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Tape 842 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
Margery Hall and Kate Garrod
   4700.0576   Tape 842.1   (Tape 4 of 4)
Brigadier Richard Gardiner and Mrs. Catherine Gardiner
   4700.0578   Tape 842.2   (Tape 1 of 7)
Michael Underhill
   4700.1910   Tape 842.3   (Tape 1 of 1)

IDENTIFICATION:  Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS:  Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES:  British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:
Hall and Garrod: 2/1/1978
Gardiners: 2/7/1978
Underhill: 2/5/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME:  1 hour, 31 minutes
Hall and Garrod:  44 minutes
Gardiners: 39 minutes
Underhill: 8 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS:  None

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Tape 842, Side A
Hall and Garrod (Part 6 of 6) (842.1)
002   degree of male domination in British India
020   Indian men with multiple wives
027   getting sent to a terrible post with no preparations for hardships
033   mosquitos
books written by British servicemen show lack of humanity in dealing with Indians
last five years of husband’s service were spent in Bombay
gave up nursing after married, too much to do around bungalow and garden
kept cows, sheep and chickens, ducks, turkeys in their compound
she’s not interested in politics
did some Red Cross work in India
easy to run a house in England or other modern countries, labor-saving devices
fascinated by primitive nature of India
consequences of dismissing a servant, other servants refused to work
she had to take the servant back, otherwise no one would ever work for them
her husband didn’t warn her about the consequences of dismissing servant because he
knew she wouldn’t believe it
chauffeur who was a drunkard in Barbados
after time in India, went to Australia, helped prepare for king’s visit
returned to London, ran into a friend who told him about civil engineering opportunity in
Barbados to design water system
stayed for ten years in Barbados, very different from India
one house servant would do all the work in Barbados
her interest in people, no use trying to change people
people she doesn’t like on instinct
if you spend enough time with anybody, you can find something to like about them
her husband’s boss in India
tries to recall other Britons she met in India
British men in India were terrible gossips
an ambitious man will go to endless lengths
ladies’ gloves
men’s scurrilous gossip linked to their ambition
ICS was recruited from UK, cream of the civil servants, PWD recruited at home
reads poem she wrote about a knight aspiring to power
“K” is slang term for knighthood
slang of the British in India, she didn’t understand half of what they were saying
self-contained world
people were well-groomed
military life was self-contained
Margery and Kate both knew someone named Nan in Poona, Nan looked after Margery
had to keep whiskey in the house, required of living there
protocol of visiting, drinking together
hoped no one would call on them because they could only afford one bottle of whiskey
per month
Nan interrogating Margery to make sure she was calling on people appropriately
Nan had a fat butt
Margery’s feelings were hurt by Nan’s treatment
their family’s country seats
asks interviewers about snobbery in US, especially Washington, DC
younger generation in Britain have lower moral standards but are more tolerant, less
snobby
405 stigma of dark-skinned Britons, “chi-chi” accents
410 her own children had funny accents from growing up in India
425 servants, had to keep them no matter how poor you were
435 rules and expectations of rank
450 Margery wanted to go home to visit relatives
456 perception of station at Poona as “outpost of empire” versus “jewel of the East”
461 Poona was a nice place, had race course, club
469 Kate got engaged at club in Poona
473 other amenities of Poona
482 other parts of India Kate visited, territory under her husband Bill’s jurisdiction

Tape 842, Side A cont’d
Underhill (Part 1 of 2) (842.3)
519 visited home of Michael and Rosalee Underhill. Rosalee is cousin of Griselda Richardson. Didn’t record interview, so de Caro relates two anecdotes from memory
528 writer John Masters published his first novel by walking into publisher’s office and convinced him to publish it, plus six previous novels

Tape 842, Side B
Underhill (Part 2 of 2) (842.3)
001 de Caro talking about someone who gave order to lay down smokescreens but burnt supplies of tribes people who were shooting at them
015 got into Indian Army as volunteer during war, critical need for officers, initially sent to Bangalore, joined 2nd Gorkhas
029 facilities of British officers; hunting, squash, fishing, holidays
033 preconceptions Underhill had regarding India
036 was plunked down into an essentially British culture in India
044 Underhill had little contact with Indians, his general attitude regarding image of old-time Raj was self-conscious, thought of it as a joke
052 differences between regiments

Tape 842, Side B cont’d
Gardiners (Part 1 of 10) (842.2)
074 Gardiner worked on railways in India, by 1940, enormous amount of Indianization of railways
082 worked on East Indian Railway, worked beneath an Indian superior
086 people don’t realize how much we did for the country
090 socialization between Britons and Indians, Indians were nice people
098 many Indians in ranks of civil service
102 East Indian Railway runs from Calcutta to Delhi, other railroad company’s routes
112 state built railways, private companies operated them
117 East Indian Railroad built at time of Mutiny, history of East Indian Railroad
125 operating costs
130 from 1920 on, company started to hand operation back to government because it wasn’t profitable
Railroad built on strategic lines for defense
Bengal and Northwest Railroad ran through old indigo country of India, building and running Bengal and Northwest
huge earthquake circa 1937, lost many stations and railroad houses
Bengal and NW kept trains running whole time of earthquake’s aftermath
reason for multiple railroads, gauge of railroads
engineering problems of smaller lines
British Royal engineer’s alliance with regular army engineers, training for engineers
Railway Board in Delhi that oversaw separate railway systems
after war, he didn’t return to India, could see what was happening, got job in Peru
every boy wants to be a railroad engineer, father worked on railroads
father was also in India, managed state railroads
railway mergers
his wife talks about being only white woman in their part of India
they seem to be sitting down to tea
their eighteen year old grandson also crazy about railroads
try to remember name of a school
her son was a postmaster
grandson is so mad about railroads that he’s an absolute bore, enjoys reading train timetables
de Caro had high school friend who was fascinated by trains
taking grandson to opera, hoping he’d show up well-groomed
made her grandson bathe
recommends Bergman movie
their enjoyment of opera
recounts plot of movie
description of opera season, opera house, summer opera program, cost
rave about wonders of opera
cheaper on weeknights, and can bring picnic
expensive restaurant near opera house
take train from London to bus stop to opera, wear evening dress, Victoria Station
plans for next opera performance
music in India, Peru
Italian opera company
cooking meat techniques, crock pots
family connections; father and grandfather served in India on railroads
father was killed in 1914
he was born in North India
came home to England for education when he was about six
no suitable schools in India, so children sent to England for education
recalls father’s bungalow, push trolleys kept under the houses, veranda above
remembers watching trains pass from verandah
every engineer had a bungalow