

AN AMERICAN IN CHINA: 1936-39 **A Memoir**

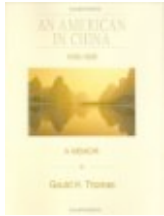
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Qingdao ~ 青島/青島

Tsingtao - Tsingtau - Qingdao



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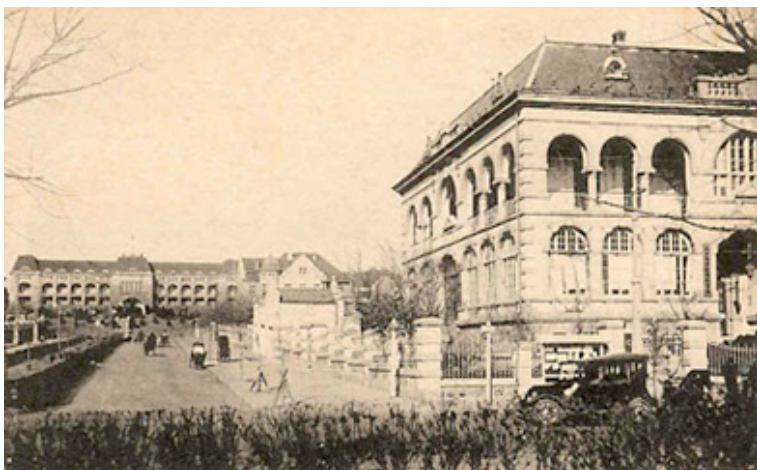


Old Tsingtao Slide Show

Tsingtao was a German concession from 1897 to 1914. The German influence is



Above, Evangelical Christ Church, built by the Germans in 1910.



Town Hall and, at right, the Japanese Consulate, originally the **Deutsch-Asiatische Bank** building, in 20's or 30's.

■ still evident in the architecture of the old town, and in its brewery, which produces the well-known **Tsingtao beer**. The city has been occupied by Japan twice, from 1914 to 1922 and from 1938 to 1945.

It was a favorite summer port of the US Asiatic fleet during the 1930's, and from 1945-1949 it was the headquarters of the Western Pacific Fleet of the US Navy. Today **Qingdao**, in the modern spelling, is a flourishing port city and a favorite summer resort. The three buildings of the Grand Hotel on Pacific Road can be seen in the 1930's postcard above. The Grand Hotel Strand on a nearby beach, was under the same management.

Qingdao, will be the host city of the **29th Olympic Sailing Regatta** in 2008.

A 1920's guidebook writes:



The Strand Hotel has the same management as the Grand Hotel. On account of its position near the sea, its modern and comfortable accomodation and big, airy rooms, it is the most popular summer hotel. During the bathing season, from June to October, there is a busy social life on its broad terrace. The hotel orchestra plays every afternoon at the tea dances and every evening for dinner. The difficulty in obtaining a room at this hotel has always been so great, that the directors have been obliged to build some villas near at hand.

GH. Thomas writes in December 1937:

The St. Andrew's Day Ball was a great affair. The Scots in town came in their kilts and danced Scottish reels. They



St. Michael's Church

kitts and danced Scottish reels. They even had haggis — everything but the bagpipes. Last night a bunch of us had dinner at the club and bowled all evening. This Saturday night is the big German party at the Grand Hotel, one of the biggest occasions of the winter season. And that's the way it goes all the time.



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Above, the German-built train station, which the author used to travel to the railway points in the interior of Shantung during business trips in 1937. The line, which went all the way to **Tsinan**, was called the KTR, or Kiaochow-Tsinanfu Railroad.



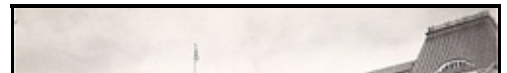
At upper right, the three buildings of the Grand.



Pacific Road from the Pier.



The original main building of the Grand Hotel.





The author was employed by Texaco, then called the Texas Company.



Above, the impressive Town Hall, or Municipal Government Office of Tsingtao was built in 1904. In a 1989 reconstruction effort, the ivy was removed and the entire building was replicated. From the front there is an unobstructed view down a wide avenue to the sea. This photograph was taken in 1945 by US Armed Forces.



The old American Consulate in German Tsingtau. The buildings today are a big draw for Western and Chinese tourists alike.





A charming German -style restaurant at the turn of the 20th century.



The old and the new in Tsingtao today.

