

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Elizabeth Warner (CN 75 T2)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case [unclear] was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as “ah” or “um” are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

. . . Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence of the speaker.

. . . . Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

() Word in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

This transcript was created by Robert Shuster and Kerry Cox in October 1992.

Please note: This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.



Collection 75, Tape 2. Oral history interview with Elizabeth Warner by Lois Tressler on November 15, 1978.

TRESSLER: Oh no.

WARNER: ...so...or to lead in prayer. Often he [Dr. Darien A. Straw] would call on people to sing. If they wouldn't do it...I remember one time he sang a solo, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" [hymn title] And that one you have to start it awfully high or you get way down here [drops her voice to a deep level on the word "here"] And he got so low that we couldn't...the rest of...we just couldn't keep from laughing, it was so low[?]. [Laughs] So some people, instead of singing, they would lead in prayer instead. [Both laugh] But do classes still start with devotions?

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: Every time?

TRESSLER: Most classes.

WARNER: That was true then too. And Dr. [Elsie S.] Dow, she taught English. Dr. [Orrin E.] Tiffany was...I believe he was head of the History department. He was a very interesting teacher. Dr. Torrey, Dr. Edith Torrey, taught Bible.

TRESSLER: What was she like?

WARNER: And....

TRESSLER: What was...what was she like?

WARNER: Oh, she was very good. I took a class or two of hers. Mrs. [Katherine Chase] Shapleigh, the Dean of Women, she was a former missionary to China, a very good friend of my mother's. And Dr. [Hawley O.] Taylor, in physics, I took one course under him just to find out what physics was all about, but I still don't know. [Both laugh] And Dr. [J. Oliver] Buswell, of course.

TRESSLER: Now he taught.... What did Dr. Buswell...? He...he was the president, right?

WARNER: Well, he was the president. He taught...

TRESSLER: Did he teach any classes?

WARNER: ...he taught a few classes, yes. He taught senior ethics class. Uh-huh. And I think maybe a few Bible classes.

TRESSLER: Was that with... just ethics. It's not with, like, ethics and economy or ethics and....

WARNER: No, it was...it was like a Bible course. It was for the seniors, I believe. Then...I can...I've had so many teachers I can't remember all their names.

TRESSLER: Well, yeah.



WARNER: But they're really a great group, as you probably know. [Laughs] And classmates. I couldn't begin to mention all of them.

TRESSLER: Did you have any...?

WARNER: There were so many.

TRESSLER: Okay. A couple of different questions I have is [sic]...was there, like, different groups on campus or was the campus mainly unified or was there like an upper class and a middle class or a bunch of jock...a bunch of athletic people? (I don't know if you knew the jocks.) [Warner laughs] [A few words unclear.] I don't know...was there like an athletic group and there was a real studious group and there was a...or what did you have? Or was it generally everybody was on the same level or...?

WARNER: Well, of course, some people were more intellectual, some were more athletic, but having only about six hundred students, they're pretty much real congenial and...

TRESSLER: Unified?

WARNER: ...very friendly and all knew each other.

TRESSLER: Yeah, that would make a big difference, I mean, because now there's more like groups.

WARNER: Yeah. Now there's so many that you just can't know everybody...

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: ...and I think it...you automatically...

TRESSLER: Group up.

WARNER: ...divide up more into groups.

TRESSLER: Yeah. So I just...something struck me to ask you that question.

WARNER: The freshmen and sophomores, we knew practically everybody. I can see where if people entered as juniors or seniors they wouldn't know the lower classmen...

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: ...but we knew practically everybody on the campus.

TRESSLER: And the freshmen weren't looked down upon because they were just freshmen.

WARNER: I don't think so. [Laughs] Not too much anyway.

TRESSLER: Oh. Maybe a little? [Both laugh] Let's see. I was going to ask you about classmates.

WARNER: Do they look down on freshmen now?



TRESSLER: Sometimes. Yeah, if someone does something dumb, you can say, "Oh, a freshman did this." It might not be, but.... [Both laugh]

WARNER: What are you, a senior?

TRESSLER: No, I'm a junior.

WARNER: Junior.

TRESSLER: But I was a freshman. [Both laugh] So I know what it's like, too. Did you...were you scared when you first.... Well, if you lived there then you wouldn't have the fear of the school...

