GODFREY LIVINGSTONE GALE

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War, World War 2

Interviewed by

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12 January 1982

Oral History Archives

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L8N 3Z5

Interview No. HCM 1-82

Charles G. Roland, MD:

I wonder if we could begin then, Dr. Gale, by you telling me your full name, your birth date and your birth place.

Godfrey Livingstone Gale, MD:

My name is Godfrey Livingstone Gale, and I was born on March 23rd, 1913 on the island of Madagascar where my parents were English missionaries.

CGR:

And your parents' full names?

GLG:

My father was William Kendall Gale and my mother Margaret Gale, her maiden name was Gaunt, Edith Margaret Gaunt.

CGR:

Perhaps you'd briefly synopsize your youth. I would gather, having missionary parents, you probably moved around considerably. Is that the case?

GLG:

Yes. In brief, we came home to England during the war when I was three years old and then returned to Madagascar after the war, in 1919, where I had another three years, finally returning to England in 1922, where I went to Elthan College, southeast London, where I lived as a boarder, took my pre-med, and then entered medical school in Birmingham as first year meds in 1930, and graduated in 1935.

CGR:

Why medicine? Was that a family career?

GLG:

No, there is no other physician in the family so far as I

can trace. We have been able to trace the family right back to 1536, actually. Many members went into the church but nobody else went into medicine, as far as I can discover. I think it was because, when I went to England, alone, in 1922, I boarded with a family in London whose son, much older than me, was starting at St. Thomas' Medical School. I was fascinated by the course of study he was doing at that time, and felt that this was the thing for me, and I never changed my mind from that time on. That's why I went into medicine.

CGR:

When did you complete your medical training?

GLG:

I graduated in 1935, in Birmingham, and had a couple of years doing house-surgeon and house-physician's jobs, and took some postgraduate work in surgery at Edinburgh. Then in 1937, I went to North China as a medical missionary, under the London Missionary Society, the society of the Congregational churches of England, and landed in North China shortly after the Sino-Japanese war had broken out. Japan had been preparing for this for a long time, of course, starting with the sinking of the Russian fleet in 1905. The war broke out in July 1937, on the outskirts of Peking, and the Japanese armies drove relentlessly south. So when I landed in Tientsin in north China, in the fall of 1937, we landed in Japanese-occupied China.

Following a period of language study, I went down into the country, going through the Japanese lines, much as they resented us there and hindered us all they could. At that time, they could not prevent me from traveling where I wanted, within rea-

son, in China. I went through the Japanese lines into an area occupied by the Chinese communist 8th Route Army, which was the only effective force fighting the Japanese, and I was about 100 miles from Dr. Norman Bethune at that time. He was in a front-line first-aid clearing station only half an hour, or an hour ahead of the advancing Japanese forces. I was in a small, country, base hospital about 40 miles behind the lines. We had to deal with the wounded and so on, but the actual war didn't involve that area of the country directly until after I had moved elsewhere. But I was very close to Norman Bethune when he died, I think it was November, 1939, though I did not know him and he did not know me.

It was about that time I was transferred to my final station, which was a Chinese University Medical School in Japanese-occupied China. So I had to pass back through the Japanese lines, as I did repeatedly. The Japanese were fully in control. This was a university, a full university with all the faculties, including medicine. There were 12 different British, Canadian, and American missionary societies, all combined in this one institution of higher learning, including agriculture with an experimental farm, astronomy, arts and science, pharmacy, medicine, and nursing, and all the other faculties.

CGR:

What was the name of this university?

GLG:

Cheeloo University, in the city of Tsinan, which was the capital of that province, Shantung province, which stretches out like a big thumb pointing towards Japan from north China. There

were about 70 of us foreigners there, on the campus, and a large staff of Chinese faculty as well, and the university hospital and the medical school where I was involved in teaching and in surgical work. The teaching was all in Chinese, which was quite a problem, but like most of the faculty there, we spent an hour or so before breakfast with our Chinese teacher every morning running over our classes for the day, practicing the Chinese characters, which we would have to write on the blackboard to explain our points, and so on. It was part of the job to go over with your Chinese teacher whatever you were going to be teaching during the day.

CGR:

It must have been difficult.

GLG:

Well, I'm sure we were not very effective, but our Chinese students were understanding. Only half the university was there because, when war had broken out in July of '37 (before I joined the university staff), about half of the Chinese students and about half of the Chinese faculty had escaped to the far west of China, knowing the Japanese would soon envelop that area. They escaped and made a thousand mile trek, mostly on foot, to the far west to the city of Chengru where they established a university-in-exile there, an area that was never reached by the Japanese; though it was bombed, they never reached them.

However, we did have good classes in Tsinan. It was a university with high standards and in fact, held a Canadian charter, so that our medical graduates could come to practice in Canada without further examinations, at least in some provinces,

I don't know whether every province -- this was in the 1930s you see, but their degrees were recognized in Canada.

CGR:

Was this in association with a specific Canadian university?

GLG:

I don't know. No, I'm sorry, I don't know.

CGR:

I wonder if I could go back a little bit -- I'm naive as to this business of traveling back and forth across the lines. I suppose I have ingrained in me the idea of "no man's land" and so on. How, in fact, would you cross from Japanese-controlled to Chinese-controlled territory?

