

T. Harry Williams Center of Oral History

Tape 887 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

Brigadier Richard Gardiner and Mrs. Catherine Gardiner

4700.0578 Tape 887.1 (Tape 7 of 7)

Doris G. Harlow

4700.0607 Tape 887.2 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: 7/10/1978

Harlow: 7/13/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes

Gardiners: 80 minutes

Harlow: 13 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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INDEX

Tape 887, Side A

Gardiners (Part 9 of 10) (887.1)

001 third interview

002 never heard of anyone seeing ghosts; had ghosts at his aunt's house; not ghost believer

015 remembers staying with friend and walking around in graveyard and reading tombstones; many families lost all of their young children

021 still have terrible things happening; massacre of missionaries in [Rhodesia?]; speaking of different people and how wicked they look or how terrible they are

039 discuss someone else in survey

043 survey group was close knit group, like transportation; were more "soldierly" than Gardiner's group

052 railways built before roads in India; East Indian railway from Calcutta eastward in 1857
when first mutiny started out; railways built to service coal fields and coal fields were in
limited areas; wouldn't say any one city was left out of railway route

073 great handicap of railways discovered during the war was lack of connection between
meter gauge system of north and meter gauge of south India; both systems had important
part in war effort; one of war projects was to link the two systems together; wasn't
necessary during peace, but essential during war

091 the scheme got out, but was never carried out; doesn't think they have been linked together

095 railways were designed to move both freight and passengers; passenger trains always full;
road systems not up to standards; great distances without substantial amount of importance
between major places

112 extensive paying traffic allows more flexibility than poorer population that is unable to pay
high fares; Indian railways met their requirement well and were improving; could only
afford improvements on high class traffic

122 gradually tried to put air conditioning in cars because had no air conditioning up until the
war; only one special train had air conditioning prior to war; entirely first class; tourist
coaches would have air conditioning

133 third class sit on wooden benches; happy; paying less

137 rates were efficient, considering distances

139 had high level engineering; had to be because had some of largest bridges with the most
difficult rivers; engineering projects were good ones

147 more exciting in India for engineers because had more scope than England; tracks are more
important in Europe for speed and traffic; speeds comparatively slower than in Europe

154 three classes of passengers on railways, some had four

160 discuss television show describing traveling by train in India

168 railways moved enormous amounts of people; a lot of traffic was local traffic or people
visiting family; thinks many enjoyed traveling and enjoyed train; train was luxury
compared to other forms of transportation

178 it was policy to keep fares as low as possible to get and keep the number of users up; never
really showed a profit

189 most trains were state-owned but run by private businesses; private companies would take
its costs and share the profits between them and the government; cut-off dates for certain
periods where companies could state at the end of certain period they would return
operating to the government to avoid going into debt; beginning 1925, this began to happen

208 one exception was Bangor Northwest Railway; was cheaper to build; still had good
industrial traffic with conversion of indigo fields into sugar fields; also had many
passengers; was private line from beginning; came over to state during war

236 in Calcutta during terrorist attacks, during world slump; Calcutta hit hard by slump; was
height of campaign against the government; in Calcutta for three and half years; didn't
notice it because were on the spot

245 going to the cinema; exceptions at the cinema when it concerned terrorism; higher security
at clubs

286 discussion of Northern Ireland situation being over-dramatized by press; army personnel
don't like it because so tired

276 bomb threats at the cinema/theater; descriptions of the cinema

285 threats almost limited to those working in offices; would bump people off even in the
middle of court

