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Tape 846 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
Brigadier Richard Gardiner and Mrs. Catherine Gardiner
   4700.0578   Tape 846.1   (Tape 3 of 7)
Colonel W.H. Salmon and Mrs. Jean Salmon
   4700.0582   Tape 846.2   (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
Salmons: 3/6/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes
Gardiners: 80 minutes
Salmons: 13 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS:  None

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Tape 846, Side A
Gardiners (Part 3 of 10) (846.1)
001  in Delhi during war, Indians were allowed to join club, mostly ICS clubs, ICS was very Indianized
006  more segregation in commercial places like Calcutta and Bombay
009  social place of club akin to place of local pub in England
015  club activities: tennis, hockey, polo
020  his first post was at Faizabad, east of Lucknow, north of the Ganges, military garrison there, other Europeans stationed at Faizabad
032  description of Faizabad
037  club in Faizabad, tennis, polo played with government-allotted horses, forage for horses
048  shooting, pig sticking
organizing shoots, good training for a soldier, but expensive hobby
amount of leave given, system of leave pay, allowance for travel to and from England
“short leave” used in summer to go to hill stations, rest bungalows along walking tour of Himalayas outside Shimla
officers transferring between Shimla and Delhi, office shut for a week while all people, supplies and equipment shifted from one place to the other
use of horses in India
Jamalpur was a special assignment
January, 1934 earthquake: Gardiner thought he was just nauseous at first, slowly realized it was an earthquake, went on and on, heard terrible hubbub outside, colleagues fled the building, Gardiner not sure if he should evacuate or not, realized it was severe
receiving reports regarding consequences of earthquake, including that the station at Jamalpur had fallen down
description of railroad routes
viceroy thought his train might be stranded by earthquake
extent of earthquake damage, explanation of how earthquakes occur, plates under Himalayas, Ganges
posted to Jamalpur a year after earthquake, main locomotive workshops were there
workshop flattened by quake, European housing in area ruined
Gardiner’s job was to rebuild workshop and colony, worked there three and a half years
sizable Indian city of Monghyr (now Munger), was about seven miles away, city also destroyed by quake
friends who had a sugar plantation in area
went to Burma in 1938, where he was inspector of railroads, was a government servant reporting to governor
rules regarding inquiries into accidents, deaths, testing new equipment
Burmese have no caste system, not much religion except some devout Buddhists
Burmese were attractive people, absolute villains, thought everything was funny
women did all the work, men sat around smoking
all the manual workers, doctors, were Indians, problems in Burma when Indians left Burma during WWII during Japanese bombing
English lied the same in Burma as in India, Burmese cleaner and more attractive than Indians
British community in Rangoon, climate
importance of rank and precedence in India, precedence laid out clearly
precedence isn’t peculiar to India, perhaps peculiar to British system, monarchy
relative prestige of different regiments
British family tradition of service in India
public works: irrigation, railroads, bridges
Gardiner family tradition of railroad work in India, father and grandfather also worked on railroad
how marriage affected his lifestyle in India
Ronald Thompson, Gardiner’s mother’s half-brother, who was railroad engineer in India, WWI veteran, volunteered for Gardiner’s project
having multiple family members in India
they make plans for tea
Gardiner’s servants, mostly Moslem, their origins
servants were very faithful, especially bearer
servants often came with the bungalow, but personal bearer would move with you
typical staff: bearer, cook, washer up, bearer’s assistant, bathroom attendant (sweeper),
gardener, chauffeur
different set up in Calcutta
servants generally male, sometimes wife would have an ayah to care for kids
separation from children
Gardiner had a widowed mother in England who looked after his kids
problems other people had being separated from kids
used to take three weeks to get between England and India by ship

