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Veenschoten, Henry M Oral History Interview: Old China Hands Oral History Project

Donald Hill

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OLD CHINA HANDS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Rev. Henry M. Veenschoten

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Preface

Interviewee: Rev. Henry M. Veenschoten

Interview: December 5, 1971
Mr. Donald Hill's home in Ann Arbor, Michigan

Interviewer: Mr. Donald Hill

HILL: Today is December 5th, 1971, and Grandpa has come to visit us this evening. He's just visited some Chinese friends in the area, and he's on his way to Detroit tomorrow. And while he's here this evening we're taking advantage of him . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, you're always taking advantage of me. (laughter)

HILL: We were discussing earlier this evening what the political state of China was at the time when Grandpa went to China and how things developed into the war with Japan, and we thought that this would be a good opportunity to get down some of his observations on tape while he's here with us this evening. Grandpa, would you like to give us some background by way of what sorts of things you saw when you went to China in 1917?

VEENSCHOTEN: We got there just in the time of transition between the old empire and the new republic which was established in 1911 under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen. And when we got there Yuan Shih-kai had taken over, and he wanted to establish an empire of which he would be the first emperor. But fortunately he died. I think he died in 1917, and the most important thing that he left, I guess, were the Yuan Shih-kai dollars, the silver dollars which were current all over China. They were really very, very pretty dollars, too. Well, the passing of Yuan Shih-kai meant that the whole country went into turmoil and every one of these generals in the army wanted to carve out a little empire of his own. And so you found the development of what we call the tuchuns. Taikun, I think, would be the Amoy of it, but it means the big shots. And each one had a little empire of his own.

HILL: These were like warlords?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Warlords. That's what they are. Warlords.

HILL: And what sort of foreign powers were in China at this time?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, China at this time had been pretty much divided among the Western countries in special interests. For instance, the city of Shanghai was divided up into several concessions: the French concession, which was controlled by the French; there was the British concession which was controlled by the British; and I think the Japanese had a concession.

HILL: How did most of these concessions come about? Why did these foreign powers have any . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: By treaty, mostly because of difficulties that they had with China in one way or another. The various powers, especially after the Boxer Rebellion, tried to jockey for pre-eminence because China presented tremendous trade possibilities. For instance, Manchester, England, was the main center for the weaving of piece goods; and someone said that if the Chinese cut their gowns by one inch, why it would wipe out the industry of Manchester. Well, that just shows the tremendous importance of China at the time in foreign trade. And the various countries all wanted to have a share, and China was too weak to resist; and so, one by one these concessions were allowed. And the only country that did not get concessions was the United States. We had no concessions anywhere, except a very small one in Amoy City, which they never occupied.

HILL: What did that consist of?

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't know. Nobody knows. It was never implemented. But what America did insist upon was the favorite nation concessions. However France, or Great Britain, or Japan, or Germany was treated, why, America insisted that she ought to have the same rights in China. For instance, the extraterritorial

rights, and the matter of courts, and so on, that American citizens could not be tried in Chinese courts.

HILL: So these were mostly legal concessions, rather than territorial?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, legal concessions. Well, the other countries had territorial concessions. For instance, Shanghai was, legally--part of it was British. The Bund, for instance, that was British territory.

HILL: But the United States, throughout China, had no actual territory?

VEENSCHOTEN: No territory, except something in Amoy, but where it was nobody knows. No one was aware of it at all.

HILL: Was Amoy a port city?

VEENSCHOTEN: Amoy was a port city.

HILL: Was it very important as a port city?

VEENSCHOTEN: Very, because all the trade for the southern part of Fukien Province had to go through Amoy Harbor.

HILL: How large is Fukien Province?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, I don't know. I'd have to look that up. I don't know.

HILL: Do you have any estimate of how many people?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, the population was probably around, I should judge perhaps around thirty million. South Fukien was estimated to have about ten million.

HILL: How far away was the nearest port that could compare to Amoy?

VEENSCHOTEN: There's Swatow and Foochow, and Amoy was just in between the two

cities of Swatow and Foochow.

HILL: And they both did equal amounts of business?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, I think so, generally. But the Amoy Harbor was the best of all of them. Amoy had about the best harbor on the coast of China, except Hong Kong. And Swatow is just about half-way between Amoy and Hong Kong. Well, the foreign nation countries had an International Concession on Kulangsu. Kulangsu was a little island in Amoy Harbor. Do you remember it at all?

HILL: No.

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, that's right. You were just a little bit of a pollywog at that time.

HILL: Well, not when you went there. I wasn't much of anything. (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: No, when you were there in 19--what was it?--1950. But, well, Kulangsu was an island about a mile long, and about, oh, half a mile wide at its widest, and this was a special concession which was controlled by all the countries together. They had what they called the Municipal Council to which the various countries' governments appointed their representatives. There was no democratic government at all. It was all appointed. But it was very efficiently run, and they had a very good police department; they had a fairly good public works of various sorts; the roads were well maintained, but the roads were all very, very narrow. And Kulangsu is just piles of rocks, about three or four huge piles of rocks with valleys in between, and very uneven. And the roads ran, twisted around between the houses and so on, and it was really a very picturesque place, but it was a horrible place to get around in. But it was very efficiently run, and I think, as a whole it was very honestly run. And

the wealthy Chinese all had their residences on Kulangsu.

HILL: Was that sort of a status symbol then, for the Chinese?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, not only that.

HILL: Or were these wealthy families established before the . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. It was a matter of security. They knew that if they were over in Amoy they'd be taxed out of house and home. But in Kulangsu the taxes were low and they knew that they were absolutely secure in their holdings. They had wonderful palaces of their own. My! Tremendous things! The houses were wonderfully well appointed. Because the Chinese, you know, went to the South Seas. Many of them went there to the Philippines, and to Singapore, and to Indonesia--what now is Indonesia; at that time it was under the control of the Dutch. But they became inordinately wealthy there. For instance, there was one chap, Tan Ka-ki, who went to Singapore. He was a coolie. He was a rickshaw coolie, and he became a multi-millionaire through rubber. And it was really quite remarkable. He couldn't read or write, even with all of his money, but he made his pile there. Well, he didn't have a house--Actually, as I recall, I don't think he had a house on Kulangsu, but he had a huge place on the mainland called Chioh-be, and he built a fine school there for the community. I don't know if . . . He had a residence there, too, but not a very substantial one. And then later on he established the Amoy University, and I suppose that's still going on today. A very, very fine university.

I can carry on from there, from the development of these tuchuns, these warlords.

HILL: O.K. Maybe you could use that to sort of give us an idea of how the Japanese come to the position where they would aggressively try to take control of

China, and how they actually did that, O.K.?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, jsut to carry on about the warlords: gradually the thing got worse and worse, and well, in 1918, one of these warlords, Chen Cheng-ming, came to Changchow, and he took the city, and he immediately started to turn it upside down. He ordered all the streets to be widened to thirty-five feet wide, and tore down the city walls, and decided to build roads and so on.

HILL: How did he take power?

VEENSCHOTEN: He came with his army. He had an army of his own.

HILL: Did he meet much resistance?

VEENSCHOTEN: No. When we got there--this is something I forgot to say--the old army of Yuan Shih-kai was till there. They were ragtags. An old army, they were really of the comic opera. And so he had no difficulty whatever in chasing them out and taking charge.

HILL: They offered virtually no resistance?

VEENSCHOTEN: No resistance at all, no. But he did not come over to Amoy itself-- Amoy City. I don't recall exactly how Amoy fared from then on. I was mostly concerned with Changchow, and he really established a very fine regime in Changchow. Well, then he got the idea of going off into Canton Province. He himself was a Swatow man, which was just to the southwest of Amoy, and he went over there and he took control. then he went on to Canton and joined up with Sun Yat-sen, and he and Sun Yat-sen were very good friends for a while, but they had a falling out--I don't recall exactly on what point--but he attacked Canton. And Sun Yat-sen had to flee, flight at night in his nightgown. And that's why from that time on Chen Cheng-ming has been considered a renegade, although he

really did some very good things for Changchow as far as we saw it. Well then gradually Sun Yat-sen got into a relationship with Chiang Kai-shek, and in fact, Chiang Kai-shek was in Changchow for a while. He was a lieutenant or something like that in the army. I didn't meet him myself, nobody knew then he was going to become what he later became.

HILL: Nobody knew what you were going to become, either.

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. I didn't know I was going to have a wonderful grandson out here in Ann Arbor, not to mention a great-grandson. Then Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen started to build up an army and they marched north to unify the country under the Kuomintang, the Nationalist Party, and they were really quite successful to a certain extent, but they never did succeed in actually putting down these warlords. All those various localities had their particular warlord who exercised authority in that district. In fact, in Changchow at one time we had three different warlords. They were all fighting together, fighting in the city. It really was a lot of fun. (laughter) And all over the country it was the same thing. And in the north, they had Wu P'ei-fu, it was one of the men that I'll remember. And there were several others. They had this Christian general--I've forgotten his name just now--who had a very large following and did some really good work for China. And many of these men were really very--in their way--quite patriotic. Well, Chiang Kai-shek went north. And in the meantime, of course, Sun Yat-sen died. I think it was in 1925, around that time. And then Chiang-Kai-shek led his army north, and he didn't come through Changchow, he went through the interior. But the Nationalist army came through our town, and they established the Nationalist regime there. But even that, in time, again deteriorated, and still we had these warlords all over the place. And it was very difficult to unify the country. Well, then, as I said, up north there were several very, very strong warlords like Wu P'ei-fu and the

Christian general. And both of them were very, very proficient.

Well, in the meantime World War I had been completed, and they were trying to work up a treaty--were trying to establish the League of Nations. And then Japan was one of the Allies, and Japan wanted to fall heir to the concessions of Germany. And Germany had a special interest in the Tsingtao peninsula, in which Tsingtao was the main city. But this was very strongly opposed by the Chinese. Then in the meantime also the Russian revolution had come about, and at first the Western nations were very much satisfied with the regime in Moscow. The country was under this nationalist leader, but then the Soviets ousted them in their coup, and Russia became Communist. Well, the Western nations weren't very happy about this, and they sent troops into Siberia. Americans also sent them, see, a number--a bunch of troops into Siberia. And among them also were the Japanese. The Japanese thought, "Well, this is a splendid opportunity." But when the Americans noticed this, why they pulled out. And they insisted that the Japanese pull out along with them. And the Japanese weren't very happy about that. Well, then the military in Japan got stronger and stronger, and they determined to consolidate their power in the German concessions, especially in Tsingtao and in Manchuria. Russia had dominated Manchuria for a good number of years, and the Japanese took over their position there. All the German countries were divided among the various countries. America got a large number of the Pacific Islands that . . .

HILL: They were all settlements that resulted because Germany lost the war.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, because they lost the war. But they were not called territories of the United States, they were just called protectorates. And the British didn't actually have protectorates of their own, either--that is, not in the Pacific. They were given to Australia; for instance, New Guinea was given to Australia. Well, the Netherlands never lost any of their possessions.