GLG:

The Japanese controlled the railway and the coast, and that's about all they were able to control for a long time. There were no main roads linking north and south China. Communication was by rail and by boat, up the Grand Canal, and along the coast. They controlled these main routes, so that you got off at the appropriate station, you checked through the sentries and they examined you and your luggage -- which could hold you up for a long time if they were so inclined -- and then set off on foot or rented bicycles to go wherever you were going into the country.

CGR:

So the railway ended wherever Japanese control ended. You made your own way from there on. I understand. Coming back, you would simply reverse the process.

GLG:

Yes, that's right.

CGR:

Now, during this period that you've described from 1937 until your time with the university, who, in a sense, was your boss? For whom were you working and who decided that you would cross the Japanese lines and work at the small hospital for a while, and then who decided that you would come back and work at the university?

GLG:

It was the senior person in the mission there, who would discuss this with us and say, "We'd like you to go to this little village and spend some months in the hospital there, make preparations and we'll provide all the facilities," and so on. It was arranged by the senior missionary, who had the overall planning to do. There was language study as well, of course.

CGR:

While you were at the small hospital, relatively near Norman Bethune, what was the state of supplies? Were there adequate surgical, medical supplies? How were they obtained, whatever you did have?

GLG:

No, they were very simple. There was no electricity there, for instance, nor did we have any generators. So any operating we had to do, such as an emergency at night, would be done with a kerosene lamp -- and we used kerosene sterilizers for the instruments, dressings, and so on. We were able to take drugs in, in limited supplies. One of the main problems was money, currency.

Eric Liddell was one of my colleagues. He would get a loaf of new baked bread and hollow it out and stuff it full of money, and just put the crust on top and carry it nonchalantly, stuck out of his tuck-sack on his back, or sticking on the carrier of his bicycle as we went through. Fortunately, neither the Japanese nor the many Chinese bandits were interested in foreign bread and they never bothered to look at the bread that he was carrying.

CGR:

What kind of drugs did you have?

GLG:

It was in the days of multi-drug pharmacopoeias. The sulfa drugs, of course, were available in Britain and Europe but had not reached us. We had Salvarsan for syphilis, quinine for malaria, and iron for anemia, and very few specifics -- antimony for kala-azar, which was highly effective -- and very little else in the way of definitive drug treatment. It was most symptomatic treatment, and we were pretty good at symptomatic treatment! As you know, the majority of diseases get well if you encourage the patient and help them with their symptoms.

CGR:

Well, perhaps you'd continue with the tale from the time you were at the university.

GLG:

Well, university work continued. In the spring of 1940, Britain and America declared an oil embargo on Japan. They needed all the oil they could get for their own purposes. It was apparent to us there that Japan's war effort in China and spreading across the far east could not survive without oil. They'd

have to capture the British oil supplies in Java and Sumatra to survive. It became more and more apparent to us that Japan was eventually going to declare war on the Allies, but for us there was no getting out. We were there and we just had to face what came. Our daughter was born in July, 1941. As '41 came to an end, it was obvious that Japan was getting more and more close to war, so we had to make what preparations we could for whatever eventualities were coming. It was clear that we were going to be interned in some kind of Japanese civilian internment camp. We didn't know whether we'd be together, or what would happen to our little daughter. So we had suitcases packed, but didn't know how much we would be allowed to take when the time came. We had one suitcase for little Margaret with all the vitamins we could cram into it, and warm clothing as well as summer clothing. A suitcase each for my wife and I. Then we heard on the radio that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor and that the balloon had gone up, and that was it.

CGR:

Perhaps you could just go back -- when were you married, and what was your wife's maiden name?

GLG:

Well, my wife was Elizabeth Durie Thomson, a Canadian nurse who had gone out independently in 1939. We met, and we married out there in 1940. She was the operating room nurse in the university hospital where I was working.

On the morning after we heard [war declared] on the radio, we were all summoned to the office of the president of the university and told that we must stay in our homes, and the

Japanese would then inform us what was to be done. So we stayed in our homes. I was worried about my patients because we were right in the middle of our regular work, and so on. The Chinese medical students, incidentally, had all disappeared, fortunately. But there were the patients in the hospital. The Japanese came around; they were quite courteous. They confiscated our radios, of course, and arranged for us doctors and nurses to go down from the campus into the city, to the hospital, under escort, each day, and be escorted back at night to our homes for a period of about a month. We weren't permitted to admit any new patients to the hospital, but we were permitted to care for the patients that were there and these were eventually discharged and the hospital was closed. We were, therefore, housebound on the campus. We had a certain amount of money but not much.

Pearl Harbor was, of course, on December 8th, 1941 [December 7 east of the International Date Line]. When spring came, we didn't know how long we were going to be kept on the campus, so we thought we'd better start to grow food. So we all rolled up our sleeves and with spades and hoes and things we prepared the fields of the experimental farm and sowed crops -- corn and peas and beans and alfalfa, and cared for these all during the summer. In the meantime, certain Chinese were permitted to go and buy food for us in the markets down in the town. One very faithful Chinese, our cook, just disappeared. When the Japanese came in, he just vanished. But our house boy stayed with us.

CGR:

You mean he vanished voluntarily?

GLG:

Yes. The cook just disappeared. He probably had his problems and he just went. But the Chinese house boy and our amah, a Chinese woman, stayed with us, were loyal. We could not go down into the town to buy our food but the Chinese boy would. We gave him the money and he bought the food for us, day by day, so that we had enough.

CGR:

You were still together as a family?

