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Tape 879 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Lamarque
4700.0599  Tape 879.1  (Tape 2 of 3)
Brigadier Frank McCallum, Mrs. Sybilla McCallum, Benjamin and Lady Bromhead
4700.0600  Tape 879.2  (Tape 1 of 2)

IDENTIFICATION:  Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWER:  Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES:  British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:
Lamarques:  4/28/1978
McCallums and Bromheads: 4/29/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME:  1 hour, 34 minutes
Lamarques: 47 minutes
McCallums and Bromheads: 47 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS:  None

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Tape 879, Side A
Lamarques (Part 2 of 3) (879.1)

006   this large community made everything “that much easier” when it came to club life; there was never any racial feeling at all in Bombay because of them
008   there were racial feelings in north India because there were grand Indians and “hoity-toity” Europeans who would refuse to mingle
010   in Calcutta, which is the center of British commercial life in India, there was the British businessman and Indians were not admitted to clubs as members
016   when Lamarque was there just before the end of war, there was a large concession: you were allowed to take an Indian as a guest to meals
019   even after Independence, there are still European clubs that will not admit Indians
021   there were very good reasons for doing this
023   the Indians are very “clannish”, keeping together and having their own clubs; no one
objects to this

in the days the British ruled India, you wanted a place in the larger cities where the
Europeans could get together in the evening and relax, talking about any subject one liked
Indians inhibited conversations and freedom of speech
the British loved going to the clubs and being sociable; the Indians find this slightly odd
the mistake that was made by the British was not saying yes to any Indian that wanted to
join the club; all the Indians wanted to know was that they could join if they wanted, for
they probably would have never actually joined
they may have joined the club, but they would have never actually gone because they do
not enjoy that type of life
the British should have allowed the Indians to join if they wished, gambling on the fact that
they never would have come
the clubs in the smaller villages varied as well; in some instances, Indians were allowed to
be members, but they never went
there was a European tennis club
Lamarque never really felt isolated, for he was the only European at times; he got so dug-in
that he would sometimes turn-down an invitation to go out to a dance
the roads were not very good
Lamarque had a planting area in one of his districts that was up in the hills; it was there that
there was a considerable European community
at the beginning of the war, the European men went off to war and the women were left
with some of the older men; Lamarque would go there sometimes for official business and
see how they were getting along
they were the only close Europeans, which was a journey itself
you could grow coffee from about 3-5000 feet, then tea from about 5000 onward
when you reached the hill station, it was absolutely gorgeous because you cooled down;
there were houses with fireplaces
there was a substantial European planting community in south India, growing coffee and
tea; it was all European owned in those days
most of the companies are now Indian;
the European farmers lived a pleasant life in many ways, although it was isolated; they
would gather at the clubs and such, even though they were far apart
there was one hill station in a farming area that would be a great place for the missionaries
to go for their holidays; Lamarque tells of other beautiful hill stations
the effect the weather had on your lifestyle varied from area to area
Lamarque began in a hot station, which was about ninety degrees all year round; there were
others that were not very hot but were very wet, some having 120 inches rain in 60 days
being in the tropics was somewhat depressing because you would not see the sun very often
for a few months out to the year; it would always rain around tea time
there was always a pleasant breeze coming off the sea; you could keep cool by jumping
into the Pacific Ocean
one would get up early and go off on an inspection or such about seven in the morning; he
would get back home at about half past eight and be holding court by nine in the morning
starting court so early was not popular with the lawyers because the lawyers did not like to
start so early
the idea of starting at nine was because the weather was much cooler; later in the day, one
would nod to sleep because of the heat
Lamarque would have brunch, followed by about a thirty minute break; there was then writing judgments and correspondence from the morning’s cases if you were lucky, you would get out at about five-thirty for a tennis game; there was the evening meal, followed by either work or relaxation a full day was enjoyable because there was nothing else to do no one would spend more than about ten days in headquarters before going off on tour, staying at traveler’s bungalows everything was done very comfortably; there would be a bus to take your gear and servants; the bungalows would normally be pretty-much furnished the cook and bearer would go ahead to prepare for the master’s arrival there were no domestic worries, unless the servants were stealing or something; being a bachelor, one never really worried about that the term “sahib” was not used in southern India, opting for “master” instead; the servants tended to speak English you never heard the English use the word “sahib” except for a joke southern India did have its own jargon, it was just different from that in the north; gives some examples there were many differences between the northern and southern terms the British troops in southern India in the 18th century bought all of the words back to England the district officer was called “collector” in southern India, as opposed to being called “commissioner” in the north there was a definite line between northern and southern India service; in Madras, they were a separate caste all together the idea that the Indians were anti-British in their conduct is false; Lamarque never felt any such feelings towards the British the press would “let itself go” about the conduct of the British government the Indians did it only because it was the expected thing; in personal relations, Lamarque never came across any animosity the only time there was any real anti-British rioting was when Lamarque was in Bombay in 1946; the Indian navy mutinied (on very good grounds in Lamarque’s opinion) they turned against their officers, who were mostly British Lamarque remembers being stopped by an antique European bum that wanted Lamarque to take his tie off; they believed the tie was a symbol of imperialism the only way to be addressed was with an open collar; Lamarque was happy to agree it was inconceivable for the Indians to feel hostile towards the British in southern India because the Federal Constitution never came into being, the British government was still responsible for the foreign affairs and defense of India; the only constitutional needs of declaring war was with the viceroy to declare it on behalf of India this was psychologically bad because there was a British representative on the Queen’s behalf declaring war on behalf of four hundred million people; it was much better than being a vote in Parliament the viceroy declared war and the congress administers never forgave this; they came out in protest, starting with discouraging people from joining the war and the services this was a breach in the Defense of India contract, which had been passed during the war it was all done very politely; the local politician would ring up the police, proposing to make an anti-war speech in such and such square at such and such time
the police inspector would be sent with a notebook, writing all the offensive statements in their notebooks; the speaker would then be arrested, which he knew he would be

