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Tape 862 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
G.N. Jackson 4700.0588 Tape 862.1 (Tape 2 of 3)
Major General R.C.A. Edge and Mrs. Patricia Edge 4700.0586 Tape 862.2 (Tape 3 of 3)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro and Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:
Jackson: 4/2/1978
Edge: 3/31/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 34 minutes
Jackson: 53 minutes
Edge: 41 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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INDEX

Tape 862, Side A
Edges (Part 3 of 3) (862.2)
004 many people were being killed in Rawalpindi
006 most of the last part of his time spent was trying to stop the murders and keep everything together
008 when Partition came, all the Hindus were sent to India while the Muslims came back; it was difficult to get the Muslims back because the trains were always being attacked
011 had to arrange for guarded trains to ensure the Muslims would make it back to Pakistan
015 they did not have enough maps of Pakistan so they were printing some in Dorado (?); Edge had to go and get them released
023 he once went to get a Muslim friend’s family and bring them to Pakistan; instead of just three or four family members, there was a “busload” of family members
038 the train was already full, so the only way to get everyone on board was to shove them in there; Edge refused to leave until the whole family was on the train
they all arrived safely
one favorable characteristic of the Indians is that they are a grateful people; the Muslim friend became a friend for life and still exchange Christmas cards
during the mutiny, the Muslim friend’s ancestors had rescued a British family
Kenneth Wilson was in Delhi and was having the same problems in reverse; he was trying to prevent the Muslims from being killed in Delhi
changed positions
one preoccupation was the arguments over the frontiers, especially in east Bengal, east Pakistan and India; they had to establish a boundary commission
by then, his wife had left; he left a year or so later because you cannot stay forever; he stayed on long enough to get the others started
when he went home, he went into the British service, which he did not care for at all
Kenneth Wilson went out again; his friend Rex stayed a little while longer, retired and was replaced by Kenneth as a civilian general
Edge did not particularly care for a particular civilian general while in Pakistan, but now they are very close friends
in a way, Edge was glad to get home, but was sad at leaving; was excited to get back home because his wife and children were there
everyone notices how green England is after being in India, which was very brown
discuss pictures
their daughter was taught various Hindu hymns in the Hindu temple near their home
Edge lived in a haunted house in Bihar as a child, though he never saw the ghost; Patricia’s house was not haunted because it was too modern
[Tratral?] is a great place for natural polo
you played many games with the troops; hockey and polo were the most popular sports
Edge was never very fond of shooting, unlike some
in India, you spent lots of time outdoors and in camp; survey camps were enjoyable; depending on what you were doing, you stayed in one area for a good amount of time or you moved around
it was usually pleasant being in one place one day, then moving somewhere else to observe there was primitive transportation
it was always nice to arrive at a new place and find camp already set-up and the bearer has a hot bath and whiskey or tea waiting on you
it was a very unsettled life; Edge and his wife moved thirty-nine times while married; they did not mind moving, although not everyone was like that
people in the secretary at Delhi and the ICS would keep two homes, one in Delhi and the other in Shimla
moving around frequently made it difficult to have a beautiful home and furniture
you would never buy furniture because you would hire it
there was a temporary nature to everything in India; the Indians take naturally to this type of lifestyle
the Indians are great at moving because they are always moving around, either between villages, on their way home or on their way back from home
each regiment had its own recruiting area; everyone once in a while, you would be sent on a recruiting tour, although Edge never went on one
there were always more recruits than you were able to recruit so you had to take the physically best prospects and send them to the training battalion
it was amazing to see the change in the recruits from entering training to the time they were finished; it took six months to make them look different, but the training went on longer depending on where you were, you might have had a government bungalow; larger areas may allow you to have a government bungalow, rent, or buy one from someone some civilians, like secretaries, seemed to be static; although the ICS had nice headquarters in their district, they were required to tour a lot too the district was a more direct responsibility of the junior ICS officers, which were sometimes the size of a small country Edge’s group did more and wider touring because they were responsible for all of India you would get used to traveling; one of the things about going back to England was that it took time to get used to not moving somewhere else; it affects the children too because they also get used to moving Nicholas [Braybook?] had the opinion that all religions are similar and was going to organize a tour based on that idea; if you want to see India, the religious shrines are not the only things worth seeing talk about some of their photos in one area, there were a lot of crocodiles Edge’s father did a lot of touring; talks about the PWD bungalow when you are touring, you would find bungalows that would become the center of the camp there were servants that stayed with them the entire time; there are a few that they still keep in touch with the trains were always interesting because of the places they went through the Indian woman in the picture was married to the son of “the Frontier Gandhi” look at a photograph of a winter home they had they decorate the elephants for ceremonies and special occasions horses played a significant role in India when Edge was growing up; they seemed to have disappeared when he returned cars are difficult to get in India and are extremely expensive India is famous for making things that should not go actually go talk about Edge’s short-stories look at a various pictures of his father Edge’s father retired particularly young because he was did not like work very much; he had to decide to either stay on another couple of years and be separated from his family or retire at forty-five usual retirement age in India is in the early fifties, partly because they “were half dead” by then; people often retired because their families had to go home look at more pictures theatricals were an important part of life because there was a large group of people there; Patricia was in a dramatic production the planes were famous for their flooding; Edge’s father and the PWD dealt a lot with that both of Edge’s sisters went out to India; one went out with the fishing fleet, but she was not very successful in India; she taught at a convent in Delhi end of Edge interview