GLG:

Still together as a family, yes, and there were about 70 of us there on the compound at that time. There was an American repatriation ship and most of the Americans, I think all the Americans from the campus were repatriated, but we were not so lucky. There was no opportunity for British to be repatriated at all. There was one Canadian repatriation ship, but my wife refused to go, so she stayed. She stayed with us.

There was also the Leper Hospital, up in the foothills, and I was permitted to go out and care for the lepers, up until the summer of 1942, when the Japanese told us that we were going to be shipped down to Shanghai.

We were told to sell our furniture, which we did. The Japanese put the prices on them; we didn't get much money, but we got some. They descended on the houses and bought all the furniture, and then we were all packed into a train and shipped down to Shanghai. This was in the summer, I think it was about August of '42. In Shanghai, a great many civilian internees were being gathered from all over that part of China and jammed into build-

ings in Shanghai. We were fed and housed there in Shanghai and were allowed to travel around a limited area in the city, wearing a distinctive arm band to identify us as British civilians.

The following March 1943, until the end of the war, the last 2 1/2 years, we were put into total, strict concentration camps. They shifted a group of us by boat up the Grand Canal to a little town by the name of Yangchow and we were crammed into an empty Baptist missionary girls' boarding school. I forget how many of us were there, maybe four or five hundred. There were two of us doctors, no, three of us doctors, because one doctor's wife was also a doctor, and my wife was a nurse. The Japanese, from then on, fed us as best they could. I say "best they could" because they were running out of food too.

We had the usual problems in this camp. Shortly after we had got there, two things happened: one, a man had a heart attack and died; and a teenage boy developed acute appendicitis. I'm quite sure that the other British civilian internees, looking at my colleague and I and seeing how young we were, must have thought, "What's going to become of us?"

We couldn't do anything about the man that died, he was beyond our care, but this teenage boy had certainly developed acute appendicitis. So, we went to the kitchen and borrowed some knives. I had a couple of artery forceps, we had one pair of gloves and one bottle of ether. So we got the carpenters to knock up a table and the kitchen people to boil cloths and sheets and so on, to sterilize them, just boiled them on the stove. My friend and I, we tossed up as to who should do the operation; I won the toss -- I wore the gloves -- and he assisted me without

gloves. His wife, the other doctor, made a little kind of shield and poured ether on it and we got this boy anesthetized and got the appendix out. We used my wife's needle, and thread as ligatures, sterilized, of course, boiled, and it worked well. The camp all held their breath while the process was going on. When he came out of the ether, there was a sigh of relief all around. He got a wound infection, but otherwise he did very well.

Another experience we had -- it was actually in another camp, there were three camps in this same area. We were just one of these three camps. I was permitted to go, with a Japanese guard, to visit facilities in other camps. So once a week I walked, with the guard, and my little medical bag, around to visit these other camps, to see if there was anything they needed, because we had better medical facilities in our camp than they did. At one of these camps there was a middle-aged man who had chronic, purulent otitis media and mastoiditis, and he started to get evidence of labyrinthitis. I was very concerned about this. The infection was obviously spreading and it was a very critical situation, no antibiotics. So I elected to do a radical mastoid for him. Now I did have some ENT experience, so I borrowed a carpenter's hammer and chisel, and one small boy brought some Meccano to camp with him, so I made some retractors.

CGR:

Some what?

GLG:

Retractors.

CGR:

No, he'd brought what with him?

GLG:

Meccano. You know those Mecanno erector sets.

CGR:

Oh yes, yes.

GLG:

So we went over with our half-empty ether bottle and put him to sleep, and I did a radical mastoidectomy on him, lining the mastoid cavity with skin graft that I took with a razor straight from his own leg, for an immediate skin graft, and packed it. Fortunately, it did clear up the labyrinthitis. The mastoid cavity was kind of a running mess, but at least the pus could now escape. The infection did not spread to the lateral sinuses or the brain, which I was afraid it would inevitably do later.

We had our usual problems, dysentery and malaria. One teenage girl in our camp got malaria and had a very high fever indeed. It was running up to 106 degrees, and we had no ice, but we did have a well and the water in the well was very cold. Now normally all lights had to be out at a given time, at 10 o'clock we all had to be in our rooms. But we got special permission from our guards at that time to attend to her all night long, so that we could bring buckets of cold water from the well to wrap her in sheets in cold water. The fever did subside and we were able to give her quinine injections and bring her out of the hyperpyrexia.

CGR:

Were you able to replenish drug supplies at all?

GLG:

No. We had a certain amount that we took in, our own personal supplies and stuff that we had got in Shanghai before we were sent up. Eventually, after about 6 months there, the Japanese finally could no longer feed us, so they shipped two of the three camps in Yangchow back to Shanghai. We were put in a camp of about 1200 people across the river from Shanghai city, opposite the main downtown area of Shanghai. We were there for the last two years. This was a man's camp until our party, including the women, two small children and some teenagers, joined them. They were very glad to see some women arriving! It was a pretty rough affair. It was an old tobacco godown, (warehouse), which had been condemned and was standing empty, but in which these men had been dumped a year before, and we were put in this camp with them. In our particular section, there was one whole floor, the second floor of this particular wing of the warehouse where there were 70 of us sleeping. We had blankets or mats to hand between the beds. I forget what the space was, I would think each lot was perhaps four foot wide and the length about 12 or 14 feet; married people would have double that.

