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Tape 860 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAME:

Major General R.C.A. Edge, Mrs. Patricia Edge, Reverend John Debrett, Mrs. Diana Debrett

COLLECTION: 4700.0587 Tape 860 (Tape 2 of 3)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES: 3/31/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 860, Side A

Edges and Debretts (Part 2 of 5)

- 004 Anglo-Indian meant they had mixed European and Asian blood
- 005 Sargent [Secluna?] displayed great generosity and was a great chap
- 009 there was a great scandal: Senior Indian official in the ICS was in charge of a refugee camp and had been running a factious organization, gaining revenue for two instead of one
- 017 police came to arrest Sargent Secluna for his involvement by not saying anything; found all of his wife's dresses were lined with the correspondence between him and the other guy
- 022 came to see Patricia before being taken off; he gave her a bag of money to keep it from falling into "unreliable hands"
- 029 Sargent Secluna was not allowed to shave in prison because the guards were scared that he would try to slash his throat; Patricia went down there and talked to people to try and let Secluna shave
- 034 standards began to get odder
- 036 you cannot transplant yourself from northern Europe to southern Asia without something happening; same is true about moving from southern Asia to somewhere like Missouri
- 046 India was a place that created tensions

048 India produced great doctors; they were Burmese refugees; hospitals were spotless
 055 one of the things you were supposed to do when you went out was to go and visit the sick at
 various hospitals
 061 there were many health hazards, such as VD or Guinea worm
 063 Guinea worm would get into your bloodstream and would usually end up in your foot;
 produces an ulcer on your foot as it tries to get out; you were not allowed to kill the worm.
 Instead, you would wind it up on a match stick and slowly wind it out of the blood vessels
 078 there was not a lot of anything in Aden, unless there was rain; rain only came about once
 every two years; when it would rain, the flies would come because there was nowhere for
 the water to drain away
 083 this was a terrible time because children would get conjunctivitis; [procrate?] and
 penicillin would cure it; they would get as much as they could from the army hospital, then
 they would just buy the rest
 086 there was no malaria in Aden; traditionally, Aden was a dreadful place; pneumonia was
 once a great occurrence, but not any more
 081 when you went out to India, you always had a day or a day and a night when you were
 taken around and shown the different sights
 096 at the museums, they would show you the mermaids; mermaids were called [dugalls?]; the
 one certain thing you could say about the mermaids was that they were not maids
 103 shopping in Aden was wonderful because it was duty-free; you went to the bazaar with
 people following you, trying to get you to go into their shops by offering more discounts;
 you could get things very cheap, and it continued up until the English left
 112 tombstones had fascinating inscriptions; one was “Nanny to the Captain so-so, She
 preferred death to dishonor”; talk about other tombstones
 121 there were no railways in Aden
 124 there is still an old Indian looking after the graveyard outside of Kashmir
 130 unable to follow because two different conversations going on at once, both close to the
 microphone
 140 John Shattock told them of an association of the English cemeteries in Asia being formed
 146 you cannot get the book *Two Monsoons* anymore
 157 Gardner went into the service of the king of [Sendai?] and was sent to the king of
 [Cambay?]. He was trying to conduct an embassy, but was distracted by a pair of eyes on
 the other side of the screen that was used to keep the men and women separate. On the third
 day, he demanded the hand of the king’s daughter as a price of the treaty. He married her,
 with only ever seeing her eyes. They were married between forty and fifty years, and
 produced a great family that is still present in India.
 198 going anywhere outside the area in which you were born creates tension; there are more
 extreme tensions when you travel to a distant, foreign country; the imbalance of males and
 females also creates tension; the climate also plays a role in the experience of tension
 because of the extremes
 214 there was also little to do; gossip could arise very easily from something very innocent
 220 just after becoming engaged, she, her mother, and fiancée had gone to the cinema. Her
 father came to meet them, but he could not find them and sat in the back box seats. The next
 day, she learns there was a rumor that her engagement would not last long because they did
 not talk the entire time and people were saying things because her father was not there with
 them.
 246 if you had an enemy or something to hide, you would find yourself in a small station with