the speaker would go up against the magistrate; there would be a quick, private trial

he would usually plead guilty, but always pleading guilty would get you two or three months in jail

he would live in comparative comfort in jail as a Class A prisoner; his family would visit; he would earn merit among his constituents as the man who stood up against the British

there was no feelings on either side, except for one of fairly good humor

the intense feelings were between the Indians; Lamarque believes those in the south were fortunate for not experiencing this because of the lack of Muslims

in the Rebellion of 1942, the Congress “went to town” on the anti-war ticket, tearing up railway lines and disrupting communications

Lamarque missed everything because he was on leave in Kashmir at the time

it was a serious matter because the British were put up against the wall with the Japanese

in the last few months, the British were just spectators of the most horrific killings between the Hindus and Muslims

in 1945 or 1946, there was a horrible massacre in Calcutta; there was another in Delhi in the last few months, in which the Muslim office staff were in fear of their lives

Lamarque went out by boat, like most everyone else, and went to Bombay, where he took a train and went to Madras

Lamarque spent about ten days going around and meeting all the department heads and so forth

Lamarque’s first station was as an assistant collector

your main business for the first year was to be trained; you were required to take more language exams, law exams; you were attached to the various departments

you started hearing cases immediately as a third-class magistrate; simple cases

you eventually built up to a second-class magistrate and then a first-class magistrate

after about a year, you were given more responsibility; after about two years, you went on independently

India was terribly strange to the newcomer; you soon got into it

you are kept so busy that there really was not time to see the forest for the trees; you would worry so much about the next problem that you did not have time to think about why you were there

the war killed the topi; when Lamarque first went out to India, the topi was very popular

the drill was to never buy a topi in London; the place to buy a topi was Port Said; when arriving in Bombay, Lamarque leaned over the rail to see, only to be told never to do that without wearing a topi

one did not much worry about the topi on the whole while in south India, although Lamarque would wear his during the heat of the day

the troops came out in the fall and no one wore the topi, and no one was worse off; that was the end and they were never seen again

if you were going out in the heat of the day in the hot weather, especially in north India, you want something on your head to prevent a terrible headache

