INTERVIEWEE NAMES:
Doris G. Harlow 4700.0607 Tape 889.1 (Tape 3 of 3)
Kate Smith-Pearse 4700.0608 Tape 889.2 (Tape 2 of 2)
Keith Roy 4700.0609 Tape 889.3 (Tape 1 of 2)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:
Harlow: 7/13/1978
Smith-Pearse: 7/14/1978
Roy: 8/11/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes
Harlow: 25 minutes
Smith-Pearse: 41 minutes
Roy: 27 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 889, Side A
Harlow (Part 3 of 3) (889.1)

002 usual thing for first officer to have a Christmas camp; would always have a tiger shoot at Christmas because there would always be a tiger that would be upsetting the jungle people
008 villagers would tie up a buffalo calf for the night; the tiger would take it and track the tiger
015 would build platform in tree and would sit completely still
024 husband would work in the morning, do office work in the afternoon and in the evening he would go out to shoot
027 during first tiger shoot, sitting in the tree not moving; tiger came out and they shot it; tiger ended up having two cubs with her; was very scary and exciting
040 usually went to camp with her husband, except when raining because it was very dangerous
all servants would be taken to the camp with them; had two enormous tents; each had separate area, complete with own “thunder box”

when first went out to [Rahl Pur?], there were no roads so had to use ponies while in camp; did have an elephant
took children to camp, too
daughter would ride the elephant with small topi on her head and umbrella over her; they would have to stop and give her a bottle because she was only two months old and couldn’t drink while the elephant was moving
trouble with raising children in India; couldn’t leave a child in India past age eight because of the physical and mental strains; up to that point, you took them with you wherever you went; good amount of anxiety
daughter would wear her out during the night because she didn’t sleep well

got malaria right before daughter was born, still had it when she went into labor; daughter had a high temperature when she was born
gave daughter sip of brandy every once in a while because didn’t know what else to do; brandy was used to keep her going because she couldn’t keep anything else down
when first went out to India and everyone learned she was pregnant, everyone tried to give her advice; had to always watch the milk, so she made the man milk the cow in front of her after he washed his hands and the bucket in Permanganate
the cook was told to cook in front of her to ensure everything was cooked properly so her daughter wouldn’t get sick; daughter had a sensitive stomach
by the time her sons came, she was not nearly as careful or worried so much; didn’t have as much trouble either
one of her friends had lost her child
spent time in Nagpur when her husband was Senior; it was capital of Central Provinces
divisional forest officer was sent to small district; when became senior, he had several districts under him and was called a conservator;
conservator’s used to have headquarters in various places; in later years they all congregated in Nagpur
chief conservator always stationed in Nagpur, which was the position her husband held
when her husband was home on leave, the maharajah of a small native state wanted someone to help manage; they were there for three years; he was on the verge of becoming a conservator, but he was a service senior
was notably different; from forest office point-of-view it was ghastly difference because nothing had been done
maharajah and guests of the maharajah were the only ones allowed to shoot the white tigers; on one occasion, a man’s daughter had been taken by a tiger, so the man killed the tiger and was put in prison
anyone who displeased the maharajah was thrown into prison; thinks even his mother was placed into a remote place in a type of prison
lived in the capital; had a specially built bungalow just for them
other Europeans included a corporal in charge of the army and an Anglo-Indian doctor; there was also an English companion for the maharajah
dull life; for last year or two there was also an English advisor from the diplomatic service
the maharajah had complete control of life and death of his people; for his sister’s wedding, made everyone pay certain amount of money towards her dowry
when congress came in, he was dethroned
left India in 1946; husband was due to retire in 1943, but unable to do so because of the
war; he had to give up job at forestry (which he hated) and took job as secretary at the civil
service (which he hated because it was an office job)
husband went out into jungle as often as he could, although didn’t get as many
opportunities when he became chief conservator; they both loved the jungles
liked the freedom of the jungle
was never really good at riding; one day, came to fork in the road in the jungle.  While her
husband went one way, her pony went the other way.  The pony didn’t like to be separated
from the other pony, so it threw up its head and starting bucking; was terrified at the time
started to learn the language the first season she was there, but daughter was born and she
was unable to continue studying the language; husband knew language because always
having to pass tests and deal with the Indians
was a good life, and really enjoyed the jungle aspect of it; when were still junior, they
stayed down during hot season; when became senior, they would go up in the hills

end of Harlow interview

Tape 889, Side A cont’d
Smith-Pearse (Part 2 of 3) (889.2)
i..i.

