, Hong Kong Office of Chinese Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC Director, Office of Asian Communist Affairs, Washington, DC Policy Planning, Washington, DC
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Derek Singer	1956-1958	Assistant Training Officer, USAID, Taipei, Taiwan
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	1961-1963	Consul General, Hong Kong
	1963-1965	Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, Washington, DC
	1969-1973	Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, Washington, DC
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Harry E.T. Thayer	1957-1959	Consular Officer, Hong Kong
	1959-1961	Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
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	1963-1966	Economic/Political Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
	1966-1970	Taiwan Desk, Washington, DC
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	1976-1980	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
Jacob Walkin	1958-1960	Consular/Security Officer, Hong Kong
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	1962-1963	Chinese Language Training, Taichung
James F. Leonard	1958-1959	Chinese Language Training, Taichung
	1960-1963	Political Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
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Robert W. Drexler	1958-1959	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC
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	1965-1966	Interpreter Training, Taichung, Taiwan
	1966-1970	China Desk Talks, Washington, DC
	1970-1972	China Expert, Political Section, New Delhi, India
	1972-1973	Talks with Chinese, Paris, France
	1973-1975	Political Officer, American Liaison Office, Beijing
	1975-1977	Political Officer, Hong Kong
	1977-1980	Office of Chinese Affairs, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
	1980-1983	Consul General, Shanghai
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	1986-1990	Consul General, Hong Kong
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William Andreas Brown	1959-1961	Chinese Language Training, Taichung, Taiwan



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	1962-1965	Information Officer, USIS, Hong Kong
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	1968-1971	Branch Public Affairs Officer, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
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	1975-1981	Cultural Affairs Officer/Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
Michael H. Newlin	1968-1972	Senior Political Advisor, USUN, New York City
William H. Gleysteen	1969-1971	Director, East Asia and Pacific, INR, Washington, DC
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	1974-1978	Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Inter-American Affairs, Department of Defense
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	1973-1977	Director, Policy Planning Staff, Washington, DC
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	1973-1974	Chinese Language Studies, Taichung, Taiwan
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Herbert E. Horowitz	1972-1973 1973-1975	China Desk, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC Economic Counselor, American Liaison Office, Beijing
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Willard B. Devlin	1974-1976	Chief, Consular Section, Hong Kong
Dean Rust	1974-1976	ACDA; Staff Assistant to the Director Fred Ikle, Washington, DC
Mark E. Mohr	1974-1977	Political Officer, Hong Kong

David G. Brown	1974-1976 1976-1978	China Desk Officer, Washington, DC Office of the Republic of China Affairs, Washington, DC
Herman Rebhan	1974-1989	General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation, Washington, DC
Leonard Unger	1974-1979	Ambassador, Taiwan
Edward H. Wilkinson	1975-1978	Consular Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
Frank N. Burnet	1975-1979	Political Counselor, Taipei, Taiwan
Charles Lahiguera	1975-1979	Political Officer (Refugee Office), Hong Kong
William W. Thomas, Jr.	1975-1979 1984-1986 1986-1990	Economic Counselor, Beijing Consul General, Chengdu Science Counselor, Beijing
Gilbert J. Donahue	1976-1977 1977-1978 1978-1981 1986-1987 1989-1992	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC Chinese Language Training, Taichung, Taiwan China Reporting Group, Hong Kong Economic Officer, Beijing Economic/Political Officer, Hong Kong
Walter A. Lundy	1977-1979	Republic of China, Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Walter F. Mondale	1977-1981	Vice President, Washington, DC
Thomas P. Shoesmith	1977-1981	Consul General, Hong Kong
William Andreas Brown	1978 1978-1979	Deputy Chief of Mission, Taiwan Trustee, American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan
G. Eugene Martin	1978-1979	Deputy Political Counselor, Taipei, Taiwan
Mark S. Pratt	1978-1981	Political Counselor, Taipei, Taiwan
Virginia Carson-Young	1978-1982	Consular Officer, Hong Kong

David Dean	1978-1987	American Institute in Taiwan, Washington, DC
Charles T. Cross	1979-1981	Director, American Institute in Taipei, Taipei, Taiwan
Anna Romanski	1979-1981	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC and Taiwan
	1981-1983	Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Beijing
David E. Reuther	1979-1981	China Affairs, Economic Officer, Washington, DC
	1981-1982	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC
	1982-1983	Chinese Language Training, Taipei, Taiwan
	1983-1985	Chief of American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan
	1987-1990	Economic Officer, Beijing
G. Eugene Martin	1979-1980	Staff Secretariat East Asia – China Policy, Washington, DC
	1980-1981	Special Assistant to Deputy Secretary of State, Washington, DC
	1985-1987	Deputy Director for Political Affairs, Washington, DC
	1990-1992	Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, Asia and Africa, Washington, DC
	1992-1996	Consul General, Guangzhou (formerly Canton)
Howard H. Lange	1979-1980	Chinese Language Training, Taipei, Taiwan
	1980-1982	Economic Officer, Beijing
William Piez	1980-1982	Director, East Asia Bureau, Economic Policy Office, Washington, DC
	1985-1989	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
James T. Laney	1981	Visitor, China
David G. Brown	1981-1983	Chief of Economic Section, Beijing
Mark E. Mohr	1981-1983	Deputy Director, Office of Taiwan Affairs, Washington, DC

Thomas P. Shoesmith	1981-1983	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
Clarke N. Ellis	1981-1984	American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan
Elizabeth Raspolic	1981-1983 1983-1986 1986-1988	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC and Taiwan Chief, Consular Section, Guangzhou Consul General, Beijing
James R. Lilley	1982-1984	Director, American Institute of Taiwan, Taiwan
Mark S. Pratt	1982-1986	Chief, Taiwan Coordination Office, Washington, DC
William Andreas Brown	1983-1985	Assistant secretary, East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Washington, DC
Russell Sveda	1984-1986	China Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Ruth Kurzbauer	1984-1986 1990	Assistant Press Officer, USIS, Beijing Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Shenyang
Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.	1984	Advance Work, White House Staff, Beijing
Herbert E. Horowitz	1984-1986	Deputy Chief of Mission, Beijing
Harry E.T. Thayer	1984-1986 1986-1989	Director, American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan Dean, Language Studies, Foreign Service Institute, Washington, DC
Joan M. Plaisted	1985-1987	China Desk, Economic Affairs, Washington, DC
Marie Therese Huhtala	1985-1987	Political Officer (China Watcher), Hong Kong
G. Eugene Martin	1985-1987	Deputy Director for Political Affairs, China, Washington, DC
Winston Lord	1985-1989	Ambassador, China

William Lenderking	1986-1988	East Asia and Pacific Affairs, USIA, Washington, DC
Robin Berrington	1986-1989	Director, Junior Officer Training, Washington, DC
David G. Brown	1986-1989	Taiwan Coordination Staff, Washington, DC
Mark S. Pratt	1986-1989	Consul General, Guangzhou (Canton)
Thomas R. Hutson	1986-1987 1987-1990	Mandarin Language Studies, Taipei, Taiwan Chief Consular Officer, Taipei, Taiwan
Richard W. Carlson	1986-1991	Director, Voice of America, USIS, Washington, DC
David G. Brown	1986-1989 1989-1992	Taiwan coordination Staff, Washington, DC Deputy Consul General, Hong Kong
David Dean	1987-1989	Director, American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan
McKinney Russell	1987-1991	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Beijing
William Primosch	1988-1991	Office of Chinese Affairs, Washington, DC
Kenneth Yates	1988-1989 1989-1992	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Beijing
Mark E. Mohr	1988-1990	Deputy Director, Political Section, Beijing
G. Phillip Hughes	1989-1990	Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, The White House, Washington, DC
Clarke N. Ellis	1989-1993	American Institute for Taiwan, Rosslyn, Virginia
Mark E. Mohr	1990-1992	Deputy Director, China Affairs, Washington, DC
Greg Thielmann	1990-1993	Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Chief, Officer of Strategic Forces Analysis, Washington, DC
David Dean	1989-1995	Trustee, Board of American Institute in

		Taiwan, Washington, DC
Natale H. Bellocchi	1990-1995	Chairman, American Institute in Taiwan
Michael H. Newlin	1991	Retired Annuitant, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Washington, DC
J. Richard Bock	1993-1996	Deputy Managing Director, American Institute in Taiwan, Rosslyn, Virginia
Winston Lord	1993-1995	Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Washington, DC
Michael A. Boorstein	1993-1996 1999-2002	Administrative Counselor, Beijing Director, American Embassy in Beijing Project, Washington, DC
Robin White	1996-1998	Director, Bilateral Trade, Economic Bureau, Washington, DC
Paul P. Blackburn	1996-1997 1997-2000	Chinese Language Training, Washington, DC Public Affairs Officer, Beijing
G. Eugene Martin	1999-2000	Deputy Chief of Mission, Beijing
Harold W. Geisel	2001	Chief, Negotiating Team with Chinese for Embassy construction in Washington and Beijing

## **HOWARD E. SOLLENBERGER**

### **Childhood China (1919)**

### **Director, Chinese Language Program Beijing (1947-1950)**

### **Foreign Service Institute, Chinese Language Professor Washington, DC (1950-1955)**

*Howard E. Sollenberger was born in Indiana in 1917. He attended schools in China and received his bachelor's degree from Manchester College. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.*



*Q: Could you tell me a bit about your parents?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes. They were both from a rural area in southern Ohio. Grandfathers on both sides were farmers, and ministers in the local church, Church of the Brethren, which is the religious background in which I come, mixed with the Quakers and Mennonites.

*Q: That's a very strong, solid background, heavily rooted in the farming area. What was it like growing up as a young lad in North Manchester?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, I didn't grow up in North Manchester. I was born there, I grew up in China. My parents were missionaries to North China.

*Q: How old were you when you went out to China?*

SOLLENBERGER: Two years old. I don't remember [much of those early days]. I came back to North Manchester later.

*Q: What spurred your parents to go as missionaries to China?*

SOLLENBERGER: I've often wondered that myself. They went to China in 1919, and in those days that was not [unlike] going to the moon.

*Q: No, but damn close.*

SOLLENBERGER: Damn close to it, you're right. There seemed to have been a movement at that time of American church people interested in spreading [the word] and saving the world. They were a part of that movement. According to my father, the impetus came from my mother, and he followed her rather than she followed him.

*Q: Where did they go?*

SOLLENBERGER: They went to north China, Shaanxi Province, Taihang mountain area which is really a rural and very poor area. My father, when they first started, spent most of his time in road construction. There was a major famine in the area at that time and, with the International Red Cross, [he] had undertaken a work for food project and my father was assigned a section of road that he was to supervise the building of for which relief food was handed out.

*Q: What was your mother doing?*

SOLLENBERGER: Basically raising a family. At that time I had an older sister, but both parents went out as missionaries. Part of her function was to try to contact the local women in the area, and to do something with them which ultimately would lead to their salvation.

*Q: I can see coming out of Indiana, not much Chinese is spoken there. How did they prepare themselves? I assume you'd get this from stories when you were older. How did they prepare themselves and how did they communicate?*

SOLLENBERGER: I've been really amazed that the organization of the church that sent missionaries overseas had the foresight to understand that language and some knowledge of the culture was important. The first year that they were in China, they went to the College of Chinese Studies in Beijing to learn the language. They were ahead of the Foreign Service in those days.

*Q: Was there a Foreign Service Chinese school at that time?*

SOLLENBERGER: No, not at that time. That came on later.

*Q: What was it like growing up as a young lad in northern China?*

SOLLENBERGER: For a long time I resented it. The expectation was that I would come back, my home was in the United States, I was an American citizen, I would go to college in the United States. And it seemed that growing up in China did not particularly prepare me for the culture shock you ran into when you came back to the United States. But there were lots of interesting things that happened.

*Q: Could you talk about what you remember? Did you have Chinese friends, that sort of thing?*

SOLLENBERGER: I did have Chinese friends. Being in quite a rural, mountainous area, the contact with Chinese was probably greater than for those that grew up in places like Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, [the major urban centers]. So, I did have that contact, and I've always been amazed at how free my parents were in letting me move around in that area. The earliest memory that I have is going with my father when he was supervising road construction. I was left behind in a room while he was out doing something, and I'd fallen asleep. When I woke up, there was a strange man with a beard, something like you have. He turned out to be a White Russian engineer that the Red Cross had hired for the purpose of road construction, a civil engineer. I, of course, was young enough at that point to not only be worried, but to start yelling for my parents. At which point he brought out a nice big red apple, which was very nice.

There were other missionary children in the area. I had contact with them. We went through the usual childhood experiences of learning how to get along with other kids, and in this case to get along in a different culture. We had Chinese servants, and from the beginning I found learning Chinese easier than my parents did. So in some circumstances, I had to be the interpreter for them.

*Q: There is a long oral history of John Stewart Service who grew up in some of the same circumstances, but he was saying how his mother really kept him away from Chinese. She was worried about catching disease, so he was really not as fluent in Chinese as he later became because of this separation which often happens with both Foreign Service and missionary families. But I take it this was not so with you.*

SOLLENBERGER: It was a little different in our situation. In fact, I'm surprised as I look back on this. For one thing, you could understand the nervousness of parents with little kids. I think a

recent study of missionaries and their families overseas indicates that the fatality rate among missionaries is higher than with any other group of people. Largely from disease, but not entirely, because in those days as you know they didn't have all the wonder drugs, etc., that we have right now. I can remember within our small mission group a number of the people that didn't make it. And yet my parents seemed to realize that we were kids, we were in this [strange] culture, and that we ought to have some contact with it. And we did. As a matter of fact, my parents did put me for a short period of time in a traditional Chinese school, which was run by mission people. I was [put with] other Chinese kids, I was the little foreign devil, and had to defend myself on several occasions.

*Q: What Chinese were you learning?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was Mandarin, northern Chinese but with a Shaanxi dialect which is rather strong and well understood.

*Q: In later life did you have to unlearn that dialect?*

SOLLENBERGER: I've never fully unlearned it. As a matter of fact just within the last month I returned from a sentimental journey to China, which took me back to the same area where I grew up. And I had a chance to not only hear but to try to practice, and I discovered that my Chinese has become a mixture of the standard Beijing variety, but all too frequently with the tones of the Shaanxi dialect which raises some eyebrows. But when I talked with the people in Shaanxi, they thought I spoke Chinese better than they did because I spoke the higher social level [vocabulary] that obviously had been picked up while I was serving in Beijing.

*Q: You got out there in 1919 and were there during the '20s. I'm not familiar with Chinese history at that point except to know that there was a lot of turmoil and warlordism. Did that impact at all on you all?*

SOLLENBERGER: It did, but Shaanxi Province was then under the governorship of Yan Xishan, who was referred to frequently as a model governor. But nonetheless he was a warlord, independent, printed his own currency, collected his own taxes, built a narrow gauge railway into his capital so that these outside trains that were on a different width of track could not freely move into his province. But things were relatively under control, although Shaanxi Province has always been considered a strategic province to the defense of the capital, Beijing and the north China plain. So that on several occasions, we ran into military operations in the area that, of course, to a child were exciting.

*Q: Were there any incidents of things that you recall during that time?*

SOLLENBERGER: I should perhaps mention here that foreigners in China at that time had extraterritorial privileges, much like diplomatic privileges, where foreigners were basically a law to themselves. They were not subject to domestic law and control. It didn't take the kids long to realize this, and sometimes would take advantage of it. There are several things as I look back on, I'm ashamed of now, but it shows that kids will be kids wherever they are. I went to boarding school for five years, eighth grade through high school at Tongzhou, which is a suburb of Beijing

now. [Editor's note: for another account of Tongzhou School, from a student who also later joined the Foreign Service, see Charles T. Cross, Born a Foreigner: A Memoir of the American Presence in Asia, Rowman and Littlefield, 1999] We would have to go back and forth from home during the summer vacation, and sometimes for Christmas. I remember one Christmas trip that we made on the train, there were several of us missionary kids, we'd purchased some of these concussion firecracker, things that you throw down on a hard surface and they explode. Being poor, although we didn't know we were poor at the time - missionary kids - we didn't have much money, we traveled third class. And in this particular incident there was an old Chinese gentleman that was stretched out on a bench across from two of us who were there, and we had these little concussion bombs. He was asleep. We also had a lot of chewing gum which apparently, as I heard the story, came to China from Wrigley's chewing gum, who when they heard about the severe famine in north China decided it would be a wonderful thing if they could get the Chinese hooked on chewing gum. At that time they were talking about 300 million [people in northern China].

*Q: We still talk in the same terms. There's always those million, or whatever number, potential Chinese customers out there.*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, the Chinese didn't take to chewing gum at that time, but the missionary kids got all the chewing gum their parents would let them chew. We took some of this chewing gum and stuck these concussion crackers on the soles of the old gentleman's feet while he was asleep. And you can imagine what happened when he woke up. And yet a trick like this, I'm ashamed of right now in terms of what I did and the reaction [we stimulated in the] other Chinese in the train, [because we foreign kids did] something of this sort.

On another occasion, we went through the train with punches and punched everybody's ticket ahead of the conductor and got them all mixed up for him. And yet he could do nothing about it, because we were foreign kids. So we had experiences that I'm sometimes ashamed of as I look back on it.

*Q: I think we all do it. What about Chinese when you were in the school outside Beijing, were you still getting Chinese, or was this pretty much a traditional American education?*

SOLLENBERGER: A traditional American education to prepare us for college. We did have a course, but it was Chinese as a foreign language. They did think that we ought to be learning about Chinese, but there were no Chinese students in the boarding school for foreigners. There were several Russian but it was basically a segregated educational experience.

*Q: Did you experience, and you only realized it later, that there was almost segregation between the foreign students, the missionaries, and the Chinese in general... How did your family feel about this separation?*

SOLLENBERGER: There was definitely segregation. The missionaries at that time, and to some extent this was because of the Chinese insistence on it, built little separate compounds. They built American-style structures, that's the only kind of structure they understood and knew. It was difficult, particularly for the women in these rural area to establish any sort of close

relationship with [Chinese] women. Partly this was because of the role and status of women at that particular time. I remember one of the missionary women, who was there before we were, talking about the way in which she was finally able to establish contact with Chinese women. And that was through the death of one of her babies. At that point the Chinese women expressed sympathy and came to her to express this. And she often said it was through the death of one of her children that she was finally able to make contact with the Chinese women.

This was, in a sense, driven home to me later on when I was back as an adult and was able on several occasions to see the mission establishments through the Chinese eyes as something that was clearly foreign, clearly from the outside. Something that from the Chinese point of view had a lot of money behind it. Also, foreigners who had special privileges, or appeared to have special privileges in China, before whom the Chinese had to, an expression they use, is to kowtow, which means to lower your head and not look at the other person in the eyes. So we had that separation, but my father was always uneasy, mother also was always uneasy with that sort of relationship and did what they could under the circumstances, as I look back on it now, to bridge that, not only for themselves but for [us] kids.

*Q: While you at boarding school were there any winds of change coming around like the Kuomintang or anything like that? Were you getting any reflections...*

SOLLENBERGER: ...of what was going on in China? Oh, a good deal of that. As a matter of fact there were several occasions where there were military threats to the area. The major one being from the Japanese in 1935 as they made a feint towards north China. They didn't actually invade until '37 but large troop movements in the area, Tongzhou was considered the east gate to Beijing so there were concentrations of troops there. That created a good deal of excitement, and also created some interesting school experiences.

*Q: What were they?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, the major one had to do with a group of boys, there were five of us that roomed together in the same room. With troops [arriving], we wanted to go down to the railroad station and look at this. We were under strict orders not to do so. The headmaster of the school was a Danish gentleman who believed in the old discipline of the Danish navy, he'd been in the Danish navy, and applied that liberally to the students. On this particular occasion, after being denied the privilege of going down to the railway station, we decided we'd go into the city. The gates were locked to the city at that time and we had to climb over the city wall, which we did, [we were young] and had scouted out the area well before hand. And found getting into town rather interesting under these circumstances. We did it three times. And one of the roommates had a girlfriend, she found out about it through him. The matron found out about it through the girlfriend, or through gossip in the girl's dorm, and the headmaster found out about it. The result was that, since we'd gone in three times, we had to be punished three times. His pattern was, you'd be invited into [his] interchamber, he had a drawer in the dresser, the lower drawer, and he had a variety of instruments there, bamboo canes, hair brushes, straps, and generally you were given the option of choosing the one that you wanted. But after three nights of this we began to get a little sore on the behind, took pillows to school with us to sit on, and the parents finally decided that was a little too much. The gentleman did not stay with the school.

But that's school life for you.

*Q: Eventually you ended up in the United States, didn't you, for schooling?*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right.

*Q: When was that?*

SOLLENBERGER: That would have been '35.

*Q: So this is in the midst of the Depression. Where did you go?*

SOLLENBERGER: I went back to North Manchester. I had free tuition there. It was a church college.

*Q: What was the name of the college?*

SOLLENBERGER: Manchester College.

*Q: You were at Manchester College from '35 to '38.*

SOLLENBERGER: [Yes], at which time I dropped out. And the reason for dropping out basically was that it seemed to me that the kids in college at that time were much too focused on their own problems, and were not aware that the world was on fire. From my point of view the world was on fire. In '38 the Japanese had invaded north China and the word that I got back from north China was that [the Japanese] had [implemented a] scorched earth [policy] in much of the area where I grew up. And, of course, things had happened in north Africa and began to happen in Europe. I just felt it didn't make sense to sit in school at that particular time.

*Q: You're about 21 at this time.*

SOLLENBERGER: So I tried to find a way to get back to China to see what I could do to help.

*Q: While you were at Manchester College what were you studying?*

SOLLENBERGER: History and political science. I was fortunate in my education to be with Andrew Cordier, who was the history professor at that time. He later became the Under Secretary for the United Nations, and [acting] president of Columbia University (1969-1970), [and dean of faculty at Columbia's School of International Affairs]. I was his assistant for a couple of years.

*Q: That's really amazing to find that in a small school.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right. My education was really from him, as I look back on it. I found a way to get back to China in relief work for both the Church of the Brethren and the Quakers, sort of a joint emergency project. I wanted to go back to an area that I knew, and [I made it]. I

spent from the end of '38 to 1940 in emergency relief work.

*Q: Were your parents still in China during this period?*

SOLLENBERGER: My father was there part of the time. My mother was not, her health was such that she remained in the United States.

*Q: You got back in 1938. Where did you go and can you describe how you saw the situation where you were at that time?*

SOLLENBERGER: I went back to the Taihang mountain area. I went to the city where I had spent the years when I was in high school, that was the home base. The area had already been invaded once by the Japanese who had gone through in an effort to weed out, or to destroy the guerrilla base. Of particular interest in that area was the fact that this was area that was under the control, at that time, of the Eighth Route Army, the communist Eighth Route Army. It was not too long after their long march, and they had moved across into Shaanxi, and set up a military base in the Taihang mountain area, and were attempting to operate against the Japanese. The city that I'd set up base in was not destroyed by the [Japanese] scorched earth [policy]. But the villages around and all the way back up to the northern area, Yangchuan, had been pretty well wiped out. The refugees when I got there, the end of '38, were drifting back into the cities. But the problem there was an emergency problem in how to deal with their homes in the rural areas. The Eighth Route Army at that time was not engaging very often with the Japanese, they were being very selective. But they had had several significant engagements in areas not far from where we were. In one of these, [the Japanese] suffered rather severely when they were waylaid in a mountain pass by the Eighth Route Army, and they retaliated by literally destroying two county seats, two walled cities. [it was] in this area we concentrated on trying to do something with the refugees, a drop in the bucket considering the problem.

*Q: How were you treated, both by the Japanese and by the Chinese communists, during this period? Here you were where the line was moving back and forth?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was not only the communists. Yan Xishan was still in the province as the military warlord. He had a deputy who was in charge of southeast Shaanxi which is where we were operating. We had contact with him. We had to because he had authority over all of the magistrates in the area, and relations with him and with [him and] the local governments was very good. I mean, they saw rather quickly that there was an advantage in having some foreign assistance in dealing with the problems that they had. As it turned out the deputy governor, Bo Yibo, was really an under cover communist at the time, and at the appropriate moment in 1939 he turned over, and turned over with the provincial troops that were under his command, turned over to the communists. He was later rewarded, became, I think, Minister of Finance under the communist regime, and is now probably the oldest senior communist still living in the Beijing area. I had direct contact with him because of the work that I was doing at that time. To begin with, [we had] only minor contact with the Eighth Route Army. I did have to get permission passes from them, [but] there were no problems in getting those. They again, I guess, saw the value of [our work], and at that time they were treating the local people with kid gloves. They realized they couldn't survive in the mountains without at least the tacit approval, if not the help,

of the local population. And by contrast the way in which they were treating the people at that time was so much better than the way in which the government troops were treating the people, that they pretty well got the cooperation that they were looking for.

*Q: Did you run into the Japanese at all?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes. While I was out on one of my relief trips in the mountains taking care of refugees, the city where I was stationed was occupied. I eventually had to go back into the city. They were obviously not pleased, made it clear that if I was going to stay in the area, I had to stay in the city. But basically they would prefer [that] I should leave. And it eventually became clear that I should leave, so I left, but came back again through the back door, going back into free China, trekking up through the Taihang mountains from the Yellow River, back to near the city that was still under occupation by the Japanese.

At that time I had some interesting contact with the communist army. On one occasion trying to get through the Japanese lines, I ran into a group of students that were coming from [the] Beijing-Tianjin area coming back to the mountains in Shaanxi to get into a school. And the communists were running some open air schools literally on the mountain side, in the little villages. It was interesting that they gave a high priority to education. There were about 300 students of them, as the students were coming through the Japanese lines from the other side, they had alerted the Japanese somehow, and all hell broke loose. It was obvious that I couldn't go through at that particular point. But we met some of the students as they came through. Their Chinese guides had gotten scared and run off and left them. They were in a strange area and didn't know where they were at night. I knew the area and knew it fairly well, I trekked over it, had hunted there as a kid. So I started back with them and we ran into some of the Eighth Route Army people who were coming down to see what the chaos was, and they took over and took me and the students back to headquarters. It turned out to be the central headquarters of the Eighth Route Army General Peng Dehuai, who was then the commander of the Eighth Route. I spent three days at headquarters basically getting acquainted, and they getting acquainted with me and finding out what I was doing. Among other things I spent one evening playing chess with the general, Chinese chess which I had learned as a kid and since I could speak Chinese it was interesting to be able to sit down with him, doing something from his culture. As it turned out I could do almost as well as he could, and speak Chinese. Among other things I wanted to get from him his story of the Long March. How he became and why he became a communist. What his view of the world was at that particular point. It was a rare opportunity.

*Q: One hears about the discipline of the Chinese communist troops. Did you find this?*

SOLLENBERGER: Very much so.

*Q: ...as contrasted to the government type.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right. When I came back from the back door on that trip, I had to come through an area that was under Nationalist control, where the Nationalists had placed one of their most dependable generals and military units, a pretty large one, north of the Yellow River, both to block the communists from expanding south, but also to deal with the Japanese.



As it turned out, this was 1939, this was the beginning of the breakdown of the United Front that [the Nationalists and Communists] had worked out to fight the Japanese. There was, in fact, going on minor scrimmages there on a three-way front, Japanese versus communist, the Nationalist versus Japanese and communist. A very mixed up situation. I ran into that.

*Q: What exactly were you doing, and where was your support coming from?*

SOLLENBERGER: The support was basically in money. The supplies had to be somehow [transported into] the area. At the beginning, with money, you could buy grain millet which was the staple in that area. And you could distribute it either through work projects, or directly. And because of the emergency nature much of it had to be direct. Clothing was another problem. [During] wintertime, [when it was] cold in the mountain area, the Chinese wore padded garments. The normal commerce did not bring either cotton or clothe in. One of the things that we did was to send refugees from the mountain area into the north China plain with currency to buy both millet and cotton, and to bring it back. The cotton could be used in home industry, women knew how to spin, weave, make clothe. The arrangement there was that by issuing a certain amount of cotton, say to a woman and her daughters-in-law, whoever were about, that by turning this into clothe they would get a certain percentage of this, and the rest of it would come back to us which we would hand out to people who needed it. Part of it was a psychological thing of getting the people back into their villages, even to build lean-to for temporary shelter from the ruins that the Japanese had left. You could do that by issuing grain back then. In other words, it's not hopeless, cooperatively you could get together and do something. But again, it was so frustrating because you'd get it done and the Japanese would come through again. I spent two years, probably the most interesting, and in some respects the best two years of my life.

*Q: Here you were trying to build up villages while the Japanese were trying to destroy them. I would have thought they would have taken a very dim view of what you were doing.*

SOLLENBERGER: They did. That's why I left.

*Q: They didn't arrest you at that point.*

SOLLENBERGER: No, they didn't arrest me. Well, let's back up a little bit. There were risks involved there. We were well aware of these. In another town along the railway which was 100 miles from here, three of the missionaries of this domination, Church of the Brethren, disappeared during the Japanese occupation, and all the evidence pointed towards the Japanese. We were all aware of this, and that we had to be cautious. We wanted to be cautious also because we didn't want the Chinese that were associated with us to be punished by the Japanese. So, it became clear that I couldn't deal with the refugees in the mountains, I couldn't go back and forth in other words, or I would have been arrested. I decided to leave but to come in by the back door.

On my recent trip back to China I went to the same town, the same city, and I met with an elderly woman who after we had left, probably a couple years after we had left, both her husband, her husband's brother and a third person had been, for some reason, selected by the Japanese to be examples of what happens to people that they suspected of whatever. Whether it was being suspected of communist affiliation, or because of their contact with the foreigners. But

these three people had been publicly bayoneted in a demonstration to the populous, a public demonstration of what happens. That sort of thing happened. I've also felt very guilty and I expressed my feeling about that. When I met with them this time, with some of the children, it was interesting that they said it probably would have happened anyhow, and they seemed to hold no feeling or grudge about it. In fact, we were welcomed, we were warmly welcomed by them. One thing the children wanted to know what [was the wartime] situation [like]. The old lady wouldn't talk about it, and had never told them.

*Q: How did money get to you?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, two ways. One way was to take a trip out to Beijing and Tianjin and bring it back. The other way when I came in the back door, arrangements had been made to the Quakers in Shanghai to send money to Xian, to a mission group in Xian, where I picked it up and then carried it into the area.

*Q: What about the other people you were working with? Were there other groups, or was this pretty much an American missionary group?*

This was strictly American. My father and two other missionaries were also involved in doing relief work, but they were basically there as missionaries. I was there strictly on a relief assignment. When I came back through the back door I brought with me a young Quaker, Lewy-Whitaker, then teaching in the Peking American school and when he learned what I was doing and decided that would be more interesting and joined me. He did not make it. When we were crossing the Yellow River coming in, both of us had contracted typhus. We recovered from that and then made the effort again and I made it back up [to where I was before]. But later he, because of the weakness I guess from typhus, he got typhoid fever, and died in Chendu.

*Q: How about the Catholic missionaries, and other groups?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, there were a few that were there. But so far as I know, in the area where I was working, we were the only [foreign] group. [You know that the missionary groups] had divided up [China into exclusive] territories.

*Q: By the time you came back was Kuomintang the government at that time?*

SOLLENBERGER: There was a new government. In 1940 was the government and I think everybody recognized that it was the end of the Nationalist and probably Chiang Kai-shek. That they could effectively mount any sort of resistance against the Japanese on a nationwide basis. I think that's basically why when he was kidnaped in Xian.

*Q: By the young marshall, Jiang Xueliang.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right. Apparently was one of his, or at least allied with him and I believe he was released and according to the information that I had, at least because of the communist insistence that he be released, and their willingness to join the United Front providing he would stop the civil war and focus on fighting Japan. At least that's the story I got from

Marshal Peng Dehuai.

*Q: You left in 1940, how did that come about?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, one, I wasn't well, and two, it became apparent [that] what I had been doing in that area, I could no longer do. So I'd spent two years and decided that I should come back and complete my education.