Lamarque joined the Federal Government when he was fairly young, they were shorthanded during the war

Lamarque wishes he could have spent more time in the districts, having gone to the government of India, he never got back; he would have preferred to be in the districts, for
practically everyone did

working in Delhi was interesting because you were concerned with high political matters and were able to meet the great men of the time; one felt they were “at the center of things” in terms of independence of operations, there was none; you were one of the team it was a hard, slow day of pushing the file around, signing your name and writing minutes it was interesting but it lacked the variety that life in the districts had; on the other hand, there was the bonus of getting a slightly better pay most of the Indian Civil Servants preferred to work with the peasants, which has always been said by people it was easier to get along with the simple peasant versus the highly-educated; Lamarque does not know why this is so one always felt that the politician or businessman was arrogant or appeared as such; the politicians and businessmen tended to think the ICS was arrogant they seemed artificial and unattractive in terms of character; the Indian villager was the one that deserved admiration because he had very little but had a great sense of humor, great courage and great resources the villager showed the very basic, natural life; they displayed how life should be lived and never seemed to be worried the villagers were likeable people Lamarque supposes that those in the ICS came from professional backgrounds, not necessarily humble ones; they were the sons of lawyers, doctors and such those in the ICS had to be highly educated, indicating that their parents had to have some wealth Lamarque does not think those in the ICS were necessarily from royal backgrounds when you reached India, one would engage in the type of rural sports that would have never been possible in England, like shooting, riding or such

end of Side A

Tape 879, Side B

McCallums and Bromheads (Part 1 of 2) (879.2)