November, 1936:

Tsingtao is a pretty red-roofed town passed down from the German occupation of the port and control of the surrounding region. It has a perfect bay with bright blue water dotted here and there with picturesque little islands, junks and sampans. There is even a Chinese temple along the shore. The three Japanese destroyers anchored out in the middle of the bay give a realistic touch to the picture. Behind the bay, on all sides, rise immediately jagged hills. No wonder it is called the most beautiful spot in all China.

Just one year later, on Oct. 7, 1937, he was to write:

The Japanese advance has been very rapid because the Chinese have not done much fighting. They put up a pretty good resistance for a time, but without any artillery, not even antiaircraft guns, their position was hopeless from the first.

With its northwestern border already overrun by the Japanese army, Shantung is definitely involved in the struggle for the first time. The Japanese vanguard is now only forty miles from



No, we are not in Germany: This postcard from 1930's shows a Japanese hotel, in what was originally the office of the Hamburg-America Line, and St. Michael's Church, built in 1934.

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At the turn of the 20th century, the Germans had their own stamps for their short-lived colony, Kiautschou, or Kiaochow, which was taken over by the Japanese in 1914.

Slide show of German Tsingtau

Tsinan, with nothing but an evidently disrupted 29th Route Army and the swirling Yellow River in between.

Huge barrels of sand and barrels of water are everywhere on the streets of Tsingtao. The USS Chaumont is coming through here on its way to Japan late this week. and the USS Canopus will pick up some more people for Manila next week. According to the executive commander of the Marblehead, our protection ship, there are still over four hundred Americans in the city.

On January 11, 1938:

The Japanese forces are here. The news of the invasion on Jan. 10 was in all the newspapers. Our harbor is still blocked and now the British shipping companies have curtailed or temporarily canceled their calls on the outer harbor. To complete our sense of being cut off, the USS Marblehead sailed for Chefoo on Sunday morning, followed later in the day by HMS Suffolk for Weihaiwei. Japanese ships are as thick on the waters of our bay as their marines and soldiers are on our streets.

In the main the Japanese have used great moderation in Tsingtao city itself, that is compared with the terrible sacking of Nanking. But we are constantly disgusted by the scattered acts that are taking place. Less serious by far than the attacks on women, but annoying, is the petty thievery on the part of the Japanese soldiers.

Among the foreigners here in town, the Japanese are obviously partial to the Germans and just as plainly have little regard for the British.



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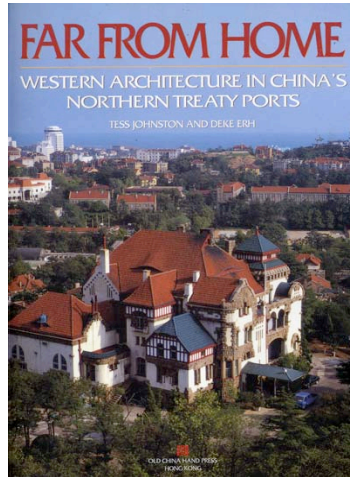
**The USS Canopus with submarines
off Tsingtao
in 1936.**



The extraordinary Governor's Mansion or Residenz des Gouverneurs, built for the German governor in 1907 in the then popular Jugendstil or Art Nouveau.

From 1949 it was used by Communist cadres. Mao Zedong stayed there in the 1970's. It is now called the **Qingdao Guest House**. The room where Mao stayed is, needless to say, often requested.

The Governor's
Mansion, or
Qingdao Guest
House,
as seen today on the
cover of "Far From
Home:
Western
Architecture in
China's Northern
Treaty Ports,"
by Tess Johnston
and Deke Ehr,
published by Old



China Hand Press, Hong Kong .



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The Bismarck Barracks, in background, built for German troops between 1903 and 1909. It is now the Oceanographic University. In 1945 it was the home of the U.S. 22nd Marines. This is a US military photograph as is the panorama of Tsingtao waterfront on top of Web page.



In the 1930's Tsingtao (Qingdao) was considered by many to be the most beautiful city in China. It may still hold that title today. The author lived in the Pension Victoria, situated in the picturesque neighborhood above. It was in Tsingtao that he met and fell in love with the beautiful **Lily Lee**, also known as Peiping Lily.

Above, map of Tsingtao (Qingdao) in the 1930s



Notice Christ Church (built in 1910) on the left. For an excellent view of Qingdao today, visit [Skyscraper City Web site](#).

[Click here for Tsingtao recipes](#)





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Sailing into modernity: A participant in the Qingdao International Regatta in August 2006. The event anticipates the Olympics Sailing Regatta of 2008.



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