INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
Brigadier Richard Gardiner and Mrs. Catherine Gardiner
4700.0578   Tape 843.1   (Tape 2 of 7)
Fergus Munro Innes
4700.0579   Tape 843.2   (Tape 1 of 3)

IDENTIFICATION:  Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS:   Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES:  British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:
Gardiners: 2/7/1978
Innes: 2/14/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME:  1 hour, 29 minutes
Gardiners:  47 minutes
Innes:  42 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS:  None

RESTRICTIONS:  Copyright retained by interviewee and/or the interviewee’s heirs

NOTE:  Copyright and property rights are assigned jointly to Centre of South Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge and Louisiana State University and A & M College Libraries and its successor agencies.

NOTE:  This index reflects the order of interviewees as they appear on the user copy tape.  De Caro’s notes state that Side A is the Gardiners, Side B starts with the Gardiners but the recorder malfunctions, and then the remainder of Side B is Innes. It is possible that the tapes sides were accidentally switched when the user copy of the tape was created.

INDEX

Tape 843, Side A
Innes (Part 1 of 3) (843.2)
001   unintelligible [Gardiners interview segment but recorder malfunctioned]
040   Feb 14, 1978, interview with F.M. Innes at London House
043   father and grandfather were in India, other relatives involved in Madras Army, never expected to do anything else
048   Innes born in India, his whole family was there
051   no better career open to a young Englishman
had to do a man’s job from the start

many British families who had generations of involvement in India

when Innes was at Oxford, F.E. Smith gave pep talk to get more Britons in India

shocked by the cynical attitude Smith took toward family connections, reduced it all to financial terms

it was a splendid life, he didn’t go for the money

we really believed in British Empire, though it seems naive now

it’s different now, wouldn’t be acceptable

talks about Philip Woodruff’s book *The Man Who Ruled India*

eyearly childhood in Madras, had to return to England at age four, saw mother once every three years, father once every five, communicated through letters

when he returned to India, it wasn’t much different from Kipling

meeting ICS men during his Oxford days

twenty-one years’ service in ICS

telegram telling him he’d been accepted into ICS

family talked about social life in India, not focused on politics or Indian aspirations

Sir Herbert Edwards, great Punjab character at time of mutiny, who said it might be 100 years before India ready for independence

Britons who believed they should be preparing India for independence

took over Punjab in 1847

India was such a mess, few Brits could imagine a unified, independent India

influence of Gandhi

Innes went to India in 1926

father was member of viceroy’s council in Delhi, Innes introduced to top people

assigned to remote district, lived just as they lived in last 100 years, had no ice or electricity, food was intolerable

hot weather in Northern India, fans, advent of air conditioning

hard day’s work

first arrived in district during cold weather season

started as magistrate trying petty cases, learning language, learning about district, talking to the people

after six months, took exam to advance to second class magistrate

got subdivision after one or two years’ service

promotion very rapid in Innes’ time, loose supervision

the Lawrences, who started first Punjab administration

became undersecretary to Punjab government, did lots of work, tremendously understaffed

chief secretary helped Innes with huge backlog of filing

settling a dispute over cost of land

transferred to different district in Punjab in 1932, as deputy commissioner

new district free of political complications, could do old-fashioned administration

the work was endless, hard on his wife because he was so busy, worked from 7AM until 11 PM

touring district, meeting with people to find out what was going on in district

other Europeans in district; an assistant commissioner and a European superintendent of police

many other districts had Indian superintendents of police, better at police than administrative work
learning the local language

at his station, problem of deciding whether to admit Indians to clubs or not, eventually most clubs admitted Indian civil servants

Hindus had to wash themselves if they shook hands with “unclean” Europeans; Moslems would be happy to dance with your wife but you can’t dance with his

final breakdown at Karachi in 1952 when club there decided to admit Pakistanis, turned out to be a roaring success

many excuses for British exclusivity, but very divisive

Indian Army didn’t like educated Indians

people tried to enlist allegiance of Innes’ Indian friends because people thought they had influence

Brits got along best with peasants, who looked up to them

problems of Indian peasants, trouble with money lenders and landlords, police

people came to ICS believing they were protectors of the poor who would dispense justice

two things to fight against: corruption and “party barty” or the party game, old feuds that had gone on for generations, combined with democracy, menace to peace of the district

remarkable murder case involving political party rivalry

social life: polo, duck shooting, amateur theatricals, mess night

commissioner’s wife took part in duck shooting and polo, sometimes did good works

wife and family had to be sent into hills during hot season, lots of social life for “abandoned wives” in hills

officers got ten days break in July, ten days in September, to escape heat

later, young men who went to India could afford to buy fully furnished houses

lots of traveling from station to station

Tape 843, Side B

Gardiners (Part 2 of 10) (843.1)

prep schools for army careers

mathematics stressed

trying to get commission into royal engineers, instead got into royal artillery

went to India with artillery

after two years, got to transfer to engineering, more schooling

Indian Service of Engineers

had almost no involvement with military once he transferred to engineering

expectations of India

mother was in Britain, father killed in war

marriage between stints in India, then wife returned there with him

met wife in Chatham

preparations for going to India: getting uniform, mess dress for evenings

cheaper to buy clothes in India, excellent tailors

helmets required

RAF came to India during WWII for the first time; they didn’t wear standard sun helmets and survived, so orders on helmets were reversed

helmets worn by both Britons and Indians

first job was as gunner on ship called Field Marshall, shipping lines in those days

description of ship, ship seized from Germans
civilians bound for India were also on board
problems of carrying civilians on troop ship
Port Said, where people often weren’t allowed ashore
near mutiny by civilians who weren’t allowed to go onshore at port, finally had to allow civilians ashore
Prince of Wales visited India, rioting in Bombay, Field Marshall was rerouted to Karachi
civilians aboard didn’t want to board troop trains from Karachi to Bombay
organization of army in India, four corps
ethnic composition of different Indian corps
differences between ethnic groups in India
problem with his aide who couldn’t live at post because he was from a different part of India, didn’t understand local language and couldn’t make friends
differences between religious factions
stationed in Bangalore
divisions within Indian Army based on religion
Britons broke castes in army, banned separate Moslem and Hindu kitchens in Madras
two years in Burma, no castes, not much religion, women integrated into everyday life
South India more progressive, tolerant, than North India
people of central India are aborigines
on being a newcomer to India
different ranks; viceroy’s commission, king’s commission, etc.
engineering projects
promotion to assistant engineer, responsible for 70 miles of rail route
working on construction of a line linking new coal fields
Britons moved around a lot within India, changed jobs
moving house, acquiring furniture
railway people moved for free, their things loaded onto railroad cars
kept personal possessions to a minimum
lost everything he left in storage in Burma
keeping in touch with friends, meeting many new people
spent three and a half years in Calcutta
staff at one of his railroad posts near Benares
railway junctions
many Eurasians worked for railways, police, post office, public works department, were backbone of India
original Europeans married Indian girls, after WWI many Europeans stayed in India, became railroad drivers
more and more, railroads became Eurasian enterprise
no difference between European and Indian railroad officers
Eurasians torn between Indian and European cultures after WWII, many had very European lifestyle
Europeans trying to decide if they should bring their brown wives home after WWII
railroad people were close knit community, had power
social connections in Calcutta
the club was a great institution: tennis, dancing on weekends
at most stations, Brits automatically joined club; in Calcutta, only by application. If you didn’t join, considered unsociable