*Q: How did you get back?*

SOLLENBERGER: Evacuation boat at that time out of Shanghai, that took me down through Australia, New Zealand, and back home. There appeared to be enough nervousness at that point about what was happening in the Pacific, even though we were not yet at war with Japan.

*Q: As you came back to the United States in 1940, were you seeing the Japanese as a very real enemy to the United States?*

SOLLENBERGER: I would, very definitely.

*Q: Had you by any chance run across anybody in the American Foreign Service?*

SOLLENBERGER: I did when I got back to Chungking on my way out. I stopped in at the embassy. It was at that time located there, and gave them a report on what was happening up in Shaanxi with the so-called United Front. They had heard rumors of that, but had no direct reports from observers [actually in] the area.

*Q: Did you get any feel from the embassy at that time, what was the interest?*

SOLLENBERGER: Only in a marginal sort of way. I did get the feeling that there was some exasperation in the way in which the Chinese were, [meaning the Generalissimo], in conducting the war, and was not getting the cooperation that they had hoped. And there was interest also in whether the communist would be a reliable temporary ally in dealing with the Japanese, and what the prospects were [the KMT-CCP] getting together. I could not be very encouraging about that from what I'd seen. It wasn't going to work for reasons on both sides.

*Q: Do you have any recollection of who talked to you particularly?*

SOLLENBERGER: One of the people I talked to was Drummond. There were a couple of people that I talked with, but I've forgotten.

*Q: Where did you go when you took this circuitous route down to Shanghai to Australia, to New Zealand, and back to the States? Where did you go?*

SOLLENBERGER: You mean when I came back?

*Q: Yes.*

SOLLENBERGER: I came back to Manchester to see if they would reinvent me to finish my education, undergraduate education. At that point I felt rather, what's the word I'm trying to think of...rather frustrated, at the slowness of the educational process. I tried to work out a deal with my professors whereby if I could pass their final examinations, I wouldn't have to sit through all the classes, I could compress within one semester a year's work. I felt I could do it. Cordier said okay, but some of the other professors felt this would be setting a precedent that they could not live with. But I did manage to finish up [in 1941].

*Q: This is a great time to be a young single man graduating from college. What happened to you?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, the draft came along, and with the background that I had with the Brethren, Mennonites, Quakers, the three historic [peace churches], my feeling at that time was that I could not participate in warfare, and this was sort of re-established by what I had observed going on as a result of war in northern Shaanxi. So I took an alternative, I complied with the draft, and was assigned to alternative service under the draft. I was four years in alternative service in projects in the United States, [Puerto Rico, and] South Africa.

*Q: When you say alternative work, what did this consist of?*

SOLLENBERGER: Almost anything you can think of, depending on what you could agree on as meaningful. It involved conservation work on the farms, environmental cleanup projects, it involved establishing a rural hospital in Puerto Rico. It involved working in hospital wards. And the reason for South Africa on this was that I was determined to try to get back to China to work in that situation. I was trying to join the Friends Ambulance Unit, it was a British operation, operating in China and got as far as South Africa. There were six of us at that time en route [to China] with the war [still] on. [Our route was to go around the Cape to India and up the Burma Road into China.] We got as far as South Africa and an Act of Congress turned us back and I spent about six months in South Africa.

*Q: What was the Act of Congress?*

SOLLENBERGER: Basically, that people not in military uniform could not go overseas. That was the result basically.

*Q: What was the situation that you saw in South Africa? This would be '43 or '44. It was not an official policy.*

SOLLENBERGER: [Yes, in 1943, we saw apartheid even though it wasn't an official policy.] I volunteered while I was there waiting for transportation, first to go over to China, and then coming back and had to return. I volunteered to work in a hospital basically set up for the blacks in Durban. So I had a direct experience with observing the practical [application of] apartheid.

*Q: Was the hand of the British administration pretty heavy there?*

SOLLENBERGER: No. It seemed to me [that one saw] the hand of the local administration in Johannesburg, [rather than policy from London].

*Q: How was that? Could you have social contact with the blacks, or was this pretty much...*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, I had a good deal of contact with them in the hospital, and only on one occasion did I have social contact outside. That was through a special incident, I guess. They assigned me to the emergency room, and one day a Zulu warrior came in, and his ear was almost cut off. He'd been in a fight; it was dangling down. And the European doctor who was in charge, said, take it off. And I said, isn't it possible that this could be put on? Yes, he said, it is but this is a black and minus an ear is not worth the bother, just cut it off, it's much easier that way. I said, would you mind if I tried to put it on? He said, go ahead. I very carefully stitched his ear back on. He came back several times to get it dressed, etc., and it stuck. But he then invited me to his home and his wife gave me some beads. So I had that one memorable social contact. But otherwise it was just [seeing people in] one of the wards, and a few of the Africans and some of the Asians, the Indian doctors were in the hospital.

*Q: You got back when, about 1944 to the United States?*

SOLLENBERGER: I left the alternative service, civilian public service, and was immediately recruited by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, UNRRA. They were in the process here in Washington of getting people ready to go overseas. The focus had shifted to the Far East, and China, and they somehow learned that I had a good deal of background in China in relief work, and had done some training people to do relief work. So I was recruited [and came to] Washington, College Park actually, and was in charge of training people to go to China with UNRRA, an international mixed group.

*Q: When was this?*

SOLLENBERGER: This was '45.

*Q: So this really started you off in your career of training people.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right.

*Q: What type of training were you giving?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was very brief. We tried to give them a little language, enough to deal with the social situation, the courtesies. There was great pressure at that time to get people out, as soon as possible. Gave them something in the way of history, background, and culture. And then on the nature of the projects that they would likely be working in. When that was winding down another project came up, and this was again initiated by the Church of the Brethren that I'd been associated with. This was through a negotiation they had had with the Chinese as to what they might do in terms of relief work back in China because of their historic interest and background [to] understand China. And what they came up with was what turned out to be the forerunner of the Peace Corps. One of the things that was needed was to as quickly as possible return to

cultivation of land that had gone out of cultivation as a result of the war. The major area was the area that had been flooded by the Yellow River when Chiang Kai-shek blew up the dikes to stop the Japanese advance. [It was successful], but it washed out several million acres of the best agriculture, [which was now overgrown] with stubble and brush. [The objective was] to as quickly as possible get [area] this back into production. The idea here was to use heavy equipment. The Chinese were not familiar at all with [mechanization], meaning sending some operators. The Brethren said, we [are a rural group and] can recruit fifty young men who can understand the operation and maintenance of heavy equipment, farm equipment. UNRRA said we could put this under the wing of UNRRA, and you can work with the Chinese counterpart of UNRRA which was SINRRA, the Chinese National Relief. And because of my background and I was being freed up at that point, UNRRA said you go out and be our liaison with this unit. I agreed and the Brethren said, you'll simultaneously be the director of the unit. I said, okay. That was another interesting year that I spent in China.

*Q: This would be what?*

SOLLENBERGER: '46-'47.

*Q: How did you get there, and where did you go?*

SOLLENBERGER: We flew from California. At that time the UNRRA people had a special contract, and I guess with the cooperation of some officially associated with the military unit, and military troop transports, we flew to Shanghai, with many stops along the way. At that time I was married, and had a young son, and dependents were not allowed to go at that point, so I went alone. They came about six months later. We were stationed in Shanghai as the headquarters. From there on [we] struggle [with] the bureaucracies of UNRRA, bureaucracies of the Chinese, and the renewed civil war, trying to carry out [our] project.

*Q: You got there in '46. Where was your group concentrated?*

SOLLENBERGER: The headquarters was in Shanghai. We had to bring them into Shanghai, and then disburse from Shanghai. The area that we were most interested in was the Yellow River area, where we thought we could do a concentrated job, a quick job, and move out. The idea at that point was not to try to introduce mechanized farming in China. Some of the major tractor manufacturers donated 2,000 tractors to our project. They probably had in mind eventually maybe...

*Q: For all those millions and millions of customers.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right. As it turned out for political reasons the Nationalist government, SINRRA, wanted to satisfy demands [for] little projects all over China. [Well], we couldn't operate without their cooperation in China, [so] basically [our] group's [efforts] had to be dispersed which was the first mistake that was made. Although we did get the major operation started in the flooded area, and we got it started in time so that when the dikes were repaired and the river was put back in its course, the area was safe to operate in. We were there with tractors and training and so forth. But by that time the civil war had resumed in the area. [Our] units that

were operating in the area were sometimes captured by the communists, and sometimes by the Nationalists. In a few cases they were required to haul military equipment, and we decided because of our [neutral] position, we would pull out. We couldn't operate in a situation of that sort.

Just to jump ahead very briefly. My last trip out I went back to Xian to see the terra cotta army. While I was waiting, in the area with the visitors outside, there was a woman and her young daughter sitting there and I sat down beside them. We got into conversation. Her husband and their older son were continuing walking around the area. I was sitting down because I was tired of walking, and we got into a conversation and it turned out that she came from near this flooded area, a city that I had been in and knew about. She said, after we'd talked a little bit, "You know, my grandfather told us about these foreigners that came in with iron cows, [which is what they called the tractors], in the flooded area [to prepare the land. They were very uncertain about what this was all about, and were wondering whether this another type of Japanese invasion, or just what it was. But they were persuaded to go back," and that he, in fact, had benefitted from this tractor operation, and had gone back into the area to resume his farming. At that point, the daughter, [who was] in the third grade, came around her mother and gave me a little gift, a jade locket. I said, "I can't accept this. Why are you giving it to me?" "Because of what you did to help my grandfather."

It's interesting how some of these things come back, and under circumstances one would never expect. But I think probably the interesting thing about this project was that in a fairly direct way, it became the forerunner of the Peace Corps. Here was a group of people working under an international organization, [a] government type of organization with volunteers [working] for subsistence, [an] agreement [which] was very similar to what the Peace Corps is now. You get your subsistence and your travel, your medical, and things of this sort but basically no remuneration. So when the Peace Corps idea began to blossom, I got involved with it as a consultant.

*Q: How did the young men work? What was your impression of the effect on the young men of doing this type of work?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, last December we had a reunion, the 50th year reunion. Fifteen of the group got together down in Texas and we reviewed what had happened. How it affected the lives of the people. So far as these were concerned, there was a direct relationship between the experience they had, [even though] there were many frustrations and complications, and what they chose to do later on in life, almost inclusively did service type of work in their communities. And many of them as a result of this had gone on. One of them particularly had seen the health problems and decided he wanted to be a doctor. He became a doctor. Interestingly he wanted to pursue the [holistic] approach on which he had gotten from the Chinese - their approach to medicine.

*Q: So we're talking about 1947 when you had to pull out. What did you do then?*

SOLLENBERGER: I was approached, I think from the consulate in Shanghai. They were looking for somebody to head up a post-war Chinese language training program for young

Foreign Service officers in Beijing and would I be interested. They obviously had some knowledge about what I'd been doing in the intervening years. So I went out to take a look at it. Beijing seemed very attractive as a place. My wife at that time was with me in Shanghai. She agreed [to go to] Beijing. [During the fall] of '47, [we] went up to Beijing, [where I] directed a program for young officers specializing in Chinese.

*Q: I was thinking this might be a good place to stop. We'll pick it up next time, we've got you in 1947 starting a language school up in Beijing.*

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*This is December 17, 1997. Howard, let's start with the setting of the language school - what was it called in those days? Beijing or?*

SOLLENBERGER: In 1947 we called it Peking, or in Chinese Beiping, because the Chinese capital was at Nanking. I guess before we get to the school here, I was invited to come up [late] in 1947 by Tony Freeman who was then I think he was the acting CG, Consul General, in Beijing at the time, or maybe he was the consul general. He had been a language officer, perhaps one of the better ones in terms of his facility with the language. He had been instrumental back here in Washington, as I understood it, in talking with the people at the Foreign Service Institute about setting up a field school for advance training in Chinese. Training in Chinese in the Foreign Service had been suspended during the war. [There was the pre-service group]; Tony had been a member of that. He had more or less learned on his own and did very well at it, but he had the feeling that it ought to be an organized program, particularly for adult students who came in, and in the beginning didn't know their way around at all in terms of how to approach the language, or what we saw the priorities were in terms of the different skills that were necessary.

I had an interview with Tony, and a little later when I got back to Shanghai I received an invitation to join the staff, to go down to the consul general's office in Shanghai, and be sworn in, which I did, and found myself to be a member of the Department of State, having never set foot in the Department of State up until that particular time. Not knowing who my bosses were back in Washington. I did not actually open the school. This was done by another person who didn't stay with the program, he was [there only] briefly. But there were some preliminary things that were done, taken care of before I arrived. But my responsibility, as defined to me by Tony Freeman, was to run the school, and design a program training the future Foreign Service Chinese language officer corps. I took that as a responsibility throughout my entire career.

*Q: Could you give me sort of your approach? This is a very important step. Chinese is, I won't say unique, but it has ideograms and it has the language. In most other languages you kind of learn the language anyway you can get it. You did not come to the language really from the academic side, but really from personal experience.*

SOLLENBERGER: Personal experience and some experience in training, but at a much lower level than was required by the Foreign Service.

*Q: You and Tony Freeman, you had to have almost a philosophy and approach. I'd like you to*



*talk about what it was.*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, basically, starting off with the assumption that language is what is spoken. That's what we concentrated on during the first part of the program. There's general agreement on that. And only after you are able to comprehend what is spoken to you and are able to respond to that, we felt only at that point it would be judicious to introduce the characters. We had to decide what characters to learn out of the 50-some thousand that are available. What would be useful to the Foreign Service within the limits of the training period, to be learned within the limits of the training period, and then to gradually build up from that.

The second part of the philosophy, I think, on the training was that it needed to be job oriented. We needed to find out what these officers would likely be doing when they went into assignments as Chinese language officers. And then you begin to prepare them for that. Among other things, we found that the duties that would be required involved reading the Chinese newspapers, at least being able to scan it. You probably couldn't depend on most of them for good translations of that, but at least enough to read to find out whether it was worth turning it over to Chinese translators to be translated in full into English, or whomever needed to review it. The second part of this was documentary Chinese. Documentary styles, as you probably know, have changed and were in the process of changing from the old very formalistic styles that were used, to new formalistic styles that were being introduced and were a much more informal approach basically. And that required specialized vocabulary, and specialized phraseology to be used under appropriate circumstances.

The third thing was to act as interpreters where necessary, and to be participants in negotiations. And this required a vocabulary in economic fields, military fields, and events in the political field, and to some extent in the cultural field.

*Q: Were you at that time also looking at the communist phraseology?*

SOLLENBERGER: At the beginning we were not.

*Q: I was just wondering in the political field there was something which one would have to deal with and what the outcome was, and they have their own special phrases.*

SOLLENBERGER: As the program developed later on, and as it became clear that the communist were in the process of taking over China, that was introduced. For one thing we needed to listen to the communist radio, and to know what they were talking about which we had as part of the program. Another aspect of the philosophy was that language is really a cultural subject, and it cannot be divorced from culture or the area studies side of it. This had not been emphasized in previous training. It was something that I felt very strongly about myself. Anyone who was going to be a specialist in Chinese would likely spend a number of years either working in or on Chinese affairs needed to have a pretty good background in Chinese geography, history, culture, religions. And the question was how to get that in. We started off by renaming the school, Chinese Language and Area Studies. We gave ourselves a mandate, in other words trying to introduce this into the program.

*Q: In a way you were blessed by the fact, this is 1997, we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Foreign Service Institute, so you didn't have an institutional bureaucracy in Washington which was just forming at that time, sitting on you, did you?*

SOLLENBERGER: Not at all, in fact, I felt rather uneasy about not having met my boss back here who happened to be Henry Lee Smith.

*Q: Oh, yes, "Hocksie" Lee Smith.*

SOLLENBERGER: "Hocksie" Smith, the head of the language school, and with whom Tony Freeman had discussed what should be done in Beijing. So I got indirectly, from Tony, as to what the philosophy of training back here was.

*Q: The traditional learning process in the United States was, you sat with a book, and you learn vocabulary. I went through this in Latin and French, Spanish. You sort of learned the vocabulary, and you read and you read and don't talk it, or very little. That was pre-war. Were you picking up the wartime experience of military teaching?*

SOLLENBERGER: Very much so. And the reason for that was that Henry Lee Smith was one of the instrumental people in getting the military program going during the war, and in developing textbooks that would approach language learning from the oral side of learning. I learned a little bit from that from the texts that were used, basically military text at that time, borrowing from some of the material that the missionaries had used, and at that time there was a college of Chinese studies in Beijing, the director whom I knew well, and I was able to meet with him and borrow and use some of the materials that they had. Henry [Finn], the then director of the College of Chinese Studies. My approach was to find out what situations our people would be in, and to develop oral dialogues based on those situations, and to learn the vocabulary that was necessary for those. These ranged all the way from the very simple social meetings, to hiring a [pedi]cab, to getting a train ticket, whatever, hotel reservations, all the way from that on up to the meetings that might be anticipated with officials in the government at different levels.

*Q: You had not serve in the government, so whom were you tapping into to find out what would be the sort of getting around the city.*

SOLLENBERGER: I was tapping into former language officers. I had gotten a good deal of this from Tony Freeman to begin with. There were several others that were around, Edward Rice was one, at my age names slip, but there were several that we contacted, plus we formally sent messages to the embassy in Nanking and various consulates that were still open in China at that time, asking them questions about usage of officers that would be coming in and how they would be used and what their functions would be, etc. We tried to build dialogues around that. [As to] hiring Chinese staff, [we hired] some old scholars who knew the tradition of China and the classical forms of the language, and [hired] some relatively young people. Had one person who spent part time with us who was a Chinese-English major at Beijing University who spent part of his time with us. We had good help and good assistance in that.

By the time I got to Beijing to start things off, Mr. Oliver Clubb, had arrived and was the new

Consul General. I remember my first meeting with him. He was very uncertain as to which direction I should go, but what relationships would be having never served in such a situation before. Mr. Clubb was very approachable and [made it clear] from the beginning that this is your job, you do it, and if you have problems come to me, otherwise I'll keep hands off. That was reassuring because Clubb was a language officer himself, and by reputation was a very precise and well organized, and very focused sort of person. But we hit it off well, had a good relationship during my stay there. The major problem that I had with Mr. Clubb, he was so organized. He was so precise in his timing, [that] he had a schedule that was really based on minutes. And part of that schedule was getting in a half hour of physical exercise early in the morning, and his preference was tennis. And I was the chosen person to get up and play tennis with him in the morning, which was good for me also.

*Q: On the area studies side, what resources did you tap for that?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, first of all, required reading. So we developed, with the help of various scholars that were coming through, a reading list. Asked the Foreign Service Institute back here to provide us some funds to buy the books, or better yet, buy them and mail them out to us. At that time it was hard to get material out there. And then to draw on local resources. Beijing was a cultural center, a center of universities, Yenching University, Beida, Qinghua, so there were a number of people we could call on. People really well versed in their own fields. And then there were a number of Fulbright scholars. I shouldn't say a number, there were several Fulbright scholars who were out there studying in special fields, and we were able to invite them in and to call on them. For current affairs, current events and things of this sort, correspondents liked to come to Beijing and they would usually stop by and we were able to tap some of them.

*Q: Were you at that point concerned about, what in modern terms we call political correctness? For example, thinking of the book Red Star Over China by Edgar Snow, and there were some other books on China that looked somewhat favorably, if not quite favorably, on the communist side. Was this a problem?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was not a problem. What we could get our hands on we used.

*Q: Were there any particular books, we're obviously talking about something 50 years ago, that were particularly good for what you wanted to know?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, for basic history at that particular point, and some cultural contact, [there was] Goodrich that we turned to. But on the geography, Pearl Buck's husband, had done a good deal of work on Chinese geography.

*Q: I was wondering, you talked about correspondents, particularly in this early time. The people who come to my mind are Theodore White, Edgar Snow, and is it Agnes Smedley? And there must have been others. I mean were they involved in what you were doing?*

SOLLENBERGER: Teddy White was. But Agnes Smedley, no. Edgar Snow, no. Although we had Snow's book, Red Star Over China which was there. We were paying attention to what was going on. To some extent also because my own personal experience and background in China,

both with the tractor unit, which had been just before this assignment, where we had run into problems with the communists. And in trying to maintain a neutral position [for] UNRRA in the work that we were doing. So I had come into contact with them, and also because I'd had contact with some of the communist leaders in '38 and '39. So I was well aware of what was going on there, and the people that were focused on them.

*Q: How did your school differ from the old Chinese Language School. I think of General Stilwell, Ridgway, and other military. But I suppose with the Foreign Service prior to that. Was there a difference?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, there was a difference and it became quite clear what the difference was. When I took over the job in Beijing there was already an army language school in operation. I've forgotten how many, but there were I guess 20 or 30 people enrolled in that school. My first question really was, why do we need two government schools? Some of the things we have in common. There are some technical things that the military people would need to learn that we don't need to pay much attention to. But there's a lot of overlap and it just seemed to me...but... I was told to stay away. They were determined to have their own and to maintain a separation. I pursued it several times while I was there with the director of the army program in terms of at least when I invited in some distinguished speaker that I could also invite his people and we tried to schedule things in such a way that we could join forces on that, and certainly not duplicate. And I had contacts that they did not have.

*Q: At that point, we're talking about 1947... I'm a graduate of the Army Language School in Monterey in 1950, and frankly the way I was taught there, took Russian, hasn't really differed from both languages I've taken at the Foreign Service Institute. So you're all working out of the same well, weren't you?*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right, we were.

*Q: This might be a point to ask about Henry Lee Smith, because he was really the person who developed the system, wasn't he? Or at least in part.*

SOLLENBERGER: He was certainly one of the king pins in developing the army language system. There were half a dozen, Milt Cowin, I've forgotten the man who did the Chinese.

*Q: What was his background? What did you know about him?*

SOLLENBERGER: I knew practically nothing about him until I came back to the United States. But his background was in linguistics, historical and descriptive linguistics, and his approach to language training was based on linguistic analysis, and highly focused on the oral spoken language. He was a gregarious person. Had had a radio program at one point, Where Are You From, which at one time was well known. If he couldn't guess where you came from within a certain radius, you would get a free refrigerator or something like that. In those days that was the technique that he used. This was relatively easy to do once you knew the landmarks for this.

*Q: And regional accents were still regional accents, too.*

SOLLENBERGER: I think the strong point for Henry Lee Smith was that he had a lot of contacts in the linguistic community, and was able to attract to the Institute a number of young promising linguists who were able to build on the system that had gone into the military training program, and to adopt and apply this to this Foreign Service. And at the same time to move ahead in really relating language to culture. In doing this, he also recruited a number of anthropologists. And we can talk about that later when we get to the Foreign Service Institute itself.

*Q: We'll stick to China. In 1947 when you arrived, what was the political situation in that part of China when you first arrived?*

SOLLENBERGER: The civil war was a continuing problem at that point. General George Marshall's efforts to arrive at a shared power agreement, something of that sort, did not work. And it became pretty clear that the struggle was going to continue. The communists had acquired a good deal of strength during the period of the Japanese occupation, and immediately thereafter. They were held back to some extent in Manchuria. They probably expected to get more assistance from the Soviet Union in terms of being able to take over the Japanese equipment that was left there when the Japanese surrendered. But the Russians took everything they wanted first, [and the communists got] what was left over. They also took a lot of the factory heavy equipment, industrial equipment out of Manchuria, and moved it into the Soviet Union. That probably held up the communist advance somewhat, we don't know how much, but somewhat. Even when I was there in '47, at least as I look back on it now, it was pretty clear to me and to those I was dealing with, and to Mr. Clubb, that the communists would probably at least take over north China. There was talk at that time that might be a period, maybe an extended period, of a divided China north of the Yangtze River, and south of the Yangtze River. And that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek probably had enough strength south of the river. The frustrating problem that we were dealing with at that time was that Chiang seemed unwilling to put the resources necessary into defending Manchuria. And if Manchuria went, and we were watching to see what would happen, or if Manchuria went, it was pretty clear both in terms of the way history repeats itself and plays out, that north China would soon follow. And that's what happened.

*Q: What about the students who came there? The first crew. Can you tell some of their background and as you were feeling your way around to developing this program?*

SOLLENBERGER: There were several there when I arrived. One of the things I learned pretty early in the game was, we're going to get students with a wide range of backgrounds, and we'd have to accommodate that which probably meant much more individual programming in training than any sort of group training. Ralph Clough was one of the students, and he had spent some time at the...was it Yale in China?

*Q: I think it was Yale in China.*

SOLLENBERGER: Jerry Stricker was another one. Oscar Armstrong who had some background, having lived in China. It ranged all the way from people who had some experience, some background, and a start in the language already, to those that were complete novices that

didn't have any background. One of the things that I tried to work out through correspondence with Henry Lee Smith in Washington was that we try to use the language school [in Beijing] strictly for advanced training, and that certain background could probably be provided for them back here in the States, or at universities, etc., who were using the modern system of teaching. And would come out to us only when they could really make maximum use of living and studying in the culture itself. We weren't in business long enough to get any real system going on that.

*Q: Were you feeling any of the winds of what later became known as McCarthyism there? John Stewart Service is having his problems and this is mainly sourced to former Ambassador Pat Hurley who had very strong feelings. I think in diplomatic terms most of Foreign Service people would describe Hurley as a prime horse's ass. But at the same time he was politically powerful. Were you feeling any of that?*

SOLLENBERGER: Not directly, no. Well aware of it, and well aware of some of the problems that the Chinese language people had gotten into on that. Particularly where there was a feeling of criticism of Chiang Kai-shek. And Theodore White, of course, had his say on that and we got his views on that. We also had the views of some of the Foreign Service people that were coming through.

*Q: I realize we're really talking about a rather short time before the place fell apart, but were you able to tap into people who were coming from the United States to tell about China and the political repercussions?*

SOLLENBERGER: Very little. We got a little bit of that...I used Clubb also who had arrived just about the same time that I did, in terms of what was going on back here in the State Department. I also arranged for him to have briefings with the students as a group periodically to bring them up to date on the information that he was getting through the channels that are open only to the head person there. And he was very good at that, and took an interest in the students, and I think kept them pretty well abreast of what was going on.

*Q: What was the plan for housing and getting the students coming in to get absorbed into the community? How did that work?*

SOLLENBERGER: We had to take the housing that was available. We took advantage of property that I guess had been acquired during the period when Beijing was the...when we had a legation there, and Sanguangao, which had been probably a part of the old Han Institute, the Chinese Board of Examiners in the old days, studying classical Chinese, bordering on that. There were some Chinese style houses that were available there, and we put our students there first and by preference, because they were a little bit separated from the consulate general, from its main compound. We held our classes there also. It was also easier in a place like that for Chinese who wanted to come in freely to come in. They weren't faced with going past someone guarding the gate so to speak. Later on when things became tense we had to move out of that area, and we moved into what had been the old marine barracks which was converted into office space. I was given space on the ground floor. The Army Language School had the top floors.

The other thing that I did was to have field trips much as you do in the schools here, you take the kids out to museums. So we organized a number of field trips that would take us out to look at things. Plus, and somewhat to my later regret, I argued and got funds to send [our students] on field trips outside of Beijing for two reasons. One, to get a little experience with dialects that were spoken in Beijing itself. The second reason for this was, and this was a personal view that I had, that the Department and our official establishments in China, were too much focused on the urban areas when the majority of the Chinese population lived outside, were rural. And that we needed to know a little bit more about what was going on in the rural countryside. And the only way to get that is to send them out. So we sent them out early on, sent them out with an instructor, so they would have a companion. Later on, go out by yourself and see if you can make your way. Some of them took some very interesting trips. Later on, after the communists took over, I was to learn that they were well aware of this, and considered that I was running a spy ring in Beijing, and that one of the evidence for that was that I was sending these people out all over China, obviously to gather information.

*Q: Which, of course was what...*

SOLLENBERGER: ...which is what I was doing.

*Q: Well, I mean, this is what the Foreign Service does.*

SOLLENBERGER: That caused me some problems later on.

*Q: Before we come to that, was there any debate, concern...could you talk a bit about the thoughts you had, and Clubb and others...is it Chubb or Clubb?*

SOLLENBERGER: Clubb, Oliver Edmond Clubb.

*Q: ...about Mandarin versus Cantonese. I mean the languages of China.*

SOLLENBERGER: There was no question at that particular point as to what we would focus on in the north. For two reasons, one, Mandarin is by far the language that is used by most of the population. At least 70-80 percent of the population could manage at that time to function in the various dialects of Mandarin. Cantonese, a different language basically related, Fukienese, a different language, but related. Hakka, a different language, but related. The minority languages, the mountain people, the Turkic people, the Tibetans, Mongols, etc., were at best 10 percent of the population, and were not of particular interest in terms of political, economic focus. So concentration, no question, was on Mandarin Chinese.

*Q: Was there any problems from the fact that the majority of Chinese in the United States spoke, I believe, am I correct in saying they came from the area around Canton?*

SOLLENBERGER: No. Later on, when we were pushed out of China, or left China, we did begin to focus on some of the other languages, Fukienese because of Taiwan. We never did get into Hakka. But Cantonese, yes, we wanted to train some people in both Mandarin and Cantonese, and Taiwanese. But that was later, that was at a later date.

*Q: Could you describe events, and how they impacted on your operation?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, it's hard to know where to begin. It became pretty clear, we'd move when it fell.

*Q: Which is when, in '48?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, and when Angus Ward was forced to leave, in other words he was held under less than free conditions while he was there, and was really pushed out. He came through Beijing and we had a chance to meet and talk with him. But it was pretty clear from what was happening in Manchuria, and the fact that Chiang was not willing to commit enough troops. He probably didn't have enough confidence in doing that, he was harboring his strength for events later on. But it became pretty clear at that point that we were a target, and we would probably go down. How that would happen we weren't sure. There was a pretty strong feeling, and Clubb had this, as well as the committee of the diplomats who were in Beijing, and the major countries all left people there to keep a finger in the pie, and then to report on what was going on. And Clubb would meet regularly with them. There was a committee that would meet and they were trying to coordinate their reaction to this about whether when to leave, or not to leave. There was a movement underway, and I think the British probably took the lead in this, and that was to get the city declared an open city so in the event the communist came, it would not be destroyed, [because Beijing was] important internationally as a cultural center. Important to China. I know that Clubb felt that in a way that was, yes, go ahead with that, but he didn't think the communists would really attack the city. His feeling, I think, was that the traditional Chinese military approach to things would be such that the communist would move in, close off the city, would isolate it, and that a deal would be made with the General defending the city, and that it would be turned over without any major attack on the city.

We began to organize ourselves, obviously in '48, for an eventuality of whatever might come. I was assigned the job of laying in stores and supplies in case we ran short of food, and if there was a siege of the city that went on for a long period of time, there might be a problem, also in charge of medical problems or services. One of the people did help with the evacuation of people that might be leaving because I could handle the Chinese language. We received information from the Department that dependents could be sent home. Among the students, most of us decided not to keep our wives there, and in one or two cases I believe, they decided they would send their families home. I decided to keep mine in Beijing. Again, feeling that the risks were probably minimal, there would be a lot of inconvenience. The personal risks would be rather minimal. And I didn't expect there would be a direct attack on the city.

The other thing was, my wife was pregnant, and we were expecting another child and we didn't want to be separated at that particular time. But the program went ahead, on schedule, without very much interruption. To the extent that we could we continued field trips in areas that were still open to us. In one particular case, without mentioning a name, one of our students who had been a former Marine, this is when we were under siege, decided he wanted to go out and see how close the communists actually were. He borrowed a Jeep from the [motor] pool, and headed off towards the east, towards the city at Tongzhou. He was advised by the Nationalists that were



at the gate of Peking at that time, not to go any further. They didn't know where the communists were, but we don't have any more troops out there, it's a no-man's land. But he decided he would go anyhow, he hadn't gone very far and he saw there was nobody in the field that he could see. He decided that he better turn around and come back. He got turned around, but as he started back, there was fire from some of the farm houses on both sides directed at him and his Jeep. A couple tires were knocked out, the radiator was punctured, a bullet through the windshield. He couldn't turn the thing off, it got too hot. He came to my office, white and shaken up. He had found out where the communists were. We had those kind of discipline problems.