interview begins
tape jumps couple of times
the boys were up to sixteen or seventeen years old; had to pass Cambridge exam;
sometimes came very small; tape jumps again
servants were mixed; had [versachie?], who was a “washer-upper”; glitch in tape
rajahs loved picnics by the river
didn’t send postcards; weren’t such things as post cards where she was staying
went back to [Rahl Pur?]; it was lovely; going along the road when a boy, who was being
called by his father on the opposite side, ran into the side of the car; little boy happened to
be head congress bankers’ son; nineteen years later, nice young man came up to her and
asked if she remembered him, after seeing the scar, she realized it was the little boy
went back to visit the college; it was still flourishing, with around 200 boys there; it was
much more like public school; glitch in tape
weren’t allowed to eat in the house
Indians loved orators; husband wouldn’t stop speaking so orator could get the mail
masters were Indians; took a rajah out to see the commissioner’s wife; made awful noise in
the car
believes rajahs were eccentric people; but thinks the Indians have lost a lot of glamour in
doing away with them; glitch in tape
many people did not see any tigers while in India; went to walk the dogs when coolies
came and told them of a tiger down the road; next morning, she went back with the dogs to
where the tiger was supposed to be; went up and realized the tiger was badly wounded, not
even enough strength to pounce; because it was so badly wounded, went ahead and shot it
rule between the English is that if you wound a tiger, you follow it up and finish him off; to
follow it up, you would put a herd of buffalo in front of you; they make a sound when they
smell a tiger and give you warning
husband walked up on two wounded tigers
out into the jungle often because it was only thirty miles in any direction

school closed for the rain, which was from about April to July; boys sometimes would not
show up when school started back because their mothers thought it was a bad time for them
to go, based on their horoscopes and such; floods also kept the boys from returning

some states were very remote

[Kahnker?] borrowed the maharaja’s rifle to shoot a panther because he was not a very
good shot, but he still missed; someone else grabbed the rifle and shot two in the neck

she was given five panther skins to turn into a coat; when asked how she got such fine furs,
she laughed and said she knew a maharajah that shoots eighty during the cold season and
sells the furs; one friend asked Mrs. Smith-Pearse to get her some furs, and the maharajah
sent her eighty cured furs

money she made for the maharajah by selling his furs was given back to her for the
medicine in the villages

it was difficult to raise money for the villages

in 1948, they went to Pakistan; tell the story of Mrs. Sherwood

dark bungalow’s bathroom was awful

when first reached India, she was not allowed outside without a topi

talk about photos

there were about 25,000 people in their camp

college was well endowed by the chiefs; they all had to contribute money

he had to join the Indian Education Service; don’t receive any pension; was keen on school
not being just for the rajahs

had a hospital in refugee camp

discusses what the women wore; the style for men and women

end of side

Tape 889, Side B

Smith-Pearse (Part 3 of 3) (889.2)

used powdered milk, made with brackish water in a tub; weak babies got stronger

very big irrigation scheme in Punjab; to produce two crops on soil, raise the water level

almost impossible to toil the land; if had money, they could farm onions the first year;
gradients get off after the soil improves

tried to go to the Himalayas; talk about the other summer places they had stayed; talk about
the summer place of the governor; how much money one had determined the summer camp
they would stay at

didn’t have air conditioning; talk about other things they had in the houses at the time;
managed to have a cool breeze through the house by having someone throw water on the
grass of the doorway while the breeze was blowing

people didn’t have their children in India because they sent their children to England; was
very expensive

would love to go back to India

college still running in India; still hears from the principal

believed were lucky to have good amount of shooting that everyone enjoyed; wasn’t
necessarily the shooting as it was the meeting with the jungle people

to make sure he paid only those that helped him, her husband would give each a piece of
card to prevent “gate crashers” and paying more
when went to camp, would draw lots to sit for the panthers; was too frightened to go and shoot, but you have to; talks about the panther hunting trip her husband took her on; never saw panther until on the way home, when there was one in the middle of the road

loved going out into the jungle because the people were so pleasant; enjoyed seeing the different sites in the jungle

talk of a place that was very remote; talk of the dirt road

talk about how happy she was when a woman she knew gave her money for the Indians; political agent sent message for her when the campaign started to never worry about money

in [Rahl Pur?] station, there were so many people; trains stopped there; at times, were about 600 people; station master was very nice

would make biscuits because it was too expensive to buy them; gave everyone large amount of tea with the biscuits

people were over-fed on the American trains; one huge American came asking for the “dame” who made the biscuits, and it was a huge, sweaty Indian

had some strict Americans in India; one American woman had to speak to some of the meetings to collect money; she was in a short-sleeved dress, and she was told she could not speak in short-sleeves and was forced to put on a sweater

can’t imagine how Americans could try to convert people to Christianity if their bodies were full of disease, she would try to help their body first

her son Robin got dysentery from bad water; American missionary doctor cured him of the dysentery and dehydration