They had all of Indonesia at that time, part of New Guinea, or Papua, as they called it. Well, the Japanese wanted to horn in on all of this, but they couldn't very well do very much in the Pacific. They got some concessions in the Pacific, but they were also called protectorates. Well, when it came to Shantung, she wanted to take over. But the Chinese made a big hullabaloo, and the Americans were in full sympathy with the Chinese. And I think, personally, that part of the difficulties tha the Senate had in accepting the League of Nations--the proposition of Wilson--was the fact that Wilson had agreed to give over Shantung to Japan. And the Americans revolted against that. And that was certainly one of the great elements that led to the rejection of the League of Nations by the United States Senate. You don't hear very much of that nowadays, but I went through it; I know. And, my, the Chinese were very much upset about that whole thing. Well, the Japanese didn't actually get Shantung as a protectorate, but the Western nations did concede that they had privileges there. And the Japanese made the most of it.

Well, then with the progress of time--I think around in the 1930's--the Japanese military tried to consolidate their power, and they started in Manchuria. And they caused a rebellion--it fostered a rebellion in Manchuria. And the deposed Manchu emperor, they established him as emperor of Manchukuo, which is a country they just carved out of Manchuria. Then the Chinese were, in the meantime, making great progress. The Nationalist Party was making great progress in China in consolidating the country. And they were also making progress in various communications--in building roads and so on. Really, the future of China looked very, very bright. And the Japanese saw that their time of opportunity was slipping by, and so they made a decision to strike before it was too late. And they started--I don't recall now . . .

HILL: Was there any particular thing that precipitated it?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, yes. There was an incident of a bridge. Now what was the name of that bridge? I don't remember. Some Japanese soldiers--why they were there I don't know either. I'd have to look the thing up. This bridge, as I recall it, was in Shantung somewhere. Over what river, I don't remember either. I'd have to do a little--really some investigation on this.

HILL: Do you want to take a look at a map?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, I don't think that'd help me at all, no. I'd have to consult the histories of that period. But I know that that bridge--in fact, just comparatively recently--I think this past year--there was a series of articles about this whole thing in American Heritage. And so it is not too difficult to find the actual data on the whole matter, and they'll be able to get a much more detailed and also authoritative account of it than I can. Well, this the Japanese took as an opportunity, and they took hold of it, and they started to attack the Chinese army. And they started from Manchuria. First they went into Jehol, which is to the north of Peking. And they overran that, and then they went into Shantung. And they overran that. Then they came to Peking, and they took Peking.

Well, in the meantime, there were several of these warlords out there who were very strong. Among them was Wu P'ei-fu and this Christian general, and they joined up with Chiang Kai-shek. They cooperated quite well, considering their diverse interests and so on, because they were united in their opposition to the Japanese. But the Japanese had the army, and they had their matériel and guns and so on. The Nationalist army just couldn't stand against them. The carnage was horrible. Well, then they came to Shanghai--just what was the occasion of their attack on Shanghai I don't remember either. There again, I'd have to do a little bit of research work. But it's easily found out. There are plenty of records of this. But in Shanghai it was simply terrible--the carnage. They

just killed people right and left, and they destroyed large parts of the Chinese section of Shanghai. As I said before, Shanghai was cut up into various concessions. There was the French concession and the British concession particularly that I know about. Of course, by that time, the German concession had, I think, reverted to the Chinese. Whether the Japanese had a concession or not, I don't recall. But at any rate, the Japanese attacked the Chinese part of the city and simply demolished it. It was simply terrible. If you want to know a little bit about that, you ask Girard. He was right there at the time. And it was just terrible. Of course, they were in the French concession, and they were perfectly safe, as far as that's concerned. But they could hear the firing, and they could see the destruction all around them.

HILL: Is this the occasion where Mom and Aunt Elly have these stories about watching executions?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, that was later, I think. Well, there were executions in Changchow all the time, but these warlords never did actually . . .

HILL: I mean in Shanghai.

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, in Shanghai. Oh, yes, that's right.

HILL: They had stories about sitting up on the wall or something.

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. That wasn't Shanghai; that was in Changchow.

HILL: That was in Changchow?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, that was in Changchow. That was in the 1930's, I think. We had moved Talmage College up there and built the high school there. And we had two residences, and the Vander Meers lived in one of them, and the Renskers were there part of the time. And Ed Simmons--I don't recall. The Koeppes were

up there, too. But I guess that was later. That was later. The Koeppes were there later. But at any rate, at that time Changchow just had a succession of warlords that were in charge of the city. And they would bring in the people who were charged with banditry, and they'd just chop their heads off out there. I remember one time . . .

HILL: Oh, I see. That was what it was all about. It wasn't actually the Japanese.

VEENSCHOTEN: No, it wasn't the Japanese. No, the Japanese never got to Changchow.

HILL: So this business that Mom and Aunt Elly are talking about is actually the warlords taking care of the civil . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: That's right. That's right. They took very good care of them.

HILL: . . . criminals?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. But this in Shanghai was real war. And the Japanese were just simply butchers. And then the Japanese went on and captured Shanghai and marched up to Nanking, which was the Nationalist capital at that time. Chiang Kai-shek had a vision of making a wonderful capital out of Nanking. And he had built a beautiful tomb for Sun Yat-sen there in Nanking City.

HILL: You mentioned earlier, when we were talking about the arrangements that you were involved in getting food . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, yes. That was later. That was during--I'll come up to that now. Then the Japanese took Nanking, and then they started to march toward the south. And gradually--especially they came down along the coast and the inner part of the country. Let me just see that map there. The Japanese came down after taking Nanking and Hangchow. They went down through the Kiangsi Province,

and on down to Canton, Canton Province, then Canton City. Then they also went along the coast to Hangchow and Foochow, and then finally to Amoy.

Then when they got to Amoy the people in Amoy were terribly frightened because they had heard what the Japanese had done in other places, especially Shanghai and Nanking. And the Amoy people had been very, very anti-Japanese, so they didn't expect that they would be treated very easily by the Japanese when they came. And they fled by the thousands across the narrow channel from Amoy to the island of Kulangsu. Well, then it became a big problem of taking care of the refugees, all of these refugees. They had no place to stay. And then Poppen, one of our missionaries in Amoy, gathered together and formed an association, and they collected a lot of money from the Chinese overseas, and they erected a big camp for the refugees on Kulangsu. The Japanese had their fleet in Amoy Harbor, and so they cut off all the supplies from upcountry. So they had no way of feeding these refugees or feeding the Japanese, either, because Amoy couldn't feed itself because it depended upon the interior for food and for all supplies of that sort. Well, at that time, of course, our whole mission work was terribly disrupted, too, but we were able to buy a launch, a motor launch, from . . .

HILL: Where did you get the funds for this?

VEENSCHOTEN: To buy the motor launch?

HILL: Yes.

VEENSCHOTEN: From the missions. The London Mission and our mission together bought it. We bought it very cheaply. It belonged to one of the banks, and the bank had no use for it. They couldn't use it. And so we bought it very, very cheaply. Very reasonably. And we also took over the crew--the captain and his helpers--and so for several years, I think for about three or four years, we

ran this . . .

HILL: From what time to what time?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, from the time that the Japanese took Amoy.

HILL: When was that?

VEENSCHOTEN: Now, I don't recall the exact year, but it must have been in '38 or '39. I think it was probably '38, and then we had--In fact we expected that the Japanese would come up to Changchow right away, but they never did. They never succeeded in landing on the mainland from Amoy. But they did prevent all communication.

HILL: They sort of sealed off the port?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, sort of sealed off the interior. Well, but they wanted to get the supplies, and so they allowed us to run this motor launch. They gave us a permit to run the motor launch. That of course didn't mean that we were not under fire. We were very frequently under fire.

HILL: By the Japanese?

VEENSCHOTEN: By the Japanese, yes. And, well, we ducked behind the bulwarks of the launch and escaped the bullets. We had a lot of interesting experiences . . .

HILL: Did they actually make concerted attempts to try and sink the boat, or do you suspect that was just more or less harrassment?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, I don't know if they did or not. I really don't know. They sure did shoot at you, at any rate. But we sent just tons and tons and tons of supplies: rice, and vegetables, and firewood down to Amoy. And they allowed us

to do that. And I myself had charge of that in Changchow. It was really quite a lot of work. And also . . .

HILL: What did your work involve mostly? What did you have to do?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, I had to take care of the finances and pay out the money-- certainly get the money--and pay out the money, and . . .

HILL: Where did you get your money from?

VEENSCHOTEN: I got it from . . . I really don't recall, now. I guess we must have gotten it from Amoy, from overseas Chinese, I think. Yes, it was from overseas Chinese.

HILL: These were contributions from overseas Chinese?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, contributions. Yes, that's right. Yes, that's right. And, oh, I became quite a banker. It was very interesting.

HILL: Who organized the overseas Chinese, exactly?

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't know who organized them, but they had organizations of various kinds that they already had in power. Just for instance, your father in Cebu, when he built that hospital and so on, they had this benevolent association. And they had those all over the Far East.

HILL: So wherever the Chinese went in foreign countries they organized themselves into committees and things to take care of the affairs of the community and to keep contact with the old world, so to speak?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, that's right. You take it in Lucena where we lived, they had the very same thing. Of course there were only about five thousand Chinese in Lucena. But they had a very, very efficient chamber of commerce, Chinese cham-

ber of commerce, and various organizations to take care of their interests.

HILL: So you were in charge of obtaining the money and then buying the . . .
Were you also in charge of purchasing the food?

VEENSCHOTEN: I delegated that work. I didn't do it myself, but I had Chinese who were very, very good friends of mine and very efficient, and they bought the stuff for me, but I had to handle the money. I didn't collect it myself. I just handled it. I was just sort of a bank. I was a middle man. And not only that, but also for the Catholic Church. The first time I went down to Amoy I went to see Poppen, and he had an office, you know, where he took care of these refugees. And there was a Spanish priest--a Catholic priest--there, and Poppen said to him, "Oh, here's Veenschoten. Perhaps he can help you." And I said, "Oh, what's the trouble?" And he said, well, they had to send money up to Changchow for their schools and for the church up there and wondered whether I'd take care of that. And I says, "Why, yes. I'd be all right." All you had to do was deposit the money to my account in the bank, and I'd transfer it there in Changchow to the schools. And I could do that quite easily. And so I handled, oh, thousands of dollars that way. (laughter) And others, too. I don't know how much money. I never really kept track of it. I haven't the slightest idea how much I handled there. A tremendous amount of money. But then the very interesting--After I told him that I would be glad to send his money up to their school and church, then he sort of hemmed and hawed for a little while, and he said to me, "The church is in need of communion wine. Would you be willing to take up communion wine?" "Why sure!" So I took up, oh, perhaps a couple of cases of wine for the church for communion, for mass. It all made for very good cooperation between the Catholics and the Protestants, you know.

HILL: Were the Catholics and the Protestants, did they ever have any kinds of

quarrels, or were they ever competitive, or anything like that?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, not while I was there. We never had any . . . It was just about the same relationship that we have here in America. We haven't any . . . There is no active hostility, you know. Of course there was opposition, and so on, but no active hostility.

HILL: You were fairly tolerant of each other.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. That's right. But this confirmed that spirit, you see, and it really helped a whole lot. It was very interesting that one Christmastime I went to Kulangsu. I spent the Christmas with Grandma and Ellen. I was there for a week or two, and then when I got back I found a great big bushel basket of these beautiful mandarin oranges, lovely oranges they were, and also several bottles of wine. I said I appreciated the spirits, and I didn't drink the wine.