*Q: During this time, what was the feeling towards the communists among...I mean, your personal feelings. You'd had dealings with them, but there was this situation in Mukden where Angus Ward was our Consul General and his staff were kept basically as prisoners.*

SOLLENBERGER: ...they were under house arrest.

*Q: Yes, and it was not an easy house arrest at all. We have a long interview with Elden Erickson, who was there as a staff, sort of like a secretary, to Angus Ward. What was the general feeling, and your feeling about almost can we do business with the communists. After all, it hadn't been that long that we'd been allied with the Soviet Union.*

SOLLENBERGER: There seemed to be a general feeling...well, first of all we had a pretty realistic view of the communists just by virtue of the experience that Angus Ward had had, and from reports that we were getting pretty regularly from Chinese who had contacts through family and so on out in the areas that were controlled by the communists. I personally had had some experience in trying to get a tractor operation started in the Yellow River, and knew the problems that were involved in that. I had also, even early on in the '30s, had run into several situations that made it clear to me that the communists, on one hand, could wear silk gloves for a while, and on the other hand, could be extremely ruthless. I'd actually seen and experienced both sides of that. Clubb, himself, was really a scholar, and was really the right person there at the right time. He knew the Soviet Union, he had served in the Soviet Union, his Chinese was good, and his contacts were good. He was realistic, and knew how to deal with them. I think he hoped that we could stay on because he felt it important that we maintain contact with them, that we don't completely lose contact with the communists. He needed to know what was going on in China, and the best way for that would be to maintain some contact there, whether informal or official, dependent on how things would develop. I believe this was the general view of the other representatives from other countries in Beijing at the time also. In fact, the reason for leaving us there, it was clear that Beijing would go, was with I think, the hope that some arrangement could be worked out whereby we could maintain some relations with the [incoming communists] however informal. That was the way we proceeded. Clubb, as I recall, really based his reporting, and his approach to this on that assumption, and was led in several instances I believe to believe that it might be possible that the communists might not want to put all of their eggs in a Soviet basket. That they might be realistic enough to know that in terms of economic development, assistance and so on, that they would have to turn some place else than to the Soviet Union, that had been through a devastating war period, and who else was there, the United States. But he was a realist, and [knew] there were a lot of problems.

*Q: Were you involved thinking about transferring the school, or did anyone think about transferring the school to Nanking, or southern China?*

SOLLENBERGER: No.

*Q: So how did this play out?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, we stayed on. The communist laid siege in the city, and on several occasions fired shells into the city, but carefully avoiding the old legation area, and carefully avoiding the Forbidden City and cultural places of that sort, which was encouraging to us. But Clubb maintained close contact with the defending General, Fe Zhouyi, and I remember he was probably under siege. He came to dinner at Clubb's house, I was present at the dinner also, was able to talk with his wife. He gave no indication at that point as to what was going to happen insofar as we were concerned, at least verbally he was going to defend the city. But it was pretty clear from other signs that that was not the case. He had already made a deal to turn the city over, in return for which he would be given a position in the new government.

The actual takeover was quiet. We were told to stay in our compounds. Several of us did try to get out on the streets a little bit to see what was going on, and were not bothered. One of our students was taking movies of the liberation parade and they confiscated his equipment and film. But initially there seemed to be no problems. The city was quiet and the staff would still come to work. We kept the school going. So the predictions that we had that they would exercise their initial control with kid gloves on seemed well founded.

*Q: Were you by any chance, prior to this, had you dusted off the books about the Boxer Rebellion, and the siege of Peking?*

SOLLENBERGER: Oh, yes. We were all well aware of that, and were prepared. But the turnover was really quite peaceful.

*Q: Did this do anything to the curriculum of the school?*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, several things. One, it became harder for us to get people in on the area studies side. We obviously couldn't get the communists, they would not recognize us at all. More of my time was spent on helping Clubb with some of his problems. There were still a lot of Americans that were in the area, and some of them wanted to leave. There were property problems, there were all kinds of problems helping American citizens, and the students decided to stay on and see what was going to happen. The communists refused to recognize Clubb's official position. As far as they were concerned he was a foreign citizen staying on in Beijing, stay on as long as you mind your business, so to speak. But it presented a problem to him. When things came up that needed to be represented to the local authorities, which was then the communists. He did not want to sort of compromise his position by going himself, so he would use me or a couple of the students to do this for him. It became sort of a game that we played with the Alien Affairs Office, which was our contact.

We would go in with a problem, so and so wants to leave, or has a property that has been

occupied, this was American property. First of all, you'd be met by a low level clerk, or officer whatever it was, who would want to know what business you had, and who you wanted to see. We don't know whom we should see, but here's the problem, can you tell us whom we should see. So we would orally tell them what the problem was. Then routinely you would say, well, this was in writing and we knew this and we had it in writing, here it is. They would look it over, oh, this is signed by Mr. Clubb, U.S. Consul General. We can't accept this, we don't recognize his position. So you'd say, you know what the problem is now. Well, would you cross off his name? I'd say, I can't do that, he's my boss and from our point of view he is the American representative here, and that's his title. So, you know what the thing is, I'll just take this letter back. Oh, no, you can't take it back, you've already given it to us. So we'll cross it off. You want to cross it off, all right, then that's still what he is. Then we'd ask is there a chance that we can see somebody and talk about this issue who has some authority. Well, we'll let you know what the outcome is. This was at least a weekly affair.

*Q: Would the problems sometimes be solved?*

SOLLENBERGER: Sometimes it would be. Sometimes the solution would not come back to us. It would be dealt directly to the situation or the person involved.

*Q: Looking at this back from the perspective, what was the American rationale, and what was the Chinese communist rationale for this non-recognition, recognition, and all that?*

SOLLENBERGER: It's hard to say what the communist rationale was. My own interpretation of this was that they were uncertain when they first came in, as to whether they wanted to keep ties open or not. They could easily have made life difficult for us as they did in the south. The fact that they didn't initially do this seemed to be a very clear indication that at least within the hierarchy of the decision makers, that they were uncertain as to which direction to go.

I think the reason why they didn't want to recognize the official position of this was that they didn't want to have direct talks, negotiations, with the foreigners at that particular point. Part of it was also they wanted to wait until their position in China was clearer. Until they had achieved military control over all major parts of the country. Then their dealing with the foreigners, the outsiders would be different than when they were only partially in control. But I think there was a delay for that reason. From our point of view there was nothing we could do about it. But there was the incident that caused us to leave.

Let me build up to that. It was clear that they were moving towards the establishment of a government as soon as they were in control of China as a whole. They would formally announce an established government and the seat would be in Beijing. This was accomplished on the first of October 1949. An interesting personal incident that was involved with this. When we established official contact with the Chinese after Nixon's visit...

*Q: This is in '72.*

SOLLENBERGER: ...and to set up liaison offices rather than formal embassies. Han Xu was sent by the Chinese government to Washington to open their liaison office. The Ambassador

came later, and Han Xu himself was later appointed as Ambassador. But shortly after he arrived the word came to me from the East Asian desk that it would be nice if we could find a reason to invite him to come to the Institute to show courtesy by recognizing that he was here. So I invited him and he came with several of his staff people. We were in the building in Rosslyn [Virginia] at that point. When he came upstairs in the elevator, following the Chinese pattern I went out to the elevator to greet him. They'd had let me know that he was coming up. He strode over to me, put out his hand, and his English is fairly good, he said, "Mr. Sollenberger, I believe we've met before." I said, "That's possible. I don't know. I was in Peking in such and such a time." He said, "I was the young officer at that time that handed to you at the entrance of the U.S. Consulate General, the declaration of the establishment of the People's Republic of China." I said, "I remember, but I'm afraid I don't recognize you at that particular point."

Back in Beijing in '49, increasingly we were having difficulty as the time went on. The Chinese feeling that they could come into the compound. And this began to cause me to wonder how much longer we could keep this thing going because we needed our instructors, and up to that point they were willing to come in. They hadn't faced any personal pressure or problems. There was another incident that occurred. The gate keeper one night came to the house that I was living in, banging on the door. He said, you've got to come out to the gate, there's a platoon of the Liberation Army out there demanding entrance. I said, all right, but we'd better let Mr. Clubb know about this also. So there had to be time out. I'll go out and see what the problem is. They were out there, and there was a good deal of tension. They were demanding to come in, and I couldn't quite figure out why they wanted to come in. They were trying to explain that they thought that we had done something to the guards that had been stationed in front of the consulate compound. Of course, we'd done nothing at all of that sort. And they wanted to come in and search. Well, Clubb joined us at that particular point, and we're talking back and forth. We finally agreed that we'd let them in, but we would accompany them, not into the buildings, but to the compound. We hadn't gotten very far, following the compound wall, where we found several rifles that had been thrown over the wall. What had happened, obviously, was that their guards had gone AWOL. They thought that we had something to do with that. As a matter of fact, we did. My son, he was then four years old, had a little Jeep and he would regularly go out to the...

*Q: This is a peddle car.*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, a peddle car. He would regularly go out to the gate that led into the compound, and while the guards were under strict orders not to fraternize with us, a kid was something else. He established pretty good relations with them. I used to send tea out with him, and Life magazines to look at, and he would report back...I ask him what sort of questions they asked him. Well, they wanted to know whether we beat our servants or not. And what kind of food did you eat? In other words, there were all sorts of questions about our relationship with the Chinese. Apparently they thought we were ogres of some sort. I've always credited him with causing the first defection. One of the guards that was there at this particular time this happened had the same Chinese surname, that I have. So he was "da Su," and my son was "xiao Su." They got on pretty friendly terms on the basis of it, having the same surnames.

*Q: One of the ways the Chinese communist, when they first took over used were very heavy*

*handed in Mukden, but did but later in Shanghai, and I guess elsewhere, to put pressure on us were claims that we either had caned the Chinese, or we'd mistreated the Chinese. This became sort of the lever which was used a lot. Did that hit you?*

SOLLENBERGER: That hit me, yes. Towards the end, various pressure was being put on the Chinese tutoring staff from the outside. They wouldn't talk about it. They wouldn't talk much about it. But when it became clear that after the decision that we move out, made clear that we were leaving, that they had to stay and make their peace. The instructors got together accused me of withholding part of their salaries. And probably several other things having to do with the students' trips.

*Q: Was this cooked up do you think, by the Chinese authorities?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was cooked up. Well, it was cooked up by the Chinese authorities and it was an embarrassment to some of the instructors. They said, we know you haven't done this. You're leaving. We're going to have to stay, and going to have to face it. I had already sent the message back through Clubb, and he certainly supported it, that we ought to be very liberal in severance pay for these people. I was at that time recommending...I've forgotten whether it was six months, a half a year, severance on that service they had rendered, whatever excuse they wanted to use to do this. And the answer came back, no. It was eventually negotiated that they would get, I think, three months. In the meantime they'd taken this to the authorities and I was summoned to the People's Court to explain and fortunately the records that are kept are very detailed in matters of this sort. There was a three man arbitration panel. After laying out the evidence on this for them, and being questioned by them on a number of different things, not on the students' field trips, not on spy charges. This was strictly on the way in which we had dealt with the people we had employed. They finally told the instructors, you better take what you can get, and that settled it, and I had no trouble getting my exit permit.

*Q: Which is interesting because in other cases sometimes the demands, I mean from what I've gotten from other people, the demands of the Chinese employees were one, excessive, two, not really of their own volition. The Chinese communist courts sort of backed them up in order to cause real trouble. It sounds like there wasn't an unified...*

SOLLENBERGER: This is not the case where we were. We got by fairly peacefully. It was only later, as I was leaving, that a piece came out in the Chinese press that I was leaving and called me the head of spy ring.

*Q: When this happened, what was the situation in China overall?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, by this time the People's Republic had been established, there was a government in Beijing. They were in effective control over most of China. In other words, there was really no major resistance.

*Q: And Chiang had gone to Formosa or to Taiwan?*

SOLLENBERGER: The incident that caused us to leave, maybe you have this from other

sources, the incident that caused us to close down and to leave was when they announced that they were going to take over the old Marine barracks, which was part of the mission, located in the legation quarter. The American point of view, and our point of view, was that these facilities were acquired by treaty rights, and we stood by that interpretation. They said there was a difference between the old legation quarter itself and the Marine barracks, and anyway we don't recognize these treaties anymore, and we're going to come in and take it over.

*Q: This is where the school was.*

SOLLENBERGER: Yes, at this time. Clubb obviously was in touch with Washington back here and how do we deal with that. And we decided we would stay put as long as we could, and see if they would back down, and it became apparent the day before, and they announced that they would take over, that they were not going to back down. So everybody turned to, and vacated the old Marine barracks building. Files had already been burned, and furniture and stuff like that was hauled over to the legation compound and was stacked up out there, and they came in and occupied the premises. But we had apparently made it clear to them that if they did this, any chance of recognition, or contact, would be erased as a result of this act on their part. It was from our point of view an illegal act in opposition to our treaty rights. So from that point on we began a gradual withdrawal and that incident was the sort of thing that brought the Chinese staff into play. They were concerned about what was going to happen to them, and we were concerned about what would happen to them. We'd had enough stories about the Chinese from indirect sources about what was happening to people who had close contacts and worked for Americans.

*Q: What was happening, what you were getting?*

SOLLENBERGER: First of all, they would put the people through a brain washing process, and sometimes with torture, and sometimes were persuaded. There didn't seem to be a consistent pattern, and to some extent on who was in charge at a particular place at a particular time as to what the pattern would be. We had one person of the staff caught up in this, he'd gone to see about his family and had been picked up and was held for several months and \_\_\_\_, but came back and we got his story. We had a pretty good idea as to what might happen, and what could happen to the Chinese \_\_\_\_.

*Q: As all this was going on, the fall of Nanking and others, did the schools continue?*

SOLLENBERGER: The school continued right up until the end of the year. The schedule was disrupted somewhat from time to time, partly because some of the instructors were having difficulty in getting in. But we kept some classes going right up to the end of the year.

*Q: The end of 1949.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right. Then we closed down, and it was a matter of getting ourselves organized.

*Q: Let's get to how you got organized and out. How did you? Was there any problem?*

SOLLENBERGER: We had to get permission to leave the city, and you had to have a physical examinations to get out. There was some concern as to whether they would use that rule to hinder us or not. Our son developed pneumonia at the time that we were supposed to leave, and had gotten permission to leave, so we wanted to extend our stay a little bit until he got over it. There was also the problem of getting your household things out. The State Department had authorized an earlier shipment of effects if we wanted to do that before the communists came in. We took advantage of that to some extent, but we still had things that we wanted to ship out. It was uncertain as to what we would have to go through, whether they would take all the stuff apart and go through it and see what we were taking out, and just how they would deal with it, departed by way of Tianjin.

One humorous incident. I had some traveler's checks and they wanted to know if I had any currency, you can't take these out, you can't take foreign currency out. Phil Manhart was then consul in Tianjin and he was there helping me get out. So I said to Phil, "You keep these and see if you can find a way to get them out to me." They saw me hand them to Phil. I didn't hear anything about these traveler's checks for a year or so, until American Express said, "Your checks have been cashed in Hong Kong." I said, "That's news to me. I've already reported that I couldn't bring them out. I had to leave them there with Phil." A couple of years later I got a letter and a check from David Barrett, an assistant military attaché, with a big apology saying that Manhart had entrusted him with bringing the checks out, but he ran into a desperate situation and had to cash them. In the meantime, so many things had happened that he had sort of forgotten about this and suddenly realized what he had done, here's the check to cover everything.

In Tianjin, the Chinese inspectors only opened one box. I had everything very carefully listed. They opened one box and closed it up before we left, and we got out without any problem although there was uncertainty throughout as to whether there would be problems, blocks put in our way. They could have said, your physical exam shows such and such, we'll have to keep you here until you get over that, there were all kinds of excuses to keep us there. But they seemed to be at that particular point prepared and willing and maybe even happy to see us out.

*Q: How did the timing work? Here you were in 1949 declared to be the capital of China. We'd had an embassy in Nanking. Then that fell to the communists. And then I think people moved to Shanghai, and then that went. What had happened at the time you were being expelled, what about our people in southern China?*

SOLLENBERGER: I think the decision had been made back here in Washington at that point that we would withdraw, and that meant everybody. It was a matter of scheduling and timing in order to get everybody out of China. I don't know the details and never looked specifically into this in terms of the record as to what the Department's statement to the Chinese was. Judging from the results, it became perfectly clear to us in the field that we'd issued an ultimatum saying, if you take this step the chances of any relationships with you are being destroyed by you, and we'll pull out. At least that was the effect of the thing, and I presume that that's actually what happened.

*Q: What was the feeling that you were getting from the officers who were talking to, Clubb and others, about this policy? I mean, here was a sort of a new nation, and in the normal course of*

*things, we'd say, okay, there's been a civil war and these guys have won, and with a little huff and puff, you'd say, okay, let's recognize it and get on with our business. Was there any feeling at that time, or were you so far removed that you didn't get it, about there were a lot of domestic politics within the United States, or was this just because the Chinese communists were being so beastly.*

SOLLENBERGER: We knew that there was a political problem back home with regard to China. The fact that we were being accused of losing China, and not supporting Chiang Kai-shek. The feeling on the spot, as I best recall it, and in talking with Clubb about this, was that we couldn't really ignore...at that time they were still talking about five hundred, six hundred million people, and the government had taken control of that area, and we needed to have a listening base at least in China, and Beijing was the place to have it. We'd been left there with the prospects that this might happen and it had gone sour, we were pulling out. The communists were asking for recognition, but Clubb's position on this, and I think he was right on this, and as it turned out he was right, was that while we might go ahead and decide to recognize them, they might not be willing or able to reciprocate, and that would put us in a difficult position. The British seemed to be more inclined to go ahead and accept the fact that China had been taken over by the communists, and recognized the argument that, because we have to do business, we have to know what's going on. They did extend diplomatic recognition, and as Clubb had sort of predicted, the communists were very slow, with all sorts of obstacles in the way of recognition. I think the French were that way also, and the Dutch.

*Q: You know, there was such a to-do later about France recognizing communist China. They didn't recognize until the '60s, I think, under de Gaulle. But the British didn't get anything out of it this the whole time, I mean, it was still ended up the United States versus China. I mean, this was the big game and the rest of them were were kind of there but almost invisible.*

SOLLENBERGER: A trend that we began to pick up even before we left were some reports that all was not well between the communists and the Russians.

*Q: That was then in the Soviet Union.*

SOLLENBERGER: How serious that was, nobody quite knew. But it did become apparent from a geographic point of view, the way in which the Chinese Communists had been sort of short-changed in their takeover of Manchuria, and in the way in which the Russians had been dealing with the Chinese on this. That some of the old feelings of the Chinese, toward the northern barbarians, seemed to be emerging. How serious that would become nobody at that point quite knew.

*Q: What about your young Turks, your students? How were they doing?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, presumably they were studying. [Laughter] One of the problems, after the communist takeover of the city was that they weren't as free to move about, and certainly not to go out of the city. You had to get permission, and they were not likely to get permission to do that. The foreign community was sort of thrown in on itself, and there was a lot of social activity, invitations, etc., to the point where I had to send a letter out to the other official establishments



and other countries out there, requesting them to please limit their invitations to our students to weekends. That they had homework to do, and it wasn't that they didn't want to be social, that they would probably rather do that than study. But please understand this, of course the students were not exactly pleased with that.

*Q: So you played the role of the heavy hand.*

SOLLENBERGER: They got along well. We could still go out and have Chinese meals together.

*Q: Well, of course, if you've got to be trapped in a city, and Beijing is not the worst place to be trapped in. While we're still dealing with this period, were there other language schools? I'm thinking of the French, the Germans, the British had something there, were they using sharing of techniques, how did this work?*

SOLLENBERGER: The British had their facilities in Hong Kong, so any training they were doing was confined there. We knew that, but there was really no contact. The question came up at one point about some Australian students maybe joining us. They later joined us in Taiwan at the school there. The College of Chinese Studies stayed open as long as they could, and there were some foreigners that were put in the College of Chinese Studies. The French, I don't know.

*Q: Well, Howard, this might be a good place to stop. We've got you up to going back to Washington. You went to Washington in 1950?*

SOLLENBERGER: There were no people going to China at that point, because our ties there had been cut off. There was a question as to whether we should continue the long term specialized training in China. As that turned out that became really one of the things that I probably fought the hardest for, and maybe had some influence on, in maintaining at least the minimal amount of training on the assumption that sooner or later we were going to have to deal with China, we couldn't ignore what was then considered 500 million people, regardless of who was in charge. And that if we ignored China, then we would be suffering the same sort of gap that they were complaining about because they hadn't given training during the war period, and found a gap of officers at appropriate grade levels. Of course, nobody knew when or how soon, and what the circumstances relations would be to re-establish. It wasn't clear at that time as to what the role of Taiwan was going play in this, although that became clear very shortly.

*Q: Had you looked at the army language school at Monterey or any of the military places as far as a job goes?*

SOLLENBERGER: No, I hadn't. My experience with the army training program as it was run in Beijing at the same time I was there indicated that's not a place I'd be very happy in.

*Q: When you got to the State Department and you decided to sign on...this was about when?*

SOLLENBERGER: May of '50.

*Q: Because essentially against that on June 25, 1950 interests in the Far East began to heat up*

*again. How did the advent of the Korean war...I mean, you didn't have time to almost find your way to the bathroom before the Korean war started. Did that have any affect on what you were doing?*

SOLLENBERGER: Initially, not very much. It took a little time for it to sink in, and, of course, when the Chinese got into the conflict...

*Q: We're talking about around November or December of 1950.*

SOLLENBERGER: When the Chinese decided to come in, then there was some interest in training, and also utilizing the language officers who had already received training. They stationed them in the key positions around China: Japan, Southeast Asia, certainly in Hong Kong.

*Q: At this time I've interviewed people who were language officers in Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, China-watching jobs. Would this pep up the program at all?*

SOLLENBERGER: It would, except for the strictures within the Department itself of personnel system. The answer we were constantly getting was, if we don't have positions, assignments, there's no point in continuing training. Particularly when the Department, and particularly the Institute, was short of funds, personnel was short, the personnel system felt it was in a tight, tight situation. The Department generally would have been willing to let training slide for a while. I kept insisting that something had to be done, even though they didn't have immediate slots, there would be plenty of opportunity as things went on to utilize these people even in places like London, and different European capitals where there was some contact and interest in China, and what was going to happen in China.

*Q: There's nothing worse in sort of the new boy on the block, and don't know anyone who may have had clout, prestige or anything to build on, and yet you hit at an extremely crucial time. How did you operate?*

SOLLENBERGER: In September 1951, I was given the title of Assistant Professor of Chinese Studies, and was given an administrative job, sort of the executive officer of the language school. I think Dr. Smith seemed reasonably impressed with the way in which I had brought the facility, the school in Peking, and I must have some administrative skills to do that. So that was the job that was given to me. Also the job of looking after the overseas language programs which they were trying to the institute, to get people if they couldn't study the languages in Washington before they left, to study in the field, or if they did study here, to provide continuing training when they got to the post. And I was given responsibility for looking after that.

*Q: There was, particularly at this point, the prestige of the Russian language officers, Bohlen and Kennan, and others. Did you try to use that as a model for saying this is what we have for China...*

SOLLENBERGER: We looked at a variety of different approaches for China. Eventually on the Chinese side we looked at Hong Kong as a possible place to train, there were facilities there, and

some very successful models. The British were there training in Hong Kong. We looked at Singapore as a possibility, some place where the students might have a chance to utilize the language outside the classroom. First of all, the few students that were given to us, aside from the universities, get university training here...

*Q: You were mentioning Yale had a good course.*

SOLLENBERGER: Cornell had a training program also, and actually the person who had written the Army ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] text on Chinese was at Cornell, so that was an option also.

*Q: Was there any problem about using university training for Foreign Service Chinese studies...I've heard at other times and other languages the university programs were designed to train scholars to do research, and were not really very practical for Foreign Service. Was this a problem?*

SOLLENBERGER: This was definitely a problem, and that's why we chose the Yale which is where the Air Force program had been set up which was based on the Army system, and Cornell. As I recall also we looked at some of the California schools, Berkeley principally as a possible place. I was interested particularly not only in giving language, but in giving a few officers a good solid background in area studies, the cultural, historical, economic, political dimensions of the Chinese culture which historically had been dynamic, and from my point of view I thought in the future was going to be and that we should have people who fully understood this as well as people who could speak the language.

*Q: Was it a hard sell? I mean you were talking about the language, but also about what we would call area training. Again, I find the Department of State seems to be an historical organization.*

SOLLENBERGER: It was difficult to sell that. We had a window of opportunity to get that started in the Department of State when the National Defense Education Act was established. Of course, that was tied to Sputnik, it came a little bit later.

*Q: That was around '56, '57.*

SOLLENBERGER: That's right, and there an interagency committee was set up to focus on different parts of the National Defense Education Act. Title IV was the one that we were the most interested in, or I was, because this was the part that dealt with language and area studies. And the effort to beef this up in universities, which we were all for, but also to see within the government what resources the country had, there was a survey that was required of all of the agencies of the government. They were supposed to identify the language skills and the area skills, background, of people who may within the various government agencies, particularly those who had to do with foreign affairs. Of course, they had no standards for doing this. What sort of a standard would they use. If you used the university standards of A-B grade for second year, or third year, or fourth year, that didn't tell you what they could really do with the language. They certainly had nothing that was useful so far as identifying area expertise. That task fell to

the Foreign Service Institute, and this is one of the things that was handed to me by Dr. Smith, who said, see what you can work out.

*Q: This had to be the latter part of the '50s.*

SOLLENBERGER: That came along a little bit later.

*Q: Let's talk here about the language thing. Was there much support from what passed as the China desk, as far as language training?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, there was support, but at that time there was some strain, I think, between the operating bureaus who were constantly pressing Personnel for staff. And the question of releasing people, personnel would go to the bureaus and say, fine training, who are you going to release for training, because that's going to leave one less hand that you have on the job here, for assignment elsewhere. So there was tension there as well as between the Institute and the personnel system. But there was support because Clubb was there and he understood the necessity for this. Tony Freeman who had helped set up the program was around, and he supported it. And the students that we had trained in Beijing, some of them were being assigned to jobs on the desk and in the bureau at that particular time. So there was support, but there was no consistent pressure to continue training.

*Q: How did you see Henry Lee Smith operating within the the Departmental environment?*

SOLLENBERGER: He was an academic. He was frustrated. I think one of the reasons why he turned some of the administrative operations over to me was that he wanted to be free to do some of the research that he was interested in doing on language and culture. And they were working at that time, the professional linguists, on an analysis of language that they thought was a step up from the systems that they'd used before. In a way the Institute was leading the way in linguistic analysis at that particular time.

Not only was Dr. Henry Lee Smith there, but George Traeger, who is a well known linguist was also on the staff, and they brought in some anthropologists who were interested in the linguistic area studies side. Edward T. Hall, who later became famous for the best seller book that he wrote on silent language. Gerard, an anthropologist, Bert Whistle, the kinesologist who was interested in the way in which body language was used. This all was a part of an effort on the part of the Institute to find new ways, better ways of teaching. But also to keep in with the academic community.

*Q: What was the state, as you sampled it at this early '50s, of the field of linguistics? Now it's a big business, but what was it like then?*

SOLLENBERGER: It was rather small. It was rather difficult to find qualified linguists. They hadn't been trained during the war. There were people who had learned the languages, but not done professional training in linguistics. The fact that Henry Lee Smith and George Traeger being at the Institute was an attractive thing. And their approach to recruitment I had to admire, that was that they were trying to hire linguists on the basis of coming for just a limited period of

time to the Institute, but with the objective of returning to the academic community for two reasons. One, to build back into the academic community a more practical approach to their language instruction programs. And the other one was, that the government didn't offer that much future for linguists in terms of promotions in government employment, and that linguists would probably generally become frustrated with the bureaucratic problems. I remember Dr. Smith talking to me at one point, he said, your job here in terms of administration is to make it possible for professional people to do their work with limited interference from the bureaucratic system. So anyway you can relieve them of the pressures of the bureaucracy would be helpful. That's good advice up to a certain point, but anybody who works in the government sooner or later has to realize that the matter of getting the resources to do what you want to do, has to be taken into consideration. Otherwise, you can't do your job.

*Q: What were you finding about your results? You were seeing the product of the American school system - elementary, high school, college, of people coming into the Foreign Service. And with the exception of those who happened to have lived overseas, and maybe acquired it with their parents or something, what was the language capability among the new Foreign Service officers?*

SOLLENBERGER: From the point of view of practical use as required in foreign affairs business, it was hopeless, very poor. The recruitment of people from the army who had been through the army language training program, there were a few of those that were coming into the Foreign Service. There were a few from missionary background who had grown up overseas who came in with the language. But by and large the recruitment for the Foreign Service at that particular point did not place any premium on knowing a language, so they were not getting the people who were qualified. And the argument at that time was that if we recruited for language skills, we're going to get people who are basically not very well suited for the Foreign Service because the people that are specializing, majoring in foreign languages, are people that are focused on that one academic thing, and we need broader people, we need to get people who have a broad background in the Foreign Service. And it just wasn't bringing in people who had the skills.

*Q: I took the Foreign Service exam in '53 which was pretty much the recruiting thing then. You took the exam, and you took the language exam in one of five different languages, but you didn't have to pass it. That was just something they'd say well, you've got to get yourself qualified once you're in. You couldn't get promoted. But basically I could see what they were after.*

SOLLENBERGER: Even in getting promoted, it wasn't an important factor at that particular time. What the Department wanted, I think, by giving that exam was to try to find a few people who had the language and could be assigned to the then important posts where it would be useful. Training became the subject of a study of the Department's personnel system towards a stronger Foreign Service...

*Q: You're showing me a booklet, it was published when?*

SOLLENBERGER: This was published in May of '54. It was the so-called Wriston Report. This is the report really that began to turn things around for the Institute. But part of the problem, as it

developed that required something to be done on this, came a little before that. This was the beginning of the problem of McCarthy.

*Q: We're talking about the Senator.*

SOLLENBERGER: Senator Joseph McCarthy and his looking for card-carrying communists in the Department of State. And, of course, this had an effect on the Chinese program also because people were increasingly reluctant - officers - to get into a field if they were going to become targets of an investigation. For the Institute this was probably the most trying period in its history. It came very close, I would say, to putting the Institute out of business. That's because when they started investigating the Department of State, the first team that they sent in was sent to the Foreign Service Institute. I think they suspected they would find the long-hairs there and they seemed particularly suspicious of the anthropologists, people dealing with the behavior of foreign peoples. But it reached the point in the Foreign Service Institute...I can't really remember whether there were 9 or 13 investigators, and the Institute wasn't that large at that point, that took up residence and were at the Institute for the better part of three months.

*Q: Good God!*

SOLLENBERGER: Just an illustration if I can give this, I think it would give you bit of the atmosphere that we went through at that time. I got a long distance call in my office, a call that my secretary should not have put through to me, but she did, so I answered it. I later saw the person, he said, "What was wrong? You didn't sound very communicative during the call that I made to you." I said, "Here's the situation." There were three investigators in my office at that time. One of them was going through the files in the bathroom where I had the Chinese material that had been sent back from Beijing, much of it in Chinese. And, of course, he was very curious about what these things were. You're welcome to have somebody translate them for you if you want them. And I went there and went through them, identified what the different files were, etc. The other person was going through the books in the bookcase that I had, and these were books on China, and linguistics, language training, etc. And he was picking up the books by the covers and shaking them to see if there was anything hidden in the pages of the book. And the third one was sitting at my desk here. While I was trying to take care of these three people, he was also interrogating me on my experience in China, and particularly on the contacts that I had had with the communists back in 1938-'39-'40, and about Mr. Clubb. That was the situation.

