INTERVIEWEES NAMES:
Philip Mason  4700.0589   Tape 863.1   (Tape 1 of 3)
G.N. Jackson   4700.0588   Tape 863.2   (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

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1.5 hours   [original and copy of Tape 863 are missing]

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 863, Side A
Jackson (Part 4 of 4) (863.2)
001 every railway community had a regiment, some descending from the earlier military adventurers
012 many people that went out during the war found many attractive Indians and married them; their isolation increasingly diminished until the mutiny
019 after the mutiny, there was certain business between the British and Indians that concerned the women that were arriving on the steam ships
021 British women had no competition from the Indian or Eurasian women
022 up until the mutiny, it was very rare for British women to go to India; the arrival of the steamship allowed the women to come out during the winter; they came out in large numbers and introduced the stricter divisions
026 by the time Jackson left; he noticed many changes in the divisions and rapid Indianization
031 Jackson was the last recruit to the Indian political service; after him, there were no more British officers; before him, the officers were half British and half Indian
Jackson entered political service in 1939; the first district officer he worked for was Indian on the whole, the British knew it was expected to put on a good show and present themselves in a popular manner; there was a constant move towards simplifying it though; the British were good at removing things that were not there people working for the viceroy really earned pay; they were constantly moving about, training and such; there was no idle part of life; this is the way it had to be the British contribution to India was the rule of law and a complete integrity of the civil service, building of canals and land revenue; there was no idea of any of this until the British got into India the work in India was not appreciated by the people back in England; they had no conception of the work that was being done in India; the British public and parliament never wanted India the Moguls slowly fell apart; then the French Wars began and the country powers chose sides, destroying anything being built administratively when Clyde Hastings came home, they impeached him because no one really wanted India the East India Company had its own army to guard its own trading stations; Clyde was drafted as a quarter master; as things went on, the East India Company began to get more and more involved in local disputes the result was the viceroy of Bengal becoming involved with the East India Company and began a hold on Calcutta Clyde was sent with a modest force of the East Indian Company’s army of Europeans to face a large army at the Battle of Plassey and won in that system, the soldiers were paid very little by the East India Company; they were not allowed to loot anyone after they had defeated them; the valuables were distributed in an orderly manner to everyone, based on rank the system still survives in the Royal Navy; anything they capture in war or rescue on the seas, they divide the proceeds evenly between everyone this was the type of system Clyde had; after being impeached, he told the House that he was “amazed by [his] own moderations” Jackson sees plenty of people from India through various reunions and get-togethers; many of the regiments had associations Jackson remembers India very clearly; early years were a very happy, active experience that is more easily remembered than his times in the diplomatic services later in life; he is in regular correspondence with his cook from Pakistan Argentina is the most Europeanized of all the countries in South America; British established all the public utilities, shipping business also a large Irish connection to Argentina because the Catholics fit in well with the Spanish; there are establish Irish-Argentinian and Anglo-Argentinian families that now only half speak English; they are settled Ecuador is very inaccessible and has not really been influenced by Europe since the sixteenth century, apart from the conquistadores; there were no European colonists until they began fighting Spain for their independence and England sent troops to help; after the first battle with the British troops, the fight was over apart from the British general and admiral that stayed, there were no more Europeans there until a boat of Jews from Germany landed seeking refuge from Hitler; by the time the British got there, the twenty Jews that had landed in Ecuador had completely taken over
and were in everything

one or two English and American families built a railway; about half a dozen British families stayed and are still there, but barely speak English; the same happened for the six or so American families that stayed

with the arrival of the airplane and airlines, people began flooding into places like Ecuador the countries were at least 100 years behind the rest of the world; they skipped the carriage age, going straight from the pack horse to the airplane

the roads are made for pack transport; automobiles were barely able to get up and down the roads until the Americans built the Pan-American Highway

they enjoyed the time in Ecuador; it took about a year to become adjusted to it though

the people in Ecuador were Christianized-Arabs

drop of Jackson interview

Tape 863, Side A cont'd
Mason (Part 1 of 5) (863.1)

beginning of Mason interview

he went to India very young and was fascinated with Kipling

his father was a doctor, but he did not care to follow his father

there was something very appealing about India; it was strong in the culture of the middle-class English before 1914

by the time he left school at eighteen, he hated Kipling; the idea of service was very strong

when asked why he wanted to go to India, he said the only reason was because it was an exciting place; he wanted to be part of the attempt to build-up India like they had done in Australia and South America

those thoughts “went into the background” when he arrived in India; he still believed it in a remote concept, but did not think about it that much; he was more concerned with doing the job they had to do