WARNER: No, I felt right at home so...

TRESSLER: ...or anything.

WARNER: ...and I already knew so many students in the college and so many of my classmates were entering the college.

TRESSLER: That's true. Was there...now was the...were the studies really hard or just...I meant, did you get to stay up late, like, studying or...?

WARNER: No, I...no, I don't think it...that studies were as hard then as they are now. There wasn't the competition. There wasn't the problem getting into college and having to compete to stay in that there is now. So I think it's changed a lot. No, my mother, she thought ten o'clock was bedtime [Tressler laughs] and if I tried to study after eleven, I had a hard time [laughs].

TRESSLER: Oh. I [?] was that partly maybe because you lived at home that things were easier because you were in a settled situation and you ate at a certain time and you had.... I don't know. It seems like at home you'd have an easier time than living in a college dorm or.... Someone would...coming up and bother you all the sudden.

WARNER: Oh, it could be.

TRESSLER: I was wondering if it might be easier that way. [Pauses] Let's see.

WARNER: But I don't think there was the pressure that there is now. Wheaton, at the time we first went there, was not an accredited school.

TRESSLER: Oh, it wasn't?

WARNER: No, they hadn't...it was during Dr. Buswell's time there that he got it raised up to the point where it got its accreditation.

TRESSLER: Then that was a pretty important event...

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: ...on campus during that time.



WARNER: Uh huh. But it didn't make that much difference at that time anyway. I mean...there...there wasn't that much...competition, anyway. The times have changed.

TRESSLER: Uh huh.

WARNER: We've changed along with them. Wheaton has grown in size and its recognition and all of these things.

TRESSLER: Did it have...did like people get "F's" or was the grading scale mostly in the higher...like "A[-]C's," "A's" and "B's" or was it...?

WARNER: Well, if they got "F's," of course, they'd flunk out.

TRESSLER: Yeah. [Both laugh] No, I was wondering....

WARNER: They had to keep their grades up.

TRESSLER: Okay. That's what I wanted to.... Did you have a certain curriculum that you had to follow? Like you had to take the prerequisites and then you could take your major and you had to...

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: ...take a certain amount of your major?

WARNER: Yes. There were certain...certain courses that were required for freshmen and then certain requirements for graduation and then you picked your major, had a major and a minor and, of course...

TRESSLER: Oh, you had a minor?

WARNER: ...certain requirements under each.... Yes. You don't have a minor now?

TRESSLER: No.

WARNER: Oh.

TRESSLER: How many courses is a minor for back then?

WARNER: I don't know.

TRESSLER: Oh. Do you remember anything like how much the cost...the college cost or...?

WARNER: No, it didn't make that much difference to me. You could probably find that in some of the records.

TRESSLER: Yeah, that's true.

WARNER: See, I was a faculty kid and I didn't have to pay any tuition, anyway. All we had to pay was...



TRESSLER: That was because your mom was....

WARNER: ...Student Activities fees. And certain fees for...I think we had to pay something for athletics and different things, but I think the whole thing was less than thirty dollars a semester, probably.

TRESSLER: Was...[sighs] was the faculty thing because your mom was at the [Wheaton] Academy, and that was...

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: ...included as a part of...

WARNER: Right.

TRESSLER: ...considered as sort of...as a part of Wheaton College?

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: I see.

WARNER: So all the faculty kids got tuition free.

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: Student Activities fees...I think it was just around twenty...twenty-something each semester and then maybe a few dollars for this or that. And then we ate at home so...[laughs]

TRESSLER: Right.

WARNER: ...we got...we really went through in a breeze.

TRESSLER: Okay. [Tressler reads from a prepared list of interview topics] It says "notable events on campus." Now, what events can you remember that especially stick out in your mind?

WARNER: Well, I remember the Washington Banquets that came up. Those were exciting.

TRESSLER: What were they like?

WARNER: Well, they were in the...lower level of Pierce Hall (Pierce Chapel, excuse me).

TRESSLER: Uh huh. That's okay [laughs].

WARNER: And...all students were invited to attend and they...they were a date affair, but you didn't have to have a date to go. Usually, it.... I remember some girls went that didn't have a date and they'd go together and have a sign [laughs] something about [laughs again] the "dateless group" or...