*Q: How many investigators were there at one time?*

SOLLENBERGER: Nine or thirteen. They had an office, they were set up there, they were interrogating all the staff.

*Q: To whom were they reporting? This was not the House... the Congress...*

SOLLENBERGER: They sent someone to the Department who...

*Q: This was part of Truman's Loyalty Board. Scott McLeod came in a little later. Scott McLeod was charged with consular and security affairs, so it may have been that.*

SOLLENBERGER: They were also very suspicious of the instructors who were foreigners, not even American citizens many of them. At one point they started to call the tutors over to the Department of State for interrogation. And it was never clear as to whether they were using lie detector tests on them, or whether they were simply recording, but they were at least recording the interviews that they had. They started off at the beginning of the alphabet, and Burmese came up pretty early in that. When the Burmese instructor was called over, who was a well known Burmese in his own country, and his wife worked at the Burmese embassy in Washington, a quiet but very independent person. When they started to interrogate him and ask him, according to his report back to us, how much he had paid Dr. Smith, or me, for the job that he had there. A number of questions of that sort that didn't seem appropriate at all. He got up and walked out, and they didn't know what to do about that. They weren't expecting this. He came back and of course reported to us on what had taken place, and said that if this is continuing, I'm quitting. Well, this was a crisis for us because there were other instructors that were lined up to go over. We were able, through Dr. Smith, to get in touch with Walter Bedell Smith...

*Q: Rooney was one of the institutional memories of the Foreign Service. People having to testify before him, he was always noted for cutting them out of representational allowance, which he called the Whiskey Fund. It was maybe grandstanding, but there was a whole school of people who were trained how to stroke Mr. Rooney. How did you get along with him? Were you appointed a stroker, I mean a stroker trainer?*

SOLLENBERGER: I wasn't appointed as a stroker but I learned fairly early on, being present when Harold Hoskins was testifying, that one of the things that Rooney wanted to do was to make a speech. This was not made for me, it was made for his constituents, and I should not respond to it. So he'd make a speech, we would let it stand, not try to argue with him. Once you started arguing with him, then he would lead you on into a ridiculous situation that would be difficult to get out of. Also, at the time, I got the administration budget office to have personnel respond to the utilization question which came up quite frequently. And it came up with regard to Chinese.

*Q: Oh, yes. A very famous case.*

SOLLENBERGER: Where the director of personnel was talking about the Chinese language officer in London, I believe.

*Q: It was London. Could you give the background to that?*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, the background to that was that there was a language officer in London because this was one of the possible places of informal contact because of the British having recognized China, and we thought we ought to have someone in London who had some background in Chinese. But, of course, the response that was given by the Office of Personnel was, when he was asked about opportunities to utilize his Chinese, I guess he couldn't expose our real interests. He said, I guess there are Chinese restaurants and places like that that he could use it. And Rooney had a hay day with that.

I very nearly got caught up in a problem of that sort when Nixon went to China.

*Q: This was 1972.*

SOLLENBERGER: 1972, yes. I was asked by Rooney whether we had provided any training for Richard Nixon before he went to China. Of course, we hadn't, and I tried to explain about that we had trained people who went with him, and that these people were utilized, and it was fortunate that we had some people who knew Chinese who accompany the President at that particular point. Then he got off of that, and said, "Did you watch that program that showed the President sitting at the table with Zhou En-lai eating? Did you train the President to use chopsticks?" He was trying to provoke something going along that way. But I guess I squirmed out of that one all right. I didn't make the headlines anyhow.

*Q: Did you find as the Wriston report was implemented, a change in attitude towards training? I'm talking about the State Department personnel, Foreign Service. Not just at the top, but within the ranks.*

*We almost did during the Kennedy administration. We would do Mongolia, if the Soviets would do something else.*

SOLLENBERGER: There were efforts on that sort of thing. But the question was, why do we need to waste the time of an officer, and he wastes his time learning Mongolian when the chances of utilizing it are very slim. My approach on that, both with bureaus and with Personnel, was let's take somebody with Russian background and language and let's add Mongolian to that so that he'll have plenty of posts to use it in in Russia. But he can be the person who focuses on Mongolia. Let's take someone from Japan and give him Mongolian. Let's take someone from China and give him Mongolian. So we actually got several people who eventually were utilized, but it took a long time and I was afraid...

*Q: Did you have a problem? Here we are, particularly during this period, with a policy of strong support, mainly for domestic reasons, of Israel, at the same time we're dealing with a big Arab world which detested this policy. And you would invite lecturers who wanted Foreign Service officers both to understand the policy, but also to understand the Arab world. I can see this would be so sensitive that it would be almost impossible to deal with.*

SOLLENBERGER: Well, it was sensitive but by putting it into a broader perspective, we were able to diffuse most of the problems, not all of them. For example, on China one of the things that disturbed me greatly, almost to the point of resigning from the Foreign Service, was that the Department of State wanted the Institute to clear all of its speakers that it invited before the invitations were extended. I'll use a name here. When it came to John Fairbanks, the preeminent China scholar, we were told no, you can't hire him because he's on McCarthy's list. That was the sort of thing that I had difficulty dealing with on a personal basis, having high respect for Fairbanks and knowing that he was not what McCarthy had intimated. These were the sort of things that we had to go through.



**CHARLES T. CROSS**  
**Childhood**  
**Beijing (1922-1940)**

*Ambassador Charles T. Cross was born in China in 1922. He attended Carleton College and Yale University and served as a lieutenant overseas in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1942-1946. His assignments abroad included Taipei, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Alexandria, Nicosia, London and Danang, with an ambassadorship to Singapore. Ambassador Cross was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.*

*Q: Let us start at the beginning. Where and when were you born?*

CROSS: I was born in Peking, now called Beijing by foreigners also, which is the name that the Chinese used all along. I was born in 1922. I stayed in China - except for a couple of years spent in the U.S. - until I was 18. I spent those two years in Auburndale (Massachusetts) and Oberlin, (Ohio) - a year in each place. Much of the material in this oral history can also be found in my book, Born a Foreigner: a Memoir of the American Presence in Asia - Rowman and Littlefield 1999/2000.

*Q: Tell us a little about your parents and life in Beijing in your teens.*

CROSS: My parents were missionaries, essentially in the education field. My mother went to China first in 1915; she was a music teacher and a professional kindergarten teacher in Beijing. She organized some of the first kindergarten teacher training schools in China. She also established a number of kindergartens in the city.

My father came to China in 1917. His first job, after a couple of years of language training, was at Peking National University (Beida) - then and now China's foremost university. It was an interesting time for him to be there because it was a time of seething intellectual activity in China. Mao Zedong was at the University; Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, led some of the discussions that had been organized by my father. So he was very much part of the surging intellectual activity which was part of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. That movement was one of the great forces in Chinese intellectual history. A lot of things happened at about the same time. For example, the Chinese characters, which were used in ordinary talk, were substituted for traditional, classical-style characters. That made it possible for many, many more Chinese to be literate. The communists and the nationalists, as well as non-political forces, took advantage of this change since they could then reach much wider audiences.

My father later became the General Secretary of the American Board Mission in North China. That board was part of the Congregational ministry. Both of my parents were Congregationalists. In 1931, we returned to the States for a couple of years, as I mentioned. We returned to China in 1933; we took up residence in what is now a suburb of Beijing - about 14 miles outside the city walls. In that suburb was an American boarding school which I attended.

I attended that boarding school for seven years. During that time, the most important event in my life was the Japanese invasion of North China in 1937, starting on July 7. There was a considerable amount of fighting in our neighborhood; there were sizeable massacres first perpetrated by the Chinese and then by the Japanese. So my last three years in high school were under Japanese rule although we had extra-territorial privileges and therefore did not suffer the hardships that were rained on the Chinese.

*Q: I have been reading an interview of John Stewart Service, who was also an off-spring of missionary parents. He said that his parents kept him away from Chinese kids which resulted in his Chinese not being very good. What was your experience?*

CROSS: I don't think my parents kept me away from Chinese playmates. When I lived in Beijing, I had as many Chinese playmates as American. It is true that our Chinese language skills were not advanced sufficiently. We learned Chinese in school, but we didn't go very far because it was just another academic subject. We also had to learn French and Latin, for example. So I never progressed very far in the written aspects of the language. My accent in conversations has a Beijing flavor and that is an asset.

*Q: Did you, in high school, manage to feel the ferment that was going on - the Kuomintang, which was then relatively new and rather progressive. Then of course came the Japanese.*

CROSS: The Kuomintang had just barely finished the formal unification of China in 1937. In 1931, the Japanese took all of Manchuria. From there, they began to infiltrate south of the Great Wall into the Beijing area. Starting in 1933 and for the next couple of years, they marched inexorably south. The Kuomintang was the national resistance. In December 1936, Chiang Kai-shek was kidnaped by General Jang Xueliang, who had been a young marshal in Manchuria where he had been defeated by the Japanese. He stayed in North-West China where he kidnaped Chiang Kai-shek. The latter had come to attack the communists, who at the end of the Long March had reached Yanan. Chiang's release was contingent on his declaration of nationalist solidarity.

I remember that on Christmas night - or Eve - Chiang was released. Immediately, in the area where our home was, the Chinese students from near by schools paraded past our house and the Japanese sentries were stationed on the city walls. They shouted slogans such as "defeat the Japanese" or "long live the Kuomintang," sung to the tune of *Frère Jacques*.

My father noted at the time that this demonstration and those throughout China would remind the Japanese that China was united, which should have been a warning to them. The Japanese read it as a threat and decided to complete the conquest of China, which they started in July 1937.

As high school students, we visited the battlefields and had some contacts with Chinese students. A classmate of mine and I took some money, wrapped in some old clothes, and traveled from Beijing all the way out to Fenzhou in Shanxi province - that is the area from which Art Hummel, later an ambassador to China, came. Carrying that money was illegal under Japanese rule. The train tracks had been blown at a couple of spots, which made the trip quite exciting.

*Q: Did your schoolmates support the Chinese rather than the Japanese?*

CROSS: Oh, yes. We were fanatically anti-Japanese. I was a strong anti-Japan proponent. That is not surprising; they were brutal.

*Q: Did the Japanese occupy Beijing while you were there?*

CROSS: They did indeed in 1937. I graduated from high school in 1940, so that I spent three years watching the Japanese from a close vantage point. The foreigners were not mistreated, but our lives were certainly restricted.

*Q: Do you have any impressions of how the Japanese were acting?*

CROSS: I think they were somewhat less belligerent in Beijing than there were in the rest of China. I remember one time, in the winter, seeing a burning village. During the train trip I mentioned earlier, we noticed the communist forces being very active. In fact, the Kuomintang forces were defeated by the Japanese and had to retreat. That left a vacuum which was rapidly filled by the communists.

*Q: Did your fellow students have any views about the communist resistance?*

CROSS: The communist resistance was all there was opposing the Japanese. So a lot of the foreigners had contacts with them. They were all very tightly organized. Inside Beijing, they had many agents. But if you went to some of the rural areas which had mission stations - some that were less than fifty miles from Beijing - you could meet the communists quite openly. In fact, Chinese students were heading towards "Free China" - the nationalist area where Chongqing is located. They would head that way by foot transiting areas run by the communists, who would help them reach "Free China."

*Q: Did any of your Chinese friends make this journey?*

CROSS: Several of them did. They went to Chongqing. I don't remember any of them joining the communists, but obviously many Chinese did, including some from Yanjing University about whom I learned later.

*Q: How did your parents do their work under Japanese occupation?*

CROSS: They had certain restrictions on their work. Americans had the right to run certain schools; they were not interfered with by the Japanese themselves, but some of their puppets tried to place some limits on activities. But the schools and the missionaries were handled quite delicately, until Pearl Harbor. My father's travels in China were somewhat curtailed. [Note: See Born a Foreigner for more on the Japanese in China]

**JAMES M. WILSON JR.**

## **Childhood Shanghai (1925-1935)**

*James M. Wilson, Jr. was born in China to American parents in 1918. He received a BA from Swarthmore College in 1939, graduated from the Geneva School of International Studies in 1939, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1940, and Harvard Law School in 1948. He also served as a lieutenant colonel overseas in the US Army from 1941-44. Mr. Wilson has served abroad in Paris, Madrid, Bangkok and Manila. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: Today is the 31st of March, 1999. This is an interview with James M. Wilson, Jr. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do they call you Jim?*

WILSON: Yes indeed.

*Q: Jim could you tell me something about when and where you were born and something about your family?*

WILSON: I'm a China brat. I was born there of American missionary parents and grew up there.

*Q: Where were you born and when?*

WILSON: I was born in a mountain resort outside of Hangchow in 1918.

*Q: What type of missionary were your parents?*

WILSON: My father was an architect/engineer who went out to China in 1911 to build various things for the American mission boards. He built hospitals, schools, houses, and churches all over China. As a matter of fact, the book on the coffee table right in front of you that I just got from the Old China Press has a piece in it on my father.

*Q: It sounds like they were moving you all around quite a bit?*

WILSON: We lived first in Hangchow, where my father also taught engineering and math at Hangchow College. Then we moved to Shanghai.

*Q: How old were you then?*

WILSON: Let's see, we were in Shanghai from 1925 to mid-1926 and then came back to the States while there was some political unpleasantness in China.

*Q: In '26, what was this? Was this the Kuomintang?*

WILSON: Yes, it was the Kuomintang forces, coming up from Canton and taking over - rather turbulent years.

*Q: It is often a period forgotten I think when people look at China. The Kuomintang was also revolutionary.*

WILSON: Very much so. This was in the days before the great split between Mao and Chiang Kai-shek.

*Q: Do you recall those first years? How did you live?*

WILSON: We lived very well on a college campus - in many respects, as you might on a college campus anywhere else around the world. When we moved to Shanghai, my father went into partnership with a fellow American architect and they planned to take over a lot of the construction that had previously been done by his engineering office in Hangchow.

*Q: What was your mother's background and your father's, too?*

WILSON: He was a graduate engineer from the University of Kentucky and then got a masters in architecture. She was a Phi Beta Kappa from Wellesley, also from Kentucky. During the time that Father was building things, she was usually teaching - first in Hangchow and later on at St. John's University there in Shanghai.

*Q: What was she teaching?*

WILSON: English literature.

*Q: Do you recall sort of life at home? Did you have any brothers or sisters?*

WILSON: Yes, I had three sisters; two older and one much younger. We had quite a number of friends and acquaintances. Many of my pals ended up in the Foreign Service later on.

*Q: When you left Shanghai in '26, you had already gone to school for a year or two hadn't you?*

WILSON: Oh, yes, both in Hangchow and in Shanghai - at American schools which were in both places in those days.

*Q: How long were you back in the United States?*

WILSON: Almost four years.

*Q: Where did you go to school? Where did you live?*

WILSON: In Kentucky, that's where the family is from.

*Q: Did you find that Kentucky was quite a change from China?*

WILSON: It's hard to try to quantify that or qualify that either way. I was rather young, something like eight years old when we came back and 11 when we departed.

*Q: You went back to China?*

WILSON: Yes.

*Q: This would have been 1930?*

WILSON: 1930, yes that is right.

*Q: Where did you go?*

WILSON: Back to Shanghai. My father had gone back to China a couple of times during the period when the family was in Kentucky. Interestingly enough, one of his assignments was with Curtis Wright Aviation, where he had a major hand in building what is now the Hangzhou Airport in Shanghai. When we went back in 1930, the Episcopal Mission Board had asked him to build a major new replacement for St. Luke's Hospital in Shanghai, along the lines of St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo. That he tried to do manfully for quite a number of years; but as you know, there were many trials and tribulations in Shanghai in the 1930s, including Japanese occupations in 1932 and 1937. This caused all sorts of difficulties.

*Q: You were about high school age when you got there in 1930.*

WILSON: Yes. I went to SAS, the Shanghai American School.

*Q: What was the American School in Shanghai like?*

WILSON: It was very much (and deliberately so) like a private school here. SAS was conceived as a preparatory school for American children going back to college in the States. It has now come back to life, enrolling many more nationalities than just the children of Americans, as it did in my day.

*Q: Were there any Chinese going there?*

WILSON: Very few. They were almost all Chinese-American.

*Q: Did you feel as though you were living a somewhat separate existence in those days?*

WILSON: Of course. This was in the days when so-called extra-territoriality was flourishing. The "white man's burden" mentality was still very evident.

*Q: What about the presence of the Japanese when they came in, how did that catch you?*

WILSON: As far as family was concerned, it didn't bother our living arrangements especially; but in terms of my father's duties it was catastrophic, because the area which had been chosen for his hospital was right in the line of fire for the Japanese troops. It was finally decided to move the entire operation out of the Japanese zone of occupation and start from scratch.

*Q: When did you leave Shanghai?*

WILSON: In 1935 to come back to college. We came back via the Trans-Siberia Railroad and Europe.

*Q: At the American School, what were your favorite subjects or most interesting subjects?*

WILSON: I guess English and history.

*Q: Was there much Chinese history or was it more the European-oriented history?*

WILSON: Mostly European, but I took a couple of courses in Chinese history. They also had courses in Chinese language which, I regret to state, I did not take.

*Q: It wasn't really pushed at that time, was it?*

WILSON: Not really. The name of the game in those days was to teach the Chinese how to speak English.

*Q: What were the various communities called, cantons?*

WILSON: Settlements.

*Q: Did you get involved with the French or the British?*

WILSON: Not really. There were two different governments in our day in Shanghai, in the settlements that is. There was an international settlement which was made up of what had been the British, American and German concessions, and then there was the French settlement or concession. The French ran theirs, and an international municipal council ran the international settlement. In 1932, when the Japanese came in, however, they took over a large part of what had been the old American settlement. It was called Hongkew. The Japanese relinquished it only very, very slowly. When they came back in 1937 they made that area their headquarters. Surrounding all of this, of course, was the Chinese city, which was under Chinese jurisdiction. It was a strange and wonderful complex in those days.

*Q: Can one go out and go up the Yangtze or do things like that?*

WILSON: Oh, yes, in the days when there was not a war going on.

*Q: You left in what year?*

WILSON: 1935.

**JOHN STUART SERVICE**

**Childhood**

**Shanghai (1925-1933)**

**Clerk**

**Yannanfu, Shanghai (1933-1941)**

**Language Officer**

**Chungking (1941-1942)**

**Visit to China (1971)**

**Visit to China (1973)**

*John Stuart Service was born in China of American parents. He attended school in China and graduated from Oberlin College. He was appointed as a clerk in Yunnanfu in 1933. He was the acting U.S. political advisor to the Supreme Commander, Allied Forces in 1945. In addition to posts in China, Mr. Service served in New Zealand, India and the United Kingdom. Mr. Service was interviewed in 1977 by Rosemary Levenson, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.*

Background of the YMCA in China: The Principle of Local Chinese Control

SERVICE: I've got a list here, of things that was put out at one time--Oh, here it is. When my father went to China the YMCA here at Berkeley, of which he had been president in his senior year, used to put on an annual Roy Service campaign to help support his work in China. (He was always known as Roy in his family and at Berkeley. But my mother didn't like Roy and called him Bob. So all of his China friends called him Bob, and his early friends called him Roy.)

Anyway, this has got a lot of information about him.

*Q: This is very interesting. [reading] "The University of California's furthest extension work, giving instruction in Bible Study, Sanitation, Engineering, Social Hygiene, and Physical Training--a practical religion."*

SERVICE: Well, that's the old YMCA--it was a practical religion, a contrast to the old-line churches and missions in China. The Y was something quite new and very attractive to a lot of Chinese. The Chinese were not exactly flocking to the gospel, but there were a lot of things about the YMCA that did attract young Chinese students particularly.



At this time the government was just starting the new schools, the new universities. They had just stopped, or were just about to stop, the old Confucian examinations. The new universities were set up in the cities. In the old days if you were studying for your exams you could do it at home or in your own village or town. But now the students going to the universities had to come to the cities. So you had a new group of university students, middle school students, growing up in these new, modern schools. The YMCA catered especially to them. It ran schools. It did a great deal of work in popularizing science, basic science, which the Chinese were tremendously interested in. The solar system, and how a steam engine works, all sorts of things. The YMCA used to set up exhibits. They had basic science museums and ran lectures. They had specialists for this.

They started the idea of public health in China, swat fly campaigns, things like that. Then they had a lot of education, free education schools, night schools, for children, for all ages. Teaching English--a lot of people wanted to learn English. The businesses needed people who spoke English, the post office, customs, these sorts of services.

In education, physical fitness was just becoming popular. The Chinese realized that in order to compete with the West they had to be strong. I mean not only as a nation, but also strong in their own personal physiques. That's the basis of an army after all. So, the whole idea of athletics was just starting in, physical fitness and so on, gymnasiums, even ping pong.

*Q: [chuckle] Foreshadowing ping pong diplomacy.*

SERVICE: Yes. Yes. But we don't need to do a history of the Y in this memoir!

*Q: No, but in context I imagine that for your father to have been sent out to Sichuan, which was way, way out, there must have been a pretty good YMCA base in the Treaty Ports.*

SERVICE: Not really. It was all pretty new, because the Y had really only started in China in 1896. So, he was there less than ten years after it first started. They were still quite small even in the cities. They started first in Tientsin, I think. The Y was relatively small.

The Y was unique among Christian mission organizations in China because it always insisted from the very beginning that it had to have local Chinese support and control. The international Y loaned or provided the services of some foreigners, Americans or a few others, but mostly Americans. It sometimes loaned or had donations of money for buildings and so on. But, in each city the first step was to find a group of Chinese Christians who were willing to sponsor it and lead it, act as directors. So the foreigners were always working for Chinese and the Y depended on local support. You had to get memberships and so on, and it had to be locally self-supporting.

*Q: Do you know what sort of invitation was arranged? How did they know the Y would be welcome in Chengdu?*

SERVICE: The Friends' Mission [Quaker] had someone there named Hodgkin, an Englishman. I forget his initials but he became quite well known later on and eventually came back to England

and headed up the English Friends missionary organization. But, Dr. Hodgkin was in Chengdu and he knew about the Y.

Not all missions were keen about the Y. Some missions regarded the Y as being a rival, as not being truly religious because they didn't put the emphasis on proselytizing. Some missionaries felt that their only job was to save souls for Christ, and therefore the thing to do was to preach.

But Hodgkin had been working in Chengdu for the English Friends, and apparently he thought the Y would be a good idea because there was a big Chinese university, a government university, just being established in Chengdu. The missions were also talking about combining their various activities into a West China Union University. Chengdu was becoming an educational, student center. I think Hodgkin was the one that first encouraged the Y, or got in touch with the Y to see if they wouldn't consider starting a YMCA in Chengdu. So, there was a friendly welcome in that sense. Hodgkin was still there when my father arrived and helped him. He had mission contacts, but he also had some student contacts and Chinese contacts, so that he was able to help my father.

#### A Six Month Journey from Shanghai to Chengdu, 1905-1906

*Q: In 1905, six years before the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty, did your father comment at all on the sort of turmoil that was going on in various parts of China? How was it in Sichuan?*

SERVICE: My parents didn't get to Sichuan till 1906, because it was a long trip up the Yangtze in those days. I don't know whether Caroline mentioned it or not, but they lost their baby going through the [Yangtze] Gorges, twenty-one days by houseboat with no doctor.

*Q: No.*

SERVICE: Well, traveling was a long, slow business. They got into Shanghai actually while there were riots going on, what were called the Mixed Court riots. So, the first night my father was in China, actually was spent on guard duty, because they were staying in a house that was outside the concession. They didn't know what might happen. Actually, nothing did happen. But, there was a lot of anti-foreign, anti-American feeling.

They had to equip themselves, and then they went up the river by stages. They went by one steamer to Hangzhou, and then another steamer to Ichang. Then, there was no way to go except by Chinese junk, houseboat. Speaking no Chinese, they could not travel by themselves. They found a man who worked for the Bible Society. I think he was taking supplies to the Bible Society, and they traveled with him. Mr. Davey, I think his name was.

They had a small daughter, Virginia, who was born in 1905 before they left for China. She was one of the first children born in Alta Bates hospital. [Berkeley, California] Her picture used to be in the lobby of Alta Bates as one of the first babies born there.

Anyway, the baby got sick--with dysentery, I suppose--and died, I think, five or six days before they got to Chungking.

Then, my father came down with malaria, which he had very badly and continued to have recurrent attacks of. So, they had to stay in Chungking for a long time.

The final stage of the trip was a ten day overland journey by sedan chair. It's about 250 miles from Chungking to Chengdu. They left San Francisco in November, 1905. It was May, 1906, before they finally got to Chengdu.

But, this is a diversion from your question--which was what? Do you remember?

*Q: Yes. [laughter] We're--what--five years before the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty?*

SERVICE: Oh, yes. I think that things were fairly peaceful under the dynasty as far as Sichuan was concerned. My parents went away every summer to various places, to Omei Mountain. One year they made a trip to Tatsienlu, on the Tibet border. I don't think there was much internal disturbance. There were problems of banditry--but that was always there apparently--and poverty.

Perhaps in 1910, but certainly in 1911, there was a great uproar in Sichuan about railways. There was talk of building a railway from the east into Sichuan province. The Sichuan gentry were extremely desirous, extremely anxious, that this not be given over to foreigners to build. So they raised some money to build a railway themselves.

In 1911, Sheng Hsuan-Huai signed an agreement for foreigners to build the railway. This caused a tremendous uproar, riots and so on, locally. This actually preceded the outbreak in Hangzhou and Wuchang on October 10. Some weeks earlier in Chengdu there were riots, and all the foreigners were called into a large compound that was owned by the Canadian Methodist mission. We all lived for some weeks in the new hospital that was just finished.

Then, finally things got so out of hand that there was fighting between various groups. The foreign consuls decided to evacuate everyone. [1911] They all came down river, and eventually my parents ended up in Shanghai. My father was soon sent to Nanking. So he was in Nanking in 1912 for a few months when Sun Yat-Sen was setting up the Republic.

The Y was very much in the center of things because many of the people who were active in the YMCA became leaders in the new government, C.T. Wang and people like that. A lot of the people who were American-trained or active in the YMCA were prominent in the early days of the government. After Yuan Shih-Kai took over, some of them had to take a back seat.

#### The Far West of China: A Pioneer Life

SERVICE: When my father went to Chengdu, where there had been no Y at all, he had to really start from scratch. At the same time he had to learn Chinese, which he did at home.

He got a teacher who came in every day in the morning. He sat down at a table and read Confucius, the classics, or whatever the textbooks were. The teacher, of course, knew no English and one sort of fumbled or stumbled along.

My father learned to speak extremely well. He was absolutely superb in his spoken Chinese.

Almost at once he was forced to begin speaking. He had to start dealing with workmen remodeling his house, trying to get acquainted with students, trying to widen his circle of acquaintances, trying to call on gentry and leaders in the community because he had to have their support. He had to get people of substance to act as directors and so on. So eventually he became a marvelous speaker of Chinese--local Sichuanese dialect, pure and perfect Sichuanese.

The Chinese used to love to hear him because he was so good and could joke and all the rest of it. My father actually never learned to read and write very well, which puzzles me a little bit because I don't know how he conducted Bible classes. I don't think that he could read enough to read the Bible. How he got along--some way or another. Maybe he had someone else read the texts.

But my mother didn't become very fluent. She could speak to get along socially and with the cook. She had to teach the servants everything they knew. She started with raw country boys from the village, shall we say, who had never seen a foreigner, most of them. She taught them how to cook and make bread. My father loved baking powder biscuits and this and that. So, obviously she could manage. But she never learned to read and write, never really spoke very well.

*Q: Did you eat the nearest approximation to Western food that the servants could manage, or did you ever eat Chinese food?*

SERVICE: [chuckle] We lived Western. Once a week we had Chinese food. It was a big event. Saturday noon we had Chinese food. We all liked it. Later on when I got a little older, every Saturday noon we boys would go over to my father's office at the Y and then go out with him and have Chinese lunch, usually with some of his Chinese colleagues, secretaries in the YMCA. This was always a big day of the week.

We loved Chinese food, but the rest of the time we ate foreign. My mother taught each cook. We had several cooks. Finally we got this one man--Liu P'ei-Yun, who stayed with my parents then for many years--who became a very good cook.

Everything had to be done. It was like living in a pioneer settlement in a way. The local salt was coarse and very black, gray, so that we used to purify the salt. The sugar was coarse and brown. I don't know how we did it, but we actually refined the sugar. I don't know how my mother ever got it crystallized. The salt I think we just beat up with a mortar.

We bought Chinese flour, but we made our own laundry soap from lye and ash and fats. We bought, or saved pork fat.

Of course, there were no electric lights. We used kerosene lamps. There was no running water. There were no telephones. If you went out, you usually went by sedan chair which meant that we kept our own chair carriers.

We even kept our own cow for many years because there was no way of getting milk which was dependable. Apparently, we even took the cows to the mountains in the summer sometimes.

But, you lived a very self-sufficient kind of life that required a lot of work and supervision. If you wanted to communicate with anyone else you sent a coolie with what we called a chit, a note, around town.

We had our own well. But all water had to be boiled. The well wasn't very deep. The water table was maybe ten or twelve feet down. All sorts of unsanitary things were going on around, of course. There were no sewers or anything like that in town. So all water that was to be drunk had to be boiled. You ate nothing that was raw, uncooked.

### The "Y" as Window to the West

SERVICE: It took my father several years of preliminary work before the Y really got going.

First my parents started by having classes at home. Chinese students came to their home for classes in English and, if they could get them interested, Bible studies. Most Chinese students wanted just to learn about the West. The West was a subject of great interest to this new generation, this modernizing generation.

They had a steady series of visitors, callers, people who just wanted to see foreigners, or get acquainted with foreigners. Mother had a group of Chinese ladies who used to come in. But all this required a lot of tea, refreshments, that sort of thing.

But I think my parents felt that it was desirable for them to try to live in a foreign, Western way. Earlier missionaries had tried to merge in a Chinese community, had dressed in Chinese clothes, worn queues and so on. This was partly because of intense anti-foreignism. They didn't want to be conspicuous.

But, by the time that my parents came along, the great attraction of the YMCA was that it represented new things. It represented the West, and there was a great interest in the West. A lot of these people that came to the house would have been hurt if they had just received some Chinese refreshments. They wanted to see Western things. They wanted to learn about the West.

The foreign community did some relief work during the war (World War I), ran bazaars. One very popular thing they did one time was to run a coffee and doughnut shop, or coffee and hot biscuits I think. Tremendously popular. Chinese would come in, and some people came every day while the thing was running, because coffee, foreign refreshments, and cakes were something that was new and strange and exotic and exciting.

I'm not sure that my parents were conscious of this. They may not have thought of it. But, certainly they were exemplars of the West and of Western ideas and Western ways of living. So, I don't think my parents felt any guilt about living in a Western way, because this was what they represented and what the Chinese wanted.

Some Chinese came to them and asked them to have a club which used to meet at the house occasionally. A club of men and women together, young men and young women, who were coping with all the problems of getting rid of Confucian ideas of arranged marriages and so on and who simply wanted to meet with some foreigners, my parents in this case, and learn about how man-woman relations, relations between the sexes, were handled in the West, what Western society was like, learning new ways, getting rid of the Confucian ways.

*Q: Was there any opposition that you recall to this amongst the more conservative Chinese families?*

SERVICE: I suppose there must have been. I'm sure that these people themselves were subject to criticism from their elders, yes. There was a lot of generational conflict going on all through that period certainly.

These people, of course, were talking about such things as making their own marriages. Mrs. Chao here in Berkeley is one of the pioneers. She made up her own mind that she was going to marry Y.R. [Chao]. Of course, he apparently agreed too. But, it was quite a famous early case of revolt against the old Confucian family idea, arranged marriages. It was about the time that we're talking about in China. I'm not sure when Y.R. and Buwei got married, but it was probably about this time.

*Q: 1921.*

SERVICE: 1921. Well, we're talking about a little bit earlier than that.