My friend, Dr. McAll, and his wife, and my wife and I and our two little girls who were both the same age -- both were about 5 or 6 months old when Pearl Harbor came -- elected to stay together, so they put us in the elevator shaft and the adjacent section of the room. The elevator they put up at the upper level and wedged it so it wouldn't come down and put a floor across the empty hole at our level, so that there was the floor over the elevator shaft and a small area of room opposite to it -- the area was 13' X 9' -- for the six of us for the duration, which

meant that when our beds were up at night, you couldn't breathe, let alone move around. But during the daytime we managed to pack up the beds a little bit so there was room to sit down.

CGR:

You'd be very good friends by the end.

GLG:

Well, we learned to be good friends. We had some fights but we got along. There were four of us doctors in this camp -- Ken McAll and his wife, whom I have already mentioned -- another doctor, Keith Graham, and myself, and four or five nurses. We had a sickbay, which we organized, which included, incidentally, a dentist chair (of all funny things) and quite a good supply of dental instruments and a small supply of things like filling materials, not amalgams but temporary materials, and local anesthetic. That was in one room and in an adjacent room to this, we fixed up a dispensary with such drugs that we had, and got one of the clerical missionaries to act as dispenser. The sickbay had six beds -- three for men and three for women.

Ken McAll took on, as his major responsibility, public health aspects of camp life. Keith Graham, who was the senior physician, kind of directed us and he and I shared the clinical work. We'd be on our alternate days. Certain hours we'd have a clinic, people would come down and see us in the clinic there. Every afternoon they'd come down. In the mornings, we went rounds and anyone who wished to see us, would send a little note that they were such and such a person, in such and such a room, in such and such a building, and we'd go over with an attending nurse to see them and do what we could. I was also in charge of

the dentistry. We had a very bright young Methodist minister who was with us who had a good pair of hands, so we trained him to do the cleaning and the drilling and the filling of teeth. I did the extractions. I did between five and six hundred extractions during that period of time, of teeth that were painful and were not possible to fill.

CGR:

What kind of a drill was it?

GLG:

A pedal-powered drill.

There were a few real emergencies and we didn't operate there, apart from minor stuff. But for serious problems, gravely ill people and surgical emergencies, the Japanese organized stretcher parties. We trained our own group of stretcher-bearers and with the permission of the Japanese commandant, and accompanying guard, we could take such an emergency patient down to the ferry and cross the river into Shanghai proper, to one of the hospitals, where we would leave the patient at the hospital and then come back under escort to our own camp.

CGR:

Hospitals operated by the Japanese?

GLG:

Yes, I suppose -- yes, Japanese or by Chinese, anyway, but under primitive, hard conditions. But it was either that or die in camp. They did a certain amount of major surgery there. There would be Japanese surgeons in attendance. There were some deaths, of course. On individual developed tuberculous meningitis. There was no chemotherapy and he died. There was ulcerative

colitis and many cases, of course, of dysentery, mainly amebic dysentery, malaria, food poisoning of all kinds, the occasional accident -- fractures, dislocations, disc displacements with extremely painful backs and sciatica pain.

CGR:

And not a great deal to do for most of these things.

GLG:

Not a great deal, no. In the camp there, however, we had a professional masseur, so we were able to use his skills quite a bit for these particular patients.

The main problem was malnutrition. In the morning, we'd go down for a bowl of cracked wheat porridge (which had the advantage of being very rough wheat and so it had lots of vitamin B, and two slices of bread. The cracked wheat was full of weevils. At dinner, we'd have a bowl of stew, mostly vegetables and some rice, and another piece of bread, occasionally some meat. In the evening, usually an egg and a couple of pieces of bread. There was little or no fresh fruit of any kind. There was no milk. We had rations of tea. From time to time, there was meat. I remember on one occasion they brought in the greyhounds -- Shanghai had a greyhound racing-track, and when Pearl Harbor came the track was abandoned and the greyhounds were set free and roamed the streets; that were rounded up by the Japanese and killed and were sent into us for meat and we were very glad to have it. Dog meat is really very good meat, as a matter of fact. It's a Chinese delicacy, has been traditionally for thousands of years. Occasionally they sent other meat in. The meat was often green and stinking. But the cooks would cut away the worst and cook

the rest, and if it was well cooked, you came to no harm. No harm in eating decaying meat; in fact, it's a great delicacy, I believe, in some countries.

CGR:

Yes, I understand that.

GLG:

High game and jugged hare, and things like that. So we ate it and were grateful for it. We had one thermos of hot water every day and we had one hot shower per week.

CGR:

Did the Japanese supply all of this food? Was there a black market in operation?

GLG:

Towards the end, Red Cross parcels started to come in for many of us, not for all. The Red Cross headquarters for the Far East was in Shanghai, and we were fortunate in this regard. They used funds from, I think, the British Residents Association in Shanghai, the former British Residents Association. I think they supplied the funds for these Red Cross parcels, and they were sent in periodically -- sometimes even once a month. There's be a can of milk powder and a bar of soap, and some tea, and a little can of margarine, sometimes a can of meat (canned meat), and cigarettes. The cigarettes were of tremendous value. There was a black market for cigarettes. We didn't smoke, fortunately. These cigarettes were worth their weight in gold, and we would exchange them for extra milk powder, for Margaret, or for whatever food we could get on the black market in the camp. There was one big shipment of medical goods, which was sent in from the

United States. Several big, wooden packing cases of all kinds of medical supplies came in, including sulfa drugs. We had no idea what these drugs were for -- never heard of them -- but used them for infections and found they were highly effective, much to our delight, particularly sulfadiazine and sulfapyridine. These two sulfa drugs which came in were greatly valued, together with bandages and other medical supplies.