TRESSLER: Oh!



WARNER: ...something like this, you know...make a joke out of it. And....

TRESSLER: Was [sic] there a lot that went without dates?

WARNER: Not too many, but they were always welcome to go. Now is it strictly a dating sort of thing?

TRESSLER: Well, yeah, I'd say it's mostly date. You probably could go if you were single, but hardly ever, I wouldn't think.

WARNER: And some of the faculty members would be George Washington or....

TRESSLER: Yeah, that's what we have now. And they dress up as George and Martha?

WARNER: Yeah. And...a very nice program and refreshments. I don't remember if it was served by the dining hall or some outside caterers.

TRESSLER: Was it a dinner?

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: Okay.

WARNER: Uh-huh. And then the special meetings in the fall and in the spring were always very special.

TRESSLER: Can I go back to the Washington Banquet?

WARNER: Yeah.

TRESSLER: Did you have...what kind of programs did you have? Was it like...? Well, like now days they have a...a singer come in and sing and give his testimony.

WARNER: From outside?

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: I think it was more local talent in those days, and it wasn't too expensive. Remember, it was depression years.

TRESSLER: Yeah. How much...do you remember how much it cost?

WARNER: I don't. I don't remember [laughs].

TRESSLER: Like, today it cost seventeen dollars. A....

WARNER: Oh, each?

TRESSLER: A couple.

WARNER: Per couple.

TRESSLER: It cost fifteen last year and seventeen this year and so I was just wondering.

WARNER: I have no idea whether it would be five dollars a couple or...it might even have been less in...[both laugh] in those days.

TRESSLER: Okay. You said special services were really good. [Special services or a series of meetings held during one week by a visit pastor or evangelist.]

WARNER: Yes. They...they were always very good, all that I remember. And the...the very special one I remember...I think that was after I had graduated and was working in Wheaton that I came to the services. Or it might have been my senior year. And Dr. [Robert Crawford McQuilkin] was the speaker. [McQuilkin and Howard Kelly held the special services at Wheaton in 1936. After McQuilkin was confined to bed because of influenza, evangelist Walter Wilson substituted for him.] At the very first service (I believe it was at the first one) that there was a time for students to share and Don Hillis was the first one to get up. Do you know who Don Hillis is?

TRESSLER: Unh uh [indicates the negative].

WARNER: He was a graduate of Wheaton who has been very...quite well-known on the mission...missions field. I believe he went to China...either China or India after he graduated from college [Don W. Hillis, Wheaton class of '36, served as a missionary of the Evangelical Alliance Mission in India.] and he's been very prominent and...with the mission board. He got up and he just expressed his feeling of need for the Lord and how he just wanted to turn his life over to the Lord and he just...just gave a very outspoken testimony like that. And then the Spirit just seemed to come on the whole group and the service just went on for hours. It was in the morning, and people weren't even worried about getting to lunch.

TRESSLER: Wasn't it a day when you had classes or...?

WARNER: Person after person got up. [simultaneously with Tressler's question] Yeah, it was class day but [Tressler laughs] they just called school off for a couple of days because there was just such a spirit of revival right there. I may be wrong, but it seems to me after I started talking now, that...that the si...the speaker got sick and couldn't be there at the last minute and so we didn't have a regular speaker and the Holy Spirit just took over. And somebody was filling in but hardly got a chance to [Tressler laughs] speak even. But it was a very, very moving series of meetings and everybody was very much touched.

TRESSLER: Now, did you usually cancel classes for special services...

WARNER: No.

TRESSLER: ...or you had like chapel services...

WARNER: Right.

TRESSLER: ...and then at night, too.

WARNER: And then at night, yeah.



TRESSLER: Same way they do it now.

WARNER: But this just...this they had no choice [laughs].

TRESSLER: Huh, that's really neat.

WARNER: I don't remember what year that was so...probably in the records somewhere.

TRESSLER: Yeah, that's true.

WARNER: I'm sure it must be.

TRESSLER: Yeah, that'd be interesting to look into.

WARNER: Because it was one of the outstanding times...[pauses] during my years at Wheaton [coughs].

TRESSLER: Then what did you do after you got out of school? You got your A.B., right?

WARNER: I got my A.B...