*Q: Both of them had arranged marriages, had engagements that they had to break.*

SERVICE: Yes, yes, that's right. But, I don't remember any criticism that was overt or violent or that involved my parents, at least not that I know of.

*Q: It's an interesting concept when you think of what has been going on at the Y in the 60's and 70's--*

SERVICE: Yes.

*Q: --the encounter groups and so on, that already in the context of its period, back in the 1910's, the Y was facilitating relations between the sexes.*

SERVICE: Oh, yes. That's right. That's right.

*Q: Do you remember seeing Westerners dressed in Chinese style?*

SERVICE: Oh, yes. There were some of the older people, particularly in small outstations, who still wore Chinese clothes. The China Inland Mission, and some of the more conservative groups, still went on that idea.

But in a place like Chengdu, which was a metropolis, I don't think any foreigners wore Chinese clothes by this time.

There were no hotels, of course, in a place like Chengdu. It was the end of the line, so many foreign visitors stayed with us. In a place like Hangzhou or Ichang, which were transit points, the missions would set up a sort of a hostel, a missionary home, or something like that. But, in Chengdu there was nothing like this. People would come to Chengdu for missionary conferences or meetings, or an occasional tourist--but they had to be pretty determined tourists. There was a man named Harry Frank who walked around China and wrote some books about it. A man named Geil visited all the capitals of China and wrote a book about it and also a book about the Great Wall. There was a professor named E.A. Ross from Wisconsin, a sociologist, who wrote a book about China. He stayed there. A lot of people in Sichuan came to Chengdu because they needed dental work or medical care.

*Q: It seems that your mother and your father entertained a most extraordinary number of guests throughout the year, the teas for students--*

SERVICE: Yes, well, this was an important part of their work, particularly in the early phase of getting acquainted. I think it tapered off a good deal as children came along and she became more busy at home. But certainly before the Y was set up, formally set up and they had buildings, a lot of Y activity was getting acquainted with students, university students, and university teachers. A lot of this was done at the house.

Always, of course, Chinese called on formal occasions, such as New Year's time. My father's fortieth birthday was a tremendous affair because in China traditionally when you reach forty, you enter on old age, you become venerable. By forty, one should have grandchildren. So, when my father reached forty there was an all-day-long procession of people that came to congratulate him and fire off firecrackers and so on, and they all had to be fed.

One thing I just remembered. In the early days when I was seven or eight, like most missionaries, we had morning prayers with the servants all expected to come and join in. Then, somehow this practice just stopped. I don't remember when or why, but eventually we didn't have prayers in the morning.

I think that it was somewhat artificial. Most of the missionaries expected their servants to become Christians. My father may have felt that it was a little unfair to put this pressure on them. It did seem a bit uncomfortable and formal.

We had a wonderful old gardener. He may have been a Christian, a real Christian. Some of the others may have gone through the motions. But, I think that the old gardener probably was the only real Christian.

Eventually my father got separate premises for the Y and it gradually grew until it had fifteen hundred members or so and quite an active program of schools and classes of all kinds. The Y was dependent largely on the goodwill of officials, but also on local support. When they finally built a permanent Y the government actually donated the land. It was quite a large site near the center of Chengdu.

Local warlords usually contributed, helped the Y, were friendly to the Y, attended the Y.

Even before the Republic, before the Revolution, the viceroy came to the opening of the YMCA in Chengdu, which was a noteworthy honor in those days. The provincial viceroy actually attended the opening ceremonies in 1910.

*Q: Would you say that was a tribute to your father's particular skills?*

SERVICE: Well, I don't want to blow the horn excessively. I suppose you can say that it was partly because of my father's skill in making friends with Chinese. But the viceroy's acceptance of the invitation was not based on a personal relationship between the viceroy and my father. It reflected the fact that my father had won support of influential members of the local gentry.

#### Strains and Hardships in Grace Service's Life

*Q: You mentioned your sister's death. Was this felt in any way to be China's "fault?" Was your mother bitter?*

SERVICE: I don't think my mother felt that it was China's fault, but it certainly contributed to her very, very strong concern about sanitation and health. Reading things like Golden Inches, the long, unpublished autobiography she wrote in the 1930's, I realize now, much more than I did then, how repelled she was by the lack of sanitation, the conditions of the inns, the pigsty next to where you were sleeping, and all the dirt and filth, the general living conditions.

I think that it contributed to her--alienation is too strong a word. But, she dropped out more and more--partly because she got more interested in other things--from my father's work. She became, I think, disappointed. Embittered is too strong a word. After the revolution [1911], for instance, they should have gone back on furlough to the United States. But the YMCA had not succeeded in getting anyone else to go to West China on a permanent basis. There had been a couple of people who for one reason or another couldn't stay. My father had had to evacuate. [1911] He didn't want to come out, but he had been ordered out. He felt he had to go back to Sichuan. The Y wanted him to go back to Sichuan to get things started again, make sure everything was all right. So, he went back, you see, and it wasn't until 1915, ten years after they went out to China, that he had his first furlough.

He always put the Y first. This is a pattern that was repeated time after time. My mother felt that the family was second, and that he did much more for the Y and gave himself to the Y more than he needed to and neglected the family. It's a pattern that, shall we say, repeated itself later on, in my case I think.



*Q: Did your father become involved with Chinese politics?*

SERVICE: He actively supported the students in the 1920's when the Kuomintang was coming to power, the period of the May 30th incident in Shanghai and all the rest of 1926, '27. He was in favor of the foreigners giving up extraterritoriality and the imperialist apparatus that annoyed, that infuriated, the Chinese so much.

*Q: Did this make him very unpopular with the so-called European community?*

SERVICE: I'm not sure because I was out of China then. But, I don't believe it did. I think most of the missionaries that they were close to tended to agree with him.

Most of the time we were way up west in Sichuan province, hundreds of miles from any guns or any gunboat. We were at the end of the line. Going up and down through the Yangtze Gorges, if soldiers or bandits were firing from the banks at the boat, they would go up and sit behind the armor plate in the bridge, things like that. But, I don't think there was any conflict between my father and other missionaries.

There were some old-line missionaries, I think, that were less inclined to see the merit of the students' arguments because, the students wanted to take over control of the foreign schools and universities. They thought that the Chinese government should set the curriculum and really have effective control of the mission institutions. I think that probably some of the missionaries opposed that. The Chinese weren't ready yet, was the general theme.

But my father didn't have very much contact with the business people--certainly not in Chengdu. It wasn't a Treaty Port. There wasn't any foreign business community there really.

*Q: Did the recurrent violence in China affect your daily lives?*

SERVICE: Well, you see, what happened in Sichuan was that after the Revolution, 1911-12 Revolution, things really fell apart. Sichuan was fought over by a lot of Sichuanese, but also became a hunting ground for people from other provinces, especially Guizhou and Yunnan.

When Yuan Shih-Kai tried to become emperor, the revolt actually started in Yunnan, and the leader Tsai led an army from Yunnan into Sichuan province in 1916 to give battle to the local commander, who had bet on Yuan Shih-Kai. The Yunnan army stayed on and on in Sichuan. Almost every year, in these years we're talking about, there was fighting going on--this was a part of the life. Some of it was very bloody, some of it not so bad; but almost always with looting, first by the defeated or evacuating army and then, of course, by the victorious army. Each side grabbed what it could.

Sometimes they would persuade the chambers of commerce, the leading businessmen to pay them--a ransom, in other words. But, if the ransom wasn't paid, or even if the ransom was paid, there would still be looting and burning.

*Q: Did this affect your day-to-day life?*

SERVICE: Oh, sometimes. There was one period when we all moved down into the ground floor of the house because the compound had mud walls. We moved into the ground floor and lived and slept in my father's library because, in addition to the mud walls, we were surrounded by bookcases. We put mattresses against the windows. There was artillery fire going across the city from one side to the other, from one camp to the other, passing over our area.

There was a mission hospital, an American Methodist Mission hospital which for some reason was not being operated. Whether they just didn't have money or what--I don't know. But, it was empty. The missionary community thought they ought to do what they could. So they opened it on an emergency, temporary basis to take care of the hundreds of wounded soldiers.

I was, I suppose, maybe ten. Anyway, I volunteered. Some of us children volunteered to act as orderlies and fetch-and-carry boys, boy scouts. I remember it was a terrible, terrible thing to see these wounded people. Most of them had been wounded several days before. The fighting was some distance away at that time. The wounds had not been properly dressed or taken care of. So, they were suppurating and so on--awful. I remember having to leave the operating room where the doctor was cutting. I went outside and was sick. I just couldn't take it.

The foreigners did what they could. My father was always helpful in things like this. Several times he actually was able to act as a go-between, mostly to save people that were caught in between the firing. He was known to people on both sides, to officials, to the generals, and so on.

In fact, he was so well known that the British consul general...there wasn't any American consul in Chengdu, never was. The nearest American consul was in Chungking, and that was only part of the time. Most of the time the nearest American consul was six, seven hundred miles away in Hangzhou. But, the British consul general made a protest at one time to the American legation in Peking about my father's having contact with officials. The consul thought that only he should have contact with the officials and resented my father's being on very good terms with the local generals, the top people!

*Q: So, he was doing para-diplomacy.*

SERVICE: Well, he was getting along. He had to.

*Q: You describe so calmly a situation that would be truly horrifying to most people--warlords fighting, bleeding bodies being brought in, et cetera. How did this all affect your mother?*

SERVICE: I suppose it affected her more than us. She was conscious of the dangers. Children can adapt, and like excitement. Let me jump ahead to an episode in the Chungking days. We spent the summers, like most of the foreigners, in bungalows along the top of hills on the south bank of the Yangtze, across from the city. One summer--I think it was '23--a Guizhou general, from the south, decided to take over Chungking. These wars were usually more skirmish and maneuvering than hard fighting. For several days, the defenders' front line was along our range of hills. Then, one night the attackers made a night attack. Altogether, spread about, there must

have been a good many thousands of troops. And Chinese make a night attack very theatrical and frightening. Everyone shouts "Sha! Sha! Sha!" ("Kill! Kill! Kill!") and fires their guns into the air or at anything that looks like a target. The defenders fired a few shots but discreetly fled, long before the attackers got close.

While all this was going on, the servants had come into the house--their quarters were flimsy lath and plaster, while the house was brick. And we were all lying together on the floor to get below the level of the windows. Actually, we children were under the beds. The house was dark (we assumed lights would draw fire) and stood on a sort of elevated terrace. A group of soldiers--I suppose a squad--came charging up the steps to the front door, which had glass in the top half. My father decided he had to go out and tell them we were foreigners. In fact, he was shouting that, but the din was so great that the soldiers couldn't hear him.

Just as my father had his hand on the knob, a soldier outside--the leader, I assume--fired his rifle from the hip. The bullet shattered the glass and passed just in front of my father's forehead. But some of the pulverized glass bounced into his eye. He fell to the floor, and thought he was blind. But he was able to tell them we were foreigners and to ask the name of their general. When they told him, he said, "I know him"--which was true. The soldiers were sorry, but we didn't know for several days whether Dad would lose his sight. He didn't. To go back to your question: this sort of thing was obviously hard on my mother.

*Q: You wanted to tell me about your boyhood in Chungking and an incident that occurred.*

SERVICE: This was in the summer of 1923 I think. It was actually at the same time that my father was nearly shot by this soldier during a night attack. That morning, we three boys had gone down along the range to see some friends. Foreign houses were scattered over several miles up and down the hills. We took with us a Daisy air rifle which our parents had bought from Montgomery Ward. We met a patrol, sort of an advanced patrol. Apparently these were incoming warlord troops from Guizhou. They were very much interested in our air rifle. They thought it was some fancy, new, foreign type of rifle [laughter] which was very much something they would like to have.

So they stopped us and questioned us and wanted to know about that rifle. Naturally, we didn't want to lose it. So my brother Bob tried to explain to them--he spoke the best Chinese of any of us--he tried to explain that it was just driven by ch'i. "Ch'i" is rather a vague word in Chinese but usually means air or gas.

Finally Bob said, "My brother there--" (I was holding the rifle) "I'll stand here and my brother will shoot me in the chest and you'll see what happens." [laughter] He had a khaki shirt on, I suppose. So he stood bravely--I suppose he was eleven or twelve--and I shot him in the chest with the air rifle. We convinced the soldiers that the rifle was not one they wanted. [laughter] They let us go on our way.

That night, of course, things turned much worse.

Speaking of the effect on the kids, after these various episodes of war, we found we could pick up all sorts of stray bullets, stray ammunition. We started a collection of various kinds of gunpowder, various kinds of bullets. We would pull a bullet out of cartridges that hadn't gone off, you know. Of course, we got many different kinds because every Chinese warlord army had arms from wherever they could get them. There might be old Russian stuff, and old Japanese stuff, and locally made Chinese stuff, different arsenals, different sizes, different kinds of powder.

We'd been having typhoid shots. So, we had a lot of these little bottles that typhoid vaccine used to come in. We had these all lined up, different kinds of powder from these various shells which we quite casually had unloaded ourselves with a pair of pliers. [laughter]

Reading my mother's notes, I was reminded of a time when the attackers had seized a peddler, a man who was at least dressed up and acting as a peddler selling food or something, down at the gap below our house. The road came up to a gap in the hills there.

They accused him of being a spy, and they hung him up from a tree this way with his arms behind him [stands and puts hands behind back] and then suspended him, just lifting him off the ground, which is a very painful way, and then they beat him on the back with split bamboo. Of course, he was screaming bloody murder. It went on all day, more or less. We went down and watched. My mother was not very happy about that.

But, you know, China was a cruel place in those days. I think we accepted these things since they were a part of normal, daily life, and they didn't affect us nearly as much as they did my mother or as they did Caroline when she came to China after we married.

Caroline's reactions to China simply surprised me. We were in Yunnan, which was a very backwoods, undeveloped place when we went there in '33. She was much more put off by it than I was. It didn't bother me.

*Q: Jack, you said you had a few things from our last session that you'd like to expand on a little bit.*

SERVICE: Well, I felt after we'd finished talking the other day that maybe I hadn't been quite fair to my mother. I'd given the impression that she had turned sour perhaps, or against, the missionary cause that my father was dedicated to. I don't think that's quite fair.

She had, of course, a harrowing introduction to West China with the loss of her child and then the serious illness of my father. She was plagued by ill health. It's obvious from reading her own account that she was suffering a lot of the time. Years later when she came to the States, the doctors at the Mayo Clinic thought she had probably had gallstones. She also had, I think, two miscarriages after the baby died, before I was born.

Probably I didn't mention the isolation of West China, the other day. It took two months usually to get there. That was before the steamer started running through the [Yangtze] Gorges, when you had to go by junk.

*Q: From--?*

SERVICE: From Shanghai. It was six months perhaps to get an exchange of letters with her parents in the United States, or anybody in the United States. They used to order supplies, but it might take a year for the supplies to get there. Your magazines, your mail, everything, was always much delayed.

There was a lot more housework than I think I mentioned. We lived a pioneer existence. My mother made marmalade from the skins of the oranges that we ate at breakfast. She made mincemeat, and did a lot of preserving.

There were no tailors, so she had to make clothes for all her children, besides her own clothes and the normal things of the house, the curtains and all the rest of it.

We had to do our own laundry, of course, at home. It was the time when men wore stiff collars, and she had trouble getting the servants to starch them properly; so, at times, she did my father's stiff collars and cuffs. It seems incredible to us now that they fussed about these things in West China!

She had to train new servants, really, from the ground up. They had never been in a foreign house before, and they had to learn everything.

So, I think by and large she did have a fairly hard life. Visitors often stayed and stayed a long time, but they were very welcome.

One thing that I remember as a child was that we always ate at the table, the family all together. It was the way my father's ranching family had eaten. They were a big family. My father carved.

It was always an occasion to have guests. I remember hearing my parents ask, "What's the news?" If visitors came from the States that was fine, but even if they came from Shanghai or down river, they had much more news than we had locally. So, there was always a lot of conversation and interest and excitement, having people visit and stay with us.

My mother did go on teaching in the Y even when she had three children at home. She usually taught at home, English, economics, and so on. Also they had night prayer meetings. Sometimes she was asked to teach older people who wanted to learn some English but didn't want to go to the YMCA and join a class with young people. For "face" reasons they would ask her to teach them privately, and this was usually done at home. So she did have quite a busy life.

*Q: In her autobiography, your mother speaks of Chinese women friends, but she doesn't name any of them, as she does her American and other friends. Was she able to form friendships with Chinese women?*

SERVICE: No, I don't think really in any very meaningful way, not in an intimate way. (I have to keep peeling off layers of memory.)

In Chengdu when I was small there were very few Chinese women that were educated. Very few of them had gone to school. Even fewer had learned English to any real extent. Practically none of them had studied in the United States or studied abroad so that it was very difficult to establish communications, rapport. My mother, as I said before, never really mastered Chinese very well. She learned household Chinese, but she never learned enough Chinese so she could develop an intimate friendship, I would guess, with any of these women.

Also, entertaining was quite formalized. Most Chinese entertained at restaurants, and women normally were not included. If you were invited to a home it was usually an official home--and the women ate in the back rooms, they didn't eat with the men--so that it was a stilted occasion.

I just don't think that my mother--although she knew some of these women and they were interested in coming to the house--had friendships with Chinese women that took up very much of her time or were intimate.

Now, when she got to Shanghai [after 1925] things were quite different because in Shanghai there were a lot of Western-educated women, women who had either been educated in Western schools in China or had actually studied abroad. When she got into women's clubs and the women's group activities in Shanghai and in the national committee of the YWCA, she was thrown in close contact with many of this type of Chinese woman, and some of them she did get to know very well. Some of them were American-educated or actually American-Chinese women. But, it wasn't really until Shanghai that I would say that she developed real friendships with Chinese.

#### The Service "Hotel": Distinguished Visitors and Occasional Tourists

SERVICE: Going back to what we said earlier--I've mentioned the fact that there were no hotels in Chengdu. I think that our house became a well-known place to stay. It often had people there. Usually they were very interesting people. My father was rather fascinated by Tibet. So, he got to know some of the missionaries up there and was happy to have them stay with us.

My father established contacts with some Chinese businessmen who used to trade in Tibet, for them to bring out Tibetan things and so on.

My mother loved to read and she read everything she could get. She ordered books from Shanghai and America. And the local foreigners exchanged books. Talk around the table was usually interesting.

*Q: What notable "foreign devils" were there, either as residents or as visitors? You mentioned, before we turned the tape on, the [Walter C.] Lowdermilks.*

SERVICE: Oh, yes.

*Q: I don't know whether they were up there at the time?*

SERVICE: I don't think he was, because they got married later on. She, Mrs. [Inez] Lowdermilk, was there in the Methodist mission. There was this E.A. Ross that I was speaking of from Wisconsin. There was a geologist from Oberlin that was out there. There were plant explorers that used to come through, like Joseph Rock, working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Occasionally a businessman. There was never anyone there in all the years we were there who represented the American government. No foreign consular officer got up that far.

As I say, we sometimes had a consul in Chungking, but not all the time. But, no American consular man ever got up as far as Chengdu. The British, of course, traveled much more, and they had the British consul there although it was not a Treaty Port.

There were people like [Eric] Teichman and [Alexander] Hosie who traveled for the British and went through Chengdu. They were checking things like the efficacy of the Chinese suppression of opium. But, this was before I remember things. This was the early years when they went through.

There was an American tourist, a wealthy woman named Tracy, Mrs. Tracy from Cleveland, Ohio, who had met my mother in Nanking, in 1912. She came back to China a few years later and went up through the [Yangtze] Gorges and up to Chengdu, which was quite a trip for a tourist in those days. She became a good friend of my mother's. When we came home on furlough in 1915-16, my mother went down to Florida to visit her in Palm Beach.

Friendships with local residents tend to become very close when you are so isolated. My parents made many lifelong friendships with other missionaries that were there, mostly American but some Canadian. I think if you live together in isolated circumstances, you do tend to establish--well, you do in the Foreign Service too. You serve in a foreign post with somebody, then you're a friend for life.

### The Family's Growing Love of China

*Q: Did your father "fall in love" with China in the way that so many people did?*

SERVICE: Yes, I think so. It's a funny thing, how to describe people's attitudes towards something like China. He certainly developed a tremendously strong affection for the Chinese people, the Chinese people he knew and, I think for the Chinese people in general. He felt strongly interested in China, much concerned and involved in China. He was always optimistic about China, that things were going to come out all right. But this was part of his personality anyway.

All of us in China--although we never really were trained or educated in Chinese; we didn't go to Chinese schools; we didn't learn Chinese; we didn't even have Chinese playmates--almost all of us grew up with this strong attachment to China. It is a rather hard thing to account for.

*Q: to account Why is it hard for?*

SERVICE: Well, simply because we led a very different, separate life. I never had any Chinese playmates. I grew up in China--spent all my childhood there--without learning to read or write anything in Chinese. I learned to speak Chinese from the servants, but my parents saw no advantage or necessity, desirability, of having me learn to read or write.

We never thought of going to a Chinese school. We eventually went to an American school in Shanghai which tried as hard as possible to be like a school in the United States. It had no Chinese students. It didn't teach courses in Chinese history or in Chinese language.

We lived in compounds separated, isolated, insulated from China in many ways. And yet, as I say, all of us that I know of, or practically all of us, who were B-I-C, Born in China, ended up with tremendous nostalgia for China, a desire to go back to China, strong feelings of ties to China and particularly the Chinese people.

Now, I think that's the key. I think it's the people. Here's a random speculation. The real contact, clue, key, we had to China was our servants. The servants, by and large, were village people, country people. They came from the countryside into town to find work, and maybe they found work with us.

But, they all had the simplicity and honesty and virtues of peasants, country people. They devoted themselves completely to the family. Well, maybe they were in some ways like the mummies that we read about in the old days of life in the South. But these were not people who had any tradition of servitude. In the countryside they had never acted as servants. When they came to work for us there was never any humility or servility or anything like that.

They were people. They were independent people, and they worked for you, and they looked after your interests. They were completely devoted to the family, regarded themselves as almost part of the family, served the family I would say wholeheartedly. They were just good people. Maybe this has something to do with why so many of us liked China, because really the only China we knew was through our servants.

#### Jack's Early Memories: Western Style in a Chinese Compound

*Q: Do you think that's enough about the background?*

SERVICE: [laughter] Yes, but I could go on and on if you want.

*Q: What else?*

SERVICE: I'm over-prepared!

*Q: Wonderful.*

SERVICE: Where are we? [reading agenda] Oh goodness, "Early memories." All right.



I was born in 1909. I was very late. Apparently, I was born three weeks or a month later than they expected me. My mother always said I had long fingernails when I was born, a sign that I was, what to say, not premature, postmature.

*Q: Postmature, or else a mandarin. [laughter]*

SERVICE: I don't remember anything, of course, until the summer of 1912 when I was three. I mentioned that all the foreigners, including my parents, were evacuated in 1911, late 1911. My father came down to Shanghai, and then went to Nanking.

Then, after a few months in Nanking, he went back to Sichuan. He was very anxious, and the Y was anxious, for him to return to find what had happened and get things going again.

Families weren't permitted yet to return. So my mother went to Kuling which is up a mountain near Kiukiang, near the Yangtze River, and spent the summer there. I got very sick and apparently they thought that I'd had it. I have a vague recollection of a room, a very bare room, which I think was my sickroom. I remember the room spinning around. It's probably my first memory.

Then, after the summer we went down to Hangzhou on our way back up the river to Sichuan to join my father. My mother got quite sick in Hangzhou. She had recurrent bad health. I think that part of the whole picture of her reactions to China was that she was plagued with rheumatic fever, and, oh, various things. I've got some notes here. We don't need to go through them.

Anyway, she was sick in Hangzhou. We had a servant who had been with my mother at the mountain, a Sichuanese, who had come down river with us. He used to take me out to the Bund in Hangzhou every day for a walk. I remember the Bund. I remember walking down the Bund--it was an esplanade on the Yangtze--with my mother along with Liu P'ei-Yun, this cook of ours.

Sometime in here I remember we were out on a little trip or a walk in the countryside. The paths between the rice fields in Sichuan were very narrow, [gesturing with hands about two feet apart] just maybe wide enough for two people to pass. I remember walking along this path and seeing a rather large, stout Chinese coming towards me and then suddenly finding myself in the flooded rice field.

I remember my mother was absolutely frantic about this because, of course, the rice fields were fertilized with what we always called night soil, human manure, which was raw usually. Therefore, everything was supposed to be highly unsanitary, as it really was. Well, my mother was simply beside herself till we could get someplace where all my clothes could be taken off, I could be scrubbed down, and so on.

And her anger that this man had pushed me off the path--I have no recollection of the man actually pushing me off. I just don't remember what happened. He may have jostled me off. He may have just been unfriendly to foreigners. A lot of people were in those days. Or he may have felt that as a child I should have stopped and waited for him to go by, which probably a small Chinese child would have done, would have waited for the elder person, this man, to walk by.

My father, of course, was not agreeing that the man had pushed me off. My mother was sure that he had, out of meanness.

We came back to the States in 1915. I remember some things about coming back to the States. I remember my surprise, for instance, at seeing white men working on the docks. Of course, I had never seen any white man doing this kind of physical work before. The idea had never occurred to me. To see men on the docks in San Francisco loading and unloading cargo was very strange.

I went to the Panama Pacific Exposition. Then, we went out to Cleveland, Ohio, where my father spent the year working in the Cleveland YMCA. I remember first grade in a public school fairly well.

Most of my memories of Chengdu really are when we went back. We went back to Sichuan in 1916, after the summer in America. We lived in Chengdu then from 1916, and I went to boarding school in Shanghai in 1920. So that most of my memories of Chengdu are of the years when I was seven, eight, nine, ten.

*Q: By then you had a brother, didn't you?*

SERVICE: Oh yes, I had two brothers. Bob was twenty-one months younger. Dick, Richard, was about five years younger than I was.

*Q: You mentioned living in a compound. Was this a single family compound where you lived around the courtyard, or did you live in a Western style house?*

SERVICE: No, it was a Chinese-style house and it was a single family courtyard. It belonged to the Methodist mission. They had had for a while a school, a middle school I think it was, in the next-door compound. So, these two compounds were opened up. They gave that up and the YMCA used it at first for temporary quarters for the Y. Then, eventually, I think we moved over there, and another family came and lived in what had been our house. But, most of this early period we were the only family in this place, the only foreign family.

There were several different mission compounds. The American Methodists, the Canadian Methodists, the Friends, would each have their own separate compounds. Each compound normally had one afternoon a week or maybe one afternoon every two weeks for its "at home" in tennis. Everybody played tennis. They'd have tea. We would all go, of course, to the Canadian Methodists on their day and to the American Methodists on their day and play tennis.

My father and mother were very keen that we children should be independent, not wanting to be catered to or looked after, waited on by the servants. This was a big thing. We always had to pick up our own clothes and pack our own bags when we traveled, wash ourselves, and not let the amah give us a bath.

When we had the tennis at our place we always earned money by picking up tennis balls.

## Home Studies: The Montessori and Calvert Systems

*Q: How do you look back on your childhood in China? Was it a happy period for you?*

SERVICE: Oh, very happy. Yes, certainly. It was an odd life in the sense that it seems odd to have lived in a country and spent all your childhood there, and look back and realize that you never had a Chinese friend! We never played with Chinese children. I think for one thing, that my mother was terribly conscious about sanitation and so on.

Most of our servants didn't have children with them. The family was back--if they had a family--back in the village. I think our gateman at one time, or the cow coolie, did have his family with him. They lived out in the gate house. But, I don't think that the children of the servants would have played with the master's children anyway. I don't think there was that normal expectation.

In any case, my mother was simply obsessed that Chinese children were allowed to do things that we should not do, eat things we weren't allowed to do, and so on, so that we rarely saw them. Sometimes on Sundays there might be a visit to some family, university family or somebody in the Y, something like that.

*Q: I've got a question down here on the agenda, what was your sense of identity as an American boy growing up in China? I know that's a hard one to answer.*

SERVICE: Well, how much identity does any child have?

*Q: That's a good question!*

SERVICE: It's a matter of looking back on things now, of course, from a long time and a long distance. Looking back I'm surprised at the Americanness that my parents were so anxious--apparently anxious--to instill. We played mostly with American children, as I said, but also with some Canadians. But, we didn't go to the Canadian school. My mother felt that the school wasn't very good. It was just starting in. It was the equivalent perhaps of a one room or two room school in the early days in the United States. The teachers were usually untrained, whoever happened to be available, maybe some missionary daughter who had finished high school but hadn't gone on to college, or a wife who happened to be available.

My mother was a teacher. She had taught. After she finished at the U[niversity of] C[alifornia] and before she got married she had a couple years of teaching. At any rate, she thought the Calvert School was better.

But, also she wanted us to have an American education. She was very definite that we were coming to America eventually. We were going to an American school, American university. There was that feeling of identity.

The Americans always got together on Thanksgiving for instance. There was always some sort of a program on the Fourth of July. It seems odd that we would have, but maybe it's not odd for exiles far away from home to have put this stress on Americanness.

Obviously we felt very different from Chinese. We couldn't play with Chinese, as I mentioned. The Chinese were dirty and unsanitary. Yet, there was never any feeling of antipathy or hostility, nothing like that. My father obviously, as I said, loved Chinese. We liked our servants, and the servants were almost members of the family in some ways.

But, we did feel, I'm sure, a sort of a separateness, if not superiority, to Chinese. We were used to being considered as rather freakish, because if you traveled you were always surrounded by crowds of people, really crowds, who would keep pushing in closer and closer just to see you, just to look at you.

You were always called yang kuei-tzu, foreign devil, but without any particular animosity, because this was the only name that most of these children on the street knew for foreigners. "Look at the yang kuei-tzu! Look at the yang kuei-tzu! as you went down the street.

Of course, in villages in the countryside, you had no privacy at all. If you had to stop at a restaurant for your noonday meal when you were traveling, they'd keep getting closer and closer till finally my father or somebody would say, "Please move back. Give us some air."

If you stayed in a Chinese inn, they would try to come into the room, but you could close off the room. Then they would wet their finger and poke it through the paper of the lattice windows. [gestures] That lack of privacy bothered my mother, I'm sure, much more than it did we children.

*Q: Were you curious about America? I know you spent that year in Ohio.*

SERVICE: I don't remember being curious about it before then. Yes, I suppose we were curious. We read, of course, about America.

My mother was the political member of the family. She subscribed to The New Republic, I think, about as soon as it started. We got other magazines, Atlantic, and something called Survey or Survey Graphic which was published then. Century magazine was being published then. I think I read all of those. We also got things from Shanghai, The North China Herald, a weekly newspaper in Shanghai, and something called Millard's Review, which later on became the China Weekly Review. I suppose we were interested or curious about the United States, although I don't recall being much concerned.

Let me describe the day. Maybe that's the best thing to do.

My mother had started me when I was five on the Montessori system, which I think is sort of interesting, that she, way up in West China, had written and gotten a Montessori preschool outfit.

So, I had learned how to read and write--read at least--before I started first grade. I was ready for first grade, and I had that in public school in Cleveland, 1915-1916.

My mother had talked to the teacher in the first grade. Because I could read before I started first grade the teacher said, "Well, obviously little Jack can go quite well. I think he can skip second grade."

My mother decided to order the Calvert School [curriculum], which is a home study system. But, it has only six grades. They do the eight grades in six years. She ordered the third grade in the Calvert system. So, in effect I skipped more than a year, you see.

Every morning the first thing to do, first order of business, was your classes, your schoolwork. The Calvert system sent out textbooks, daily assignment sheets, examination questions. You sent the completed examinations back to Baltimore to the head office and they graded them.

I would get up and get to my studies. As soon as you finished your studies for the day, you were free. So, I was very eager on this. I used to finish up, do my recitation, and I might be through by nine thirty or ten o'clock.

Then the day was yours. I was very fond of reading and my parents had the Encyclopedia Britannica, the eleventh edition I think. I was very keen on--I'm talking now, oh, about eight, nine, ten years old probably--very keen on looking up things in the encyclopedia, categorizing things. I remember using the encyclopedia to look up all the Crusades and to study antelopes and various kinds of animals, one thing or another leading you on.