Tape 862, Side A cont’d
Jackson (Part 1 of 4) (862.1) beginning of Jackson interview
he went in the government service; he started in the Indian police service
did a lot of court and case work, prosecutions, investigations and general supervision;
British officers were really in supervisory positions
the whole police force were Indians, except for one or two British officers per district; the
force could run perfectly without the British, as it was designed to
Jackson was one of two supervisors in a district of one million people; was in the Punjab
he then went to the Northwest Frontier province and joined a semi-military police force;
the main goal was guarding the frontier from raiders coming from outside India; they
performed civilian duties against armed raiding bands of about 100 men
he was then invited to join the political service, being recruited from existing servicemen in
India; there was no direct recruitment from England and it was filled by officers from the
Indian Civil Service, Indian Army and Indian Police
you got into the Indian police force by passing a civil service exam commissioners in
England
the Indian police department was divided into two parts: it represented India to neighboring
countries, where India needed to be represented, and it administered India’s relations with
the frontier peoples
they shared with the foreign office the posts in Iran on the Persian Gulf
external affairs department was started by the Indian police service; the districts in the
Northwest Frontier were administered by the police service because it was a frontier
district
the crown representatives were representatives of the crown to the kings and princes; the
crown representatives were also the viceroy
the external affairs area dealt with affairs outside the frontiers

Tape 862, Side B
Jackson (Part 3 of 4) (862.1)

it was expected of the ruling people to take over
Indians were very hierarchical people; the British hierarchical system was more so because
of the Indian influence
you only had to go to a maharajah’s court to see a good demonstration of hierarchy; you
would have to pay to be in the audience
you would set out to put your tents on the ground where everything happened; called tent
clubs
went pig sticking in India, but he did not have time to do very much; did some in Iraq by
himself
if the conditions are easy, you can do it yourself; it is almost the only thing you can do by
yourself
the conditions in Iraq are easy because there was a large number of pigs that all acted in a
predictable way, the ground was flat and easy to ride on, and there was limited cover for the
pigs to hide in
in the Ganges Carter, the grass was extremely high, pigs were unpredictable and were few
in numbers, terrain was terrible, and it required three men to go and catch one
pig sticking in India involved a good number of tents, ten or twelve people, thirty or so
horses, a large number of beaters, some cattle and elephants for larger hunts; it was no
more than a fox hunt in England
everyone in Peshawar would go out on the hunts; if you did not have a horse, you could rent one from the cavalry;

amusements in India were self-made

besides dancing and balls, there was bird shooting or big game shooting

it was not difficult in those days to shoot a tiger; you were encouraged to shoot panthers because they were seen as a nuisance by anyone that had livestock or loved ones

Jackson did shoot a panther before; that particular panther had killed a calf the night before; he sat in a tree during the night, waiting for the panther to return to its kill

it was very exciting and he did it because someone had asked him to do it; it was normally the poor asking him to kill panthers because they had to survive on the limited livestock; he was also the only one with a gun

Jackson was the first of his family to go out to India; it made a slight difference

there was a great tradition of going out to India and many families had been there a very long time; most of the famous names from the mutiny could be found in the army lists, but not all were in the army

the reason for most of them being in the army is because the army was so easy to get into; the rest of the services were recruited by competitive exams given from the schools and universities of England; there was no guarantee that someone working out there would win the competition

the large number of British in India over the years had connections in the army because they were the most numerous people there

if your name was one of the famous names from the mutiny, any army regiment would be happy to have you; the government exams limited the number of people accepted for those jobs; the armies love the names of famous generals

many of them had been there for generations; many regiments had been started off as the mercenary regiments of the military adventurers and known for the name of their founders; officers of those names are still serving