CGR:

When was this roughly? Do you have any recollection?

GLG:

About a year before the end of the war this supply came in.

CGR:

Sometime in '44?

GLG:

September, around there I would think.

We had the stretcher squad trained, several squads trained. We gave courses in St. John's Ambulance for first aid. Of course, we were getting air raids fairly regularly at that time. The Americans were bombing Shanghai, and we wanted to make sure that we doctors and nurses were not indispensable if we got hit in an air raid, so we had a phalanx of trained personnel with us who would be able to carry on and give first aid if we were put out for any reason.

We were fairly busy doing our medical work. Every member of the camp had his particular chore to do, of course. There were the kitchen squads, there were the cleaning squads, there were the grounds squads, there were quite a few teenagers and among the inmates there with us, were the staff of St. John's Universi-

ty in Shanghai, which was a mission university. They were all interned with us, so we had lots of intellectual resources there and they conducted high school classes for these kids and in due course set, what we call in England, the senior Cambridge exam, which is the university entrance exam, which they set and which the kids wrote, which were kept till after the war and taken back to England and were in due course accepted by Cambridge University as entrance examinations for these kids. They were three or four who professed interest in becoming medical students, so I started them on a pre-med course of anatomy, physiology and bacteriology and so on. By evening most of the chores were done, so we entertained ourselves in the evening. There were all kinds of lectures being given by all kinds of people. It was surprising the variety of interests and hobbies and expertise present in this camp of 1200 people. So there was always something good going on.

The American ship, the "President Harrison", happened to be in Shanghai when Pearl Harbor came, so the Japanese immediately seized it, of course, and all the crew were interned with us, including their orchestra. Now, when the Japanese came on board, in order to try and prevent the Japanese from using the President Harrison, the crew opened the seacocks and let the water in and it sank to the mud at the bottom of the river. The Japanese were absolutely furious, they were just furious. So they ordered the captain to lighten the ship, so he lightened the ship by throwing over things like grand pianos. Anything valuable that he could, he threw overboard. But the musicians of the orchestra of the President Harrison managed to save their musical instruments,

including a double bass, violins, clarinets, one or two woodwinds and brass, and percussion, and they brought these into camp with them, so we had a pretty good orchestra. We had some good concerts. Their violinist was really very good. He was a jazz violinist, but he didn't mind having a shot at classical music; and someone had taken in with him a good many musical scores including the Mendelssohn violin concerto. So one member of the internment camp who was really very gifted, transcribed the Mendelssohn violin concerto for the instruments that we happened to have in camp. This particular violinist, whose name was Nathan, practiced the solo part and played the Mendelssohn violin concerto very creditably in a concert.

Then we put on many plays, numerous Shakespeare plays. We had no proper scenery or costumes but we managed to rake up enough from our scanty wardrobe to make into costumes of one kind or another. What wood there was around we knocked up for scenery, as for instance when we put on The Tempest, and the historical plays. Modern plays too -- Noel Coward's Bittersweet, and Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest, and Barrie's The Admirable Crichton, and so on. These were great fun, more enthusiasm than histrionic gifts, but a lot of fun.

Among the group there were also some first-rate Chinese scholars and so those who were interested in the Chinese Classics took courses regularly over the two and a half years, going in great depth into the Chinese classics, their history, culture, poetry, philosophy, and so on.

CGR:

So it wasn't entirely wasted time?

GLG:

No, it wasn't.

CGR:

What was the mental status, on the whole? It must have been difficult for some people to cope with -- an indefinite future? How would you rate that?

GLG:

Well, for many of the business community, it was a disaster. They lost their businesses, they lost their life's earnings, and they had no idea what would happen to them when they were released at the end.

For the teenagers and the children, confinement was very difficult. They had to be kept busy, otherwise they would have got out of hand and got into trouble. There was one instance, incidentally, in this connection which could have been disastrous. Among the inmates there were some very unsavory characters from the Shanghai waterfront, including a couple of men who had served time in Sing Sing one time or another, and one of these got hold of half dozen of these teenage boys and encouraged them to break camp at night by climbing over the barbed wire and going out into Chinese villages to buy cigarettes and bring them back in, which they would then resell at exorbitant prices in camp. Well, one night, the boys happened to be caught in a Chinese village some way from the camp by a Japanese naval party which had been passing through. So they were brought back and our own guards had lost face badly in that these boys had escaped and had been captured by a naval landing party. These boys were

severely beaten up all that night. The guard's office was only separated by a plywood partition from one of the dormitories where the women were kept, where the mothers and sisters and sweethearts of some of these boys were sleeping, and they knew exactly what was going on, and there were hysterics, so we got up and tried to sooth the women as best we could until thing settled down. None of the boys were actually killed or executed but they were then led off and put into solitary confinement for three months, and then brought in again. Of course when they got back, were they heroes! All the girls flocked around them. But they were pretty badly beaten up; of course the should not have gone out. The particular man who had encouraged them to go out, who had given them the money to buy cigarettes, knew that he would be involved, so he rushed up to the guard's office with a large bribe in his hand and the guards whom he bribed didn't take any action against him.