Mason had no family connections to India

he was curious about India and a felt that he knew it when he got there

after his first night, he saw people wrapped in sheets sleeping on the stations in Delhi; he felt that was how Delhi was and how he expected it to be

by age fourteen, Mason knew everything that Kipling had written, although at that time Kipling had not written his later books

they prepared for India at Oxford; the concept was education; it was a very bad year

the details to Indian history are really pointless; he found his courses in Indian history extremely boring because the points were boring

Mason did not read a lot about India in his last year

he went straight from Bombay to his first assignment, arriving at midnight and was put into a tent; the next morning, he was delighted to find the freshness of the morning

at breakfast, he was introduced to the chief magistrate; the job of the first year in India is to get a feel for the atmosphere, no one really does work their first year in India

he was visited by an official, who asked if Mason had any orders for him; he was like a quarter-master general for the collections office and commands all the messengers; for the first couple of days, Mason could never figure out anything he could do

gradually, the jobs Mason was assigned became more and more difficult

his first job was to certify that the corpses that were being brought in were those that
deserved an award for being in wars; was educated in the ways of faking recent deaths with older corpses

after about three weeks, he received word of a new case that was to be tried in his court; when he arrived at court, he learned it was a standard village case between two different parties claiming the same thing and beating each other up because of it; there was not any real damage done and Mason could not understand a word that was said

his clerk did not speak English; the case, which would normally have taken three days, took Mason about three weeks

after that, there were a few other criminal cases; he also went around the camps and did various inspections, especially such things as sanitation

they would always push things into your face in order to get your attention

he then went to a training camp; it was a terrible waste of four months; there were dull lectures on code and criminal procedures; they were treated like schoolboys

he then took the exam; no one really fails the exams because they were so easy

by the spring, he was put in charge of one of the divisions; this kept him very busy and was very hard work the first few days; the criminal work was simple and varied; the principles of the criminal work were the same

the main part of the work dealt with the land disputes; there were cases that had to go to the civil judges and concerned the actual ownership of the land; they operated on the basis of possession: if a man worked the land and paid taxes on it, his name went on the papers until a judge ordered the change

the only way a man could lose the land was if he stopped paying rent or had committed a crime

end of Side A

Tape 863, Side B
Mason (Part 3 of 5) (863.1)

ten to twenty pounds a week was the object for every Indian

the Indians influenced the English by their attitudes to authority and readiness to accept things

horses allowed you to go where automobiles would not; horses also allowed the Indians to see you and to talk to you

Mason’s friend had a car, given to him by his parents, would only start after being pushed; it was used in the station only.

the Indians had an authoritarian regime for thousands of years, but were eager to accept new things

the caste system made the English worse; the English were taught the caste system by the Indians

the attitude to interracial relationships with the Burmese was different because the Burmese did not have a caste system and were a different religion

Buddhism seems to be a more cheerful religion; the people in Burma seemed to be more cheerful than those in India

intermarriage caused a different attitude

a good number of British that went out to Burma intermarried; it was very common and considered nice by many of the men

in Morris’s day, English men living with Burmese women was unheard of for various
072 reasons there was a difference between north Anglo-India and south Anglo-India; the north was more efficient
084 the Hindu concept of ritual pollution did have an influence on the actions of the people
102 it was a great thing for a woman to have her own team of servants to carry and care for her bags and luggage; these men were chosen at the beginning of the season and given uniforms for that season; the men were highly competitive, especially at the beginning of the season
112 tells the story of the woman who learned that the men were outcasts from a familiar subdivision just by them telling her where they were from; men from Mason’s area would only go on a job like that if they were outcasts
087 the [Bungies?] were the sweepers, which was their class name
096 Mason never got the feeling that people were frightened of the Indians, even though they were a minority
115 tells the story his sister’s French hairdresser, who thought India was a terrible and dangerous place; it was not hard to believe that because of the attention from the media
122 when she arrived, she would be sent to the bazaar with a messenger that would show her around; she would go shopping by herself while Mason never really felt he had to worry about her safety
130 during the last few years of the war in Delhi, they would rarely chance upon soldiers that were unknown in the area and would be shooting peacocks
135 the British were not concerned about “going native” because they had their own communities and were too isolated from India; the army was even more isolated
145 there is a difference now because it is more dangerous for an American to go now and become absorbed into the culture; their once was an established system that one could fit into that were superimposed
182 the British were very concerned with punctuality and their clothes