288 got worse after reached Calcutta; became concentrated during slump in Bangor
 298 knew chief policeman from parties and such; was legendary for being efficient and tough;
 worked in Palestine after retirement as an advisor
 311 seems England is always in the middle of warring sections; thinks present policy has gone
 completely wrong; Smith has been unwise in past and made foolish mistakes; thinks Davis
 has it right
 332 amateur theatricals were everywhere; between wars, were popular because unable to go to
 cinema; very expert standard
 343 club in Calcutta would put on major production for a week in winter; chose plays with large
 cast to bring people in and have the opportunity to enjoy themselves; [Shimla?] was the
 same
 353 miniature theater in Shimla ran four or five productions during four months of the hot
 season; different people produced
 363 theater was popular in many places and countries; still amateur clubs in operation
 370 noted it most in India because the lack of things to do
 373 difficult to get a good play because can't get the play rights for long period after it is
 written, so are limited; tended to go toward the older plays: "The Ghost Train"
 401 one memorable play in Calcutta with large cast was story about a department store; had
 twelve scenes; goal was to get maximum enjoyment out of the plays
 413 did produce on play, but mostly just took the parts that came along
 417 had occasional musicals
 432 used to be firm that sent out professional companies, but were mostly second class;
 gradually ended before the war because expensive business
 461 occasionally touring orchestras
 469 amusements were plentiful: polo, tennis, hockey, football, other games, crochet; Pakistanis
 play the best hockey
 481 never had plays about India because there were none; there were the actual Indian plays in
 Indian theater
 488 went to Indian theaters because an assistant would invite you; only went for an hour then
 left them to it; went on for hours; couldn't understand the language or what was going on;
 intriguing, authentic Indian music
 520 very good libraries; weren't great number of books about India because it didn't become a
 popular subject until after the first war; wrote very well
 532 one famous writer was Masters; wrote about railways; very technical and correct
 551 historians wrote good books about Japanese campaign
 556 didn't have radios
 581 life more efficient now because more sufficient equipment; had to have a license to own a
 radio set
 596 constructing more radio towers in India; they would also rebroadcast news bulletins
 626 end of side

Tape 887, Side B

Gardiners (Part 10 of 10) (887.1)

004 any family with Indian countries read Kipling's stories as part of their education; Indian
 books are fascinating for adults and children; made good radio and television stories
 010 never was a postcard person; some may have, but unsure; varied with the individual
 whether or not to use postcards; English soldiers seemed be more likely to use them

029 because some probably weren't very good letter writers; serpents are popular subject
 discuss television show "It Ain't My Fault Mom"; talk about one of the English actors
 042 troops would group together and share a bearer; extraordinary system
 047 discussion of the English actor again
 053 seen good number of servant statues; they were a favorite memento; could buy set of all
 your servants; most about six or seven inches high; cheap, but easily broken
 064 many beautiful things in Peru: ink copies of animals
 067 only Indian relic he owns is a copper bowl; Tibetan tea bowls with copper outsides; lost
 good deal in Burma during the war
 076 had to be very careful with statues, even had to watch the humidity
 079 very colorful and accurate; they were painted, but modeled after fashions
 086 if could get a good set of servants, things would go well; would follow you everywhere and
 became part of the family; were a good many bad ones, too
 093 if you were out there for the first time, the person looking after you in the unit would send
 couple for you to interview; have an approved list of available servants
 105 first servant in Bangalore was good servant
 107 bearer would go out and find the rest of the household staff, normally relatives; cook is
 often the most difficult one to find
 113 depending on where you were, your servants were either mainly Hindu or Muslim; bearer
 in south maybe Christian or Hindu; in north was mostly Muslim, except cook who may be
 anything
 127 they were complete professionals, depending on how they were brought up and their
 previous masters were; same way in Peru; also whether he was properly trained
 136 Indian servant system was second-to-none; very faithful; live in bungalow area; would be
 back by ships side the day you returned home from leave
 147 had a dog they were unable to take home for leave; the bearer took care of the dog for four
 months; when they returned, everything was clean, even the dog
 158 in Peru, didn't have as many servants; maybe had one gardener; in India, had a gardener
 and under-gardener because of large gardens
 162 caste system forced you to have certain servants; low caste members took care of
 bathrooms and no other would do the job; even affected Muslim servants
 174 had no caste due to regimental rule; when recruit came, senior Indian officer looked after
 him
 184 varied during war because had no problems where ever they went as unit; never worried
 about cooking pots or anything like that
 185 other units on Indian troop ships had to have two kitchens, one for Hindu and one for
 Muslim; own cooking pots and never mixed; kitchens were on different ends of the ship
 190 during war, many units had to break down the castes because of the war conditions
 197 trouble during war came in beginning in war; recruited specialized people from the
 railways (like surveyors); story of the Sheik worker that shaved his beard, then was
 allowed to go home three days later
 208 because of heat, could only work at certain times of the day; by ten o'clock, could not touch
 any piece of the railing because it would burn your hand; worked from four in the morning
 'til around ten in the morning, had another session around four in the evening for four or
 five hours
 234 India is very defined and rigid
 238 tremendous number of Buddhists in India; they are near the Hindu's religiously, which