Maybe every other day or so we would go in the afternoon to some other compound, always in a sedan chair when we were small. Later on I would walk, but we always had a servant with us. Eventually we got ponies, Chinese horses, small horses. We'd play with children at this place or that place and come home.

We used to watch, of course, what went on around the house. We'd steal cookies from the cookie jar in the kitchen and watch the cook cooking the meals and so on, play around the compound.

The big thing, I think, was the trips that we used to take. My father was very keen on finding a good place for the family to go in the summer. It was accepted that you couldn't stay in a place like Chengdu during the summer months because it was very damp, very hot and humid. There was a lot of disease, cholera and so on, in the summer time. Almost everyone tried to get away.

The family kept trying to find an ideal place, and finally my father found a mountain which rather stood out from the range that was north of the Chengdu plain. It was about six thousand feet high. The top of it had been a place of refuge. If a mountain was difficult of access, the local people would put a wall around the top, and when there was banditry, civil war, or other disturbance, villagers from the area would go up and take refuge.

Anyway, there was this old chai-tzu, they called it, up there at the top. It belonged to a temple in one of the villages near the foot of the mountain. My father rented this place, took a long-term lease on the top of the mountain. First we, and then quite a few people built small cottages up there on the top of the mountain.

When we took over this mountain--when my father started this summer colony you might say--it was completely undeveloped. So we all helped building trails and paths, connecting the houses and going out to scenic places.

We boys used to have a little secret hideout of our own, a little shack in the woods, a lean-to where we would go and fix lunches. Good fun, not too different from American boyhood in a way, a place in the woods and so on.

So we went there for three or four months every summer. My father would take us up there and then go back to Chengdu--it was two days travel, fifty miles--and then come back, oh, maybe several times during the summer for a weekend or maybe a week or more.

But, always during the summer we would take a trip to the mountains. As I got older, each summer we would go further, explore new mountains.

We were exploring. It was new country. Foreigners had never been to a lot of these places before. Each year we got higher, nine thousand, ten thousand, finally quite high. Eventually we got to fifteen thousand feet.

*Q: You told me you had some footnotes from our last interview that you wanted to add.*

SERVICE: I think you asked me something about why we made these trips to the mountains every summer. I failed to mention what probably was the most obvious of all. That is, that both of my parents loved the mountains. They had a great feeling for nature. My mother, for instance, had John Muir's books--several of them. I remember reading some myself as a boy, particularly one about a winter trip that John Muir made by himself, climbing Mount Shasta.

This love of the mountains was carried over when we came back to the States, because every summer that we were here we went off with some of my uncles to the High Sierra.

Even in 1916, the family had a reunion at a place called Bass Lake which is a resort lake up from Fresno. But, in 1924 and '25, and again in '27 when I came here on the way to college, I went up with my uncles--my father and my uncles--up to Tuolumne Meadows. In those days that was quite a trip, dirt road, gravel road.

The road down to Lake Tenaya was a one-way road, you know, one hour up, one hour down. I drove with a cousin in an old Model T Ford, and the road was so steep at one point that we had to turn around and go in reverse. The gas fed the carburetor by gravity, so that if you had to go up a steep hill, it wouldn't reach the carburetor. Going backward we could make it.

It was quite a trip, but not nearly as much as when the family first started going there. My uncle--Fred Goodsell, who married my father's sister--has told me about going up with the Service family, camping in Yosemite Valley in either 1903 or 1904 when they went by wagon.

The main purpose of these expeditions to the mountains was fishing. They really camped. They took sacks of potatoes and sacks of onions and sacks of this and that. We lived on fish and pancakes. The real purpose was fishing. But, I wasn't very keen on fishing.

Every day we would go off to some fishing lake near the meadows, within walking distance. Then, I would decide what mountain I was going to climb. I would spend the day scrambling up one of the peaks around there. I climbed all the peaks within one-day walking distance of Tuolumne Meadows, I think. In '27 my cousin and I climbed Mount Lyell. At any rate I developed a liking for the mountains naturally.

When I was growing up in China, the best part of the year, really, was the summer and these trips. Then, eventually, as I got older--when I was ten, nine and ten--why, we'd make a trip to the mountains in the winter because there was always snow up there, at six thousand feet. There was never snow in Chengdu. Chengdu was about fifteen hundred feet in elevation but practically never saw snow. We'd go up usually for, oh, five or six days in the winter time and see the snow.

*Q: The topography of Sichuan--I remember Chen Shih-Hsiang telling me--really does look like some of the fantastic Chinese scrolls. Was your sort of mountain like that?*

SERVICE: Well, not so much there. Through the Yangtze Gorges you get some of the scenery that you see in paintings. But, these mountains were really more alpine mountains, Matterhorn type. Hang on. [Brings out framed watercolor by A.C. Morse]

This is painted from our mountain. We were out in front of the main range, and you can see the main range back here in the distance. We gave names to these places. These are the Three Muffins over here and some peak called Chiu-feng up there.

*[Interview 2: April 6, 1977]*

SERVICE: The high point of the summer, was when my father took us on vacation. My mother always said my father never took as much vacation as most other men did. But, he would take a week or ten days or so, and we would take a trip up into the mountains beyond our summer resort.

There were usually temples, incidentally, on top of these mountains, either Buddhist or Taoist temples. Both religions apparently shared the idea that the higher the mountain, the closer to heaven. So, there were old temples. By this time, after years of civil war and disturbance, they were generally in deplorable condition, but usually there were a few old monks there. We would stay at these temples.

#### The Winter Harvest: Ice Cream Making in Chengdu

SERVICE: Yes. Let's go back to China for a minute. You asked me if there was anything else I could think of.

The last two winters in Chengdu we made the trip up the mountain. One reason we made those winter trips was that my father had a passion for ice cream. We couldn't have ice cream. There was no ice, you see, in Chengdu.

He had gotten the idea of building an icehouse up on the mountain. There was a caretaker to look after the bungalows, and he would put away ice, you see, in the winter. Then it would either be kept for the summer or we would send somebody up the mountain to bring it down.

Well, it never worked out very well because for one thing the Chinese just couldn't really fathom the wasteful idea of using--sawdust, mainly, for packing ice. They would never use enough sawdust to preserve it.

So, we went up to supervise the building and the filling of the icehouse. The ice wasn't very thick and the only source we had--there was no pond or anything--was cisterns. We had cisterns and we'd take ice. It was quite thin ice. [about one inch thick, gesturing] It never kept till summer. By summertime we never had any ice.

So, what finally happened was that along in April my father would send a man from Chengdu fifty miles up the mountain to bring ice down to Chengdu. We would know about when he should arrive, and everything would all be ready. The custard would be made, and we would expect the man in about four or five o'clock on the second day.

We had an awful time getting ice cream makers. We ordered stuff from Montgomery Ward. Every year we sent an order to Montgomery Ward, and it would take a year maybe for the order to get to Chungking. The first one, my father decided was too small. It was a two quart or something like that. Then, we got another. Finally we got a six quart freezer.

Before the man arrived the custard would all be ready. Then, the man would come puffing in with what was left [laughter] of the load of ice. Then, we would make ice cream.

Again it was very difficult to get the Chinese to use enough salt. So, this meant we had to really do it ourselves because wasting salt--salt is very valuable and precious.

But we would finally get six quarts of ice cream. There were five people in the family. So, we couldn't eat it all. People would, of course, be invited in to help share the ice cream, the Yards and other friends. We gorged ourselves on ice cream about, maybe twice a year. All this building of icehouses and so on, all it would produce was about three gallons of ice cream!

### A Geographic and Ethnographic Trip into Tibet

SERVICE: In the final year I was in Chengdu, in 1921 when I was just having my twelfth birthday, my father and two other men made a trip that they had talked about for years. It was over the range, and then into the Min River Valley north of Kwanhsien and then into what was called "tribes country" where the people were all Tibetan peoples.



It was quite an intellectually active missionary society in Chengdu. It had a West China Missionary News and the West China Border Research Society which was started in 1922, 1923. I wrote an article for the Missionary News on this trip that I'm talking about.

All these people felt that they were on the edge of things, on a sort of frontier. They were interested in research on the various ethnic groups of aboriginal peoples, Tibet and so on, and a lot of the pre-Chinese groups that were still living in Sichuan, Lolos and others.

Wherever they went, my father and these other people made notes and maps. My father carried a boiling point thermometer, a hypsometer, to get a very precise reading of the altitude, and aneroid barometers--things like that we always carried. Over the high pass, we got a reading of 15,300 feet on the barometer and 15,000 feet on the hypsometer.

All these places we went to in the summer trips were along a range north of where we were, which lay between us and the upper valley of the Min River, which comes down through Kwanhsien and waters the Chengdu plain.

Anyway, there was supposed to be this opium smugglers' trail over this range. My father always talked about trying to cross the mountains into the Min River Valley. So, this year, finally in 1921, we did it.

But when we started we didn't know very much about the height of the mountain or the distance. Our guide claimed that he'd been over it, but later on it turned out he didn't really know much about it. It took us much longer and was much more difficult and higher than we expected.

We expected a trip of about four days from habitation to habitation, four days to cross the range. We had supplies and food, but actually it turned out to take us a week, seven days. So we ran out of food.

#### Boarding at the Shanghai American School, 1920-1924

*Q: When did you go away to boarding school in Shanghai?*

SERVICE: By 1920. I'd gone through the sixth grade of Calvert School. So, the question was what to do with me. The obvious thing was for me to go down to Shanghai to the American school. My mother went down the river with me. It took, I think, six weeks, a little more than six weeks to make the trip.

*Q: Good gracious.*

SERVICE: Anyway, we got to the school late. It was October, late October when we got there. My mother expected me to go into high school because I'd finished the grades. But, I'd just had my eleventh birthday, and I was very late for the school year. The school made me do eighth grade over again, which was very boring. It was a bad idea, but there was no help for it.

This school was for American children. About half were day pupils from Shanghai. There were some missionary, but most of them were business and official children. The other half were boarding pupils, and they were practically all missionaries' children.

As I've said already it was single-mindedly trying to be an American school. There were a few non-American, white children, but there were no Chinese. They taught nothing about China. They didn't teach the language or anything like this.

We even tried to play baseball and American football and basketball, but not sports where we could compete with any other schools, because no one else in Shanghai played baseball except for the American community team. We were rather foolish, I thought, in pursuing American sports. That's when I first saw Harry Kingman because he played for the American local community team.

As soon as Kingman came out to Shanghai as a Y secretary, he began playing for the community team in Shanghai, a local team. Of course, he was far better than anyone else. He was a star. He'd played for the big leagues, I think the New York Yankees. So, he quickly became the star of Shanghai. We were all very much impressed, in fact dumbfounded, to see the way he could throw the ball from first base to third base across the diamond, almost like a bullet, without its rising at all.

He became a pitcher. I don't think he was a pitcher in the big leagues, but in Shanghai he was good enough to be the star pitcher for the local team. So we all knew Harry Kingman, although I didn't see a great deal of him outside of watching from the bleachers.

And football was a similar problem. We had to play against a local pick-up men's team or against the American Navy. If a gunboat or something was in town, they would have a team.

In any case, all these things were quite irrelevant to me, because in eighth grade at eleven, I was still two years younger than anyone else in the class. Also, I got my growth rather late. So, I was very much of a shrimp, and hadn't started really to grow. Furthermore, having grown up in a place like Chengdu in West China, I had never seen a roller skate or ridden a bicycle. I'd never played any ball games. I'd never had any participation in athletics. Being very small and unskilled when it came to choosing teams, I was always the last one to be chosen. I hated ball games and never really participated very much, any more than I had to.

This was why I waited out two years before I went to college because I was fed up with being two years younger than everyone else. I was fifteen when I graduated from high school, and I waited two years before I went to college.

*Q: Apart from hating sports and being bored in your classwork, how was the rest of school?*

SERVICE: Well, it was tough at first because everyone had read about British boarding schools and they had the idea of having fags, smaller boys who did errands for the bigger boys. This I found a little hard to take.

Also, just having so many other Americans, I think, was hard to take. I mean I'd lived in a community where I went over to play with the Davies boys one day or the Canright boys another day. I just wasn't used to having so many of my kind.

The whole business of hazing and fags and so on made the first term rather tough, or at least the first couple of months. My name, Service, sounds like Latin servus, "slave," so some boys tried to call me slave, and I had a couple of fights over that. After I was willing to stand up and fight it out, we outgrew that sort of thing.

I was fairly homesick in those first two or three months but there were YMCA people in Shanghai that kept an eye out for me. My parents had a friend who was a classmate at U[niversity of] C[alifornia], who was working in the consulate there, a man named Sawyer. He used to take me out, for walks on Sundays, things like that.

I was fascinated really--I became fascinated--just by Shanghai. It was such an exciting and, for me, strange place. Transportation, railways--there was a little railway out near us, not far from the school. We were in the Hongkow section of Shanghai, in rented buildings. There was a short railway that ran through Shanghai down to Woosung. I used to go out and just sit and watch the train. If you put your ear to the rail, you could hear the train coming--or I'd listen to the telephone poles, you could hear the whistling in the wires.

Then I found I could go down to the docks and watch the ships. I used to do that weekends, not always alone, sometimes with other boys. The school finally found out about this and were horrified. You read novels about crime, and the docks and the waterside are always supposed to be the worse places! Here we were young lads, [chuckle] eleven and twelve, spending our Saturdays wandering up and down the docks of Shanghai or going across the river to Pootung.

The second year I was there, we lived in what was really a residence, which had been rented and used as a dormitory. There was a heavy, cast iron drainpipe--and we could get out of our window and go up and down the drainpipe. So when friends were leaving for West China, I used to go down and see them off. Their boats left about midnight.

Eventually the school found out about this because someone reported it to the school. They had seen me down at such and such dock seeing some boat off at eleven o'clock. Well, of course, we were supposed to be in bed by eight, I think, eight or eight thirty. So, this got back to the school, and they were going to expel me. But I couldn't easily be expelled because I lived a month away, a month or more travel away. So, they relented.

I enjoyed Shanghai. I learned how to read some Chinese by the numbers on the cars, because the numbers on the streetcars were in English and Chinese. So my first Chinese that I learned was the numbers.

We had a little bit--not very much--spending money. We used to go off to Chinese shops, little tiny sort of Papa-Mama shops, you know, that sold all sorts of things to eat, various things. This was all strictly against the rules, but we used to buy peanuts, buy duck eggs. Chinese were very

fond of duck eggs that had been hard-boiled and then sort of pickled in salt. They were very salty inside. Things like that--

One year there was a big missionary conference in Shanghai. There was a Scout troop, and I joined it as soon as I could. I was very active in the Boy Scouts and eventually became senior patrol leader, although it was rather embarrassing because I could never become a first class scout since I didn't swim. You see, in my boyhood in West China there was no possibility of swimming, no place to swim. I was a second class scout while I was senior patrol leader.

When the school moved to new premises in the French Concession in my last boarding year, 1923-1924, it was isolated, and there were no stores or anything nearby. So, the scout troop set up a little store. We sold candy bars and things like that. We started Saturday night movies. We ran that partly because we had a very, very active scout leader.

But, in any case, a lot of people were coming into Shanghai from other mission stations, interior and so on. Someone got the idea that they might need help in being guided to wherever they were going to stay, missionary homes or some hotel or somebody's home, residence.

So we set up a traveler's aid post in the main railway station and took care of these people. But, in between train times we would wander all around the yards, and of course, we had great larks.

It gave me--I wouldn't say it gave me--I already had the sense of adventure and of charging about and exploring, from the very beginning, from my father. Of course, what we kids were doing charging around the railway yards of Shanghai, I don't know. [chuckle]

But foreigners could do almost anything, you know. No one was going to stop you. Actually, no one was going to touch us, as I found out. Chinese kids would have been stopped, I'm sure, from running around the railway yard. Chinese kids would steal in there, go in there to pick up scraps of coal, half burned coal, or something like that. They'd be chased away. But, no one was going to chase away foreign kids. Foreigners lived a sort of special life, were special persons.

*Q: Well, it seems as though you certainly got away with murder at that school.*

SERVICE: Oh, yes.

*Q: Was the education reasonably good?*

SERVICE: Yes, I think quite good. Fair. Most of us did quite well when we came back to the States. You know, most of the children went on to college. Most of the missionaries were college-trained people. There were some that weren't, Pentecostals and so on. But, in those days they were very much of a minority. So, most of the missionaries--and certainly most of the children that went to Shanghai American School--went on to college, and I think most of us did pretty well.

*Q: What did you do with your school vacations?*

SERVICE: Usually people invited me. I don't think that this was arranged, because some of these people were people my parents didn't know. But, my friends would apparently ask their parents, "Well, here is this boy and he can't go home for Christmas. Can't we invite him here?"

This business of having people visiting you for a long time was accepted. Everyone did it. People had to stay with somebody. So, there was never any problem. I always had invitations for Easter and Christmas vacations to someone else's home.

I went to Soochow one Christmas vacation with a boy named Smart. His father died and his mother moved to Berkeley later on. I went out to Shanghai University once with some Baptist people. Several times I stayed with YMCA friends, particularly the Wilburs who knew my parents.

#### Twelfth Grade and Graduation from Berkeley High, 1924-1925

*Q: I guess your parents finally got a home leave in 1924. Is that right?*

SERVICE: Yes, that's right, in 1924, from Chungking where my father had been asked to start a YMCA. It was my father's second home leave, although he had been in China by that time, what, nineteen years?

The original plan was, I think, that the family was going to go through Europe. But, for some reason that couldn't be done. So, we came straight across the Pacific, to Berkeley. My grandparents' house had been burned down in the Berkeley fire. [1923] It had been on Oxford Street in that block which is now an experimental University garden.

We stayed up here on Spruce Street with an uncle. Then, we rented a house at Spruce and Rose, and I went to Berkeley High for my last year of school.

*Q: How did that strike you after Shanghai?*

SERVICE: Terrible.

*Q: Really?*

SERVICE: Oh, yes. I disliked it very much. It was not a happy year at all.

*Q: What was the matter?*

SERVICE: Well, I don't know. It was just a huge, big school.

*Q: About how big then?*

SERVICE: Oh, it was over two thousand. It was sort of overwhelming for that reason.

*Q: About how many had you had in your school in Shanghai?*

SERVICE: Oh, the whole school had been about four hundred, but that included the lower grades and high school. High school was a hundred, hundred and fifty, something like that. I forget, there were something like thirty people in my class there, my junior class, my last year there.

But, for one thing you arrived from a place like China with your clothes absolutely ridiculous, you know, by American standards. I said my mother made our clothes. Even after we went to Shanghai, Shanghai clothes didn't look like anything here.

We didn't realize in China that boys, by the time they're seniors in high school, wear long pants. When I started to Berkeley--I had just had my fifteenth birthday--I was still very much a runt and I was wearing short pants. I got a lot of kidding about wearing short pants, a senior in high school! So, I got my father quickly to take me out and buy some long trousers, some cords. Everyone wore cords in those days. Of course, they had to be dirty. So, it took me a while to get these dirty enough to be respectable.

I didn't want anyone to know I had been in China because the first time we came to America, when I was six, we were always being embarrassed by being shown off as coming from China.

People would say, "Oh, speak some Chinese for us!" or "Get something we can use for chopsticks. Let's see you eat some rice," and this sort of thing. I made my parents promise not to let anybody know we were from China, not make a big thing of it. So, I tried very hard to keep it a secret that I was [laughter] a strange freak from China.

You have no friends. You come as a senior. Most other people have got their friends. And I worked very hard, maybe because I had nothing else to do.

*Q: Were you behind academically?*

SERVICE: Oh, no. I did very well.

*Q: I didn't mean to suggest that, but I mean how good was your preparation in China?*

SERVICE: I think the preparation in Shanghai was okay. Later on when I started to college I had a problem because I didn't have trigonometry. But, last year of high school here at Berkeley I did extremely well, which was a great boon when I applied at Oberlin which will come along a little later.

## **II AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHT YEARS: SHANGHAI TO SHANGHAI, 1925-1933**

### Apprentice Architect in Shanghai

SERVICE: The sensible thing to do was to go back with my parents to Shanghai. I had liked mechanical drawing very much. The YMCA had an architectural office in Shanghai because they

had quite a large building program at this time. This was mid-twenties. They were building YMCAs and residences around China. So, they had an architectural office and through a little parental pull I got a job as an apprentice draftsman in this architectural office. I worked there for eighteen months.

I liked it quite a bit, and I thought for a while I would be an architect. For some reason I convinced myself that to be an architect one had to really be an artist and creative and I didn't have that. So I thought I could be a civil engineer which was related to architecture, but more practical.

*Q: How was the office set up?*

SERVICE: An architect named A.Q. Adamson was employed by the YMCA as head of the YMCA Building Bureau. He was a trained architect, but his main function was administrative. He ran the office, made sure things were done.

They also employed a Hungarian architect named Shafer whom my parents had known quite well. He was a refugee. He had been a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War. During the Russian Revolution they broke out of the camps, or no one kept them in the camps. He and a lot of other Czechs and so on worked their way clear across Siberia and finally got to China.

He had come up to Chungking when my parents were there on a contract to survey a motor road from Chungking to Chengdu. So, they had got to know him. One way or another he had gotten a job in this YMCA Building Bureau. He did most of the designing, actual architectural designing.

Then there was a crew of draftsmen, most of them Chinese except myself.

*Q: What tradition did he design in?*

SERVICE: Most of the houses, the YMCA residences, were very utilitarian, perhaps a trace of European. He built the foreign Y in Shanghai which is Italian Renaissance, I suppose.

*Q: Eclectic?*

SERVICE: Eclectic, yes, but more Italian Renaissance than anything else.

*Q: What were your functions?*

SERVICE: I was simply, as I say, a very junior draftsman. I was given jobs of working up floor plans. Shafer would give me the rough layout and the size of the rooms, and I drew the very simplest type of detailed floor plans.

I don't think that we had to conform to any particular building codes, certainly not in Chinese cities. We probably did have to in the [International] Settlement of Shanghai. We were building one building there, and that's what I worked on most of the time, the Foreign YMCA in

Shanghai. It was a big building, I think about ten or eleven stories, which for Shanghai was big. There were several Chinese YMCAs in Shanghai. Then there was a Navy YMCA which was built to take care of seamen, particularly navy seamen.

*Q: Did you get out to the building sites?*

SERVICE: I don't think the Foreign Y was started because I was still working on the plans. [laughter] So I don't think that I actually saw it under construction. I didn't get to any of the other sites because they were all inland or elsewhere.

*Q: I was wondering if it was the custom for architects to supervise the building.*

SERVICE: Yes. I think that the YMCA Building Bureau usually had someone to supervise, just as here.

*Q: Right.*

SERVICE: The bureau made the contracts and, of course, you have to have some representative to supervise, make sure the contractor fulfills the contract. But, who that was in Shanghai I don't know, because there was no one around when I was there. It may have been Adamson himself that would go out and check. I don't know.

*Q: Do you have any idea how the fee system worked? Did you get ten percent or was it on a flat fee for work done?*

SERVICE: This was an office of the YMCA, and people were simply paid by the Y.

*Q: Salaried?*

SERVICE: Salaried, yes. I assume that the Y was having enough of a building program going on that it paid them to hire their own staff, rather than work on any sort of a fee system.

I actually worked in the office building of the national committee of the YMCA. The national committee had a building in the downtown area of Shanghai. We were on one of the top floors of that.

### A Blank Period, A Fairly Quiet Year

*Q: This was an exciting period in Chinese history. How much did you see of what was going on?*

SERVICE: Well, actually, you see, I missed most of the excitement because the 1925, May 30, demonstrations took place when we were still in the States. It was just about the time I was graduating, just before I graduated. I remember my parents being very concerned and very alarmed at what was going on, reading the newspapers. But, by the time I got to China in the fall of '25 the excitement was over.



Then, the Northern Expedition was starting in 1926, coming up from Canton. Chiang Kai-shek was leading one wing. I remember our house boy that we had in Shanghai, our cook boy, being very concerned, very excited about it--he was obviously a patriot of the Nationalists--and talking to him about how good these people were. Most of the foreign press was treating them all as Reds and Bolsbies. Chiang Kai-shek was called a Bolshevik and so on. But our cook was very pleased and excited about it.

Then I left Shanghai in late '26 to come home. I was actually in Shanghai from September 25, 1925, until December 26, 1926. Then, I came on a long, round the world trip to go to college. I actually read about the events of the spring of 1927 when I was in Paris. I remember buying the Paris Herald Tribune and sitting there--in front of the Madeleine, I think it was--sitting down and reading all these exciting things about the attacks on foreigners in Nanking and so on. But on the whole, except for the fact that the Northern Expedition was starting and people were beginning to be concerned about what seemed to be the anti-foreign thrust of the Kuomintang, it wasn't a terribly exciting time.

There was a build-up of foreign troops in Shanghai. There was alarm. Almost every country was bringing more forces into Shanghai by the time I left. But, it really wasn't until '27 that the big crunch came. So, I came in between.

*Q: What did you do with your spare time and how did you live?*

SERVICE: Well, I remember very little about it. It just was not a very exciting period, sort of a blank period.

I lived at home with my parents. I had a bout of asthma, quite a serious bout of asthma. I had jaundice that year, went into a hospital for several days. They didn't know how to treat jaundice. But, otherwise it was a fairly quiet year.

In the summer of 1926, my parents went to Tsingtao where they rented a cottage. Tsingtao was one of the places where people from Shanghai went for the summer. But, I couldn't get that much vacation, of course, so I only went up for a short while.

A friend of theirs, a Methodist missionary who later on became a bishop, was going to Peking. So, I went up to Peking with him, summer of '26, and we had, I forget, maybe a week in Peking.

But, the most exciting part of that trip was that--The fighting had just stopped between Feng Yu-Hsiang's army and Chiang Tso-Lin's army. Feng, the so-called Christian general, who had a very good army, well trained troops, had withdrawn from Peking, had been forced out of Peking by Chiang Tso-Lin. He withdrew northwestward up the railway to Nankow Pass and then fortified himself. Finally after some very severe and heavy fighting he had been driven out of the Pass northward into Inner Mongolia.

The railway had just been opened up. We got on one of the first trains to go. It was terribly crowded and we managed to get ourselves onto the cow catcher of the locomotive. It was a huge locomotive. This was the only railway in China that had American locomotives. It was because

of the very steep grades. They had thought that American locomotives, being heavier and more powerful for the Rockies, would be better.

So, it was a great locomotive with a large platform out front. We had, I suppose, eight or ten people, all crowded on to this platform, in front of this huge, puffing, snorting, double-barreled steam engine, went up through Nankow Pass and so on. That was a lot of fun.

We saw the trenches and saw the battlefields. There had been a lot of serious fighting.

### Some of the Sights of Peking

SERVICE: My missionary guide was very much interested in the plight of the women involved in the night life of a city like Peking. So he took me on a tour of the brothels of Peking. Being dragged around by a missionary--who, of course, was not doing any business, he was just going around and talking to the people, the girls and the madams, and just observing--was a bit bizarre, it seemed to me.

*Q: What did he hope to accomplish?*

SERVICE: Well, I don't know. I assume he had a sociological missionary interest in the conditions. He obviously had done it before.

*Q: How did the situation strike you?*

SERVICE: I think we better take this thing out of this!

*Q: Okay. I'll make a note. Can you really see anything wrong with that? Gladstone did it after all.*

SERVICE: Yes, well, it just seemed like an odd--It seemed to me to be a strange thing to do. I was curious in a young way, I suppose, but I had never really--I knew such things existed, of course, but I had never thought of visiting a brothel before. We went all through the places outside the Chien men [the old main gate of Peking's Tartar City].

*Q: How did you react to the brothels?*

SERVICE: Oh, if you mean was I attracted or excited, no. I was just sort of perplexed as I recall, curious. I don't remember having any very strong reaction.

*Q: What did your parents say about that?*

SERVICE: I never told them. I never told them, [chuckle] just as I never told my parents about these other incidents. My parents never knew about these things in high school I talked about. You feel sort of ashamed that you don't react or don't defend yourself, but it all happens so suddenly that you can't. So, you just feel ashamed of it afterward I think. But, this thing, there didn't seem to be any point in telling my parents about it.

I saw the main sights of Peking. You couldn't see very much of the Forbidden City, but you could see the Temple of Heaven.

The man I was with stayed with someone in the Bible Society, and they had an old Dodge which was a famous car. It was a Dodge touring car, about 1924 or '25 model, which apparently was a very sturdy car. It wasn't a four-wheel drive or anything like that, but it would go on the worst kinds of roads and was very popular in North China and Inner Mongolia. Roy Chapman Andrews was making his trips about that time, and this was the kind of car they used. I remember riding around Peking in this old Dodge touring car.

*Q: Was there anything else you wanted to say about those China years?*

SERVICE: I don't think so.

### A Long, Solitary Tour Through Asia and Europe

SERVICE: I had the idea of studying engineering in college. It was always taken for granted I would go to [University of California] Berkeley. No other place was ever suggested. But if I was going to take engineering, I needed trigonometry and I hadn't had trigonometry. So, we planned that I would come here to Berkeley for summer school.

*Q: This was in--*

SERVICE: Nineteen twenty-seven. I had always wanted to make the trip through Europe. It had been talked of in '24, been impossible. So, it was planned that I would travel alone from Shanghai as far as Ceylon, and at Ceylon I would be picked up by some people from the YMCA coming on a following ship. Then, I would travel through Europe with these people.

But after I left Shanghai their plans were changed by the YMCA. They were told they couldn't take the time for the trip. They had to go directly to the United States. So, my parents telegraphed me, did I wish to go on or did I wish to come back? I could do either one. Of course I decided to go on.

The ship went to Singapore. I left it there and went up through the Malay states. At Penang I got a British India boat to Burma, spent a little while there, went up to Mandalay and back, and then to India.

There were YMCA people in all these places, and my father had written to some of them. So I could always check in with the YMCA people, and they helped me plan my sightseeing.

When I got to India I went to Calcutta and a very nice man there helped me plan my India tour, which was quite an extensive tour eventually.

I traveled alone, had a sleeping bag, a sleeping roll, and I spent nights on trains when I could--a very sensible thing to do.

I got up to Darjeeling. I had quite a trip, Taj Mahal.

*Q: Did you make comparisons in your mind between India and China? How did India impress you?*

SERVICE: I don't remember too much. I remember being very depressed. I did not like India, never have liked India. I'm sure my feeling was the same then, that it was so much more of a hopeless place than China, the attitude of the people.

But, I've been to India so many times since that it's a little unfair for me to try to really analyze what was my feeling at the age of seventeen, except that I never felt the affection or closeness or sympathy with the people of India that I do for the people in China.

*Q: Did it bother you that it was a colony?*

SERVICE: No, I can't say that it did. To be perfectly honest I thought the British did a good job of running it, the railways and so on, were good.

Then I picked up another steamer in Colombo, Ceylon, and went on to Europe. The ship landed in Genoa. I had talked to people on the boat--it was in March--and decided the best thing to do was to take another boat down to Naples, then come north with the spring.

I had gotten a guidebook by this time and looked up pensions, cheap. So I went to a rather modest pension in Naples. At the first meal--they had meals served at a long table, family style--there were two American women right across the table from me, and talking away about San Francisco, San Francisco Bay.

I said nothing because no one said anything to me. But, at the end of the meal one of the ladies leaned across the table to me and said, "Do you speak English?" I said, "Yes, I speak English and I come from the same part of the country you people come from." So, they were quite interested.

We chatted a bit. They had just arrived in Naples and I had just arrived in Naples. So, they said, "Well, we're going out this afternoon to Pozzuoli," I think it was, near Naples. "Would you like to come along?" I said, "Fine." They said, "Well, meet us down here in the lobby in half an hour."

When I came down there was a young American woman with them, a very attractive young woman. They asked my name to introduce me. I said, "My name is Service." One of the women looked surprised and said, "Younger brother of Roy Service?" I said, "No, son."