For the teenagers -- as I say, there were classes and lectures and entertainments and sports and athletics. They played games, there were races, track and field races, and so on, hobbies, as far as we could, to try and keep the occupied.

Those of us who did have a Christian background, had, I think, resources that perhaps other people lacked. We found however that we all had a breaking point, emotionally and psychologically. Perhaps the breaking point for some of us was at a higher threshold than for others, but we all had a breaking point, depending on how far we were being pushed.

We had regular church services, of course. They were well attended and they were good services.

CGR:

Other than the occasion you've described of these boys being brought back, and so on, were there other evidences of brutality, physical or mental brutality, on the part of the Japanese?

GLG:

Very little so long as we didn't break the obvious rules in the camp. You see, prisoners of war, as such, were in a different category. The Japanese despised them for having surrendered rather than fighting to the death, which is the Japanese Samurai tradition, as I'm sure you know. So they regarded prisoners of war as expendable labor to be worked to death and thrown aside. We were never in that category. We were a nuisance to the Japanese. They had to look after us, they had to feed us, they had to delegate men from the fighting forces to guard us. So we were a nuisance. But they didn't, otherwise, interfere with us too much. We never had to do work for them of any kind.

We had our air raids. The camp was never hit, though the little vegetable garden outside the buildings, all enclosed by the barbed wire, was hit by one bomb as the planes were going over, and shrapnel came through the roofs from time to time, from the Japanese anti-aircraft fire.

An American plane was shot down by a Japanese anti-aircraft as it flew over the camp and crashed some distance away. That was a mater of real distress because some of the Americans in our camp had boys who were in the American air force, and they didn't know who was actually in that plane at that time.

We had a secret radio in camp which some of the men had

managed to smuggle in. It was in the seat of a pull-out couch. We were allowed to take in our own beds (they didn't provide any furniture of any kind), and we took in our own bed and bedding, and this man took in a day-couch, on which he slept at night, and hollowed out in it was this radio. There was electricity in the camp, we did have a little electricity, and he would plug it in and listen with earphones. One night the Japanese made an unexpected inspection of the dormitory where he was and they found it. But fortunately, he had money in his pocket and he was able to pass the money over to them and they just confiscated the radio and didn't say anything more about it.

There was also another radio. Our engineers were smart. They got a child's hobbyhorse and hollowed out the body of the hobbyhorse, and built a radio inside it and kept it in the little workshop we had, where a bunch of tools were available. Only three or four people in the whole camp knew about this, very secret, and they listened to it occasionally under very secret conditions, with two or three standing outside to warn if anyone came near. This was never found by the Japanese. I was not in on that in the circle, but the senior doctor, Keith Graham, was, and when the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, this was picked up by the little radio. Keith Graham did come around and tell one or two of us that this had happened and that the war could not go on very much longer. So some of us realized at that time that the war was eventually coming to an end.

The main problem, as I say, was malnutrition. They couldn't feed us. I don't know what the calories were, but it was not enough. The two little children, my daughter Margaret and the

McAll's little girl, who was the same age, were all right; there was enough for them, but we were hungry. When the end of the war came, my wife's weight had dropped to about 100 lbs. and she was very unwell. I was about the same weight and I had amebic dysentery and I was developing TB at the time too. I suspect that if the war had gone on six months more, there wouldn't have been many more deaths in the camp. Now we weren't as bad as Belsen, we hadn't got that far. I don't want you to get the wrong idea. But we had little energy, we had to spend most of our time sitting or lying down; just do our chores and then go and lie down.

CGR:

Were there ever any efforts to escape from the camp?

GLG:

No, not from our camp. But there was one interesting incident. When this had been a tobacco warehouse, they had a big pump there (I'm not sure what it was for), but it would occupy half this room in size, and when this concentration camp was first opened by the men, before we joined them, engineers there dismantled it and used the material for making toilets, of which there were none. Some time after that, another camp in the Shanghai area (there were six or seven camps in all with several thousand people) complained to the Japanese that there were not enough men in their camp to do the hard work, nor was there anyone with the engineering skill to fix it up. So the Japanese called for volunteers to go there and one of the volunteers from our camp agreed to go. So he was transferred to that camp. Later, by the grapevine, we heard that he had escaped from that camp and had gone west. Now, in the meantime, the Japanese came around look-

ing for anything they could use for war materials and came into our camp and looked for this big hydraulic pump and were furious that it had been dismantled. They called our commandant, the British commandant saying, "What's happened to the pump? Who did this?" Very smartly, knowing that this particular engineer who had been transferred, had since escaped, he said, "Well, I'm very sorry, it was so-and-so who did this, and I don't know where he is now as he left us to go to the Weihsien camp." So the Japanese hoofed over there and found, of course, that he'd escaped, as our commandant knew, so everything was all right.

CGR:

Just as well he wasn't recaptured!

GLG:

Yes. We had no escapes from our camp.

CGR:

There were, I think you said, about 1200 people, roughly, in this last camp of whom, I gather, the vast majority, were men. What about the sexual life of the camp. What can you tell me about that?

