

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

Tape 852 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Brigadier Richard Gardiner and Mrs. Catherine Gardiner

COLLECTION: 4700.0578 Tape 852 (Tape 5 of 7)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES: 3/8/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 852, Side A

Gardiners (Part 6 of 10)

- 001 The railway needed maintenance
- 010 before machines, tamping was done by hand
- 027 the locomotive department was separate, running sheds
- 039 Mrs. Gardiner talks about going out on the [trooper?]
- 040 she was in a cabin with three other wives while he was in a cabin with the husbands
- 041 crazy man started shooting targets with his air pistol
- 052 nanny brought washed diapers to hang dry in the women's cabin but the Captain, upon inspection, threw the diapers out of the portal
- 062 inspecting dinners
- 082 different dinners for men and women
- 097 her mother bought her expensive evening and ball gowns in anticipation of many social events but her husband was a soldier assigned to railways
- 099 after arriving, they moved to a rural area called [Motta Pur?] where she was the only English woman
- 107 for the first month life was difficult because Richard was away, but she made friends with a few locals who introduced her to Indian culture

118 Lord [Willingdon?] “now we know why there is a servant shortage in England”
 123 they had the same servants follow them all around India
 132 no Indians were allowed into Saturday Clubs in Calcutta, but she thinks this is dreadful
 142 the wonderful army in Delhi carrying on
 147 the pitfalls of dividing a country (Pakistan/India/Bangladesh) many people murdered
 158 Richard’s mother and father had been to India, but her mother’s preconception about
 attending balls was wrong
 165 after living in the jungle, Mrs. Gardiner abhorred socially elite life ways
 169 spent time horse-back riding, swimming “not much for a white woman to do”
 188 Indian people looked upon girls as nothing--servants would bring presents to the boys,
 but not the girls
 191 women not encouraged to get involved in discussions about culture, politics, etc., and not
 encouraged to get socially involved as women did in England
 200 squatters in Peru lived difficult lives, but it was not permitted to discuss the poverty of
 Peruvian Indians
 223 hunting at the Christmas shoot and someone shot a panther; the female came out and
 someone shot her too. Mrs. Gardiner now opposes all hunting
 268 back to the discussion of life on the railway
 277 time-tables, engineers, the locomotive man, general managers
 287 Richard’s job as Inspector of Railways in Burma involved a responsibility to the
 government and the safety of the railways
 308 he was responsible for the inquiry into accidents where damages exceeded a certain
 amount of money or where people died
 316 he inspected new signal boxes and rail cars
 370 special inquiries in courts of law, i.e., the Tay Bridge disaster; 75 people dead
 414 zinc mine owners near Burma Road had a mineral rail line that he inspected
 432 he later became the Director of Transportation during the war including railways, rivers,
 troops, and docks
 441 he raised a railway construction company in Bangalore and also raised troops
 478 the Burma War
 480 river steamers and paddle steamers during WWI; the river was main transport before
 railways
 517 transportation difficulties on the Ganges
 540 a retired Commodore with the Indian Navy during WWI whom they consulted in later
 years about water transportation difficulties
 587 explosion of ship in Bombay Harbor in 1943 demolished the dock

Tape 852, Side B

Gardiners (Part 7 of 10)

001 the geographical and geological layout of Peru
 011 the Indian railway system was very efficient, especially because every man concentrated
 on being a railway man, as opposed to today when unions don’t care about the passengers
 025 being a railway man was a good caste
 029 traveling in the train was quite comfortable
 032 extensive Indian railway system, Delhi to Calcutta took two and a half days
 034 passengers brought bedding for night journeys

036 cabins had benches that could sleep four and a bathroom
 044 meals--either a restaurant car or ate at restaurants in the station
 053 wiring ahead to restaurants, ordinary meals were roast chicken
 062 people took servants with them on trains in first or second class coach although there
 were railway porters
 071 the question of caste always present in tasks performed by servants, railway porters, etc.
 074 Richard met his wife at Chattham
 090 shooting/hunting
 098 hockey and golf played on sand in India; golf courses called "browns" instead of "greens"
 122 interviewers and interviewee looking at photos of a trip from Delhi to Agra to Lucknow
 146 dogs were great companions
 149 a photo of a contractor on the CIC was evidence in his investigation, man was paid for
 work that he did not do
 155 a photo of a pool of water at the Viceroy's house in Delhi
 167 this house has recently been in the news because the president no longer wants to live
 there because of its size and vestiges of pageantry
 173 Indians used to love show and pageantry, but the current rulers are ultra-socialists
 178 a photo of his bungalow where he lived during his course for inspectors
 203 riding elephants to hunt; shooting panthers and hunting bears
 254 photo of ship
 271 rail bridges across the Ganges River
 275 railway volunteer corps, internal security
 277 making an armored railcar
 290 the revolution (Gandhi) shut down the railway for a week, cut off from Delhi
 299 hill stations designed for wives to go to from April until October, bungalows for rent
 311 men got fortnights to join his family
 321 hill stations for rest and relaxation
 332 they were expected to be members of the club, but the Gardiners only used to club for
 their facilities, but not for dancing and drinking
 351 the Calcutta Sweep, a race run by the Calcutta Golf [?] Club
 370 Various clubs (golf, tennis, gun, etc.)
 379 in Calcutta, business men made more than service men and thus there weren't too many
 army personnel in the social clubs
 388 however in Delhi, where there were a lot of service men who belonged to clubs
 397 railway officer grades had their own clubs, separate from the sergeants'
 415 club life--different types, number of people, differences between clubs in India and in
 England
 464 Mrs. Gardiner liked the Saturday Club
 469 Burma is less dusty, and thus easier to photograph
 484 they never got malaria because they knew how to use a mosquito net
 486 he had jaundice once while traveling with troops
 508 they swam for exercise
 521 an experiment he conducted on locomotives after an accident to test if the design for the
 locomotive was faulty, description of locomotive and engine set up
 590 railway accident at Dimapur that involved derailment of the whole train, they found a
 great deformation of the track that indicated a faulty locomotive . . . unfinished story