TRESSLER: And you had it in history.

WARNER: ...and the Wheaton Public Library was looking for somebody and Miss Julia Blanchard, who was the librarian, recommended me for some unknown reason to work down there so I worked there for a year.

TRESSLER: I forgot one thing. I forgot to ask you about events [cuckoo clock sounds once] on campus while you were...I mean events in the...going on outside of campus while you were going to school...to...what was one of the big...

WARNER: Off campus?

TRESSLER: ...well, we discussed it before and we said it was...the Depression was going on and what exactly...can you remember anything about the Depression?

WARNER: Well, as I say, I came from China right about at the beginning of it and lived there on the campus the whole time so I didn't really have anything to compare it with. And then I went to China later, but I kept hearing that it was the time of the Depression. But I do remember when I (this might impress other people)...when I got out and started.... Oh, what I got paid working at the library?

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: Oh, yeah. Twenty-five cents an hour. And my brother Leland worked for the...he was one of the janitors working on the college buildings so he got forty cents an hour. Then, when we graduated, both of us had to find something to do and I worked for...I think I got sixty dollars a month working in the library...

TRESSLER: Public library?



WARNER: ...full-time...

TRESSLER: Was that the public library?

WARNER: Public library in Wheaton. That sounded pretty good to me. I was still living at home.

TRESSLER: Oh. So that helped out some.

WARNER: So it didn't cost that much. And my brother started a rad...he had always been interested in radio and he started a radio repair shop with another fellow who had just graduated from Wheaton. And they...they made even less than I did then. [Tressler laughs] Starting out, they took about thirty dollars a month salary for themselves [laughs].

TRESSLER: Oh, not very much.

WARNER: Later built it up to a little more.

TRESSLER: Did...?

WARNER: So, that was the type of wages that people got in those days.

TRESSLER: That made me think of what your mother...what did your mother do during...I meant, did she get paid for being a housemother and then get paid at the Academy, too, or...?

WARNER: No, I don't think she got paid for being a housemother. She got the use of the...

TRESSLER: House?

WARNER: ...dormitory, the lower floor. At that time they had a larg...the full lower floor. It was like two small houses had been put together with a...a porch between. And upstairs the girls lived. Later it was remodeled so that she had a smaller apartment at the front. And she was paid for her teaching. I think she got twelve hundred a year or something like that at first [laughs].

TRESSLER: That's not very much either.

WARNER: Teaching full time. So she worked hard. She worked in the...in the dormitory and also teaching full time.

[Tape recorder turned off and on again]

TRESSLER: We're back again. [Unclear] continuing on the interview and Mrs. Warner was talking about her mother's salary. What else did...okay, so then you worked at the library for a year. What did you do...what...did you do after that?

WARNER: Well, then I went to Gordon College for a year. I was interested in the mission field, hoped I could get back there someday. And I wanted to take a little more training in preparation for it. So I looked around at all the different schools and Gordon offered various courses in missions on the different fields, which interested me. So I decided to go to Gordon for a year.

TRESSLER: And you decided at the beginning that you just wanted to go for a year or did you



want to go all [unclear]?

WARNER: Well, I didn't know. I was...I had enough money to go for one year so I started out on that.

TRESSLER: Now this is Gordon, Massachusetts?

WARNER: Yes, in Boston.

TRESSLER: Boston?

WARNER: It was in Boston at that time. The college and the seminary [Gordon College and Gordon Seminary, later Gordon-Conwell Seminary] were together. They were all in the same building even.

TRESSLER: Then you lived on campus, is that right?

WARNER: Uh huh, uh huh. They didn't have a campus.

TRESSLER: Oh, they didn't have a campus.

WARNER: Just one building. The dormitory, dining hall, seminary, college were all in one. This was way back, remember.

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: They were right on the Fenway, which was a beautiful park, so that was their campus.

TRESSLER: Oh. That's nice. Then what courses did...what were you...you just wanted to...?

WARNER: Well....

TRESSLER: ...take missionary courses mainly?

WARNER: Yes. I went as a...as a college grad, but I was interested in taking the missionary courses, and I took several college...several Bible courses, too, which were undergrad courses, really. I took one under Dr. [Merrill] Tenney first and liked him so much that I took several under him and they were really good.