HILL: No pun intended! (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: No. That's, well, it was very, very interesting. Oh, one thing, one time we really had dangerous--we had a radio. I don't know how we got that radio, but at any rate, I had a radio. And I knew that there was a typhoon that was in the offing, and we were supposed to go down to Amoy. I sort of wondered whether I should go, but the last reports weren't too bad, so we went ahead. And I had a bunch of people on board the launch--perhaps around fifteen, twenty people altogether--and we went down and it was all right. It was windy, but not bad. But when we got down the river to where the river emptied into Amoy Harbor--it was a great big estuary a couple miles wide--Boy! There the waves were simply mountainous! And my, that launch just bobbed up and down, and up and down, and my goodness we got scared! And one of the passengers was a woman and she was terribly scared. She said, "Oh!", her brother had been drowned, and

she said, "Turn back! Turn back!" Well, I didn't dare turn back because I thought that as long as we kept the nose of the launch into the waves, why, we could ~~breat~~ ^{beat} them. But if we once turned around and let the waves broadside, why, we'd be swamped. So then I went to the captain and asked him. I said, "Can we make it?" He says, "Yes." And so then I thought since they were waiting for me I went ahead, and we went ahead. And we went sailing through those heavy seas and there were about, oh, I think . . .

HILL: He probably had lots of experience.

VEENSCHOTEN: Sure, sure.

HILL: Did he appear concerned at all?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, naturally, yes. He was concerned. He knew what he was up against. There were about half a dozen ocean liners in the harbor tied up because of the typhoon, and here we came sailing across the harbor merely in our little motor launch. Oh, he was very, very, he was very proficient. He knew that harbor, and he knew the river very good.

Well, we went home in 1940 because it was our furlough, a regular furlough.

HILL: So things just went as normal^{up} until the time of your furlough?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. And then we came home to America in 1940 and Girard at that time was in Hope College, and he graduated in 1941. Then he wanted to study medicine, and he was accepted in Wayne Medical School in Detroit. So then we determined that it would be cheaper for the family to live in Detroit than to continue in Holland because Grandma and the girls couldn't go back to China. They wouldn't allow it. At that time things were starting to look pretty bad already as far as Japan and American relations were concerned. The world war had already started. In fact it had started--for a couple of years. I think that

was around in 19 . . .

HILL: This was the war with Germany?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Germany. Hitler and so on. I don't recall when that thing started. It must have been around 1939, or something like that, I guess. And then, so Grandma couldn't go, and I went by myself back to China.

HILL: You went back to Changchow, then?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Well, that's where I was going to. But I had my fingers crossed because the American relations with Japan were very, very precarious. And I recall that when I took leave of Grandma and the kids in the station at Detroit I just felt as though I was going to Princeton. I had such feelings of foreboding, you know, it was simply terrible.

HILL: You really didn't know what you were getting back into.

VEENSCHOTEN: No. Well, I had planned to go back to Changchow on this motor launch. Well, Poppen and I travelled on the same ship, the Harrison, President Harrison, from San Francisco. And we got to Honolulu, and we were supposed to go from Honolulu directly to Shanghai. But when we left Honolulu we immediately recognized that the ship wasn't going westward, but southward. And then we were told that the ship was traveling under sealed orders leaving Honolulu. And so she'd been directed to go south instead of west.

HILL: This was a passenger ship with sealed orders?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. A regular passenger ship. And so we kept on going and kept on going until we found the place where they have the souvenirs. . .

HILL: (laughter) So you got a little side trip to the South Pacific?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. We knew we'd crossed the equator. They had the special celebration . . .

HILL: This is in what year now?

VEENSCHOTEN: This is in 1941.

HILL: Now what time of the year?

VEENSCHOTEN: That was in the fall, it was in November.

HILL: So this was probably maybe a month before Pearl Harbor, then, right?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. We got to Amoy just a few weeks before, a week before Thanksgiving.

HILL: Oh, I see.

VEENSCHOTEN: And then we were . . . Perhaps I can just resume then what I was going to say. I expected to go from Amoy back to Changchow. When I was in Hong Kong I had an opportunity to fly back into the interior. I thought of it very carefully, but . . .

HILL: O.K. Now, let's go back, let's ~~see~~, before you were talking about your trip, your roundabout trip. Maybe you can go into that before you get to where you went from Hong Kong.

VEENSCHOTEN: You want to know more about the trip?

HILL: Yes. I want to know more about the trip. It's fairly interesting. You say you went to New Guinea and to the Philippines. Maybe you could dwell on that a little bit more, particularly on the Philippines as you had an opportunity to see it before the Japanese went there, and maybe you can give us a

little comparison of what you saw when you came back. Just to diverge a little bit on our story.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't see a great deal of the Philippines. The thing I remember most vividly about the Philippines was the wonderful sunset in Zambungo where we were there just at sunset. Oh! it was simply marvelous. All kinds of colors. Beautiful red and whatnot in the west from Zambungo.

HILL: Now, let's see. You went from the Fiji Islands to Port Morsby?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, New Guinea. And then to the northern point of Australia, to Thursday Island, and then back north to Zambungo, and to the Philippines. You were asking me about the looks of the Philippines, of Manila, when I saw it that time. It was all the old, old, city. I remember the ship was tied up on a pier just off in the harbor near the old walled city and the cathedral.

HILL: Down near where the Manila Hotel is?

VEENSCHOTEN: I really don't know. You know where the walled city is, and the old cathedral which was destroyed. Well, that's the place. I don't remember where the Manila Hotel is.

HILL: Was it down near the Lunetta? That area there?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, that's right. That's where it is. And I recall that in the evening I went to see a movie. And as I was coming back quite late by myself I passed the cathedral and the city wall. I was accosted by a Filipino gentleman, and he says, "Would you like to have a good time?" And I says, "I'm going to have a good time in my bunk in the ship." And I went right on.

HILL: (laughter) You mean even back then they were hustling?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh yes, yes.

HILL: What kind of a movie did you go to?

VEENSCHOTEN: I haven't the slightest idea anymore.

HILL: Aha!

VEENSCHOTEN: I just went to pass the time.

HILL: Were those sound movies then at that time? I guess they were.

VEENSCHOTEN: Sure, sure. Sure, they were sound movies at that time. And then we went from there back to Hong Kong. At Hong Kong we got on a--I think it was a J.C.J.L. boat to Amoy, and we got there shortly before Thanksgiving of 1941.

HILL: Now, from the time that you left Detroit to the time you got to Amoy was how long?

VEENSCHOTEN: I couldn't tell you exactly. I don't remember. But I think it must have been close to two months.

HILL: Ordinarily that trip would have taken what, about a month and a half?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. About a month, or a little more than a month. Then we got to Amoy and we were all jittery because we all knew that America and Japan were going to tangle sometime. And I was anxious to get back up to Changchow on this motor launch, but Voskuil was down in Amoy. He'd come down with the launch a short time before I got back there, and he was expecting to go back. He was waiting for the Japanese to give him a pass. But they didn't get the pass. I recall that, well, on the Saturday before the eighth of December--that would be on the sixth of December--Mrs. Vander Meer and I were out for a walk on Saturday afternoon, and we passed one of the shops--grocery stores. And Alma asked me

whether she should buy any more supplies, lay in some more supplies, in view of the critical difficulty. And I said, "By all means. If you've got the money, I'd put in the supplies." So she bought a bunch of stuff yet that afternoon. And then on Sunday, I remember Sunday evening I preached at Union Church. I remember the text. The text was about Phillip. Phillip said to Jesus, "Show us the Father." And years later I met some of the missionaries who had been at that service, and they told me that it seemed so well adapted to what we were to experience.

HILL: You're referring in the context here to the Pearl Harbor which was that morning?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Yes, of course we didn't know anything about Pearl Harbor at that time yet.

HILL: You didn't know that Honolulu had been bombed.

VEENSCHOTEN: It hadn't been bombed yet at that time.

HILL: Well, let's see. That Sunday night it had been, hadn't it? Wasn't that on the morning of . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. Not in China. That was still Saturday, you see.

HILL: Oh, that's right. There's a time change. Right.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. And so that night I went to bed, and in the middle--oh, towards morning, Poppen--Poppen and I were staying with Dr. Oltman in the Sen Ki Suan House--and Dr. Poppen came to me and shook my shoulder. And he said, "Be quiet!" he says, "the Japanese are here arresting Oltman and myself. And be careful!" So I lay there shivering in the bed for the rest of the morning 'till light. And then on Monday morning I got up, went to the bathroom, and as I

looked out of the window towards the girls' middle school where normally an American flag was flying, I saw a Japanese flag. And then I knew what had happened. I knew that there was war between America and Japan. And we went to breakfast. Of course, Poppen and Oltman weren't there. We didn't know what had happened to them. And pretty soon we noticed some Japanese soldiers came up to the door, and we were back out of range, out of sight. He couldn't see us, and they went around looking into the windows, and they didn't dare to come in, and didn't dare to knock, or anything. And we just sat there.

HILL: You weren't going to invite them in. (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: No. We had the radio going, as I recall it, and we heard the news then, of course, that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. But after a while we said, "Well, it's no use keeping this up. They're going to get in here finally, anyway." So, we invited them in, and they were very courteous. They went through the house and so on and so forth.

HILL: Did they take your radio away?

VEENSCHOTEN: No. No, I don't know why. They didn't find it or what. They went through the--

HILL: Do you think they would have if they had known that you had it?

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't know. I haven't the slightest idea. But they didn't take it. Oh, no. We didn't have a radio. My radio was over at Mrs. Vander Meer's. Mrs. Vander Meer had it and they may have had a radio there and that that was taken. That was very possible. I guess that's what happened. But Mrs. Vander Meer had my radio. And then they went up to the other house where Oltman and Poppen and I were staying, and they went through that. They took some of the things. They took my camera--No, they didn't take my camera, but they took some

other things of mine, I remember. I don't remember just exactly what it was they took. And then they came and they took us away. They just marched us down the street to the Japanese hospital on Kulangsu, and they kept us there for a day. And then towards evening they told us that we could send word to our servants to bring us food and some bedding. And they did, and we were kept there in this hospital for a day or two--I don't remember just how long. And then we were allowed to go back to our own homes, our own houses, and Oltman and Poppen and I were in one house, and in the other house there was Voskuil and Koeppe. Voskuil and Koeppe, yes, that was all in that house.

HILL: What happened to Aunt Alma?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, she was a Danish citizen.

HILL: Oh, she was?

VEENSCHOTEN: And so nothing happened to her at all. But Mrs. Angus, she was down with the children there on Kulangsu, and she was in the same soup as ourselves. But then we were told that we would be under house arrest. We were not allowed to leave our compounds, and nobody was allowed to come to see us or visit us, or anything of that sort. But Oltman was appointed as the American representative with the Japanese officials, so we were kept sort of in touch. The Japanese also had an English news sheet they put out I think once a week, something like that, but we didn't get very much news out of that. That was all telling about the wonderful successes of the Japanese army. And my goodness, we were certainly discouraged. Day after day . . .

HILL: Mostly propaganda?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, it was truth, too, of course, because we got the same thing

over the radio. And finally--we had a radio, but I can't recall now just whose radio it was. But we got regular news from that.

HILL: Where did the broadcasts come from? Hong Kong?

VEENSCHOTEN: No. Hong Kong was in Japanese hands by that time. Very shortly after, at least. Not from Manila, either. Now Manila, you see, also was captured and very shortly Singapore. Oh, they just went right--like knife through butter, you know. I don't know where the broadcasts came from, but we got them right along from America. We knew the news. I recall, then they took Indonesia--that is, the Dutch Indo-China, and Java and Sumatra, and all of those. And then they went up the Malay Peninsula and up to Burma, and they took Burma. And my, the news was bad. My, the news was bad, you know. And I remember, we wanted to save on light, and so we had just one bulb burning in the evening, and all of us would get together, five men . . .