made them “alright”
 246 because British were Christian and neutral, they didn’t worry about religious issues and
 were easy to get along with
 257 can break down caste system
 267 talk about the information the interviewers got about the northwest frontier
 273 hadn’t talked to any tea growers, and Mr. Gardiner thought that was a pity; considered a
 specialist area
 279 Mr. Gardiner suggests another type of group that could give interesting information; they
 lived in their own world, deliberately cut off; only joined the war because American fields
 came and had to use part of their tea gardens; they objected to being disturbed
 296 Bangalore was his headquarters for a while; southern India was much different than
 northern India; entirely different part of the world
 303 south is so different from the north: people are small, less virile and tough due to the
 climate; different language; much more “Negro” in the south
 322 soldiers stationed in the south lived much like the ones in the north; people were less
 concerned with military than the north
 327 in the north, everything seemed to be affected by the past
 331 the mutiny didn’t affect southerners like it did to the northerners; southerners are older
 because they are the original settlements
 334 because the south is older than the north, the mentality is different
 338 talk about difference in architecture between the north and the south
 347 talks about different places he’s been that were memorable
 359 end of third session with Gardiners

Tape 887, Side B cont’d

Harlow (Part 1 of 3) (887.2)

366 beginning of interview with Mrs. Harlow
 369 husband just out of college, wondering what to do; had Bachelor of Sciences; was analyst;
 didn’t like it very much, so looked for another job; applied and got job to go to India
 383 went out in 1911; stayed there til war when he joined the army; fought in Mesopotamia; got
 engaged in November, five days before went back to India
 398 November to March was camping season in India
 402 waited ten months to go out to India; went there and got married
 405 arrived in Bombay at nine o’clock at night, got married the next morning; nowhere to live
 because was young and had no relations; he had made plans ahead of time; 1920
 425 good number of girls on same boat were engaged and were going out to get married;
 common practice for an official’s daughters or relatives to come have a good time after
 school; every girl that came ended up getting married, unless you did not want to
 441 joking reference to girls coming for season were known as fishing fleet; no matter how
 plain a girl was, if she wanted to get married she could
 450 September was normal time for girls to go because was end of hot weather and beginning
 of the good season to be out there
 457 boat trip took about three weeks to one month
 467 could get married at Bombay Cathedral or a Scottish church; all girls coming up were
 coming up to get married the next day; had weddings from ten o’clock through the rest of
 the day, one every half hour or so; most stayed on boat that night
 478 girls unable to get off the boat in the morning because of the boat knocking into the harbor;

- they were the first ones to get married and had the cathedral all to themselves, except for friends from Bombay
- 493 doesn't remember much from the first voyage out; remembers being sea sick; traveled first class because couldn't get second class seat
- 506 describes storm they encountered right before Bombay; suitcases were floating, cabin flooded
- 524 neither one had any connections to Indians before
- 531 wife of friend gave her tips on what to take to India, they were in England on leave at the time; bought topi in Bombay; first thing husband did was take her shopping
- 542 after a year, topees went out, around the time of the war; used to never go out without a topi
- 557 danger of the sun was not on your head, but your eyes because of the glare
- 562 had beautiful honeymoon; were supposed to go to honeymoon spot the night of the wedding, but the servant lost the luggage; on plateau; very beautiful, few Europeans
- 579 end of tape