TRESSLER: Why did you take Bible courses? Didn't Wheaton offer enough in Bible at that time or did you just want to continue on?

WARNER: Well, I wanted to take some more and then you don't always have time to take all you want at Wheaton...

TRESSLER: That's true.

WARNER: ...because you have to take all your other courses, too.

TRESSLER: That's very true. So then, did you get to take these missionary courses?



WARNER: I took one missionary course, but I think it was sort of a general survey because I found that these other courses in particular areas of the world were ordered on demand [laughs].

TRESSLER: And there wasn't [unclear].

WARNER: And there wasn't very often that much demand for them. I wasn't sure just what field I was interested in at the time or which field I wanted to go to. I...I had been interested in Europe for some reason. I can't remember just why. One reason, I'd taken history as a major and I had taken French and German. I was really interested in Europe, even though China was my background.

TRESSLER: Was that maybe because of the foreigners that you met in China at the time?

WARNER: I really can't say.

TRESSLER: That's still interesting that you went into history and interested [sic] in Europe a lot. Then, after, did you stay any longer than Gordon...at Gordon than just one year?

WARNER: Just the one year.

TRESSLER: Okay. I see.

WARNER: I ran out of money [both laugh].

TRESSLER: That's an important thing. Then you went back home?

WARNER: So I came home and I didn't know just what to do then, but there was another job at the [Wheaton] College library which was offered me so I worked there for another year.

TRESSLER: I see. Want to stop?

WARNER: Okay.

TRESSLER: Well, we can go on if you want to.

WARNER: Okay. And then I was considering what to do the next year and I thought, well, I didn't know exactly how to get into mission work. I didn't have any particular [mission] board in mind or know just how to apply. So I was thinking about pursuing my library interests. I don't know where I thought I was going to get the money for this because I ran out of money, [both laugh] but I thought about going to the University of Illinois and taking a librarian's course. In fact, I had even sent an application for that when I met a lady who came to Wheaton, a former graduate, Florence Meeker Raetz, who had graduated from Wheaton in twenty-six [1926], and whose sister was a classmate of mine. And she was looking for someone to go back to China with her to work in the Door of Hope Mission. So when I met her and heard what she wanted and we talked things over and we prayed about it, it seemed like a door that was open and maybe I could fill that need so pretty soon I was on my way to China again.

TRESSLER: Where did you meet her at?

WARNER: Well, she came to Wheaton. I don't remember just the circumstances, whether she was there to speak. I think maybe she came to speak. But, having been a graduate, she was...she knew



various people at Wheaton anyway and was there for a few days and we met her. We being from China, we had a lot in common.

TRESSLER: That's true.

WARNER: And also, her aunt, Florence Drew, and her uncle, Reverend Edward Drew, had founded the South China Boat Mission. He had come back to the States for health reasons, but she had carried on there and we had known her in Canton, during my childhood. She and my mother were good friends and were on the committee of this Door of Hope Mission which was started there in Canton, so that was a common contact.

TRESSLER: Then your reason for going to the mission field was exactly what?

WARNER: Well, it was a need in this particular place, and I was sort of at loose ends looking for a place to go and wanting to serve somewhere, and it just seemed to...they just seemed to fit together at that point.

TRESSLER: Did you have to raise your own support then or...?

WARNER: Yes, but it was very small. I looked in the history of the mission. It said that if the funds were available, that we received forty dollars a month support. And I had recollected it as twenty-five dollars a month. (Here I thought I lived in China on twenty-five dollars a month all that time!) [Tressler chuckles] The College Church [of Wheaton] undertook my support to the extent of twenty-five dollars, and I think most of the time I did live on that.

TRESSLER: Wow! Then....

WARNER: Actually, we lived in the home and there was no rent necessary and twenty-five dollars was very adequate...

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: ...with the exchange in those days.

TRESSLER: Then that was un...that was under it...

WARNER: Uh huh.

TRESSLER: ..that wasn't under a mission board, is that right?

WARNER: No, it was not a mission board in this country [the United States]. It was a committee which was formed out there in Canton, and my mother had been on the original committee which was formed. It was started by some women who felt the need of this work, and they had just gotten together on their own and started a group, to pray for it, to pray for the opening of a rescue mission for little Chinese slave girls. They formed a committee, meeting monthly, praying for it and undertaking to support it and to help get it going.