HILL: Read under one bulb?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Well, the other men, I think they played cribbage. But I never played cards, I didn't care about cards, so I sat and read. And we got this news--getting worse and worse--and the Japanese seemed just about on the point of invading India. And my goodness, I felt terribly bad, and I said, "It's a lot of fun." And Poppen entirely misinterpreted my real meaning, and he said, "Tai pu isu!" And in Chinese it means, "Most meaningless!" (laughter) Oh, my. But then--I don't know exactly how those things went--but, oh, then after about four or five months, the Japanese and the Americans had their first exchange of prisoners of war. All of our group left except Poppen and myself. And Oltman wanted to stay, too, but about an hour or two before the boat was to leave for Shanghai, the Japanese officials gave him orders that Oltman had to leave, too. He had to leave within a few hours, and pack up and go out. He felt awfully bad

about that. Well, he could speak Japanese. He had been born in Japan. He spoke Japanese very, very fluently.

HILL: Oh, I see. That's why they made him the representative.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, that left Poppen and myself. I was in the upper house, in Sen Ki Suan, as it was called, and he was in the lower house, in Chiu-put. And that's all the rest of them left at that time. And then there were three single ladies: Miss Veldman, and Miss Green, and Miss Beekman. Let's see: Miss Veldman stayed on in the hospital for several months. She worked in the hospital and they kept her up there in our mission hospital. But finally she felt she couldn't stand it any more, so she moved over to the ladies' residence. We used to come together, about twice a week, and then we'd have exciting games of dominoes and carroms, and things of that sort. It was exciting. (laughter) But we were not supposed to go out of our compounds, but we did. We had to go, get out of our compounds. They came to us one night in a week, and we went over to them for one night in a week.

HILL: The Japanese did allow this?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, I supposed they knew about it, but they were very, they really didn't . . . And every afternoon we always took walks around. We never went out into the more populated parts of the island. We just stayed quite close to our houses. We went for a short walk. We went bathing at the beach, in the ocean. I think I bathed the last on the third of December. And then it was too cold. I thought it takes too much of my energy, so I didn't bathe in there after that. But then the next summer--we were there for two summers--

HILL: Now, let's see. You were under house arrest in where, Changchow?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, in Kulangsu. But we couldn't--I wanted to go to Changchow but I couldn't because the Japanese wouldn't give us the permit.

HILL: O.K. So you arrived back in China, you went to Kulangsu first to catch the launch back to Changchow, but you were caught there. You stayed there.

VEENSCHOTEN: And that's why I was a prisoner of war.

HILL: So there you were under house arrest from when 'til when?

VEENSCHOTEN: From December 8, 1941, until sometime in--I think it was the last part of August or the first part of September of 1943.

HILL: Oh, for two years?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes.

HILL: You were under house arrest.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. We, Poppen and I boarded together. We had this common cooking . . .

HILL: So, you had virtually nothing to do except to read and to play games.

VEENSCHOTEN: That's right. Yes, that's all.

HILL: And you couldn't carry on any work or anything?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, none. In fact, after Oltman left I was made the American representative, between the Americans and the Japanese authorities, and I had an armband. I could go anywhere throughout the island, and in Amoy, too--wherever I wanted to go with that armband because I was the representative. And so I got out quite a lot, and I went down visiting various . . .

HILL: Were you allowed to visit the Chinese, then?

VEENSCHOTEN: No. The Chinese didn't dare to talk to me.

HILL: I see.

VEENSCHOTEN: No, they never talked to me. But I went to see the British. I got one of the men there, Tully was there, and he had quite an extensive library, and Oltman had left quite an extensive library, and so I had lots of reading.

HILL: Were the British under the same sort of house arrest?

VEENSCHOTEN: Sure, yes, they were under the same thing. But they had their own representative.

HILL: So after your house arrest period was over, then what happened? Did they put you in a camp?

VEENSCHOTEN: Then they . . . Well, before--this was in the summer of '43 I was in . . .

HILL: By the way, did you have any contact with Grandma and the rest of the family during this time?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. I never got a letter for the two years that I was there. Not a single letter. And I got one letter through. Oh, let me tell you about this radio. Alma had my radio, and then when she left I took it up to my place. I smuggled it in somehow, but it broke down, went out. And then I was the representative. I could go out and call on another American who was a missionary of the Seventh Day Adventists, Anderson, and he was a very interesting chap. He was quite older than I. He had actually pure white hair, and he didn't want to have a barber come in and it grew down, grew longer and longer.

It was over his shoulders. Beautiful, beautiful, glistening white hair.

HILL: Nowadays if you tried that you wouldn't be out of style. (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no. Not at all. Well, one time I went up there and he'd had it shaved off. Absolutely bald. (laughter) It was the funniest looking sight you ever saw. Well, he and I got along very, very well together. Well, I mentioned to him one time that my radio was broken, it wasn't working. And he said that one of his Seventh Day Adventist people was a radio man, and he'd get him to fix it. So he did. This chap came over and he got the radio and . . .

HILL: A Chinese?

VEENSCHOTEN: A Chinese, yes.

HILL: Well, how did he have contact with the Chinese?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, I don't know. He did. (laughter) But I don't know why. We were just a little bit more law-abiding, I guess, or something like that. But another thing is that they weren't nearly as prominent as we Reformed Church missionaries were. Especially Poppen. Poppen was very, very prominent because of his work with the refugees. He had run-ins with the Japanese authorities again and again and again about the refugees. And one time during the Japanese occupation of Amoy the Japanese--Well, in fact, they immediately stationed Japanese soldiers on Kulangsu which was contrary to the treaty, you know. And immediately the Americans and the British and the French also landed troops on Kulangsu for throughout that--until Pearl Harbor. There was a contingent of the American soldiers--

HILL: What happened to all those American soldiers . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: I suppose they were interned. They were captured.

HILL: Oh, they were also captured.

VEENSCHOTEN: The consular authorities, they were returned home. They were under special arrangements. They went home with the first exchange of prisoners. But Poppen and these three single ladies, we decided we'd try it out and see what would happen. We wanted to show the Chinese Church that we weren't just running away, and so we stayed on, but there was nothing we could do. But we did serve as a very strong moral example to them, and influence. They felt that we were their friends.

HILL: They were able to observe you somehow?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, they knew that we were there. In fact, they had some funny stories about me in Changchow that were absolutely unfounded. They said that somebody had seen me in this Japanese hospital, and we were imprisoned there in the hospital, and that I was at a window and I shouted out, "Help me! Help me!" And it wasn't true at all. There was nothing to it at all. But people would get the funniest stories. I can imagine that a lot of these stories we take as gospel truth have no foundation in fact. But, no, we got along there very well.

Well then, I was talking about this chap. He came and I wrapped this radio in cloth or something, I don't know. Well, he carried it out and when he brought it back he brought it right out on his shoulders. And he came right up into the house, and there were Japanese living right at the foot of the hill below us. That guy, I don't know how on earth he ever got so bold. But then it worked. But then Poppen and I were afraid that the Japanese would find out about it if we had the thing out in the house. So we put it in a closet in the house where I lived, in a clothes closet, and then we'd close the door. And I had a wire up in the attic for an antenna, and we'd get reports from America on the radio, so we knew all about the fighting. As the fighting went on the Japanese were

all the time saying that they were having great victories, but every victory was closer to Tokyo. So we knew pretty well then . . .

HILL: So you followed the course of their defeat.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Yes. So we knew then pretty much what was happening. But I had very good relationships with the Japanese vice-consul, the official. A very fine young fellow. I had a very fine relationship with him, had nice conversations with him. In fact, one time he came and he told me, he said, "My, there's a British lady . . ."--I went to visit her too, occasionally, there. She was interned. She had arthritis. She had had it for a number of years, and her name was Fenrick. But she was just like a board. She couldn't move. She just lay in bed. She was just like a board. Oh, she could move her head a little bit, and move her arms.

HILL: So she was in bed all the time?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Well, he told me, "Say, I had a wonderful experience. I just went to see Mrs. Fenrick. My!" he said, "you ought to see her. Why, she was happier than I was." She'd been telling him about Christ and about the gospel, And she was a prisoner of war, and he was the conqueror, and yet she was conquering him. It was a very interesting experience. I enjoy saying this because it shows what tremendous power a person can receive, and she was a very fine Christian woman in every way. She was not a missionary, either. She was the wife--widow, rather, of a businessman.

Well, then this Japanese official told me that the Japanese and American governments were negotiating for exchange of prisoners, and that we would be among them. And then in August or the early part of September in '43, they transferred us from Amoy to Shanghai. Very, very interesting. They were having cholera, and so before we could enter into the port of cholera, they made every-

one of us submit to an examination. They took samples of our feces. (laughter) It was strange to see all these men on the deck with their pants down as they took these samples of feces. We were held up there for several days, and then we went into Shanghai on trucks. They took us to a camp which was formerly a Chinese middle school. I forgot the name of that middle school. There's a very famous pagoda nearby. It was named after that pagoda, but I've forgotten the name of it. The place was, I think, about ten acres. It was surrounded by a double line of barbed wire, and sentries, and night lights--very brilliant lights all around it. But inside of it we could do what we pleased.

HILL: You ran everything pretty much yourselves?

VEENSCHOTEN: We ran it ourselves, yes. They furnished us our food, but we had to prepare it ourselves, and so everything, they furnished the materials, and we did the work. And when I got there the committee asked me what I wanted to do. And I said, "Well, what is there that you'd like to have me do? If there's anything that you have special need of, I'd be very happy to do that." Well, they said, it was difficult for them to get people to work in the kitchen. And I said, "All right, I'll work in the kitchen." And so I had an assignment in the kitchen, and it was one of the best assignments there was, because we got double portions of everything. And whenever there was something special, everytime they'd give us--they'd ration raisins and sugar, and various things like that--we always got double.

HILL: That was the arrangement, since working in the kitchen wasn't very nice work?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes.

HILL: What did you have to do, then?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, we had to cook the rice, cook . . .

HILL: Dit you wash the dishes and stuff like that?

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't know that we washed the dishes, actually. No, the people did that themselves.

HILL: Each person had his own mess kit or something?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. He had his own dishes and everything. The food was carried out to the barracks, or the dormitories.

HILL: And then dished out.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. But we had to boil the rice. And we had a lot of cracked corn that had been sent over by America for refugees, Chinese refugees during the war, or during the Japanese occupation, that is. That was really very good because we'd get our starch and our proteins at the same time. It was impossible to get out the maggots and whatnot. (laughter) So, we just took that all in stride. But I really was amazed, you know, how these community women--the wives of businessmen--how they looked up under this thing. It was just simply marvelous. A lot of these women hadn't done a lick . . .

HILL: It took quite a bit of stamina.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. They'd never done a lick of work themselves. They always had a staff of servants and whatnot, you know, and especially--they were all British, of course. There were practically no American women as far as I can remember.

HILL: Of course the British have a heritage of sort of stoidity.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, they also have a heritabe of snobbishness. But these women were really remarkable. I take off my hat to them. They were marvelous.

HILL: So how long were you in this camp arrangement then?

VEENSCHOTEN: About two months. And then, when we got there I told the other prisoners that I had been told that there was to be another exchange of prisoners of war. And they said, "Oh, no. They're just kidding you. There's no such thing." But after a while we were told that, well--in fact, we got little slips of paper which had our names on them. And the paper was, scraps of paper, they were very small, and . . .