GLG:

Well, where husbands and wives had these cubicles, they were okay. There were a number of single women and teenage girls, and there was a certain amount of sexual activity going on and quite a few illegitimate babies were born. In fact, my wife's chief job was looking after these illegitimate babies. There would be, I would think, six or eight born. She was able to get a little room and prepare bassinets, and scrounge cotton material, blankets and so on, and look after these babies and the mothers would

come in and nurse them in this little creche. We couldn't have a baby in the dormitories where there would be 60, 70 people trying to sleep. So the babies were kept in this little creche. So there was a certain amount of sexual activity going around.

CGR:

Yes, one would assume, human beings being human beings, that that would be the case.

GLG:

The Japanese guards never attacked any of the women.

CGR:

Any evidence of homosexuality that you were aware of?

GLG:

I would have to say that I'm sure there was, but it never came to our attention. There weren't babies produced, and what people did in the privacy of their own cubicles was none of our business.

CGR:

I've asked the question of a large number of men who were of course in wholly male POW situations, and I've been surprised at the evidently quite sincere expressions indicating that as far as they could tell, this just didn't seem to be going on. Yet, certainly, in the German POW camps malnutrition was not really a problem so that you perhaps couldn't write off lack of sexual activity on that basis, and, to me, it's just a legitimate and intriguing question.

GLG:

Oh, human nature being what it was, and being a mixed community there, I'm sure there was. It just didn't come to our

attention.

CGR:

Venereal disease much seen?

GLG:

I only remember treating one case. I think they would have come to us, if it occurred.

CGR:

That's interesting too, isn't it?

GLG:

Oh, I'm sure there was venereal disease. There were prostitutes, for instance, among the people who were herded together and brought into this camp.

CGR:

Let me go back, if I may, to the period just before Pearl Harbor. I was going to ask, in the period just before Peal Harbor, you indicated that it was obvious that there was going to be war. How was it that you all remained where you were? For example, was there any opportunity, any impetus to cross the border again and get to the Chinese side, or to go back to Britain, or Canada, or Australia, or wherever? I get the feeling, and I'm not suggesting this was the case, but I wondered whether there wasn't sort of a feeling of the inevitability of this and everyone sort of waiting for it to happen? Am I putting that unfairly?

GLG:

It certainly was discussed. Dr. McAll was in touch with guerrillas up-country who assured him that if he just went into the hills, which was easily done at that time, they would safe-

guard his passage through to freedom in the far west. But he had his little daughter (as we did too), and he rejected the idea and I don't think we even seriously considered it. There were too many problems involved. A single person could have made their escape. In fact, at the Yenching University in Peking there were two friends of mine, on the staff there, and they heard on the radio in the early morning that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor; so they quickly grabbed a suitcase and left the university campus that night, made their way through the Japanese lines in the darkness, as the Japanese had surrounded Peking, and made their way out to the hills and made this thousand-mile trek to the far west, spending six months, actually, with Mao Tse Tung and Chou En Lai at Yenan on the way, and spent the rest of their time in free China in the west. But for us that didn't seem to be practical. I suppose the year before, we could have come home, and we discussed it with the British consular office, but it was not easy to get back to Britain at that time with the war on. We felt we were doing an important job and contributing to the war effort in training these medical students and student nurses, and so on -- even though it was on the periphery of the theater of war. But we were certainly advised by the British Consul to stay, which we did, and then it became too late and there was no longer any choice.

CGR:

So your daughter was 6 months old?

GLG:

Yes, she was 5 months at Pearl Harbor.

CGR:

So at the age of 5 years she had know essentially nothing but life in an internment camp.

GLG:

That's right, yes.

CGR:

Now has this affected her, as best as you can judge?

GLG:

Not at all. I should say, incidentally, that in addition to malnutrition it was awfully cold. We had no heating of any kind, and we just wrapped up and tried to keep warm. Shanghai's winters are very bitter. In the summer they're hot and humid. And these were difficult for the children, but for little Margaret and little Elizabeth, it was home. They weren't separated from their parents. In fact, they had abundance of tender loving care from all the other inmates of the concentration camp, who were longing for their own children. They just lavished their attention on these two little girls. Even the Japanese guards, who were also longing for their own wives and families, were kind to both little girls. They were surrounded by tender loving care. They were not affected psychologically.

We tried to get them used to the noise from the air raid attacks; whenever there were thunder storms, by taking them to the window to enjoy the thunder and the flashes of lightning. That was great fun. So that when bombing came they weren't the least bit disturbed. In fact, in one particular raid which was unpleasantly close, we evacuated down to the basement of the building (didn't do any good because if any bomb had hit it would

have gone right through to the basement), and we were all kind of huddled around. Margaret was very busy drawing and didn't pay any attention to the bombs and flashes and so on. This moment at a halt in the bombing and in the silence of this big room, her little voice piped up, "Mommy, what color should I paint this house?" So she wasn't the least bit upset psychologically. Her teeth suffered, and the dentist noted when she got back to Canada that her teeth, the permanent teeth, were poorly formed at that stage. Otherwise, she was fine and she's been very well.

CGR:

What about the sort of classic war-time diseases -- typhus, smallpox...?

GLG:

Well, we were all vaccinated regularly against smallpox, and there was no smallpox outbreak. We did have one case of typhus, didn't we Betty?

Betty Gale:

Yes, and meningitis.

GLG:

Yes, tuberculous meningitis, and a little boy who got bacterial meningitis. Fortunately these Red Cross parcels with the sulfa drugs had arrived and we pumped these sulfa drugs in him, and he recovered. We were alarmed by the case of typhus because there were rats all over the place. One man in the camp had made a special hobby of studying fleas, that was his particular hobby, and we used to take these dead rats and he'd identify the fleas as indeed being the fleas which were the vector for the transmission of typhus. But fortunately, although this one man got

typhus, we never found out how he got it and it didn't spread.