TRESSLER: Well, what...you just mentioned Chinese slave girls now. Why...why was [sic] there slave girls?

WARNER: Well, there used to be many slave girls in China. They were from poor homes...almost entirely, I would say, because the people being very poor, they just couldn't afford to raise very many children and a little girl was saleable, and also they didn't value their girls as much as their boys because the boys were the ones that carried on the family name, the family worship tradition, and when the girls married, to all intents and purposes, they were lost to their own family. They moved into the other family. So if they had several girls and couldn't support them, they just couldn't see any point in struggling. They would sell them to a family that could use them as a little servant girl, or if it was an older girl, to someone who would take her into a brothel, make money from her.

TRESSLER: Now, you had both young girls and older girls?

WARNER: Yes. Mostly they came to us when they were younger. [Tape recorder turned off and on] Let me change that last remark. I said "mostly younger girls." During the five years I was there, it seems that most of the girls we took in were younger, but the first girls that came into the home, when it was first started, were older, and they had been helped to escape from their owners by some of the missionaries, where they'd been sick in the hospital and had become Christians and didn't want to go back. So these were older girls that it started with, but, of course, at all times we had girls of different ages [pauses], younger and older.

TRESSLER: Then when did you go over to China?

WARNER: It was in the fall, about September, I think, 1936.

TRESSLER: You went over by boat, is that correct?

WARNER: Yes. Yes. Everyone went by boat in those days.

TRESSLER: How long did that take to travel?

WARNER: About three weeks.

TRESSLER: Three weeks?

WARNER: Stop in Japan...make two stops in Japan, and then probably in Shanghai, and then arrive in Hong Kong.

TRESSLER: What...did you do any special preparation to take this trip, I mean as far as courses, or like...start studying more, boning up on your Chinese, or anything like that?

WARNER: No, I really didn't. I already had a start on Chinese.

TRESSLER: Yeah.

WARNER: The requirements were that the first year should be spent in going to language school, studying Chinese full time, though actually, in addition to that, I did get involved in the handcraft part of the work a little during the first year.

TRESSLER: But you had to take Chinese.



WARNER: Right. And in Canton, there was a language school organized. I don't remember just how many students, but I think there were ten or twelve of us, at least, from different missions...

TRESSLER: Was...?

WARNER: ...studying together.

TRESSLER: Was this school...was that anyplace near that island that you're....

WARNER: No, this was on the mainland. We were located near the Southern Baptist Mission. They had a big school there, several schools, and I believe they had a hospital, too. And we even used...rented a piece of property from them at the beginning of the work.

TRESSLER: I see. Then where did you live during.... Oh, I know what I wanted to ask you. What was that like when you first came to China again...well, when you returned for your...for this mission job?

WARNER: Well, it was sort of like getting home again.

TRESSLER: Was that...it wasn't...were you surprised at the things that occurred during the time that you had left in China like big chan...was there a big change like in the way that people acted or in the dress...

WARNER: No...

TRESSLER: ...or anything like that?

WARNER: No. Most things seemed pretty much the same, except that in the city of Canton they had made some changes. They had a bridge across the river. You could go across by bus instead of having to take a...a ferry boat or a little sampan [small boat].

TRESSLER: Was that college still...or...

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: ...the college and the school where your father worked?

WARNER: Yes. The university was still there and many of the people I had known were still there. I paid several visits over there.

TRESSLER: So it was like going home.

WARNER: Yes, it really was.

TRESSLER: Where did you stay at when you were...when you went to China? I mean to....

WARNER: The language school?

TRESSLER: Oh, you stayed in the language school?



WARNER: No, it was just a...they just had a...a couple of teachers that just met with us. I don't even remember where we met. Yes, I believe it was at the Southern Baptist Mission's, somewhere in their territory, which was quite close to Door of Hope. I just walked over everyday...

TRESSLER: Oh, you stayed in there?

WARNER: ...and lived at the Door of Hope. Yes.

TRESSLER: Okay. [Pauses] You served just at that one place, is that right, or did you go to a couple different.... You se...you were there five years, is that correct?

WARNER: Yes.

TRESSLER: Okay. Did you...you stayed at that one Door of Hope Mission or you went to other places or...?