HILL: Did you save yours?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, I didn't. They wouldn't allow me to do that. I wasn't allowed to take any writing out of the camp at all. And in some ways we really had a good time. We had fellowship. On Sunday evenings, one of the interesting things was they had brought in a lot of records, gramophone records, and somebody had rigged up loudspeakers, and so on, and amplifiers. So every Sunday evening just at dusk, why, we'd have a concert. That's the first time that I heard "The Lord's Prayer". And so that to me, it always means a tremendous lot that I could still hear that, you know, by Menotti. And it means a lot to me. Grandma didn't like it. She didn't think much of Menotti as a composer, but I liked it because of its associations. Well, then, in the process of time, why, we packed up, and the time came when they sent in trucks to take us out. That was about, I think, about the most heart-rending moment in my life. There were just 25 of us of the 1800.

HILL: Only twenty-five?

VEENSCHOTEN: Only 25 of the 1800.

HILL: How did they happen to choose you to leave?

VEENSCHOTEN: Because we were Americans. The others were all British and other nationalities.

HILL: And the prisoner exchange was only for Americans?

VEENSCHOTEN: It was only for Americans, yes. But, you know, it was remarkable how these others also, they showed such wonderful spirit, you know.

HILL: Did you ever hear what happened to the others after the war?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, they stayed in there until the end of the war. A couple of them managed to escape, but very, very few. And they had hard times. There was not enough to eat, and it got much worse after we left. And then we were . . .

HILL: Let's see now. They picked you up in trucks at the camp, and where did they take you then?

VEENSCHOTEN: At the camp, yes. And then they took us down to Shanghai to the docks there, and we boarded our ship. It was a French ship. I think it was the D'Artagnan. It was, originally, the D'Artagnan. They had several ships of Dumas' characters, you know. But the Japanese took it over. They changed the name to Teia Maru, which "Teia" means "Asian Empire", or something like that.

HILL: And where did that ship take you?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, that ship took us along the coast. It had come originally from--it started in Japan. There were some Japanese missionaries on it, and I think there were some Korean missionaries on there, too. And then it came to Shanghai, and then from Shanghai we went to Manila. Not to Manila, but to San Fernando, near, just at the foot of Baguio Mountain. And then there we took on a bunch of prisoners who came from Manila, from Santa Thomas and from this other place up in the interior there. And oh, those prisoners, they suffered.

I tell you. They had had an awful time.

HILL: They were really in bad shape, huh?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, they were in bad shape. They were really in bad shape. Well, then this, from San Fernando we went to Hong Kong, and there we took on some more Americans. And from Hong Kong we went to Saigon, and from Saigon we went to Singapore. In Singapore we had a rather interesting thing happen. They put on water, and brought in big barges, water barges. And while they were tied up beside us, one of the men on the barges--he must have been probably Chinese, or at least a native--and he wrote on the deck of the ship a great big "li", in fact that's victory, you know. And then he erased that and he wrote something else which I don't remember. I'll have to ask Poppen about it. Poppen's the one that saw it. I didn't see it myself. But that guy, he suddenly took his life in his hands and showed that he was--that they were with us, you know. And then from Singapore we went up towards Java, in the straits between Java and Sumatra. It was very interesting. On that trip, on that one day, we went through a part of the seas. A perfectly calm, a very calm day, very calm water, and the water was simply crawling with a certain kind of life. I don't know what it is.

HILL: Sea snakes?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, they were little bits of things, very, very small. And later on I read about them in the Geographic, and they said that's the only place in the world where those, where that life is found. And they're only found in certain parts of the year, and we just happened to be there at the time. And I recall we went through the straits where we could see the flames of Krakatowa, of the volcano. And from there we went into the Indian Ocean on the south side of Sumatra, and then steamed northwestward up to Goa in India, which was Portu-

guesses at that time, and was neutral.

Really very interesting. This Teia Maru, the Japanese ship, they were under very strict orders. They had to report every, I think almost every hour, the exact position where they were, to Geneva. And then they reported to the other countries so that the ship wouldn't be attacked. And they had big white crosses painted on the funnels. And on either side of the ship they had big glass illuminated crosses, white crosses, so that day and night--of course the funnels were floodlit at night. And I thought it was rather significant that here Japan had forced all of the missionaries out long before that. At the beginning already of the China difficulty, they had forced them out and opposed the Christian Church, and here they had to take their refugees, their prisoners of war away under the sign of the cross. Very significant, I thought. Perhaps I'm sort of prejudiced. As Grandma used to say, "I may be wrong, but I don't think I am." Well, then, in Goa we tied up there and we had to wait for the Gripsholm to come from America with fifteen hundred Japanese to exchange for the fifteen hundred Americans.

HILL: So the actual exchange of prisoners was to take place at Goa, in India?

VEENSCHOTEN: In Goa. Yes. In India. That was a neutral port. Portugal was neutral at the time. And well, when we got there we said we were tired of being on that ship. We'd been on the ship for a whole month. And we were awfully tired. We wanted to get on land. And they wouldn't allow us at first, the Portuguese authorities wouldn't. They were afraid of trouble. But they made such a stink about it, finally they said, "Yes, well, you may just get here in these railroad yards at the wharf." It was an awful place to walk, between the ties of the rails and whatnot, but it was better than staying on that ship. The ship was terribly crowded. We had fifteen hundred on board. I don't know how many it was rated for passengers, but it must have been at least double the

amount of passengers that it was supposed to have, and people were way down in the holds, and the holds were terrible. Fortunately the weather was very good. We didn't have a storm on the whole trip. We had rain at night sometimes, but no winds.

HILL: Was it hot?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, it was awfully hot, and especially down below. Most of them came up on deck at night, and slept out on deck. Poppen and I were among the more fortunate ones. They had constructed bunks, a sort of a barracks on top of the deck, and they had one tier, just two layers of bunks. And they were not separated bunks--we were all together, but with boards in between so each one knew where his place was. And we had a sort of a mattress and a pillow and a sheet. And that was plenty, we didn't need any more than that. But it was never changed throughout the month that we were on board the ship. And a lot of the people when we got to Goa they took these dirty sheets and just threw them over the side of the ship, and oh, you ought to see those Indians gobble them up, you know. My goodness, they were precious to them. And well . . .

HILL: It's kind of strange that here the prisoners are throwing away what few things they have and the Indians are gobbling them up.

VEENSCHOTEN: Of course, those sheets weren't ours anyway. They belonged to the Japanese, but they were so horribly filthy by that time. Well, at Goa we waited for two days, and then the Gripsholm came in from America with the Japanese. And when they were tying up, a bunch of us men were standing on the pier, on the wharf, watching them. And the Gripsholm was a Swedish ship, and was supposed to have a Swedish crew, but they didn't have enough Swedes in America to man the ship, so they put on some American seamen. And when they had the ship tied up, why these seamen got on the prow of the ship and started to sing "God Bless

America". And when they got finished, one of them shouted down to us on the wharf, he said, "Why didn't you join us in singing?" One of the men answered him, "Hell, we're too hungry to sing." Which was quite true. Oh, man! I've never suffered hunger like that. The only time in my life when I've ever been hungry was on that ship, and the food was simply atrocious. It was terrible. And well, pretty soon the Japanese were unloaded. Well, first of all they unloaded the packages, the Red Cross packages, and really that was a tremendous sight. There were just streams and streams, thousands and thousands, tens of thousands of these packages, each one with a Red Cross on it. Packages for refugees and prisoners of war in Japanese hands. And these were transferred . . .

HILL: So those were transferred to the Japanese ship?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. From the Gripsholm to the Japanese ship. When the Gripsholm came in the Japanese saw us on the wharf, and they said that they wanted to get off the ship, too. Well, the Portuguese were afraid that they would start a fight. And so they said, "All right. But you have to keep a certain distance." I don't remember; probably about a hundred feet between the two. And the Americans mightn't get near the Japs, and Japs mightn't come near the Americans. But gradually, gradually, gradually, they got closer and closer, and pretty soon it was all mixed together. Then the missionaries, particularly the Japanese missionaries, they could speak with the Japanese. Well, we could all speak more or less, because most of the Japanese knew English, too. But we found a large number of Japanese Christians on board, and we had really very interesting fellowship with them.

HILL: Why were they going back?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, they were forced. They were compelled by the American government. Just like we--we were compelled to come back to America. And we weren't

asked whether we wanted to. We were just sent back. Well, then their baggage came off. And you should have seen their baggage. My goodness, the stuff that they had! Sewing machines, and graphophones, and radios, and they were dressed to kill, you know. And the American kids, they were all in rags. None of us had had anything new for two years. We were in terrible shape. And then these Japanese came from America, and my, they looked like millionaires, which made some of us feel--well, I didn't particularly care myself, but many of them made very, very sarcastic remarks about it.

Well, then the Teia Maru left ahead of us, a couple of days. First of all, when the exchange was made--the Japanese came over to the Teia Maru, and we went over to the Gripsholm--and we had to wait for them to clean the cabins. And they had spread out a dinner for us--a smorgasbord on the deck of the ship. The table extended on two decks--the whole width of the ship.

HILL: I imagine you really had a feast.

VEENSCHOTEN: And you should have seen that stuff. Oh my! Everything you could possibly imagine! Turkey, and chicken, and beef, and pork, and all kinds of vegetables, and desserts, and what have you! It was simply tremendous! I'm surprised that we didn't die that night, but then we certainly got our teeth into that stuff. Well, then we went down and we got into our cabins. I was down I don't know how many decks down, and I had some very fine cabin mates and we had a really good time.

HILL: Were you and Dr. Poppen in the same room?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, not in the same cabin. We were there on the same ship, and also the three single ladies, Miss Veldman, and Miss Green, and Miss Beekman. And throughout the trip we would get together on Sundays especially, and we'd have coffee together. We did that on the Teia Maru, too. We had just enough coffee

so that we could get along. In fact, even in Shanghai we got together on Sundays and we had coffee together throughout our stay there. Then on the Gripsholm, one of the things that I found out was that I had lost a tremendous lot of weight. I was less than 130 pounds. I think about 128 pounds then, and starting out at about 160. But I soon got back my weight, and I took full advantage of all the opportunities and privileges that we had there. The food was simply marvelous. We were assigned places at the tables. Of course, we had to eat in shifts. They couldn't accommodate all of the passengers on one shift. And I was assigned to a table with--I think there were three other men and a woman. Or maybe four other men and myself and a woman. She was a doctor who'd been in China. She was not a missionary, but she'd been a doctor in China. And I don't know why all these men left. They didn't want to be at the table with that woman. Well, I had a good time with her. She and I were alone at the table, and every so often we would have little tickets on the table at our plate entitling us to chocolate bars and cigarettes. And I, of course, didn't care for the cigarettes, but this lady doctor, she smoked cigarettes, and so I'd give her the cigarettes. She didn't want to have the chocolate because she didn't want to get fat, and so she gave me the chocolate bars.

HILL: So you had double chocolate, and she had double cigarettes.