the British government services in India were elite and carefully chosen; they were better than the civil services in England; the Indian Civil Service could not have been more than

the intake for the Indian Civil Service was around twelve per year; the same for the Indian police; the Indian army may have been around sixty; it was rare to see anyone of these outside the large towns

they were trying to run the country for the Indians benefit; they had established a strong military position; there was an atmosphere of “benevolent paternalism”

they were civil servants that treated the people as they would have to treat people back home

the Victorian ideal was carried on as a tradition; the standards of integrity in the public service departments in India were miles above the current standards in England

the way of life was an older way of life that seemed to be at least thirty years behind; they were still living pre-1914, at least socially

the motorcars killed the horse transportation system, although many kept their horses because they were fun

there were horse-carriage regiments that were not recognized until 1939

the social life really centered around the club, which survived much longer in India than in England; they are like the country clubs in America

clubs in England were established as a small social club for those that controlled all the
money and prestige; the early clubs were filled with those that were richer than anyone else in England; they died out when the wealth became more evenly distributed

clubs in India went on because that was the form in India; there were few that had plenty while the rest had none; those with plenty money went to the clubs; the same is true about the country clubs in America

one generation of millionaires did not talk to the second generation, although Jackson cannot figure out why

the west in America was very hierarchical; it seemed to be based on how long you had been making one million dollars a year; most made their money from the railways

there was always a club at headquarters; when all the service administrations were being run by the British, there would be a collector, doctor, public works engineer, education department chief, chief of police, some had a civil judge and soldiers; there may have been some planters; this was enough people to have a club

as the services were “Indianized”, the doctors soon became all Indian; the education and public works department became almost all Indian; the police force and ICS was about fifty percent Indian

as the Indians began to take over the jobs, they became more frequent in the clubs; by the time Jackson arrived, there would only be a few white faces among all the Indians

if you were in a cantonment with two or three regiments, there would be about thirty soldiers and wives; in the tea district, there would be tea growers and no soldiers

there are numerous clubs in Calcutta; there are many state managers in the clubs of Bombay and Calcutta; also many business men

dares to think there are more British in India now than when the British were in charge because of all the business activity, both in principles and as employees

amazing that people could responsibly exercise large amount of power and differently; British were not thrown out of India, left because they thought it was the right thing to do

if the British could have gotten out before antagonists began to capitalize on the long British rule, people may have adjusted better, but it is difficult to say

you lived with the Indians, not the British; all the people actively engaged in anything in India lived with the Indians

the British army was not involved with their Indian troops, unlike the Indian army

the average district consisted of one million people, all under the responsibility of the district commissioner; nearly all the district commissioner’s staff, including the senior members and supervisors, were Indian

Jackson was never in Calcutta; there were some very rich Indian businessmen in Calcutta doing business with each other; the area of business was not a monopoly of the British, they only ran some of the things

Jackson left in January of 1947; it was a gradual transition to being stationed in India; he first went out in 1933

English adjusted selves very well after leaving India; found they were able to handle the competition of England and fit into some type of leadership role well

Jackson is an insurance broker

there were physical living difficulties in India; it was extremely hot and uncomfortable; the food was terrible; depending on where you were, you sometimes could not find an English-type meal

you would only go on leave every four years

the economy was different in England; salaries were better than those in England, but
everything was lower-quality; you had more of everything, but everything was inferior
you were forced to take your civilization with you and teach it to people; you only enjoyed
the level of civilization that you took with you; you had to teach the servants everything
you knew
there were no air conditioners and primitive refrigerators were just beginning to come in;
winter came so suddenly that everyone caught the flu; the winters were nice and
comfortable, but summer would suddenly come again, along with the flu and hepatitis
you had to be tough and vigorous to survive; the European cemeteries were full of people
that died before age twenty; if you survived to twenty, you would usually live a long time
India was full of malaria; you could never sleep without a mosquito net; there was also
water contaminating insects; some insects would bore holes in the skin that would never
heal; dysentery and cholera were very common
Jackson once killed a snake that was climbing out of the bathroom drain with a hockey
stick
the bathrooms were very primitive
home leave was every four years; there was a ten day per year short leave; trip to Kashmir
to do whatever you pleased
people of Kashmir were aware of the type of army movements and turned it into a tourist
attraction; you see the scenery on horseback, reaching a new, freshly pitched tent every
evening with tea and food waiting
there was a two-tent system, so you arrived with everything already up; you could save
money by having them set-up camp when you arrived
you could fish for trout in nearby streams
the Eurasian community was slightly underprivileged because they were not completely
accepted by the Indian or the British, but not completely unaccepted
end of tape