Hospital in [Valor?] treats lepers

huge irrigation tank in [Perique?]; flooded 200 mile area

goddaughter wants to go to India, and she told her to definitely go to Kashmir

end of interview

Tape 889 Side B cont’d
Roy (Part 2 of 3) (889.3)

to lose your pension was colossal thing; his job was to recommend who he should see and what the course of action should be; didn’t know what to do

only evidence against the guy was him having very good Indian friends, some of whom were Muslim; Sir Jeremy made recommendation to viceroy that Penderel Moon should be dismissed, but his pension should not be stopped; it then went to the secretary of state, who agreed;

he was dismissed

another good friend who was the first Indian to become secretary to the governor general; governor general and viceroys are the same people, but governor deals with the states while the viceroys deal with the princes

his friend wrote a book The Chancellor of Power; was in charge of constitutional changes

princes said they would not enter into a federation because their relations was with the viceroy and not the governor general; only direct link is with the crown, and the viceroy is the crown

was a mess because had 382 states in India at the time of Partition; names some of the larger, more prominent ones that were giving substantial amounts of money to the English war effort; they said their ties are with the Imperial crown and there was nothing the Labor government could do to break those ties
gives an example using [Hydrobar?], who was the richest
the 382 states were a variety of states, from the most organized, to those that had no
economic or administrative stability; some were rich, some poor; some had enormous
amounts of land, others had very little
when princes said they would not “play ball” with the Labor government’s decision, they
had to figure out what to do; made [V.P. Mennan?] the constitutional advisor to the
governor general
V.P. was told to go and visit all the maharajahs and tell them they had no future in India if
they tried to go against the constitutional settlement they were establishing; deputy prime
minister would guarantee all their rights and privileges, just like what happened with the
ICS, if they would come into the Indian union and if they decided to stay out, eventually
they would fight it out
V.P. did magnificent job; was asked who he wanted to help him, and he wanted Penderel
Moon, who was back in England; Penderel came back, and became V.P.’s advisor
they negotiated the whole of the transfer of power from the 382 states to the union of India
only two held out; one was an [Azaham?], who said his only link was with the crown in
England and was not going to join the union; the other was a Muslim state on the border
with Pakistan with no economic stability, and he said he was going to join Pakistan
after deliberation, Penderel, [Shankah?], V.P. and Patel decided to march the army in and
take them over; took over both of them; this is when Penderel came back and was reason
for him receiving his knighthood
what they saw the war in the east was coming to a close, they had think about the economic
reconstruction of India that was needed
when Americans got to India, the British were already there. At one point, there were four
million troops in India; strategy was to push Japanese back from Burma, and the military
action was based on India
the need for barracks, roads, airfields and other things associated with army operations was
out of the Indian economy; all the activities were financed by the Indian government
knew once they took away all this activity, the economy would indeed flop
by 1946/1947, Sir Jeremy was back in England and the English government sent out
[Archibald Rollands?]; he was private secretary to Lord Beaverbrook
Beaverbrook got the aircraft industry of England moving when they were invaded;
Beaverbrook got the people in the English factories to build the bombers, bombs and
everything else
British government, seeing the war was coming to an end in India, sent Archie as the
Finance Minister of India
Roy had done seven years’ service with Sir Jeremy; said he was going home because Sir
Jeremy was going home, and he agreed
Archie comes in and told Roy that he was not going home; Roy had not had leave for
thirteen years and he couldn’t go on; Archie begged Roy to stay for one year because he
was completely new
they had to take a private plane; flew around the country to every prince and state to ensure
the economy could take up the slack when the war was over; Sir Archibald, Roy and a staff
of about six or seven flew around India for six months
talked with princes and governors of the provinces; put plans intake that would initiate
local activity that would make up for the ending activity of the war
Roy was able to do something that no other ICS officer was able to do: he went to every princely state in India.

Princely states varied greatly in numerous ways; maharajah of [Massaw?] was one of most enlightening rulers, he had road, health and education programs; others that were not as wealthy or large as [Massaw?], but were as advanced in thinking and operations.

Concept of maharajahs lived a life of luxury, totally secluded from their people is not correct; majority of them were very enlightened and concerned with the welfare of the people, but were examples of benevolent despotism.

There were basically no democratic processes in the countries; they were not ruthless tyrants, many of the maharajahs were the most enlightened people, concerned with the welfare of their people.

There was a maharajah who set a horse on fire because he didn’t win the race; this story went around and tarnished the others.

If tried to make an assessment of the social impact of the maharajahs, it would be fair to say that the majority of them took steps to protect the welfare of their people, but not on the democratic lines that we accept; best way to describe them in our terms is benevolent despots.

Went to Tibet because it had treaty alliances with the British government of varying natures; British government maintained a political liaison.

End of tape.