upon arriving in India, McCallum was told that he was heading for a good regiment and they wished him well and luck getting there no one seemed to know where his destination village was he could not find anywhere to spend the night because everything was so crowded; he went back on board the ship and slept there for the night he was sent to another station, who knew nothing about him there were ten Gorkha regiments during peace time, all being gradually reduced they left without any arms because the battalion was being rearmed this was the beginning of 1919; McCallum was nineteen years old they were very badly treated, having old-fashioned equipment; they had a canvas pack, rather than a normal pack the pay was three hundred rupees a month (or about 20 pounds); you fed yourself, clothed yourself, etc. there was one station that had no garrison McCallum assumed it was safest for him the less he said, for he was only nineteen years old McCallum’s regiment decided to stay at one station, even though the British there were being beaten and left for dead in the city
the only problem was that they had no rifles
a group went off to the fort; it was an experience
the British families had been evacuated; there was a hushed silence upon looking at camp
McCallum was told to return at midnight, along with a British civilian; they spent the night in a ditch on the side of the road
upon returning, there were three or four more white ladies that had been rescued from the city
the next morning, they sat outside the gates but nothing happened; they returned to the station to be greeted with reinforcements
the next morning they moved camp around a club
there was a civilian doctor there that said not to allow the men to fire the guns from the fort because there were bees
McCallum was told to stay at the police station with about thirty men
no one trusted anyone else
the police were very good to McCallum, feeding him and such; McCallum was told that there were prisoners in the cell and there may be a rescue attempt
McCallum was then told to open fire if the crowd assembles, shooting to kill
at the end of 1922, the brigade was encamped and reconnaissance was made on the road ahead
a group of local “scallywags” and a Sapper went ahead to survey the road; they were shot at by some locals because the locals did not like the way they looked
the Sapper was hit; the bullets bounced off of Ben’s head
there was a disagreement between two men over some work one did while building the roads
one of the men destroyed some of the work and the other hired someone to “bump him off”
one of the camps began shooting at McCallum, hoping to frighten them; the attackers were held off and McCallum’s group continued on
according to McCallum, all Sappers are “mad”
McCallum was “too stupid to be scared” when he tried to cross a clearing on the way home; one of the men he was with was shot in the pelvis and died
McCallum dodged behind the nearest bush or rock; he was shot in the finger and never noticed it until someone made mention about it
McCallum did not know what to do, so he just laid there; he was unable to get his revolver out to use it
once the firing seemed to settle, McCallum lifted his head and was nearly missed by a deflected bullet
McCallum laid back down and did not know what to do next, although there was not much else to do; he suddenly heard voices and noticed their escort arriving
a Sikh came out on his own two miles out to check on McCallum
McCallum joined the Indian army because one always thought there would be some excitement; they also joined because you could afford to live off your salary from the Indian army
mosquitos were terrible
it was alright, until you would hear a “Bang!” in the middle of the night; McCallum would say to himself, “Oh, here comes the crowd.”
in the morning, McCallum would go back to the club; everyone was there
there were leather easy-chairs in the club, where McCallum would take a nap
McCallum talks of the famous shooting in 1923; the Gorkhas and the [“Cookies”]? went on firing, killing many
the Hunter Commission came out to investigate; none of the officers were asked to give evidence, which is considered to be disgraceful to McCallum
a guard and others had been taken down from their garrisons
one of the British men decided on his own that if any of the locals wanted to go past a certain point, they would have to crawl
McCallum was then sent to Bihar with six men
they were told that all of the trains coming up would have guards aboard; McCallum was told to take the guards off and put his six on
no guards ever turned up; McCallum got rid of his six men, being left with an old man and a cook
the station was extremely comfortable; it did not matter that McCallum had no money, all you had to do was sign the check and everything was all right
McCallum went to the local headquarters after about two days at the station, asking to go back; he was allowed to do so
McCallum appointed himself as the next escort for the next train down
by the time he returned, everything had calmed down and they were on their way to Peshawar
McCallum maintains that the leader knew things were bad and the Frontier militia was revolting
there were a number of rifles that had disappeared
around the fifth of May, they were told to send a flying column up
the Punjab was very lovely; some people said they would be disappointed, but that was not the case
the most memorable were the beautiful Indian women that were seen everywhere; there was a tremendous amount of hospitality and affection shown to the British by the Indians people were always pleased to see you and could never seem to do enough for you
everything in the mess was left immaculate; all of the photographs were framed on the wall there was no feeling of resentment anywhere, even in Pakistan
none of them had served with British officers, but the tradition continued none the less
some of the things that were carried on had been started by the British officers but had improved, like a better hospital with a female doctor that had been taught in America
many of the things that had been started in a modest way had been improved as well
the difference between the rich and poor Indians was more apparent as one grew older
Mrs. McCallum had both grandfathers serve under India Company; McCallum’s grandfather served with a British battalion, going out just after the mutiny
his grandfather married a missionary’s daughter named Smith; his grandfather was later forced to leave the service because the pay was inadequate for a married officer
Mrs. McCallum had an uncle that worked on the railway in India, whose brother became a famous engineer in India; they were a “white subordinate” family
one brother would save enough money to have the next brother sent back and become educated; the third brother became a doctor
when the McCallum’s returned for a visit in 1972, they went up by road; they were met by a very smart major at the top of a pass and a very smart lieutenant
there was an old library that had been transformed into a guest house
there was an officer that told McCallum, “This is your ADC.” McCallum replied, “I’ve
never had an ADC in my life!”

514 McCallum was given guards that helped to make thing much easier and made them very comfortable

517 the major suddenly produced a medal from his pocket, telling of how his father received the medal at one of the mutiny sites; his father was a French and the major was extremely pleased that he had the medal

530 the major is now settled in Australia; this amazes McCallum

537 before the McCallums finally left India, they received an album of all the photographs taken during the visit; they were able to attend one of the popular festivals

545 in Mrs. McCallum’s younger days, the wives were never able to attend some of the festivals

552 there was a tradition in that the British officers that had joined the regiment since the last festival had to participate in the next

564 for one festival, they had to cut the head off of the pagan goat; if they did not get it on the first try, the crowd would rush in and smear your face with the blood

568 the British officers joined in all of the Indian religious ceremonies

570 there was a great slaughter of a buffalo, which was tied to a pole in the middle of a rectangle area