It turned out that both these women were school teachers in San Francisco and had been classmates of my mother's and father's at Berkeley. The young woman was a ward of one of them, a singer. She'd been singing in the San Francisco opera, minor singer. But, she had done well enough to get a job, a learning job, in the San Carlo opera company in Naples for a year.

She was going to take some time off and travel around Italy with her guardian and her guardian's friend--these old, old ladies they seemed. [chuckle] They were in their mid-forties, I suppose, if they were in my parents' class because at this time my parents would be forty-seven.

At any rate, I sort of tagged along through Italy with these people and then spent a week in Switzerland. It was April and you couldn't do much climbing. It was between seasons.

By this time I had gotten the idea of bicycling through England. I went to France, but I didn't like France because the French that I had had in the American School I found was very little help when I got to a real French-speaking area.

### What to Major in? A Switch from Engineering to Economics

SERVICE: I did fairly well my first year, except with my idea of engineering. I had signed up for a very heavy math course. It had a woman instructor who, I think, was probably just starting teaching. At any rate, I don't think she was a very good teacher.

They had the honor system in Oberlin. You always sign the honor pledge at the end of the blue book, "I have received no help," and so on. On the first blue book that we took in this course I forgot all about the pledge, and I didn't sign it.

So, when I got my blue book back, zero. Well, it was another thing like this mechanical drawing thing business. [Allegation that Jack stole a T-square in high school] I said, "I'm very sorry, but this was the first blue book I've taken, and I just forgot all about it." Well, she finally gave me credit. Anyway, I had decided by that time I didn't like mathematics, not all that much.

This meant that I wasn't going to be an engineer. My college experience really was a sort of a floundering, groping around, not knowing what I wanted to do. After a good start in my first freshman semester, I seemed gradually to go downhill. Then in my junior year I began to get interested again and to come up. My junior year and my senior year I did quite well. But, there was no Phi Beta Kappa key like my future wife got!

*Q: What did you major in?*

SERVICE: Well, this again was a funny business because after I lost interest in engineering, I didn't know what to major in. I ended up with a minimum economics major, because economics just seemed the sensible thing to do--practical.

But, I took courses like economic history of the United States. I liked history. Economic history of the United States was history, but it would count for economics. I had to take a course in accounting. I took a course in foreign trade and things like that. But, I got by with just a barebones minimum economic major.

I actually took my introductory economics in the fall of 1929, right during the crash. I don't think our professor had any conception of what really was happening on Wall Street. Not many people did, except that stock prices were going up. When the market broke, he believed that this was

just another business cycle. This one happened to be worse, but we would come out of it all right. In fact, for a long time he was quite optimistic that it wasn't going to be a very serious one.

I had one professor, a quiet old fellow who I think was probably a Socialist, but he was very discreet about what his real beliefs were. He sometimes would make a quiet remark that indicated that he didn't believe the old classical economics that the head of the department taught--who was sure that the Depression was not a very serious or deep one.

*Q: When you were taking your economics were the theories of Keynes brought in at all?*

SERVICE: Not at all. Well, Keynes may have been mentioned, but none of our professors were Keynesian, and certainly we learned nothing about Keynes' theories. I mean it was pretty much Adam Smith with maybe a little Marshall and Ricardo, but it was not Keynesian.

*Q: What language did you take?*

SERVICE: I offered French. I had had a little French in Shanghai American School, but it was abominable, so I told them I knew some Chinese. They sent me around to see a Foreign Service officer up in the Division of Chinese Affairs, who turned out to be someone my parents had known and I had known slightly in Shanghai.

He was rather busy and surprised. He said, "Well, I haven't spoken any Chinese for a long time." A lot of people didn't keep up their Chinese very well. He said, "Just tell me something about yourself, where you were born, where you went to school, and what you're doing."

So, I rattled on for a while in my terrible Sichuanese. He said, "Well obviously, you know some Chinese." [laughter]

After the oral, the examiners said, "Wait in the waiting room outside, the anteroom." So, I went back there and--I forget--fifteen or twenty minutes later, somebody came to me, a clerk, and gave me a piece of paper and instructions about having a physical examination at the navy dispensary.

Well, this was a tip-off. If you were sent to get the physical, then you had passed. They didn't tell you officially until some days later. I went and passed my physical exam that afternoon at the Naval Dispensary.

Then, there was the question of what to do. I had asked the man who examined me in Chinese for advice. This was January, '33. He said, "Look--there's going to be retrenchment in the department. Appropriations are going to be cut. There are simply going to be no appointments of any Foreign Service officers. You've undoubtedly passed the examination since you took the physical, but I can't give you a clue when you may get appointed, how soon."

I mentioned that I was thinking of going back to China anyway. My father was going then and my mother was going to follow later. He said, "Well, that would be an excellent idea. If you go to China, apply for a clerk's job, a clerkship. You'll probably get one if there is a vacancy because you will have saved the Department of State money by being already in China; and the

fact that you've passed the examinations and are on the waiting list for appointment will also be in your favor.

So that's what we did. I went with my father to China.

*Q: Supposing you had been offered a foreign service position outside of China, would you have taken it?*

SERVICE: Oh certainly. I'm sure I would have. Simply that--A job was critical at that time. Almost any other job probably too. I don't know.

#### Trainee in the American Oriental Bank, Shanghai

SERVICE: My father and I had a difficult time sailing because the Bank Holiday intervened and my father couldn't get the money to pay for the steamship ticket. They weren't anxious to take checks in those days since all the banks were closed. [chuckling] But, he had a brother in Berkeley who had a jewelry store down on Shattuck Avenue, L.H. Service, and he helped out. All the old Berkeley people knew L.H. Service.

Anyway, we got on a Danish freighter and got to Shanghai.

*Q: Were you at that point formally engaged to Caroline?*

SERVICE: Yes. Oh, I'm sure we were formally engaged. After I passed the examinations we had agreed. I'm not sure that I gave Caroline a ring then. I don't think I gave her a ring till later. Even then it was a ring my mother had, that my mother gave me, that I gave to Caroline. But anyway, we considered ourselves engaged.

*Q: Then, you arrived in Shanghai in 1933.*

SERVICE: Shanghai was having a deflation. Things were not good in Shanghai. American firms were letting people off. My brother Bob had been to Berkeley, had dropped out--he didn't like Berkeley, was unhappy--and gone out to China. He had been fired by the company he was working with. He was working as a sales representative for a machinery manufacturer.

There was an American-owned bank in Shanghai, the American Oriental Bank, which was run by a man named Raven. My family knew Raven very well. We also knew a Hungarian who was number two in the bank. Like our architect friend, he was a man who had come out across Siberia from a Russian prison camp. He had stayed in Shanghai and gone into banking.

At any rate, the bank agreed to take me on as a trainee. The salary was \$200 Mex. a month, which at that time was--well, less than \$100.

*Q: Two hundred dollars what? What was the word you used?*

SERVICE: Mexican. We'd say Mex.

*Q: Was that the currency in Shanghai?*

SERVICE: Yes. Well, Mexican dollars, had circulated very widely in the early days of China trade. By this time the Chinese government was putting out its own dollars. But, the word Mexican still was used. You saw Mexican dollars with Spanish, all sorts of different kinds of coins. Most of the coins were now minted in China. But, the phrase when you meant Chinese dollars was always Mex. or Mexican.

*Q: I hadn't heard that before.*

SERVICE: When you meant American dollars you said gold. You never said U.S. dollars. You said gold, even after Roosevelt devalued.

At any rate, I was sort of a trainee in the bank, working with the Chinese clerks as a teller, learning how to be a bank teller.

### III APPRENTICESHIP OF A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, 1933-1942

#### Clerkship in Yunnanfu

SERVICE: Almost as soon as I got to Shanghai I went around to call on the American consul-general, Cunningham, a very elderly gentleman who had been in Shanghai a long time, and applied for a clerkship.

It wasn't too long--I think it was only about six weeks--when Cunningham asked me to come and see him and said, "Would you like a job as clerk at Yunnanfu?"--which in those days was considered the end of everything. I mean to hell-and-gone, a remote and isolated post in South West China. He said, "You don't have to say today." I rushed off and sent a telegram to Caroline.

I didn't get an answer right away, but I went back to Cunningham I think the next day and said yes, I'd take the job. Then, Caroline's cablegram came in saying, "No, don't go!" But, the die was cast. I had committed myself, so I went to Yunnanfu which is now known as Kunming. In fact, to the Chinese even in those days it was known as Kunming. It was only the foreigners who still called it Yunnanfu because that is what it had been before 1912. The old Chinese name was Yunnanfu.

*Q: So, that was your first post. What did it pay?*

SERVICE: The pay was \$1800, U.S. dollars, for that day and age, a very fine job. But as soon as Roosevelt came in the Economy Act cut all federal salaries 15 percent across the board. That still didn't bother me. I had plenty to live on. But then they started devaluing the dollar. This meant that our paycheck went down as the U.S. dollar went down.



It was particularly bad in Yunnan because it was in the French sphere of influence and a lot of prices were based on the French Indochinese piaster, which was a gold-based currency. So, we had a very substantial cut in pay.

Eventually the government got around to compensating us, not for the depreciation of the U.S. dollar, but for the "appreciation of foreign exchange." So, it meant I had eventually quite a nice lump sum payment which I promptly proceeded to deposit in the bank, the American Oriental Bank in Shanghai.

### Duties

*Q: What were your duties? First off, to whom did you report?*

SERVICE: When I first got there there were two officers--two vice consuls actually. The senior vice consul who was in charge was a man named [Charles] Reed. Then, there was John Davies.

Everybody in the Foreign Service was usually sent first to a Mexican or a Canadian border post for a short trial period, usually three months or so. Then, you came to Washington for Foreign Service School which was another three months, sort of indoctrination, orientation, whatever you want to call it. Then you were sent out to the field. So this was John Davies' first field post really. He'd been in Windsor, Ontario and then Foreign Service School.

Very soon after I got there they decided that with two men there--in other words the chief vice consul and me--there was no need for John Davies. They were cutting down everywhere. John then was transferred up to Peking as a language student. You asked who I reported to. Well, there was only one person to report to, and that was the vice consul.

The office, of course, reported to the legation--it hadn't been raised to embassy status. We always said Peking, but actually the capital of the country was Nanking. In 1928, the Nationalist Kuomintang government made Nanking the capital.

This was very unpopular with the foreigners because, well, they loved Peking and they had their establishments in Peking. They had no lovely buildings in Nanking. So, the ambassador kept most of his office--most of the chancery was in Peking. He would make occasional visits to Nanking to conduct business.

So, we would always say that we reported to the legation in Peking. We generally reported by mail which might take two or three weeks, because the only way to get to Yunnan was a long trip through Hong Kong, then down to Haiphong, then by train, the French railway, from Haiphong--which in those days was a three-day trip because they didn't run at night--up to Yunnan. You could come directly overland but it would have taken you weeks and weeks to make the trip. So the only practical way was this two-week trip around.

*Q: When you say direct--*

SERVICE: Well, you'd go up the Yangtze to Chungking and then overland to Kunming, but it would take you about four weeks to do it.

*Q: What were your duties there?*

SERVICE: I did everything. Files, of course. I maintained the files. I did all the filing. I did all the typing and I was not a trained typist. This was to create a lot of grief because--Reed was terribly worried about promotions and much concerned about almost everything, social position, everything else.

But he couldn't stand any erasures or any mistakes on a page. I was always having to retype things so they would go in looking perfect. I myself don't mind little things like that. [laughter]

He had me do trade letters, commercial work. But, there really weren't any commercial opportunities in Kunming. There couldn't be because the French were not about to let any Americans do business--or anyone else except themselves, any other foreigners except themselves--do business in Yunnan. All goods had to come through French Indochina.

We would get trade inquiries--what is the market for beer, for instance, in your consular district? The only real letter to send them back was just, "There isn't any." But not my boss! He insisted that we write them a full dress discussion of the market and procedures for importing and the desirability of getting a local agent, the desirability and necessity of getting a forwarding agent in Haiphong, and all the rest of this. Every trade letter had to be a certain number of pages.

I had gotten eventually to do most of the routine consular work, registration of American citizens, issuance of passports, registration of births, marriages, this sort of thing.

After a year I was commissioned as a vice consul with no increase in pay.

*Q: Your first title was what?*

SERVICE: Just clerk, Foreign Service clerk. But then they commissioned me a vice consul, which meant that I could perform services like passports since I had signing authority. I could do notaries.

### "Bureaucrats are Made, not Born"

SERVICE: My chief was not a China service man. We had a Chinese interpreter in the office who was supposed to call attention to newsworthy things in the [Chinese] newspapers and translate them if necessary.

But, my vice consul didn't think he was doing a very good job. So he'd make poor Mr. Hwang sit down beside him, and he would point at the paper, [sternly] "Now, what is this? What's this?" You know, point at the headlines here and there and make this poor Chinese translate.

Actually, most of his political reporting was from talking to the British consul general who was an old China hand and whose Chinese was excellent. He was eccentric like a lot of British people in remote places. Homosexual and a Muhammadan to boot. He'd served in places like Kashgar.

But he was not alone in being unique or peculiar. In the French consulate, one of their members was a Buddhist.

But, anyway, Charles Reed talked mainly to the British consul general. He'd go to the club and hear the gossip at the club. The commissioner of customs and the commissioner of posts had Chinese colleagues, theoretically on the same level they were. So, they got a good deal of news because they had to know where the disturbances were. The political reporting basically was the sort of gossip Reed got from talking to other people. We had to submit a monthly political report. If anything urgent came along we would make a special report. If it was something really vital we'd send a telegram, but that was very unusual.

I remember one night. I think we were having a Christmas party and a telegram came in--any telegram was an event. We had to leave the party, rush down to the office, open the safe and get out the code book.

The telegram was from the legation in Peking relaying a circular from the Department of State saying that the president had declared December 24th a holiday because of the weekend arrangements or something like that. But, of course, we'd passed December 24th [laughter] by the time we got the telegram. So, we went back to the party.

The political reporting was, shall we say, very low key, very unimportant.

*Q: So, you don't feel you really got any good training in this--*

SERVICE: Negative training, mostly negative.

*Q: In what sense?*

SERVICE: How not to do it. This was a favorite phrase of Mao Zedong, training by negative example.

We ought to go back to Kunming because I rejected out of hand the value of serving there. That really wasn't true, because although I wasn't getting any very useful training in political reporting, I was learning to be a bureaucrat.

This is something that should not be treated facetiously. Bureaucrats are made, not born. Nothing in my background trained me or prepared me to be a bureaucrat. It's very important. It's not all negative. If you're going to get along in a bureaucratic system, bureaucratic organization, you've got to learn what things are acceptable, what you can do, what you can't do. You've got to learn prudence and caution, how to get things done, things like that.

Actually I became, I think in most people's minds, a pretty good bureaucrat. Most of my career was spent as a bureaucrat. I've made a little summary here. Actually, out of my twenty-nine years of service--which were diminished by five and a half by firing, leaving twenty-three and a half years as actual time served in the Foreign Service--I only spent about five years in political reporting.

This is what I'm generally known for, and this is probably why I'm sitting here talking to you. But, actually administrative and consular work, which are usually lumped together, were about fourteen years of my time. So most of my time was, shall we say, in bureaucratic pursuits.

Of course, in the Amerasia case I violated a lot of bureaucratic rules, and I acted in a very unbureaucratic way. That's one of the reasons why I got into trouble. But that's something that comes later.

Also, the business of being a clerk and learning from the ground up how things are actually done--filing, coding a telegram, all the routine operations--was something that always stood me in good stead.

I had it in Kunming. I had it for a while in Peking because after things got busy in China politically, then they needed extra help in the code room, and the language officers were called out for night code room duty.

Then in Shanghai, as we'll see later, most of my work was administrative.

Always in my later Foreign Service career I knew what the practical problems were. I knew the advantages of writing, breaking up a despatch, for instance, into various smaller despatches, because then they would be filed more easily under the appropriate topic. You write a grab bag type of despatch, why the file clerk has got a terrible problem.

Learning how to draft telegrams so that the night duty officer could get the subject right away and decide whether or not it's worth decoding in the middle of the night, and learning how to deal with subordinates. All these and more were improved by having had a basic grounding. Most Foreign Service officers come in and start as a commissioned officer. They never had the non-commissioned, grassroots, down-to-earth sort of experience. Anyway, that covers my addendum.

Incidentally, talking about bureaucracy, I was going to relate an incident in Kunming when I was learning to be a bureaucrat. Every post in those days was required to submit weekly, for the U.S. Public Health Service, what was called a quarantine report. It was supposed to report epidemics for the U.S. Public Health Service.

Generally, most consuls were in seaports. But Kunming was five hundred miles from any water. We didn't even know the population, and there were no medical statistics. So, we simply had a form statement. We would put it on this form each week, "The population is estimated to be 150,000. There are no statistics, but typhoid, smallpox, syphilis, are prevalent, and such and such

diseases are endemic, cholera and so on." When I had spare time I would type these up in advance and have them all ready. It just seemed to me completely absurd that we should do this.

So, I kept telling Mr. Reed that we should explain and object. He laughed at me and he said it was no use. But, I persisted. He said, "Well, okay. Write a despatch and send it in."

So we wrote a formal despatch to the Department of State explaining all the circumstances. We waited months and eventually a reply came back.

[paraphrasing] The Department of State has forwarded our despatch to the Treasury Department which in turn had forwarded it to the U.S. Public Health Service (which was under Treasury). They now had pleasure in transmitting the reply back through the same channels.

The Public Health Service reported they read our reports with great interest, found them of much value, and hoped that the consulate at Kunming would be instructed to continue to submit them.

Reed laughed, of course, when this came in. He said, "I told you so."

But, he also had his foible in bureaucracy because he was trying, all of the time he was there, to get Kunming declared an unhealthy post. In those days you got service credit for time and a half if you served in an unhealthy post.

Kunming was considered a healthy post simply because somebody looked at a map and said, "Well, it's on a plateau; the elevation is six thousand feet, lovely climate." So, we were a healthy post.

But, Shanghai and Hangzhou--Shanghai was a modern city. You lived in a foreign concession. There was sewage, sanitation, doctors, and all the rest of it. But, Shanghai was listed as an unhealthy post.

Reed spent a good deal of his time in Kunming on a campaign to get this changed, but he was as unsuccessful as I. [laughter]

### The Opium Trade

*Q: What sort of trouble did these missionaries get into?*

SERVICE: They were always trying to protect their converts against what they considered persecution by the Chinese. Heavy taxation--opium. The Chinese wanted them to grow opium. How else were they going to get any taxes out of them? This was typical pretty much all over.

I think that the missionaries were gulled at times by their converts. No doubt their people were badly treated. Most of the aborigines were badly treated by the Chinese. The Chinese took the best land. The aborigines either were left in the valleys if they were malarial, or were pushed up on the mountains. Where the land was good the Chinese were in occupation. In taxation, in everything that concerned government, they were discriminated against.

*Q: What about the opium trade? Did that ever come under your official eye or did you manage not to notice?*

SERVICE: You couldn't help but have it under your eye since the poppies were everywhere. Whole fields around the city of Kunming were a mass of poppies in the springtime. There was vacant land inside the city walls, right outside the walls of the consulate, that was planted with poppies.

Did the trade come to our notice? Certainly you couldn't avoid knowing about it. There were certain people there in town, French people, that had no visible means of support. One assumed that they were engaged in it some way or another.

Some foreigners smoked opium. The Frenchman who was the local representative for the Salt Gabelle which was the third Chinese organization run by foreigners, smoked opium [Others were the Maritime Customs and the Posts]. After dinner he would generally retire and smoke.

The whole life style, the daily schedule of a city like Kunming was tied to opium smoking. People got up very late in the morning, and late in the evening they would come out in the streets to get a snack. The whole town was geared to the prevalence of opium smoking.

You saw it everywhere you went. If you traveled, the inns were full of the smell of it. Your chair bearers and so on would smoke. It was a very commonly seen thing.

We took trips on ferry boats on a lake near Kunming. I remember watching an old man, for instance, curl up on deck and then smoke, just taking advantage of the relaxation, quiet on the boat crossing the lake to smoke.

One thing I may not have stressed was the fact that Yunnan was one of the principal opium producing regions of China. It was an important cash crop. The opium was shipped out through various other warlord domains down the river to Shanghai, Hangzhou, and also particularly down the West River to Canton. Of course, some of it went into Indochina, and some of it we suspected was processed into morphine and heroin.

Soldiers and opium were what Yunnan really lived on, exporting soldiers and exporting opium.

The United States government was very much interested, then as now, to stop opium traffic, narcotics traffic. So we were supposed to report on that.

I just happened to pick up recently a Bulletin of the Concerned Asian Scholars, July-September, 1976. I see there's a long article in here, a very good article as a matter of fact, on opium and the politics of gangsterism in Nationalist China, 1927-45. One of the important sources this author, Jonathan Marshall, uses are American consular reports from all over China. I find a number of reports in here that were written by Reed and Ringwalt while I was in the consulate in Kunming and which I myself typed and prepared to be sent out.

They mention in one place a figure of 130,000,000 ounces for 1933.

*Q: From the province of Yunnan?*

SERVICE: The province of Yunnan.

*Q: Doesn't that seem like an extraordinarily high figure?*

SERVICE: It's a tremendous figure but--I don't know. No one actually knew of course. It was a guess, but if you saw the countryside around Kunming in the springtime when it was just a mass, a sea of opium poppies, you could believe an awful lot was produced.

*Q: How did you and your seniors arrive at these figures? This sort of statistics collection has always struck me as a tremendous problem.*

SERVICE: Well yes. You had ideas of the magnitude of the trade through the size of military convoys that would take it out of the province for instance.

*Q: Military convoys?*

SERVICE: Oh yes.

*Q: Whose army?*

SERVICE: Well, it had to be by military to give it safety. Most of it moved in very large shipments. One warlord shipping it through the territory of another warlord, by arrangement of course.

There would be a pay-off. But you would hear, for instance, of convoys of a hundred or two hundred mules. Well, we're talking here about ounces, so you'd convert that to pounds, into mule loads. A hundred mule loads is a lot of opium.

*Q: Of course it is.*

SERVICE: And so, it's actually tons, and perhaps hundreds of tons, of opium that was being produced, that one could actually get very clear evidence of.

*Q: Who counted? Was it direct observation or did you have sources who brought you these reports?*

SERVICE: Sometimes scuttlebutt, rumor. Sometimes missionaries had seen them. Sometimes Chinese reported them. Occasionally something would get in the newspapers, but not very much of that sort of thing. This was generally gossip and rumor. But sometimes if you just happened to be traveling yourself you might see them on the road. We didn't do much traveling, but if a large shipment was being made it would get talked about.

*Q: I look forward to reading that article.*

SERVICE: The thing that's interesting about this article, one thing to me that's interesting about this article, is that in the late 1950s, or around 1960, there was a man named Koen, I think it is, who wrote a book on the China Lobby. This was his Ph.D. dissertation, a rewrite of it, and it was being published by Macmillan. In it he made some accusations, some statements tying the Kuomintang to opium business.

After the book was published Macmillan got cold feet, withdrew the book, tried to get back all copies from libraries and people they sold it to, and simply squashed the book. I've been told, and I think it's probably true, that it was the State Department that brought pressure on Macmillan to withdraw the book.

Yet here is this article written now, much later, all based on U.S. government consular reports showing absolute, complete, and very intimate tie-up of government in China, including the Kuomintang government, with the opium business, deriving income from it.

*Q: On a fairly institutionalized basis.*

SERVICE: Oh yes, sure. And yet the State Department apparently forced Macmillan or scared Macmillan into withdrawing this book. It became a collector's item, of course, until it was reprinted here recently.

*Q: How does the book stand up?*

SERVICE: Oh, it stands up very well. The part on the opium is quite peripheral. It's not at all integral to the story of the book.

*Q: I think that's a very interesting footnote. Did opium users function okay?*

SERVICE: Oh, yes. Opium in moderation is probably no worse than cigarette smoking, and cheaper in those days in Yunnan.

People would smoke usually in the evening. Then, about ten-thirty or eleven o'clock they would want some refreshment, and the streets would suddenly be quite full of people. A great many peddlers selling Chinese-type snacks would be on the street, noodles and things like this, for this post-smoking snack, like the after-theater crowd.

We knew it was just as well not to try to get hold of our number one boy along in the middle of the forenoon, or in the middle of the afternoon, because he was down in his room having a few pipes.

You would telephone people in government offices. We did have telephones, although they didn't work very well. Particularly in Chengdu when I was a boy, if you telephoned somebody or you tried to call on somebody, and they said, "He's out telephoning," it always meant that he was having opium!



### Lung Yun, the Local Warlord

*Q: What relations did you have with the provincial government? Did you have your own warlord or conflicting ones?*

SERVICE: There very definitely was a local warlord named Lung Yun, "Dragon Cloud," who was part aborigine, probably mixed Chinese and aborigine. But, he had gotten Yunnan very firmly in his grip. Of course he worked with the French, but I think the French were quite content to let him govern.

But they had him really under a very tight rein because it was impossible for him to import any arms, buy any arms, except from them. The foreign trade had to come through Indochina. The only outlet to the world that was usable was through Indochina.

I think that they had agreements with him on things like handling of political exiles. There were always some dissidents, Annamese dissidents who were opposed to French rule. So, I'm sure that the French, or Lung Yun for the French, kept a pretty close watch on that.

Then, there were problems like deserters from the Foreign Legion. A good part of the garrison in Indochina was Foreign Legion, and some of them would take off and run to the hills occasionally, end up in Kunming. They always got returned to the French.

But, Lung Yun ran Yunnan as a separate country in effect. There was a representative of the ministry of foreign affairs--

*Q: The Chinese?*

SERVICE: Yes, the Chinese Nationalist government in Nanking. But, he had to be someone who was acceptable to the local people. In other words he was someone designated by Lung Yun and then given a commission by the foreign office.

He was the person we normally dealt with. What little business we had was with this old gentleman who was an old Mandarin holdover from the days of the [Ch'ing] empire who, I'm sure, consumed his share of opium as most people did.

### Assorted Chores

*Q: Was there something further on your notes?*

SERVICE: Oh well, I've got all sorts of things.

We didn't have any dealings with the central Chinese government except for this local representative. We didn't have much business anyway except for missionaries that got into trouble or had complaints, or in some cases a missionary might die.

I remember one missionary who died. She was a very large woman who had lived in a remote city for many years and gotten so heavy she couldn't be carried in a sedan chair. So there was no way for her to leave. She simply died there all alone. It turned out that despite her having been there for ten or twelve years she had no converts, no one to look after her. The local magistrate took charge of her possessions and sent them up to the consulate.

We didn't have a great deal of business. We were there mainly because it was so remote; there was no other way for Americans to get the protection or consular services, passports, and so on, except by having a consulate there.

But, also we were there to watch the French. In earlier more actively "imperialist" days, there had been concern about what were the French up to.

After about a year, Reed was transferred, and a Chinese language officer, Arthur Ringwalt, was assigned to the consulate.

Also, after a year--I think after Caroline became pregnant--we were given a rent allowance, \$150 a year, which was ridiculous.

But anyway, we then moved out of the consulate and rented a house belonging to an Englishman, an English Methodist missionary, I think. They had a small mission hospital there, and the doctor was going on home leave.

Ringwalt was a more pleasant person to work for. I was in charge actually for a while between the two men. Then, Ringwalt did some traveling and left me in charge.

### The Long March Skirts Kunming

*Q: When the Long March skirted Yunnanfu, what advance intelligence, if any, did you have?*

SERVICE: Well, I'm not sure. Of course, the Chinese newspapers had something but not very much. They were strictly controlled and heavily censored. Also, we had only Kuomintang communiques which were always that the enemy is at full retreat. But, very often the enemy is in full retreat toward our rear, you know. [laughter]

*Q: That's a nice expression.*

SERVICE: I think that probably most of our information came from people in the customs and the post office, and also from missionaries, because in those days the Communists were super anti-imperialists. If they had a chance to snatch missionaries, they would hold them for ransom or sometimes try them for imperialist crimes.

Not so much the Mao group, but some of the subsidiary groups actually executed a few, held trials, executed them as imperialist agents, which they could be. If you wanted to talk about passing on information, missionaries did serve in some ways as spies. We'll come to some of that later on.

We got reports from missionaries who were having to flee because of the Communist advance, telegrams and so on. This got closer and closer and people traveling as best they could, began to arrive in Kunming. So, we knew the Communists were coming our way.

Late one night--The consuls were trying to keep in touch. I forget what time this was, but it was quite late. We got a chit from the British consul-general, I think, who was very close to the French consul-general--they were near neighbors--saying that they had decided that all women and children should leave by the morning train.

They'd made arrangements with the railway. There was one train a day, early morning. So I rounded up the few Americans there were, running around knocking on their front gates, got them up and got them off on the train.

There was an American plant explorer there, a rather famous man named Joseph Rock who did a lot of work for the Harvard Arboretum and for the National Geographic Society and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was living in Kunming at the time, and a bit of an old maid. He wanted us to tell him whether or not he should evacuate. We said, "Our instructions are women and children should evacuate." He asked, "Did we think it was dangerous?" Well, we didn't know. So he left on the train the day after the women and children did.

The Long March came very close to the city. Some of it did. Of course, an army of that size doesn't all trudge single file on a single road. They move through a country like a cloud of locusts, in a way.

Villages very close to Kunming were told the day beforehand--they had scouts out ahead--"Prepare so much rice. So many people are going to be here tomorrow. You'll be paid." The remarkable thing was that everything worked out just as the scouts had said. So many people did come the next day, rice was prepared, and they were paid.

Of course, they were robbing landlords along the way, seizing what they could in the way of silver. Apparently they did have enough money to pay. It made a tremendous impression because people were not used to being paid for anything that was provided to soldiers.

For an army like this on the move to be so well organized and to pay off made a tremendous impression. This was not in the papers. It was what you heard from talking to people, the grapevine type of news.

Obviously their intent was to make a dash for the Yangtze, which they did. They had completely sidestepped the provincial army which had marched forth to meet them in Guizhou. The Communists were so mobile, so fast in marching, that they simply marched around them.

The night of the crisis some Yunnanese troops dragged into town, dead beat from being force-marched from further west. They would have been poor defenders--Kunming could have been captured if the Communists had thought it worth the time. But they knew their lives probably depended on getting across the Yangtze. So the Communists didn't delay.

*Q: Have you any estimate of the numbers in the Long March at this point?*

SERVICE: We had heard all sorts of figures. I don't think anybody knew. We heard figures from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand, probably closer to fifty thousand.

*Q: Did you see any of it?*

SERVICE: No. No, we didn't try to go outside the city walls. It would have been foolhardy. We went down to the club and consoled ourselves with the Cercle Sportif! [laughter] So, no one saw any of them. They just went by like ghosts. After about a week, we called the women and children back from Indochina. I think it was a week. Caroline probably told you. She remembers those things much better than I do.

*Q: Can you recall your own estimate of what it meant?*

SERVICE: Not really, no. No one really thought that these people were terribly important. Yes, they had held out in Gansu. But, I don't think anyone felt that they were a real threat to the country or likely to take over.

Everybody felt that they were semi-brigands--and some of them were semi-brigands or had been brigands. There was always a lot of unrest and dissatisfaction. Yes, they were legendary for their marching ability, for their deftness in maneuvering.

But, they had been defeated. That's why the Long March took place. They had been driven out. They had lost, I think most people felt that this was sort of a remnant, defeated remnant, that was running for shelter and safety in some far western areas.

*Q: Were leaders' names talked about?*

SERVICE: Oh yes, of course, a great deal. Mao Zedong and Chu Teh and Zhou En-lai were famous names, and they were continually being reported as having died or been killed or died of wounds. Zhou En-lai died numerous deaths. All of them--Mao Zedong was tubercular, at death's door. These names were already legends.