VEENSCHOTEN: That's right. It was very interesting. I couldn't eat all those chocolate bars myself. When I got home to Detroit I gave what I had left to the kids and they just simply feasted. They hadn't had any. Chocolate bars were just unattainable in America. (laughter)

HILL: They were giving them all to the soldiers.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, then we also had a lot of different lectures and courses. I took a course in Mandarin on the ship. And I also attended the lectures of a wo-

man whose name I've forgotten now, but she was a professor in St. John's University in Shanghai, a history professor. And she gave a very, very fine course of lectures on modern Europe. And she did it right off the cuff. She had no notes, nothing at all. And we took our notes on the Teia Maru, on the Japanese ship, we took it on Japanese propaganda leaflets. We'd put them to good use. When I got to New York, the army, of course, looked at these things. I think that they confiscated them, as I remember it. And I'm quite sure I didn't keep them. But I had one piece of literature that I thought was very good propaganda, and they took that away from me in New York, but later on they gave it back to me. I thought it was quite innocuous. But it really was--It gave Japan's position, and her ideas in the war, and I thought in a very interesting and very logical sort of way. I still have that book.

Well, we had some very, very fine times on the Gripsholm. They had a swimming pool, and I went everyday and I took a swim in the swimming pool, and I really felt like a millionaire. A millionaire. And they also had a steam bath. I always took a steam bath. I'll tell you, it was wonderful.

HILL: You really had a time. Now where was this ship headed? It left Goa, and where did they set sail for?

VEENSCHOTEN: It headed south, southwest, and we passed . . .

HILL: Was it marked in the same way, then, lit up with white crosses?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, it was all lit up. A little different. It had the name Gripsholm in huge letters about ten feet high on each side of the ship, and it had crosses on the funnels, and so on, I think. But it was very, very well run. And the name Gripsholm is also flood-lit. Of course it was a neutral ship, and . . . But I think they also had to report every hour the exact position of the ship to Geneva. And we went from Goa we went south, a little

west, passed quite near Madagascar, and down to Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

In Port Elizabeth we had a very interesting experience. The British there had prepared in a most wonderful way for us, for our entertainment. They had arranged for everyone of the fifteen hundred passengers to be entertained in the homes, in the private homes of the people there in the British community in Port Elizabeth. Well, we declined to accept this ourselves, because we wanted to meet some of the Dutch people there, and the Dutch Reformed ministers. So we sent in a request, and they made arrangements for a pastor of a large church there in Port Elizabeth to come with his car. And he took us around, took us all around Port Elizabeth--that is, the white section. He didn't take us into the colored or the black section. And he was a very fine chap. I enjoyed his discussion. He had a huge congregation, and he said it was mostly young people, and I got along very, very well with him. I've unfortunately forgotten his name.

HILL: Did he speak English, or did you carry on in Dutch?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, yes. He spoke very good English. Very, very fine English, But in fact, with the exception of Poppen and myself, I don't imagine the others-- I don't think the single ladies could understand Dutch, with the exception of Miss Veldman. She might have understood some, but I think very, very little. Of course, he would speak good Dutch, I would rather think.

That was the first day when we got off, and then the second day I joined a group of missionaries who went to see a black congregation, church, there in Port Elizabeth. We went by bus, and it was very interesting to see the transition from the white section into the colored section. First we went to the colored section. There they had really very, very fine cottages that the government had supplied. They were clean and neat, and each one had a little garden with it and so on. And of course it was very small. And that section

was all for the colored people. The colored people, you know, are the mixed race. They are the white and blacks mixed. And then way off in the distance across a deep ravine we could see another colony, but they didn't take us over there. I didn't get over to see that. That was the black community. It impressed me to see the distinction there between the whites, the colored, and the black. And my soul certainly revolted against it. But I have to tell you another story pretty soon. And then we went to this black church.

HILL: This was black, not colored?

VEENSCHOTEN: This was black, not colored. This was black. And there they were having a school. A public school was held in this church, a school for the black children. And the principal was a black who had a M.A. in Education from Columbia University. And he had a lovely group of kids there. Well, they were meeting in the church because they were preparing a new school building which the government was putting up for them. And then he had them, he asked whether we'd like to hear them sing. We said, "Yes," and we thought, oh, these little kids singing, and so on. But you know it was the most beautiful music I've ever heard. Most wonderful. They sang mostly their African songs. It was simply marvelous! The melody, the harmony, and it was really wonderful. And so I was happy that I had that opportunity to see the other side of the whole thing.

Well, one of the interesting things on the ship, one of the lectures was given by I think a Ford motor salesman who'd been in South Africa, but had been caught by the war in China. And in fact it was interesting. In Port Elizabeth, too, we saw huge factories, the flashlight batteries, Ever Ready flash light batteries. A huge factory there in Port Elizabeth. And other American factories, too. Well, this chap was telling about the relations between the whites and the blacks, and so on. And he said that the Boers and the British, they don't get

along together either, you know. And the Boers won't speak English. They can speak English, but they won't. And one time a Boer salesman of his took him out to meet a prospect. So this salesman, this Boer salesman, introduced him to this other, to his friend, the Boer farmer. Then this chap, the American, started to speak to him in English, and the Boer farmer walked away. And then the salesman called back, "Say!" he says, "this man is an American. He's not English." "Oh," the Boer says, "Why didn't you tell me that in the first place?" This shows the spirit between them, you know. He could understand English perfectly, but he refused to speak it. He insisted that the Englishman had to speak Afrikaans.

Another interesting thing that happened on the Gripsholm, the Teia Maru with the Japanese prisoners of war returning to Japan, they left two days ahead of us, ahead of the Gripsholm. As they were preparing to leave the wharf, a bunch of us missionaries--there always was a bunch of us missionaries gathered together on the stern of the Gripsholm--and we noticed there a group of Japanese Christians whom we'd met. Well, I didn't know them myself, but the other missionaries knew them. So as a token of our fellowship together in Christ, someone struck up a hymn, and we all joined in, and so then we sang that one or two verses. And then somebody started up another hymn, and so we just kept on singing, oh, about half an hour, I think. Well, while we were singing there, I noticed that there were two men who were engaged in very, very strong words, altercation. They were sitting on a bench together and, my, they were going on at hammer and tongs. And one of them said, "If these missionaries love the Japanese, they'd better go to Japan!" And the other said to him, "Well, these missionaries believe that Christ wants us to love even our enemies, and so these missionaries, they love the Japanese." "Well," he said, "If they love the Japanese that much they better go back to Japan. We don't want them in America." And the chap who said that was a white man, and the other man was a negro. And then I got back

to Detroit, and they'd just had these Detroit racial riots. So you can imagine how I felt about that.

HILL: It's an interesting study in contrasts.

VEENSCHOTEN: Another interesting thing that happened, from Port Elizabeth we went around the Cape of Good Hope, and we had the wonderful stormy weather. It's always stormy at the Cape of Good Hope, they say. And here I saw the albatross. First time I'd ever seen them. And those are beautiful birds, my! they're marvelous birds. And then from Africa we went straight across the South Atlantic to South America, to Rio de Janeiro. And it was very interesting. We got there during the night and had to anchor outside, and the ocean was absolutely calm, just as calm as could be.

HILL: Just like glass.

VEENSCHOTEN: But there was a heavy fog. We couldn't see a thing. We knew that the land was right close by, but we couldn't see a thing. And we were all on deck there and waiting for land. We hadn't seen it for several weeks, and suddenly the clouds parted, and in the middle of the clouds we saw the figure of Christ.

HILL: Was that that big cross up on the hillside there?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. The image of Christ in Rio de Janeiro. I can't imagine anything that is more touching than to see that. With Christ with his arms stretched out and he says, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest." And then we went into Rio.

HILL: This was in the morning?

VEENSCHOTEN: This was in the morning, yes. The fog cleared away, you see, it

burned away, and we went in and we had a fine day there. And we went to the top of that mountain there, to the foot of that figure, and we had a -- Oh, Rio was a beautiful town. Oh, that's one of the most beautiful, beautiful cities that I've ever seen. You remember Hong Kong?

HILL: Yes.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, I think it's even more beautiful than Hong Kong. Oh, it's just simply out of this world. It's just a fairy place. We enjoyed it very much. There I bought some jewels. I've forgotten what they are.

HILL: Sapphire.

VEENSCHOTEN: Sapphire. Yes, that's right.

HILL: Mother has a sapphire that you bought.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, that's the one that I bought there in Rio de Janeiro at the time. And then we started back. First we went about a thousand miles out into the Atlantic.

HILL: Incidentally, where did you get the money for that?

VEENSCHOTEN: That was paid by the Board. The fare was paid by the Board. But it was . . .

HILL: Yes, but I mean, how did you get money yourself? Where did you pick it up?

VEENSCHOTEN: We didn't have any money until we got some money in Port Elizabeth. But, oh, well I did something that--When we left . . .

HILL: (laughter) Oh, oh. Here we go! What did you do?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, when we were still on Kulangsu we were able to send some of our things over to the mainland and sell them. And we also had some money. I don't remember now exactly where the money came from, what money it was, but we sent it up to Changchow. There the Board took it from our hands and used it for their running budget, and then they didn't have to send it from New York. We had some money . . . Oh, yes. Before we left Kulangsu we had to sell all of our stuff. The Japanese told us we had to sell everything. So we sold all we could and so we had that money in our hands. This was Japanese money, and when we got to Shanghai we were pretty well fixed. Well, then after two months when we had to leave, of course, that money was no use to us anymore, but I had quite a lot of it on hand. I don't remember how much. And well, some of it we donated to the camp for things, special things, and so on. Then on the trip some of the passengers started to gamble and they needed American money. No, they had to give Japanese money. Oh, this was it. They wanted to get ahold of Japanese money so they could exchange it. Also, that's one way. Gambling, too, I'm quite sure. But when we got to Goa we could exchange the Japanese money for American money. So I got a whole lot of American money in my hands through exchanging the Japanese money for American on the ship from these gamblers.

HILL: But that was after you got to Goa?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Yes, I think it must have been. I really don't recall exactly. I think it was on the Gripsholm that I got the money. I think it was then that I got it. I don't know exactly how it was that I got that exchanged around.

HILL: Somehow you changed your Japanese money into American money.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. That was a lot of fun. I had enough money. Then when we got to Port Elizabeth the American government advanced us funds, too, so that we could buy things that we needed.

HILL: How much did they advance you?

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't recall exactly how much it was. It was perhaps around fifty dollars, or something like that. But you know what most of them went out to buy?

HILL: What:

VEENSCHOTEN: Watches. On that whole ship there wasn't a clock. There were a lot of places where clocks had been, but they were just covered with paper. There were no clocks. Before I went on that trip I had somehow or other mentioned in my talks in the Byron Center Reformed Church . . . Oh well, this is another story. I'll tell that later on. Well, before I went to China I knew that there might be trouble and so I left my watch, my good watch, home, and I bought the cheapest watch that I could buy in Sears Roebuck for about three or four dollars. And when I got on the Gripsholm I was one of the few people that had a watch, at that time.

HILL: A Sears Roebuck watch.

VEENSCHOTEN: A Sears Roebuck watch.

HILL: You ought to write in to them and tell them that. They could use that for advertisements. (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: Everyday, oh, at least a score or more people would ask me the time from that Sears Roebuck watch.

HILL: You should have hung it up on one of those paper clocks.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, that is one of the interesting things, too, that happened. Well, another thing that wasn't quite so nice was one chap died at Goa of a

heart attack, and he was buried there, and he was a missionary. And the other was a chap that got on board at San Fernando in the Philippines, and well, when he came on board he was in terrible shape. Terrible. His stomach was bloated and in terrible shape. Well, when we got to Rio de Janeiro he died. Or shortly after we left Rio, I guess. He was buried at sea. And that was rather . . . The ship stopped, you know, and the machinery, everything stopped, and really very impressive. Then, oh, it took us, I don't know how many, several weeks to go from Rio de Janeiro to New York, and it seemed like an age to us. We were so anxious to get home.