Tape 846, Side B
Gardiners (Part 4 of 10) (846.1)

his early days as a gunner, rose at dawn, only worked in the morning
couldn’t handle the building materials except in the AM, too hot to touch
had to keep yourself healthy to survive the heat
Gardiner stayed healthy by living sensibly
railroad’s medical system, Indian doctors stationed on line
dental care not widely available, had to go to bigger city
India was a very good life for Britons
importance of railroads
importance of irrigation works built by British in North India
British at home admired work done in India back then, but now such causes are
unpopular, people disapprove
hand over at time of India’s independence, terrible massacres not much talked about
wars and emergencies since, religious problems of Bangladesh, Muslims versus Hindus
after war, went to Germany as director of transportation
then came home to England, would have liked to return to India but then came Independence
Britons don’t retire to India, except tea planters
Gardiner always considered England home
nothing to stay on for after retirement there
type of person who thrives in India is healthy, can work with and like Indians
differences between Indians and Africans, skin coloration
education of Indians
opinion of radio program that aired about Anglo-Indians
Indians have never been as backwards as Africans, they’re cleverer and better bred, better artists
nobody could’ve done better than the British in uplifting India, with the Mutiny as a hiccup in the middle
Mrs. Hall tells about bomb that fell on her sons’ prep school, everyone miraculously safe
headmaster suggested boys go to US during war, but her sons chose to stay in England
her son’s friend regretted going to US during war
Mrs. Hall liked India back then, lived in railroad post, traveled around
recalls shooting expedition where they rode elephants
the Raj looked upon as awful now, but she’s not so sure
Indians were wonderful cooks, better than the Peruvians, dishes they specialized in,
including custard

199 inferior cooks in Peru, Halls had best cook in area
204 primitiveness of Indian kitchens: brick ovens, charcoal
211 de Caro’s stint in India
214 Mrs. Hall thinks Kashmir is the most beautiful place
223 women’s activities: swimming, shopping, jolly good fun, though modern women would
call it a wasted life, selfish
235 her mother-in-law had three young children with her in India, gave Mrs. Hall many tips
240 how to ensure you’re getting fresh milk in India
246 Mrs. Hall would have been scared to have her children along, worried for their health
252 warned against eating fish, someone who died after eating fish in Mughalsarai
260 glad she saw these places, not sure she’d like them now, sees Indian poverty on TV now
267 Calcutta was an extraordinary place, great stores, clubs, but squalor on back streets
275 disparity in price of cotton and silk in India, Britain
284 increase in cashmere sweater prices at Marks & Spencer, difficulty in finding pure wool
these days
295 Mrs. Hall knits heirloom sweaters for her family
302 prices of sweaters, descriptions of sweaters, Guernsey sweaters
326 Mr. Hall models his Guernsey sweater, discusses advantages of sweater
342 difficulty of finding woolen stockings, horror of cold feet
351 end of interview

Tape 846, Side B cont’d

Salmons (Part 1 of 5) (846.2)
353 March 6, 1978, interview with Colonel W.H. Salmon, at Turnbridge Wells
357 family tradition of Indian Army service, five generations dating back to 1760
363 postings of great-great grandfather, 42 years in India
375 family came from Cheshire, Salmon enjoys tracing its pedigree, were landed gentry, hid
during Restoration
395 shows family portraits in gallery, recounts their Indian service
405 great grandfather who was a great adventurer commissioned as ensign in Madras at age
fifteen, fell in love with general’s daughter, to general’s displeasure, eloped with daughter,
general sent him to Fort William as punishment, couple remained there for six years
440 great grandfather sent wife and three kids back to Madras so he could fight in Afghan
War, traveled across territory disguised as a native
460 he and his regiment’s attempt to capture fort, great grandfather led victorious attack
470 greatly impressed another general
479 great grandfather walked all the way back to Fort William, served in Mutiny and took
part in siege of Delhi
491 grandfather also served in Madras, eventually retired in Cannanore, in southern India
505 grandfather’s awe for his own father
515 great grandfather more or less ruled whole Cannanore area
519 grandfather joined Hyderabad Contingent, commanded 3rd infantry battalion through two
Burmese wars
530 grandfather captured the [Bo?], famous outlaw in Burma, was rewarded with gong
548 grandfather died just before war, house bombed during war