CGR:

Well, from the sound of it...

GLG:

I beg your pardon, typhus is spread by lice, isn't it. Sorry, I've got that wrong. There were lice, of course, too, and this man got typhus (I don't know how he got it), but the fleas from these dead rats were the species of fleas that carried bubonic plague, but fortunately there was no case, so there was no plague. But these were the actual fleas.

CGR:

What it was it like when the war ended?

BG:

Well, it was really quite amazing because, as Godfrey may have told you, we didn't know what might happen when the war ended, whether we would be caught between the Americans coming back -- the allied troops coming in and the Japanese fighting in Shanghai, or whether we would be lined up and shot. Now this was actually on the order books -- someone had seen this written -- that in the one remaining camp up in Yangchow, they were to be taken out and shot if there was an American landing. The other fear was that we were to be sent up to Manchuria or (I don't know where) maybe to Japan. One of the camps holding the so-called "political prisoners," had already started on their trip up north when the war ended. Our camp was to be the next to go, but we never, fortunately, had to go because the Japanese Emperor made his famous speech that they were to lay down their arms and suffer the insufferable and admit they were defeated. The Ja-

panese guards just disappeared overnight. We woke up in the morning and there were no Japanese. It was incredible, it was like a miracle. Because we had no air raid shelters and no place to go if we ever had been in a real battle right there, it would have been frightful. This is the one thing, of course; we all kept thinking -- "Well, maybe there'll be a miracle and they'll just disappear," and that's what happened.

CGR:

Then what happened?

GLG:

The immediate reaction to that was total breakdown of camp discipline. While the Japs were there you had our roll call, you had your meals, there were lights out, you were in bed from this time on. But when the Japanese disappeared, until some kind of order was established several days later, the camp just went berserk.

BG:

We had thousands of people milling through, all day long. It was just wild. But the American planes came in, and this was actually before August 15th. The war hadn't been officially declared over, but the came in and everybody mobbed them, of course.

GLG:

These were the Chinese.

BG:

No, the Americans. Don't you remember the Americans coming in?

GLG:

No, I don't.

BG:

Oh, I guess you were in the hospital. He was very sick at the end, so he didn't see everything. They came in and there was great excitement. They came in at considerable risk to themselves because the Japanese guns were all pointed at them, but none of them shot. Several of these men came in. It was so grand to see such healthy young men coming in. Everybody looked so scrawny in camp.

GLG:

It must have been after the Emperor's speech.

BG:

Well I was trying to remember. Most of the Japanese had gone, darling.

GLG:

The Japanese had gone, yes, so that the Emperor must have made his surrender. Some of the Japanese were reluctant, in some areas, to lay down arms, even with the Japanese Emperor's voice coming over the radio. That was the danger, I think.

BG:

Well, then they dropped all these pamphlets to say that the war was practically over (I should have reviewed this, I didn't know this was coming up, it's so long ago now -- you tend to forget the order of things).

GLG:

Then the Americans came over dropping food and clothing to us.

BG:

They nearly killed us. The food canisters came right through the buildings, they were so anxious to get us this food, which was wonderful. They came down in great big parachutes -- red, yellow, green, blue, white -- it was marvelous watching them all sail down and land.

GLG:

Some of them without parachutes, they really come a-whang.

BG:

One went right through one room, right through the next room, and landed up in a bed on the second floor. Fortunately there was nobody in the way, they would have been squashed flat. But anyway, it was marvelous. Of course, everyone ate so much they all got sick. Then they came and announced -- they called us to a special meeting on the 15th of August -- and the three different representatives -- the British, the American and the Chinese -- spoke to all the different nationalities, and we sang our various anthems and everybody wept and cheered. Then the next day we had a lovely Thanksgiving service, to which nearly everybody came.

The place was just bedlam, as Godfrey said. Then an American chap that was in camp with us -- a wonderful man -- came to us one day and said, "I'm taking you people out to my house in Shanghai." We all had the chance to stay there, till the ships came to take us off. He was just marvelous. He took us to his home -- the McAlls and ourselves -- and Anne McKeith, who could speak the Shanghai dialect. We couldn't. So we stayed there a month until we were repatriated and we tried to recuperate.

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4 April 1986.

Godfrey Gale MD, interned by Japanese

Dr. Godfrey Gale, former chief of staff at West Park Hospital, has died of cancer. He was 73.

Born on the island of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, Dr. Gale, who died Friday, studied medicine in England before becoming a missionary in China just prior to World War II.

Gale

He was arrested by the invading Japanese forces and spent the duration of the war in prison camps, his son Kendall said.

"He was able to keep up his practice while in the camps and helped many of the prisoners who had medical problems," Kendall said.

Dr. Gale moved to Canada in 1948, taking a job as head of surgery for chest diseases at the Toronto Hospital for Tuberculosis which is now West Park. He became chief of staff in 1973 and held the position until retirment in 1978.

"He remained with the hospital after retirement as a consultant and was instrumental in setting up a hospital museum," Kendall said.

Dr. Gale leaves his wife Elizabeth, daughters Margaret and Patricia, son Kendall and four grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Central United Chuch in Weston.