HILL: You were on the last leg of your journey.

VEENSCHOTEN: The first real news that I got from Grandma was in Goa. Now you talk about important things that a person gets to know. What do you suppose . . .

HILL: You got a letter, you mean?

VEENSCHOTEN: I got a letter from Grandma in Goa. She knew that I was on the way.

HILL: How did she know that you were coming?

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, she had heard that it would be possible to send packages to prisoners of war through the Red Cross. But she didn't know how to do it so she called long distance to the Board rooms for Dr. Potter and asked him how she could send that package. And he says, "Oh, but Mrs. Veenschoten, your husband will be coming home pretty soon." And Grandma almost fainted right there at the telephone. And . . .

HILL: What a way to find out. How should he know and not call her?

VEENSCHOTEN: She was very indignant about it, and then she called up Mrs. Poppen

and told her, too. And you know, and then they wrote letters to us in Goa. They told her that we could be contacted in Goa and so there were letters there. And one of the things--I don't suppose you would be interested in this particular news item that was in that letter, but it said that, she said that my daughter Joann had met a young man, and that's him, and they seemed to have certain bonds of affection of one another, and so on and so forth. And that is something which I had to take care of when I got home. So I had a whole month, about a month and a half to decide whether there could be such a man as Jack Hill or not. (laughter)

HILL: Well, that's sort of an indirect decision.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. But well . . .

HILL: So you're on your way home from Rio de Janeiro to New York.

VEENSCHOTEN: To New York. And well, I'll never forget, of course, when we got to New York, and the city was in blackout at night, and we couldn't see anything. We got there at night and we had to wait for the morning when we could see the cars passing back and forth on Long Island, and so on. But the next morning when the port opened, why we sailed in, and well, you know, it's a marvelous thing to see that Statue of Liberty.

MRS. HILL: That's what my mother said. She saw that and she just cried, and she saw the American flag flying, and she was just . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: And then we all burst into that song, "God Bless America", the whole fiftenn hundred of us. You never heard anything like it.

HILL: That must have been quite a sound. Quite a sound.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. And then we . . .

HILL: Of course Grandma and the rest of them were in New York.

VEENSCHOTEN: They were in New York waiting for us, but of course I didn't know about that at the time, but they were . . .

HILL: How did you meet up with them?

VEENSCHOTEN: Then, well, we had to go through the F.B.I. surveillance, and questioning, and that took a long, long time. But by that time we also had word that Grandma and the other relatives were in New York, and that we were to go to a certain place. I was going to go to stay with a Presbyterian lady who lived around Riverside Drive, around that section. And finally I got off, and got on a taxi, and it was dark, and I don't know what time it was. About ten, eleven o'clock before I got over to this apartment building. And I got to the door and the doorman, the man who guards the door there, and he looked at me and he thought that I was a bandit or something. And I told him that my wife was there and so on and so forth, and htn he let me go on up. And then I got to this lady's apartment, and she met me and she said, "Oh, Mr. Veenschoten. I'm afraid you can't see your wife. She's having a bath." I says, "That won't bother me at all." (laughter) And so Grandma and I met.

HILL: In the bath. (laughter)

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. You know, it was a very interesting thing. Later on she and I were exchanging confidences, and then we both acknowledged that we both approached that moment with considerable trepidation. We didn't know how we had changed in that time.

HILL: Well, having not heard from each other for two years, I can imagine.

VEENSCHOTEN: For two years, you know, and it was really, it was remarkable

that she and I both had that same general feeling of just sort of feeling of just sort of uneasiness of what it would be like, you know. We had no difficulties.

HILL: Well, we know what you mean.

MRS. HILL: A little bit. We weren't separated that long. We wrote.

HILL: We weren't separated that long and we wrote, but there was still . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: Not quite under the same circumstances, either.

HILL: But even so there are still quite a bit of . . . We know what you mean. We know the feeling.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, yes. Of course we'd had considerable more background of living together than you folks did.

HILL: Yes, that's true. You'd been together for quite a long time.

VEENSCHOTEN: Then we came together there in New York, and then we had a few meetings with the Board, members of the Board, and so on. Then we started for home by train. We stopped on the way at New York, a church that supported us. And Sunday I was supposed to speak--which I did--and I didn't know what on earth to say. And I started out in Amoy and I went through my experiences in the prison, rather, in Kulangsu. And then in the evening I had really quite an inspiration. I started out and I said, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." You better ask your mother whether she's ever heard that quotation.

HILL: I think Dad keeps quoting that. You used that sermon over and over again, didn't you?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. But it was really very, very effective. Today I'm still meeting people that remember that sermon.

HILL: Do you still have the text for that sermon?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, I haven't. I'll have to write it out because, gee, I think it's worth preserving.

HILL: I would think so.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, then we went on to Detroit, and we settled down for the rest of the war until . . .

HILL: Now, let's see. You left Detroit in 1941.

VEENSCHOTEN: In 1941, in I think it was in September or October.

HILL: And you arrived back in Detroit, then, after being away all that time; and you arrived back when?

VEENSCHOTEN: In December, or just before Christmas.

HILL: Of 1943?

VEENSCHOTEN: That's right. And then we lived in a very comfortable home there in Detroit. Girard was studying medicine, and your father came occasionally, drawn for some reason or other. And I was kept busy, more or less, speaking and so on. And Ellen was in the primary school, so that took care of us very, very nicely. Until--I think it was in 1945 when I got a letter from the Board in the early part of the year saying that they were appointing me to go back to West China and work there as a missionary, and asked me whether I was willing. And I said, "Sure, I'll be glad to go, but since they speak Mandarin there," I said I'd have to learn to speak Mandarin. The Amoy dialect wouldn't do me any

good. And I suggested that I take some lessons in Mandarin, some instruction in Mandarin. So they arranged for me to enter Yale Language School, and Grandma and I went up to New Haven, and we lived there for several months, and I studied Mandarin. At Yale we joined a cooperative house. Several of the language students there and ourselves, we rented the house of people who owned this lock company.

HILL: Yale Lock?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yale Lock. That's right. And it was a beautiful house. And I don't remember how many people we had in there. And then we boarded ourselves and shared the work altogether by cooking and cleaning and so on. And we had a very, very wonderful experience there. We enjoyed those other--they were all youngsters, of course. We were old people. And I remember one time they--it was a Sunday evening. It was rather chilly and we had a fire in the fire place. We were all sitting around and the doorbell rang and a man and his wife were standing there, and their car had broken down. They wanted to call up a repairman to take care of their car, and it was a little bit difficult because it was a Sunday night. Well, they made contact, and then while they were waiting the man said to me, "Well, what have you been doing in China?" He said it in sort of a belligerent way, and I said, "Why, we've been doing a big work in China. We've been establishing a system of schools there which has never been done in China before. And we have hospitals and things of that sort." And I just elaborated on all the work that we'd been doing in China. And, well, he was called away, and I kept on talking to his wife, and when they finally, when they left, she turned to me and said, "You've sold me on missions." (laughter) So I did a little missionary work, you know.

HILL: You did a little salesmanship, you mean.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, I enjoyed the language work there very, very much. It was a lot of fun. I don't know whether it did me much good. One thing that I did get out of it, and that is I'm now a Yale alumnus.

HILL: Oh, boy. What an honor.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Yes, I'm a Yale alumnus of the year 1945. So you can't dispute my greatness any longer.

HILL: Your scholarly qualifications.

VEENSCHOTEN: Great! I'm great! No doubt about it at all.

HILL: Humble, too. (laughter) So anyway, now you're getting ready to go back to China.

VEENSCHOTEN: Well, yes. I was ready to go back to China. And the first of all, of course, they landed on France, and then very shortly Germany capitulated. And then it was a few months later--yes, I think it was in August--that the Japanese also capitulated. And then I got a telephone call from Dr. Shafer. He said that the Board wanted to send the missionaries back to China and I was it. Would I go? I said, "Sure." And he said, "When can you go?" I said, "Right away." And so Grandma and I packed up our stuff, and went back to Detroit and got ready, and we had a very short time. We were on our way back to New York. I left on a Liberty Ship from Philadelphia. Well, are you interested in that trip?

HILL: Did Grandma go back with you then?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, she stayed. She couldn't go back then yet. She couldn't get her passport. But, oh, there was one interesting thing happened. Oh, it wasn't at that time. I guess it was in 1941 when I went back to China alone.

I had to have my bunions treated and operated on.

HILL: Oh, you had an operation.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. I had an operation. I had both feet treated. And I couldn't walk very well. Well, then I was going to go back to China. I had to get a passport and I had no way of getting around. So I asked the pastor of the church, Mr. Hollebrond to chauffeur me down to the Federal Building, the post office in Detroit. Mr. Hollebrond took me down to the Federal Building downtown. When we got there my feet were in such shape I couldn't walk very well, and he had to . . .

HILL: You had casts on both feet?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. And he left me off at the curb at the post office. And I had a camp chair with me, and it was a warm day, and I sat on that camp chair at the curb, and it was a warm day, I had my hat in my lap. And pretty soon somebody came along and dropped a quarter in it. (laughter) Later, that Sunday, I gave the quarter in the collection plate.

HILL: That's a roundabout way of collecting for your own work.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Well, I suppose that was one with being an indigent alien when I left the Philippines. (laughter) Well, we went back, we went up to Philadelphia. We got up to Philadelphia on time and we got on our ship. It had been a troop carrier, but there were only four cabins on the ship, and two in each cabin meant that there would be room for eight passengers, but there were only seven. Well, the others had got there before me, and they got the best cabins, and I took what was left. I found that my fellow passengers--four of them were Pentecostal missionaries, and two of them were Standard Oil men--were all paired together, and that left me alone in the other cabin. Well, we

started out and sailed along the East coast of the United States down south. We were going to go through the Panama canal. Well, after a week or so they developed very serious engine trouble, and we just simply inched along. I don't know how long it took us to get over to the Panama Canal. Then we got there and they had to wait two weeks for the repairs, for the blower of the boilers had broken and the motors were burned out. So we had to wait for that to be sent over from America. And I enjoyed seeing some of Panama there at that time. We went to Panama City and saw that and so on.

Well, then we went through the canal, and going through the canal itself is a wonderful experience. It is simply indescribable, I think it is the feeling that you have when you get inside these huge locks, and the cement walls just going right up about I think eighty feet. And way up taller and above the ship. The ship is just lying down below. And then gradually you see the water boiling all around you and the ship starts to rise, and pretty soon you're on top. And then they open the gates and you just go up to another one. Really a very, very wonderful experience.