WARNER: I was with the same mission but we moved after the first year because of the political situation, the beginning of World War II. At the time that we moved, Mrs. Raetz (we neglected to say I went back with Mrs. Raetz and her family: her husband and two little girls).... And he was the field direc[tor] [side one of reel of tape runs out, clipping Warner's last word] [Pause after tape comes back on] Where do I start now?

TRESSLER: Maybe when you.... I don't know. You can start with Mr. Raetz.

WARNER: Mr. Raetz was the director, the field director, of the South China Boat Mission at this time. He lived with the family at the Door of Hope, and we had one section of the building for us Americans. The girls and the native workers had the rest of the building. And we had school for them each morning. We had a devotional period with them before school started and then they had handwork, embroidery, weaving, things of this sort, in the afternoon.

TRESSLER: What did you mean by "native workers"?

WARNER: I mean they...they had a...a Chinese woman who was the teacher, and also a matron who was Chinese, who was in charge of the meals and just running things in general in the home (responsible to us, of course).

TRESSLER: Did the girls prepare the meals or were the matron...?

WARNER: Yes. No, the girls prepared them taking turns, but the matron was in charge and directed it. And she also went out and bought the groceries and supplies and all of this sort of thing.

TRESSLER: How long did the girls normally stay there?

WARNER: Well, that varied depending on how old they were when they came, of course. They would go through our school (we had a little primary school), and then if they finished the school and were old enough and wanted to go on to school, we'd help them get into Bible school or take nurses training or something of this sort.

TRESSLER: I see. What kind of work exactly did you do when you were over there? I know you worked with this mission, but what were your specific tasks?



WARNER: Well, the first year I did mostly the language study. Then we moved to Hong Kong. I didn't get around to telling you about that, but Mrs. Raetz and the children went down to Hong Kong on vacation the next summer (that would be 1937) to the same island, in fact the same house where we stayed during the time that our family refugees that time. And she took time out to have her little boy born during that time so I went down to stay with them and look after the youngsters while she was in the hospital, and Mr. Raetz had come down for a visit, and he went back up to Canton, and then we expected him down for another visit, and he arrived very suddenly with the whole population of Door of Hope. I think there were around twenty-five or thirty girls at the time and the native workers. He had just packed them all up and put them on the riverboat and brought them down, just the way we had come a few years before, and due to similar reasons, except that this was the time that the Japanese were beginning to fight with China, and there was a factory (I forget just what they made there, some kind of war supplies) so close to the Door of Hope that he said it wasn't safe to stay there, that the Japanese were going to start bombing and that would be a...one of their targets, so he felt that they should move so he brought them all down with him and really filled up our little three room house for a few days until we could find a larger house down in the village along the beach (the fishing village where the Chinese lived). And we found a home there and had them there for the better part of a year and carried on our work there. Then we...we had the industrial work going on, the sewing and weaving and so on, the same as before. We were a little farther from them, but we would still go down. And I was still taking some work in language school. The language school had also moved. Most of the missionaries moved from Canton down to Hong Kong and we picked up a few more missionaries who were in language school and had quite a school going there. A couple of teachers, oh, maybe three or four teachers, and fifteen or twenty missionaries studying. Then let's see, what did I do? Then I was sent out to do some house hunting because the place there really wasn't adequate. And also, this type of girl...when we were in Canton, we had a wall around us and could keep the place pretty well protected and you have to have it protected with this type of girls who, theoretically, belonged to someone else, and if they can, they'll come and sneak them back. In...in the island there we didn't have any kind of protection for them, and we kept getting more girls all the time. Not slave girls at this time, but little refugees who had no one to take care of them and just needed a home somewhere and our numbers grew to close to fifty. And the little building was just bursting at the seams. So we started looking somewhere where we could find a larger house, and we watched the ads and inquired around and we found a place on the mainland. Kowloon is the city on the mainland across from Hong Kong and about halfway in to the Chinese border we found a large home which had been occupied by a Chinese family. There were several houses there, and there was one house which they no longer needed and wanted to rent. And it just filled our needs. So we rented that and moved our group over there. So after close to a year, we moved on to the mainland and spent the rest of the time, up until we got involved in the war, in that home with all of the girls.

END OF TAPE

