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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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
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

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

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

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

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

third class sit on wooden benches; happy; paying less
rates were efficient, considering distances

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

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

three classes of passengers on railways, some had four
discuss television show describing traveling by train in India

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

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

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
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

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
going to the cinema; exceptions at the cinema when it concerned terrorism; higher security
at clubs
discussion of Northern Ireland situation being over-dramatized by press; army personnel
don’t like it because so tired

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

threats almost limited to those working in offices; would bump people off even in the
middle of court
got worse after reached Calcutta; became concentrated during slump in Bangor
knew chief policeman from parties and such; was legendary for being efficient and tough; worked in Palestine after retirement as an advisor
seems England is always in the middle of warring sections; thinks present policy has gone completely wrong; Smith has been unwise in past an made foolish mistakes; thinks Davis has it right
amateur theatricals were everywhere; between wars, were popular because unable to go to cinema; very expert standard
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
miniature theater in Shimla ran four or five productions during four months of the hot season; different people produced
theater was popular in many places and countries; still amateur clubs in operation
noted it most in India because the lack of things to do
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”
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
did produce on play, but mostly just took the parts that came along
had occasional musicals
used to be firm that sent out professional companies, but were mostly second class; gradually ended before the war because expensive business
occasionally touring orchestras
amusements were plentiful: polo, tennis, hockey, football, other games, crochet; Pakistanis play the best hockey
never had plays about India because there were none; there were the actual Indian plays in Indian theater
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
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
one famous writers was Masters; wrote about railways; very technical and correct
historians wrote good books about Japanese campaign
didn’t have radios
life more efficient now because more sufficient equipment; had to have a license to own a radio set
constructing more radio towers in India; they would also rebroadcast news bulletins

Tape 887, Side B
Gardiners (Part 10 of 10) (887.1)
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
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
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
troops would group together and share a bearer; extraordinary system
discussion of the English actor again
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
many beautiful things in Peru: ink copies of animals
only Indian relic he owns is a copper bowl; Tibetan tea bowls with copper outsides; lost
good deal in Burma during the war
had to be very careful with statues, even had to watch the humidity
if could get a good set of servants, things would go well; would follow you everywhere and
came part of the family; were a good many bad ones, too
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
first servant in Bangalore was good servant
bearer would go out and find the rest of the household staff, normally relatives; cook is
often the most difficult one to find
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
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
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
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
in Peru, didn’t have as many servants; maybe had one gardener; in India, had a gardener
and under-gardener because of large gardens
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
had no caste due to regimental rule; when recruit came, senior Indian officer looked after
him
varied during war because had no problems where ever they went as unit; never worried
about cooking pots or anything like that
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
during war, many units had to break down the castes because of the war conditions
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
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
India is very defined and rigid
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