Well, while I was waiting there at Colon the captain and I--we were very friendly. He was a friendly chap, and we got along very well--he told me that when we got to Balboa we were going to take on another passenger. And I said, "Oh, I suppose you'll put him with me, then," because all the other cabins were filled, had two each, and I was alone. "Oh, no," he said, "I wouldn't think of doing such a thing. I wouldn't even put him with the crew." He said, "The crew would mutiny if I put him with the crew." I said, "Well, what's the trouble?" "Why," he said, "This chap is a convicted murderer. He's a Chinese. He was convicted. He murdered two Chinese on a President ship, and he'd been a prisoner, a convict here in Panama for ten years. And he was pardoned by President Roosevelt and now he's got to go back to China on the first ship that's leaving for China. So we'll have to take him on." And then he

showed me the quarters which he was preparing for this Chinese chap, and they were simply terrible. They were right up on the stern, right over the propellers. Oh, it was a horrible, horrible place. And so I said to him, I said, "Well," I said, "I can't see putting a human being in that kind of a place." I said, "Well, we better put him in my cabin with me." I said, "Now, there's another cabin which you're using for a storeroom, and that cabin has a bathroom connected with it. If you'll give us that cabin, then he can come in with me, the two of us together." And he was very happy about that. So when we got to Balboa I was just a little bit nervous. After all, to be in the room with a murderer isn't exactly something that one would prefer, but even more what worried me most was the fact that he probably smoked cigarettes, and I hate cigarette smoke. But I thought, "Well, all right. We'll get along with it somehow."

Well, we got to Balboa, and we stopped, and pretty soon this chap came on board, a young Chinese about thirty years old. A fine looking fellow. He was well dressed, and looked fine, and very well behaved and well mannered, and he came to my room. Then he introduced himself, who he was, and so on, and that he'd been in the prison and so on, and been pardoned by Roosevelt on the condition that he would leave the United States and never come back, and go back to China. And then I introduced myself. I said that I was a missionary. "Oh," he said. "A missionary. Then you don't want me to smoke." The first thing he did was light up a cigarette. And he said, "Well, you don't want me to smoke." And I said, "Ohm no. That's all right. You can go ahead and smoke. I wouldn't think of asking you not to smoke." And, "No," he says, "I'm going to quit right away." He put out his cigarette, and he didn't smoke the rest of the time, the whole month that we were on the ship together.

HILL: He didn't smoke even when you weren't around?

VEENSCHOTEN: No, no.

HILL: Was he allowed out of the room?

VEENSCHOTEN: Oh, yes. He was allowed out. He was absolutely free. He was a free man. A very interesting--he told me later on, he said when he got on board the captain wanted to take his money for safe-keepint. And he says, "No!" He says, "It's my money!" He had a little he got in prison, that he'd earned in prison. And he said, "I'm a free man, now." Every once in a while he'd say to me, "I'm a free man, now." But he was a lovely fellow, a lovely fellow. Well, the upshot . . .

HILL: What did he speak? What was his language?

VEENSCHOTEN: He spoke very good English. Very good English.

HILL: I mean what was his native Chinese language?

VEENSCHOTEN: Cantonese, so I couldn't speak that to him. Well, then he told me his story. He told me that he had been brought up, born and raised in a small village in Canton, near Canton. In fact, most of the Chinese in America come from that village in Canton. Well, he said that he was married. He had married a Chinese girl there, but because they were so poor he went to Hong Kong to look for work. I think that his brothers or friends got him a job on a President ship, and so he went to work, and there were other Chinese on board, and they got to gambling. And he accused them of cheating, and he got a gun and he shot them both. And so that must have been after they left San Francisco or Los Angeles on the way to Panama. So when he got to Panama he was taken off and imprisoned, and he was tried and convicted, convicted to fifty years for each murder. A hundred years imprisonment. Then he was in prison, and one time he broke out and he got into the jungles, and my goodness, he almost died. He

couldn't--so he went back, he gave himself back up. But apparently it didn't spoil his relationship with the wardens and oh, he had various different jobs. And he told me all about it, all the details.

And then he told me a most interesting thing. He said that he saw a--there was a building there in the prison yard. He asked them, "Well, what's that?" And they told him that it was a chapel. "Oh, what's a chapel?" "Well, that's the place where they preach the Christian religion." "Well, what's that?" "Well, that's just a religion about Jesus and so on." And he said, "Well," he says, "may I go there?" He says, "Why, sure you may, if you want to. You don't have to if you don't want to." He'd never heard of the gospel before. He went there and he heard the gospel in prison, in that chapel from Roman Catholic and Protestant chaplains that were there. And he was converted. And he was a lovely chap. And I had a wonderful opportunity in that month while I was with him to give him instruction. And on our last Sunday on board I suggested to the other missionaries--there were these four Pentecostal missionaries--I suggested that we have communion together. And they agreed to that, and I said, "Well, how about inviting this Chinese to have communion with us?" I said, "He's been converted." And they said, "Let us examine him, first." And I said, "All right." And so they did, and they were very well satisfied with his witness. And so the four of us and the Chinese convict had communion together. One of the most touching services I've ever conducted. I had the communion service.

And then when he got to Hong Kong he found that the relatives of the two men that he had murdered had sworn vengeance and were going to kill him. So he went right on to Shanghai. And I knew that Homer Ling, a friend of mine, was in Shanghai. And I gave him a letter of introduction, and asked Homer Ling to try to get him a job, and so on, and get him settled. And they did, and I had correspondence with him until the Communists came. And he was a splendid chap.

HILL: So you got back to China now, when?

VEENSCHOTEN: That was in 1945, in . . . Well, I got there, I think just before Thanksgiving again. Then very shortly I was able to go back over to Changchow and I resumed the regular missionary work there that I'd been doing before, except ~~that~~ there were no missionaries left. I was practically the only one that was left there. Well, when I got back to Changchow, things were in pretty bad shape. The Chinese, of course, had been at war for practically ever since we got to China, as far as that's concerned. I never knew a year of peace as long as I was there, 34 years. But especially after the Japanese incursion in 1937, why then, of course, it was simply terrible, and the country was just simply drained of all of its resources. And the people were so tired of war. And then on top of that, of course, was the horrible inflation. The currency was just simply worthless. Absolutely worthless. All their paper currency was good for was to make firecrackers. After the Communists came to Changchow, on the first Chinese New Year, I remarked to one of my Chinese friends, I said, "My, it seems to me that the firecrackers are louder this year than usual." "Oh, yes," he says, "They've used the old Chinese bills to make the firecrackers, and they are much better than the paper they used to use." So they had much better firecrackers. So they were worth something. (laughter) But that is something which I think that Americans are not informed about--and if they have been informed they've forgotten--that the Chinese went through all of those years of dislocation and disruption; of war, just war. Just war!

HILL: Of course, that's not a particularly unique situation in Chinese history. There have been times of prolonged war and strife.

VEENSCHOTEN: I don't think so. They've had periods of peace, and so on. During

that time that I was in China, you know, the constant changing of these warlords, that in itself, you know, is very disruptive. And in many, many ways which I can't go into in details now, the commerce was just simply very, very difficult to maintain.

HILL: I suppose that in the older periods of strife in Chinese history, such as at the end of the Chou Dynasty, the fall of the Chou Dynasty, although there was a time of general strife and fighting between probably people that had similar status to the warlords, there wasn't a crisis in national identity.

VEENSCHOTEN: No. And another thing is that it wasn't nearly as general. It was much more localized than it was at this time, especially during the war years. After the Japanese Incursion, why, then the whole country was absolutely upset, and then everything was in disorder and disarray, so that you couldn't possibly carry on an economy the way it was. They had no inlets and they had no outlets.

HILL: I see. So China ever since you had come into the country was trying to get out of the old imperial system and had developed an industrial economy. It had been primarily an agricultural economy, right?

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes, that's right.

HILL: They were trying to build up an industry in the midst of political unsettlement, or political strife.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. And then there was another factor that entered in, and I don't remember ever having heard it, or seen, or read anyone else having made this comment, and that is the terrible depressing effect that the American Congress had on the price of silver. Because there were certain senators in what we call the silver states like Utah, and Colorado, and Wyoming, Montana,

and Nevada, Arizona. These were called the silver states. They wanted America to use silver in the place of gold, of the gold supply as the basis for their economy. Instead of having gold in Fort Knox they had a certain amount of silver. And this set the price of silver way up, and they drained the silver dollars out of China so that China didn't have any silver bullion to back her paper. And so her paper depreciated and depreciated. And the responsibility directly is the silver senators from America. And I never hear that mentioned, but it had a tremendous effect.

HILL: It would be interesting to research into that.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. I certainly think that it should be called to the attention of people, the responsibility that America has for the condition that China was in. Then you add to that the fact that they had no way to come back. And then, when the Communists came, the people were thoroughly, thoroughly discouraged. I know because I talked to scores, hundreds of Chinese in Fukien, and most of the Chinese that I knew did not support Chiang Kai-shek, did not support the Kuomintang.

HILL: Oh really?

VEENSCHOTEN: No. Because they felt that they'd been let down because of the horrible economic condition of the country. There was this brother-in-law of Chiang, the brother of Madame--Mrs. Chiang, he was accused of quite shady dealings. And he was a very clever capitalist, but he did it, according to the reports, at the expense of the people. Of course, I think we can currently discount that somewhat because anybody who makes money is under fire. So, after all, we just have to see what's happening in our Congress no, as we want to have certain men--justices of the Supreme Court, and Agriculture Secretaries, and whatnot--appointed, and they go very minutely into their

financial doings. Well, there are very few men--even including your grandfather who dealt with gamblers--who are above suspicion. (laughter) So, that is a factor. You cannot begin to appreciate the terrible feeling of futility on the part of the people at the end of the war, in 1945. And it got worse and worse, and it was terrible. The inflation was simply unspeakable.

HILL: So Chiang Kai-shek really did not have the backing of the people at that time?

VEENSCHOTEN: Not in our community. I don't know about other parts of China. But not in our part of China.

HILL: And it was primarily because of the economic . . .

VEENSCHOTEN: Because of the economic situation.

HILL: The lack of economic hope and stability.

VEENSCHOTEN: Yes. Yes. And that instability was due at least to these two factors:--and probably other factors that are also entered in--and that is the Americans buying up the silver supply of the world, and the length of the war, the disruption of war. The Chinese generally had a very illusory idea of communism. One of my very best friends was a very wealthy man in Changchow said, "Oh," he said, "When the Communists come in we'll do business as usual." And as a result he was cleaned out of everything he had. And when the Communists came to Changchow they immediately started to levy taxes. Not pro rata, but each one individually. Whatever they decided that that man had to pay, they had to pay that. And of course the poor people didn't have to pay anything, and the rich had to pay a tremendous lot. And they insisted it had to be paid in rice. And rice had been hoarded by the farmers. I was told in the county of Chiang-Peng which is just to the north of Changchow, they had enough rice to

last them for three years. And part of that was due to the fact that they were just hoarding it. Also part of it was due to the fact of the lack of transportation--transportation was always slow, of course--but it was also hoarding. And the Communists deliberately set out to bring out all this hoarded rice, and they had these exorbitant taxes that had to be paid in rice. Well, when all these supplies of rice had been exhausted, the wealthy people said, "Oh, we haven't got any more rice. We can't pay this tax." They said, "All right, you buy rice from us." And by that time, of course, the rice was at a tremendously inflated price. A terribly inflated price. And then they had to dig up their silver which they had buried in their fields, and so on. And all the silver was taken over by the government to buy the rice. Well, then at the end of that, the government had all the rice and they had all the silver. And so they had a very solid base under their whole economy. Well, then they turned around and they said to the poor people, "Now come here, and we'll sell you rice at a low price." The rice which people had been paying their taxes with at an inflated price. And now they sold it to the people at a very low price. And naturally they said, "My, these are wonderful people, a wonderful government. They're giving us this rice so cheaply."

HILL: So they gained popularity that way.

VEENSCHOTEN: They gained popularity. That was the basis of it. And then after they once got the mind and the heart of the people then it was a very simple matter to force them to do the will of the government.

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