*Q: Amongst the foreign community?*

SERVICE: And Chinese, yes. I don't know how much among the Chinese, but I would guess quite as much.

*Q: I would have thought more amongst the Chinese.*

SERVICE: Yes, My own contacts with Chinese were so limited in those days that I can't speak with assurance, as I could for instance in later days.

It was very impressive though, this organization and their treatment of the people. It made a very real impression.

*Q: Did it linger? What was the effect of the March on the surrounding communities?*

SERVICE: I don't think very much because they couldn't stay very long. They undoubtedly left wherever they went, a memory. People were paid and they treated the people well. In those days they took it from the landlords and gave it to the people.

What they couldn't carry away they said, "Come in and help yourselves." It was sort of Robin Hood.

The ideology didn't have a chance to sink in as far as Yunnan was concerned.

### The Chiangs Visit Yunnanfu

*Q: Was it soon after that Chiang Kai-shek and his wife came to visit?*

SERVICE: Yes. The Kuomintang armies and Kuomintang airplanes were pursuing the Communists. This was how Chiang extended his control to some of the western provinces. Guizhou and Yunnan at this time began to come under central government control. It wasn't really effective until '37 when the Japanese war started. But, organizations like the Bank of China began to get into Yunnan.

The Chiangs came up to Yunnan, and they had a reception for the foreign community. Ringwalt, who was very absent-minded, didn't think about taking us. We found out later that the British consul had taken his cipher clerk, a man who was lower in status than I. But, Ringwalt just didn't think of it. So, we didn't meet Chiang and his lady. [laughing] Did Caroline say we did? I think she's wrong about this.

*Q: No, Caroline remembers it that you went and she didn't.*

SERVICE: No, no. Neither one of us went.

*Q: Do you remember what impression they made? Obviously, you can't speak first person on this.*

SERVICE: No. The big problem locally, the big question, was whether they were going to come before the opium was harvested, the poppies were harvested. If they were going to come before the opium was in, then the Chinese realized they were going to have to do some chopping, at least in the fields close to the city.

But, fortunately the crop was got in all right. Now, how this was arranged or why, I don't know. But the fact is that there were no great losses of the local crop.

*Q: Tact, I dare say, at some level.*

SERVICE: The way the Chinese work things out.

To Peking as Chinese Language Attaché

SERVICE: We arrived in Peking in December, 1935. I was assigned as a [Chinese] language attaché. That's where we sent all our people for language study. In fact, all the foreign missions sent their people to Peking for language study. I had two years in Peking, which were a wonderful two years, an idyllic place to be with ostensibly no responsibilities except to study.

*Q: Was this your first serious exposure to the written language?*

SERVICE: Yes, that's right. I had sat in on a course here at Berkeley for a while, but not long enough to really learn anything. As I said before, I had learned the numerals from comparing the English and the Chinese on the streetcars in Shanghai when I was a boy. But, I was basically illiterate in Chinese. I spoke a backwoods Sichuan dialect.

The first quarter in Peking we were sent to what was then called the North China Union Language School, which was run by a man named Pettus, mostly for missionaries, but also some business people and scholars.

It was the equivalent in those days of this sort of school in Taiwan now. But, there weren't very many scholars. [John King] Fairbank and Woody [Woodbridge] Bingham, people like that, were in Peking or had been in Peking just recently, Marty Wilbur and so on. All the China scholars went to Peking for a while, and they studied at this North China Language School.

But, the legation sent its people there only for the first quarter for an introduction. After that we studied on our own with our own teachers, following our own course, our own book.

We had a different emphasis. The missionaries were learning to read the Bible and to preach. We were interested in Chinese official correspondence and reading newspapers and being able to translate and interpret for official interviews.

The teachers, as I say, were horrified at my accent, my dialect, and insisted that I try to forget everything I had known and start completely anew.

*Q: Was that very difficult?*

SERVICE: Yes, it was. But, I think I did it fairly successfully.

*Q: That's what I've heard!*

SERVICE: I tried to forget my Sichuanese and just assume I didn't know any Chinese. So, I worked "wo, ni, t'a," "I, you, he," this sort of thing.

*Q: What did you think of the system of teaching?*

SERVICE: It's a very time-wasting system, I'm sure, because basically, after we finished the language school we were just on our own with two or three teachers. We would spend practically all day with a teacher across the table working on the text. But, the teachers knew no English, and at the beginning you knew very little Chinese. I think that the modern methods of using tapes and so on would be far better.

But, we had two years to do it. In the army and the navy they had three years to do it.

*Q: Oh really.*

SERVICE: Yes. So, if you're willing to invest that amount of time and you've got full time to do it, why it works. We could learn Chinese.

*Q: It sounds enormously luxurious to have a one-to-one relationship.*

SERVICE: Oh, yes.

My brother Dick, after my father died, had gotten a job as clerk in the consulate in Foochow. He found out at this time that he had intestinal TB [tuberculosis]. He had an operation for appendicitis in Foochow and the doctor, when he opened his abdomen, found he had intestinal TB.

So, he came to Peking and was in the Rockefeller Hospital, the PUMC [Peking Union Medical College]. They recommended that we find a place outside the city. We went out to the Western Hills, maybe fifteen or twenty miles outside of Peking, and rented a house. Foreigners had bungalows out in the Western Hills. We lived out there for something over six months with Dick after he came out of the hospital.

I only had one teacher, and he came out by bus every day. He'd take a morning bus out to the bottom of the hill--we weren't very far up the hill. Then, he would stay there all day and go back in the afternoon. This was not as good as having two or three teachers. But, we got along all right.

*Q: So, you had no other duties than to study Chinese?*

SERVICE: You had to read. You took an exam at the end of the first year and an exam at the end of the second year. You took exams on Chinese geography, foreign rights in China--extraterritoriality in other words--some Chinese history. You had to know something about China. This was not regarded as terribly important. Your main job was to learn Chinese.

But, I did a lot of reading. I can remember very definitely a milestone in my attitude of knowledge of China was coming across and reading R.H. Tawney's Land and Labor in China, a very good book, still a very good book. But, it was the first, analytical, economic-sociological approach to China that I had seen.

There was a good deal on foreign relations in China. H.B. Morse and Tyler Dermott's Americans in Eastern Asia. Then, there was a two volume compilation by a man named [Westel Woodbury] Willoughby about foreign rights in China, all sorts of things about extraterritoriality because, of course, we had to protect our rights and even to serve as consular judges at times.

Then, the history of China. In those days there wasn't very much. [Chauncey] Goodrich, and the old histories. The succession of the dynasties and Confucianism. You got a fuzzy idea about the wonders and virtues and ethical beauties of Confucianism and the examination system where even the poorest man had a chance, you know.

But, there was not much along the lines of a Marxist approach or any sort of a class analysis of China or what really went on with the peasants. You knew vaguely that there was an elite culture. But, no one really went down to the soil and looked. You had had agricultural people come out and write books, like a man named King, an American, who wrote a fine book, Farmers of Forty Centuries. He was lauding the virtues of the Chinese system of agriculture, how it was self-sustaining and self-supporting and so conserving of everything, like night soil. He wrote panegyrics about Chinese agriculture, but nothing about systems of land tenure or life of the peasants or anything like that.

So, to read something like Tawney's modern, social analysis of what China was all about was quite new.

*Q: Did you come across [Max] Weber's work on China?*

SERVICE: No, not at that time. No, actually it was not on the list, and I don't think it even was in the library at the legation. [laughter]

At the end of the first year we took comprehensive exams. We checked in about once every quarter at the embassy to find out how we were doing. Then, at the end of the year we took the exams. There were three students.

*Q: Who were they?*

SERVICE: Three at first. Two of them--One was Ed Rice, who's out here in Tiburon, and another man named Millet. We had a lot of jokes about Rice and Millet working together. Millet is the staple food for North China and rice for South China, of course. Then the second year another man was assigned, a man named Troy Perkins, who had already been in China, and had served for a while as a consular officer.

*Q: Was there any professional training for your job as political officers?*

SERVICE: Very little. I'd had some introductory political science, political theory, at Oberlin. But, it was a very sketchy course under a Hungarian named Jaszi, who was quite an interesting person who served in one of the early post-World War I governments in Hungary.



But, we really didn't have to know very much. We didn't go to anything like West Point or Annapolis. There wasn't any sort of special training academy.

Normally in the Foreign Service you went to an orientation course in the Department. But, that was only about a six week course. They'd show you what a visa was and what a passport was and a consular invoice was. You learned a little about routine operations.

I never attended the course because I'd been a clerk for two and a half years and I went from Kunming direct to Peking. So, I never had this orientation. But, I'm sure I was much better off than the people who had to rely on that.

You asked whether I'd read any Marxist and Leninist materials. No. I don't think I read anything directly by Marx or Lenin until I got to Yenan.

When I got to Yenan I realized--

*Q: In 1944.*

SERVICE: In 1944 I realized that I hadn't, and so I scratched around and asked the Communists, "Look, haven't you got any of these things here?" [laughter] They did. They found some very dog-eared, old copies that some of them had, some English versions of [Marx's] Communist Manifesto and things like that.

#### A Lotus-Eater's Paradise

*Q: What can you remember about the foreign community there?*

SERVICE: Oh, it was a wonderful place. Peking was a lotus-eater's paradise in those days. The life and the homes, the old Chinese homes that people were able to rent or buy, attracted people who simply wanted a lovely place to live. There was an artist community.

There were people like Harold Acton, a British poet. There were foreigners who were teaching in the universities there. Pei Ta [Peking National University] and Tsing Hua had several foreigners on the staff. Ivor Richards, a British philosopher and linguist was there.

There were people there that just liked living in Peking. There was an American sculptress named Lucille Swan. There was Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit archeologist, paleontologist, but philosopher as well.

There was a diplomatic community. There was a missionary community. And there was a community of language students. There were the Marine guards.

For those who wanted it there was horse racing. A lot of people had polo ponies and played polo. We didn't. We stayed away from the club. Of course, we were out of town, living in the hills for a part of the time. But I was more interested in study than in going to the club.

But you couldn't avoid living a fairly busy social life. You met a few Chinese, not very many.

*Q: I was going to ask about your Chinese contacts.*

SERVICE: Hu Shih was there and various other people. Chiang Monlin who later on was president of Pei Ta. Hu Shih was lecturing in Chinese philosophy. I went to Hu Shih's lectures one year, my second year, when I could understand enough.

*Q: How did they impress you?*

SERVICE: Well, it was very interesting. Philosophy is not my subject unfortunately. I'm a nuts and bolts--I'm a facts and figures man, and I don't deal well with abstract concepts. But, the lectures were interesting, history of Chinese philosophy.

*Q: Did you ever come across George Kates who wrote The Years that Were Fat?*

SERVICE: Yes. I didn't know him very well. He was a bit of an eccentric, sort of lived by himself.

People like [Owen] Lattimore were there. [Edgar] Snow was there. There was a foreign newspaper community, a foreign writers' community. As I said, there was quite a large, active artist colony.

We took several trips. I went up to Inner Mongolia with a man in the embassy named Salisbury. A group of us--Phil Sprouse and a couple of Marine language officers--took a trip out in the hills to an old Trappist monastery which was way back about four or five days' travel back in the mountains. They had developed their own little valley, put in irrigation, sort of a Shangri-la type of place.

But a lot has been written about Peking. I think we're wasting our time talking about life in Peking!

#### An Informal Study Group and Edgar Snow's Report on his First Trip to Yen-an (Paoan)

SERVICE: You asked me about Ed Snow as a person. I wasn't an intimate with Ed, although we knew each other in Peking from the December 9 student demonstrations. But we weren't very close. I've said almost everything I know about Ed in a piece that I did for the China Quarterly (John S. Service. "Edgar Snow, Some Personal Reminiscences," The China Quarterly, April/June, 1972, #50, pp 209-229.) after his death. I don't know whether we can incorporate this or not. Ed was a wonderful person, but you really don't want me to spend a lot of time talking about him, do you?

It's actually mentioned in the memoir here, my second year in Peking I joined a group, very informal group, that used to meet about once a month at one of the member's homes.

Generally these were people who were scholars, writers. Hu Shih was a member. Owen Lattimore was a member. There was a Swedish newspaper man--half newspaper man, half scholar--people who were in Peking for postgraduate study or graduate study.

Ed Snow was a member. We knew in the summer of '36 that he was out of town, but nobody seemed to know exactly where. Then, he came back in the fall of '36, and it just happened that that month's meeting was at my house.

So he came and told us about the trip to Yen-an. It was a very interesting, exciting evening.

*Q: Visiting--*

SERVICE: Yen-an, his first trip to visit Mao Zedong, and the Communist army--actually not to Yen-an but Pao-an, which was where they were located then. But, we always lump Pao-an and Yen-an and think of it as the Yen-an period. It was at the beginning of the Yen-an period, but they hadn't yet reached and occupied Yen-an.

What was happening then, of course, was the hope for a United Front. What Ed Snow brought back was the Communist push for a United Front.

*Q: With the Kuomintang?*

SERVICE: With the Kuomintang. The Sian Incident hadn't yet occurred, but it took place very soon after that. (When Chiang Kai-shek was kidnaped by the Chinese Communists, 1936.) I think most of us, and even Ed Snow himself really, didn't seem to feel that the Communists had any chance of coming out on top.

There was this possibility, a rather exciting one, that the civil war might end. But that was the extent of our expectations at that time.

Ed's political views at the time, well, [chuckling] we didn't categorize people by political views, and our political concerns were generally limited to China. Ed was certainly sympathetic with the Chinese left. He'd already published a volume of translations of stories, mostly short stories, by left-wing writers in China. But, then most of the promising young writers in China were left-wing, anti-Kuomintang, Lu Hsun and so on.

We knew that he was a friend of Lu Hsun and Madame Sun Yat-Sen. He was in contact with the left. He and his wife, Nym Wales, had been sort of co-conspirators with the student leaders at Yen-ching during the December 9 riots.

We didn't know at the time the extent of the Communist influence in those riots, but I think the Communist influence moved in very rapidly. It may not have been there as an instigator at the beginning, but certainly the Communists did move in. A lot of those leaders, of course, ended up by becoming Communists.

You ask what information we had on the Communists. Snow's description of his trip to Yenan was really all we knew about the Communists.

*Q: What was the focus of the study group?*

SERVICE: The focus really was whatever study or research people were doing. Owen Lattimore, I remember, was still writing his Inner Asian Frontiers of China. He was doing research on the history of the long conflict between the nomads and the settled farmers.

I remember there was a lot of discussion at one of these sessions about who first invented trousers and the significance of trousers! Of course, you couldn't really develop cavalry until you had pants. [laughter] You could have chariots. But if you were going to ride, as the Mongols did, you had to have trousers. So, there was a lot of discussion as to just when--The Scythians are supposed to have had trousers.

It tried to be scholarly. There were several members that usually had some topic of interest. I don't remember Hu Shih ever giving us a talk, but he used to show up occasionally.

*Q: When you commented on Ed Snow's political views you said that people weren't categorized in those days. Now I don't know to what extent people were being categorized in the United States in the mid-thirties?*

SERVICE: Probably more than we were in China. I think we were much more isolated in China and naive perhaps. But by the mid-thirties certainly there was Communist influence in the writing field and labor unions in the States. But we didn't, as I recall, think much about it in China.

*Q: I just read a review of a book about Norman Thomas and a comment that like many American political activists he despised too much intellectual baggage--political theory. Am I getting the right impression that political theory just wasn't a significant part of the intellectual life of the group you're describing in the 30's in China?*

SERVICE: Yes. I think it was probably felt to be irrelevant. It didn't impinge very much.

I think I mentioned earlier that in 1932, when I was a graduate student here, Norman Thomas came to Berkeley during the presidential campaign. He couldn't speak on the campus. He spoke on the steps of I[n]ternational House.

I was one of a large crowd that heard him speak. I voted Socialist in '32 and if you asked me, I probably would have said that I was a Socialist: certainly Ed Snow and his wife were Socialists. But I wouldn't have thought very much about it.

I hadn't met any Communists at this time. I didn't think of people as being Communists.

*Embassies Insulated from Chinese Political Events*

*Q: What political judgments were you able to form? Or were you just so busy that--*

SERVICE: Actually, I think it was a sort of a vacuum. No, that isn't true. The political climate was mainly the Japanese threat. The Japanese were trying by a nibbling process, to carve off North China or at least cut it out from under direct Nanking control. They talked about "autonomy" for the North China provinces, and that would mean the withdrawal of Chiang Kai-shek's own troops and strengthening local people.

There was a flight of Japanese airplanes over Peking the day we got there. They were dropping leaflets in favor of autonomy for what was called East Hopei, where they finally did set up a separate regime, East Hopei Autonomous Region.

Then only a few days after I was in Peking, the students in the universities all demonstrated, December 9 movement [1935]. John Israel has written a book about it.

Of course, I took off. I mean I didn't go to school when something like that was going on. I was the only person really, except for people like the Snows and Jimmy White who was the AP [Associated Press] man--the newspaper people were out--but I was the only American official as far as I know that was in the streets while these demonstrations were going on. I went back to the office and told them about it.

*Q: Was that apathy typical of the diplomatic corps?*

SERVICE: Very much. They'd got enough to do at the office, and they stayed at the office.

At any rate I had a wonderful time following the students all day. That afternoon, they were beaten up very badly by the gendarmes, sprayed with water hoses, and driven into alleys where the police could beat them up. The police had belts with heavy buckles and they used those. I'm sure they learned a lot of these things from the French police. Don't they call them gendarmes?

*Q: Yes.*

SERVICE: Then at the end of '36--just after a year--there was the Sian Incident when the Generalissimo was kidnapped in Sian. Of course, this was a tremendous affair.

I remember seeing Chinese like Chiang Monlin weep when the Generalissimo was released, when the word came that he was safe and coming back. The Chinese felt--people of that kind who were, you know, Kuomintang people--felt very emotional about it.

I had a shortwave radio which really we got for my brother, because when he was sick out in the Western Hills he was in bed most of the time. I was fiddling with it during the Sian affair, and suddenly I realized I was hearing Sian, Sian calling, an English voice. It was Agnes Smedley who happened to be in Sian. She was broadcasting the news.

So, I went down to the embassy the next day and told them about news being broadcast from Sian, and they were absolutely staggered. [laughing]

*Q: Did they not have anybody monitoring?*

SERVICE: No. Things were very simple in those days. People didn't think of these things. The idea that there were news broadcasts in English that they could pick up from Sian was something that no one had ever thought of.

*Q: Was anything done to change the situation?*

SERVICE: I think that they picked up--After all the navy had a big radio station there. All of our communications were by navy radio. So, I assume from then on--when they got the time and wave length from me--that they started listening.

*Q: You assume, but you're not sure.*

SERVICE: No, I don't know.

*Q: That's an extraordinary story.*

SERVICE: I just went in and told them, Agnes Smedley's in Sian, and she's telling us all about it. Zhou En-lai was there, of course, negotiating the whole settlement and the release.

*Q: What did Agnes Smedley have to say if you recall?*

SERVICE: Oh, I don't recall. It was just a news bulletin. I don't remember very much of what she said, but that the Generalissimo was safe and things like that, because people on the outside weren't sure. I think she was just giving an account of negotiations going on and the terms of the Young Marshal, Chang Hsueh-Liang. She was talking from the point of view of Chang Hsueh-Liang rather than from the point of view of the Communists. But, I think she mentioned the fact that Zhou En-lai was there, as I recall. Well, that's enough of that.

*Q: Okay.*

#### The Marco Polo Incident: Jack in Hospital with Scarlet Fever

SERVICE: The war started when we were in Peking, in the summer of '37. Caroline's father and mother came out to visit her. Her father had retired. His last post with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been in San Francisco. They came out and stayed with us for a while.

Then, they decided to go off to a beach resort, Peitaiho. My mother was also down there with my brother Dick. On the third of July--they were going to leave after the fourth--I had a terrible sore throat. I went to the embassy guard. They had a navy doctor there, a couple of them.

The doctor was amazed at my throat. He called the other doctor over to look at it. "Isn't this a beauty?" So, they told me to go home and gargle with salt water. I said, "We've got a small baby.

How about that?" He said, "Sure, you better stay away from the baby. Don't get too close to the baby. Mustn't give the baby your sore throat."

The next day I went to the Fourth of July reception at the embassy--all Americans were invited, of course, to the embassy on the Fourth of July--and talked to everybody, but I felt miserable.

The next day--the fifth--I had quite a fever. So a doctor finally came to my house, and he said, "You know what you've got?" I said, "No." He said, "You've got scarlet fever."

They sent me immediately to the PUMC isolation ward, which was full of children. It was mostly diphtheria, and they had tubes in their windpipes. Chinese don't go to hospitals until they're in extremis normally. I think I was the only adult in this ward for a while with all these little kids with diphtheria.

Anyway, the family had already gone off to the beach before they knew I had scarlet fever and had to go to the hospital.

Then, the seventh, which was two days after I went in, I could hear the firing at Loukouchiao from my hospital bed. You know, ten miles or so outside of Peking, eight or ten miles, was Marco Polo Bridge. I could actually hear the war starting in the night and then heavy fighting in the days after that.

Germany had just developed the first sulfa drug, sulfonamide.

*Q: Yes.*

SERVICE: The PUMC had just gotten some, and they were trying it out. I was one of the first people that they used it on, and it was absolutely dramatic, the effect. Within twenty-four hours all my fever had gone and I felt quite normal, felt fine.

But they didn't know what to do about the normal quarantine, so they made me stay the full--I think it was three weeks that I stayed in isolation. It was quite a long period. But, eventually I got in a room by myself. There was an American dietician who tried to make me gain weight because she thought I was awfully thin. So, she was stuffing me.

They told me that I could not put my feet on the floor. It was part of this isolation. But, I found I could get all around the room by hopping from one piece of furniture to another. [laughter] From the bedside table to a chiffonier to something else, I could get all around the room without ever putting my feet on the floor.

*Q: Why weren't you allowed to put your feet on the floor?*

SERVICE: I don't know, but the rules were that I wasn't supposed to put my feet on the floor. The nurses came in and found me once perched on top of the dresser.

*Q: Sounds like a Thurber cartoon. [laughter]*

SERVICE: The nurses were all missionary-trained nurses, practically all.

*Q: Chinese?*

SERVICE: Chinese nurses, yes. Several of them tried very hard to find out whether or not I was right with Christ. I finally complained about it and said I thought it was unfair to take advantage of a man in this situation. The head nurse said that she would speak to them, so I was not bothered after that.

*Q: So, then the Japanese had taken over Peking. Is that correct?*

SERVICE: The Japanese took over Peking and I think Caroline came back with her parents from the beach when they were able to travel.

But some time after the occupation--I'm not quite sure why--it was decided that everyone should move into the Legation Quarter, where there were foreign guards. It was an enclave.

So the family moved in and stayed with some of our friends in the embassy. Everybody doubled up, sort of like in the siege of the legations--if you've ever read about that--in the Boxer time.

I was not allowed to go in because of my recent scarlet fever. I stayed in our house which was in one of the PUMC compounds, trying to find out what was happening in the city. I apparently stimulated a few rifle shots. So I gave up exploring.

After a few days, it was decided to evacuate people who could leave. So, Caroline and her family then left and went to Japan.

#### Edgar Snow Smuggles Ten Ying-Ch'ao out of Peking

SERVICE: About this time I took her trunk down to my mother. Trains were just beginning to run. I think I was on the first train after a long break. Ed Snow was on the train, I remember, and he had an amah with him.

I was quite surprised that he had an amah, and he seemed rather solicitous. I said something to him, and he said, "Can't tell you now." It turned out that this was Zhou En-lai's wife, Teng Ying-Ch'ao, whom I met next in Yen-an in 1944. He was smuggling her out of town. She'd been having treatment in a hospital in Peking, I think for TB.

Anyway, the train trip to Tientsin, which normally takes about two hours, took us over twelve hours, because we were always being sidetracked for Japanese troop trains coming south.

I was escorting a couple of American women tourists who had been stranded in Peking. I delivered them to Tientsin and went on to Chinwangtao. This was where my mother was catching a boat south. Because of the delays, I got there--with her trunk--just as the gangplank was being raised.



Mother got to Shanghai precisely as the hostilities were starting there, and was caught on the Bund on August 13 when the bomb was dropped by the Palace Hotel that killed Bob Reischauer and hundreds of other people.

*Q: Were you physically afraid at this point in China?*

SERVICE: I've never thought much about it. Perhaps a part of being an optimist is that one tends not to be very fearful. But things like war, gunfire, and bombing haven't usually bothered me very much. At least, as my mother would have said, I haven't been "frightened out of my wits."

When we came down in the houseboat from Chengdu in 1920, when I was going to school, we had to go past a place on the river bank where there were bandits. We expected the bandits to try to stop us. The baggage in the bottom of the boat was moved over to the side toward the shore, so my mother and the baby could get down behind the trunks.

When we came to the place on the river, sure enough, they started firing with rifles. The boatmen all jumped off the boat, on the far side and held on to the oars. Mr. Helde and I went out on the front deck to row the boat and to persuade the boatmen to get up. I remember watching the bullets hitting the water around us.

But, in the excitement of things like that you're not really afraid. I'd heard much fighting going on, as I mentioned before. In coming down the Yangtze--in '21 I think--there was a big battle in Ichang during the night when some of Wu Pei-Fu's troops came up and tried to attack the city. Our steamer was sort of in between. I heard the firing, but I don't remember being terribly afraid. I stayed in bed.

You don't necessarily want to walk into it. But, if you hear it you know you're not going to feel it. [laughter]

*[Interview 4: May 3, 1977]*

#### The Foreign Press Corps

SERVICE: You asked about the caliber of the foreign press corps. Actually, Shanghai was probably more the center of news. Peking was a bit of a backwater. The capital was Nanking, which is accessible and easily covered from Shanghai.

Most of the regular foreign press in China was chiefly interested in developments that affected foreigners, business, the principal political developments, wars, and things like that. They generally had a rather scoffing attitude about Chinese warlord affairs. You know, the Chinese armies always carried umbrellas, and they didn't fight when it rained. "Silver bullets" were what really won the wars, or were the major weapons. It was a sort of a looking down the nose, a slightly sneering attitude.

There wasn't very much real concern with what was going on in China. There were exceptions, of course. Ed Snow was probably the best exception.

When the Sino-Japanese War started they picked up people to be stringers who happened to be in Peking. A young fellow named Haldore Hanson was teaching in a YMCA school there in Peking. He started working for Associated Press, I think.

There were a number of people in China, young Americans. After all these were Depression days, and people were footloose. Some of them had come to China just to try to make a living as well as they could. A lot of these people started working as journalists.

There was a Reuters man in Peking named Oliver who was quite good, but then there were others that just went to the embassy for the handout and talked to a few Chinese.

I think even that people like the New York Times depended mainly on the handout material, contact with the embassy, the superficial news. Generally, they had one or two Chinese friends or Chinese contacts who they hoped could give them the inside story politically of what was going on. But, it wasn't particularly analytical reporting.

*Q: With the exception of Ed Snow, would you say that there were any China specialists who really knew the language and had a detailed knowledge of the Chinese political scene who were working as reporters for the American press?*

SERVICE: Not who really knew Chinese. There were people like Hallet Abend, for instance, who had been for many years with the New York Times. But these people were Treaty Port people, reporting from Shanghai and they didn't really know Chinese. They might have had Chinese informants, but basically their reporting was Treaty Port and foreign interests oriented.

*Q: I think we'll go on with this later when we move to Chungking.*

SERVICE: Good.

We were talking about censorship in the Chinese press. During the suppression campaign against the Communists, prior to the formation of the United Front, there was very little news published about the Communists. It was very heavily censored. The Chinese government news was always, "The Communists are near defeat and are retreating." After the United Front began to break down, you again heard very little about what the Communists were doing.

You asked me a question about circulation of Ed Snow's book. My guess is that that was probably not heavily suppressed at the peak period of the United Front. But, I'm just not sure how much it circulated outside of sanctuaries like Shanghai. In the International Concession of Shanghai, of course, Kuomintang censorship couldn't apply.

Certainly the Communists were never given a good press in China or by foreign correspondents. But, I think there was a period when they were not completely cut out of the news, as they were before and after the United Front.

## Passes Second Year Chinese: Shanghai, a Disappointing Posting

*Q: Let's return to chronology now.*

SERVICE: Yes. We had Caroline being evacuated from China in, I think, September [1937]. She went and stayed in Japan for a while, and then the State Department decided that things were not going to be good for returning to China. So she was authorized to come to the United States. We had two small children. She came to the States and stayed with her parents.

Meanwhile, I stayed on in Peking. I kept the house, a Peking Union Medical College house, in what was called the south compound.

There was an American newspaperman that I mentioned earlier, Haldore Hanson, who had been taken on as a stringer, I think by AP. He'd followed the Japanese army south from Peking on bicycle and had gotten himself into Paoting, which was a city about seventy-five miles south of Peking, and then was found there by the Japanese.

They gave him a very hard time for a while, kept him under detention, and then finally let him out. They were suspicious of what he was doing, of course. Anyway, he was, I think, rather shaken up and he needed a place to stay. He came and stayed with me and shared the house.

He did a good book on the war ("Humane Endeavor:" The Story of the China War, New York, Toronto, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939.), but he was one of the people jumped on by [Senator Joseph] McCarthy because of his writings at this period. Some of them were published by Amerasia magazine.

The language exams were supposed to be given in late December. My two other fellow students, Millet and Rice, asked for a little extra time which was granted. Goodness knows, there had been interruptions to our studies. We were having to do night code room duty. So, we got a slight extension. We took the exams and I passed, and then got word that I was assigned to Shanghai, which was a terrible disappointment to me.

*Q: What did you hope for?*

SERVICE: I hoped for a smaller post and one where I would have a chance to do political reporting and to use my Chinese. We had two years of required language study. Then there was a third year optional exam, which you didn't get time off for. You simply prepared yourself for your third exam at whatever post you were at.

I wanted very much to do that. Very few people in those years had been taking the third year exam. But, since I had a good start it seemed to me a shame not to do it.

I figured Shanghai would be a difficult place, and it turned out to be exactly as I expected, a very difficult place to prepare for the third year exam, for various reasons.

*Q: Why?*

SERVICE: For one thing, it's not a Mandarin speaking area. But I met a peculiar situation in the administration of the post. The executive officer, a man named [Richard] Butrick, was very anti-China language service.

This was quite common. There was, I think I mentioned before, some tension between China service and non-China service people. He gave orders that I was not, for instance, to have any access to the Chinese correspondence coming to the office. I had hoped to be able to either supervise the translation--We had a Chinese interpreter, but we always had an officer that checked the translations.

He would not allow me to have any contact with the Chinese correspondence and felt that I was supposed to devote full time to my duties in the office and made it as difficult as possible for me to study for my third year exam. [laughing]

*Q: What a terrible waste!*

SERVICE: He was a very peculiar man. He's famous in the Foreign Service, as I say. Dick Butrick, all sorts of nicknames have been applied to him--"black bastard" probably the most common. He was very dark-haired.

He apparently believed that most China people became effete snobs or went native.

At any rate, I was disappointed going to Shanghai, but of course there was nothing to do except to go.

*Q: Did you enjoy it when you got there?*

SERVICE: Well, yes, a very, very busy life. Caroline came back to China after I'd been there a few months. We had a hassle when I got there. This is again, as we were speaking of, "the science of bureaucracy."

When I arrived, I was not met at the boat, which was rather typical of this man who was executive officer. Anyway, I presented myself to the consulate as soon as possible, and he said, "You'll have quarters in the bachelors' quarters." There was an apartment for bachelors above the office in a big office building in downtown Shanghai. "You'll be up there since your family's not with you."

I was entitled to quarters. There was allowance for quarters. "I am a married officer," I said. "My family--" He said, "Your family is not with you. You'll be up there."

Soon my household effects arrived from Peking. So, I applied for a quarters allowance "to store my effects," and I made sure it got on [Clarence] Gauss' desk who was consul-general. Gauss was sharp enough to know there was some background to this.