- the one person you did not want to be with
- 251 discuss Kipling's ability to describe such instances
- 259 the thing about India was that everyone loved it; you would hate it for a while, but it would "grow on you" and you would learn to love it
- 262 John loathed it because he was tired of hearing how wonderful it was; he did not like the heat, immediately got dysentery, and just over-all disliked it
- 271 everyone hated India for the first year or two; you would then suddenly realize that you did not hate it
- 275 the bad thing is that it is contagious and can spread throughout your family
- 293 you could complain how insufficient things were in India, but you were really not fit to function anywhere else
- 299 one reason for the British liking India was the ability to find yourself in a wide area to function
- 311 talk about the opening week of hunting season
- 313 unable to follow conversation
- 341 her father went to Egypt first, then she went at age thirteen; she was there two years then went on to India
- 362 unable to follow conversation
- 413 Alex went out again; Hilda, Edge's older sister, was Alex's nanny; Jackie, Alex's older brother, stayed with Edge in England for a while
- 422 there were two sons; Jackie was the clever son, Alex was the not so clever son
- 440 Edge says he sometimes regrets not being more methodical, but then his offspring would not have as much fun going through his belongings
- 450 Stewart was a military adventurer
- 487 there's a story written by Edge about a leopard; there is strong Indian influence
- 485 game back in July of 1920 and the Indian influence was still with them the following year
- 507 talk about the role of women in India
- 520 one woman felt someone was fooling around with her husband, so she had the slave girl buried alive and erected her tent right over the grave; she faked her own suicide and displayed blood-stained garments to make it look real
- 555 talk about a man named Thomas; he was a wild Irish
- 579 when the British took over, the little private armies were turned into regiments
- 595 there is an old church with an old man still trying to keep up the church; there was not a soul for miles that would have been able to even attend church, much less a Christian
- 605 the old man had been keeping the church for forty years and his father did it for fifty years
- 612 end of Side A

Tape 860, Side B

Edges and Debretts (Part 4 of 5)

- 002 Edge did not think he was cut out for the Indian life; they are very spiritual, which seems to take the form of being mercenary
- 007 the husband of the woman that lived with Patricia while Edge was away was trying to go to sleep on the couch when the servants were talking on the veranda; all he could hear were the same three words over and over; the words were like a prayer
- 020 disliked the Indians; if he could do it all over again, he would have liked to be in the Indian Civil Service so he could really get to know the Indians
- 028 his father was in the ICS; caught typhoid fever three times and survived

043 Indian was not romantic either; it was nice for a girl, but not for a man;
 046 there were stations that were marvelous and plenty going on; the nicer, larger stations were
 surrounded by beautiful hills and land
 048 most British knew that a station was small and miserable by looking and seeing only flat
 country and plenty of dust
 051 some of the best time was spent on the Northwest Frontier; it was exciting and the climate
 was great
 054 at first he was in Danapur in Bihar; talks of the different regiments that were stationed
 060 it is rumored that at one jail, an earthquake caused the walls to crumble to the ground and
 the prisoners were allowed to escape
 072 if you were in the British army in India, you saw a lot of your own men; if you really
 wanted to set out and learn about India, you would join the Indian army
 076 he spent five years in India and is still completely ignorant about India because of this fact;
 they tended to keep to themselves and avoid the Indians
 082 at dances, you would always dance with Indian men, but you would never meet their wives
 because the wives never came
 086 at the turf club, there were a certain number of Indian women that would always play
 bridge
 089 the basic problem was that they did not like the Indians in the British service; in the Indian
 army, they did like the Indians and went out of their way to get to know them; the British
 service seemed to spend most of its time dissolving riots
 094 you would become attached to your servants; you would do a lot for them if they were in
 trouble; John remembers going to great lengths trying to find an eye doctor for his bearer,
 even arranged a trip to Bombay to visit with a specialist
 110 looking back, he went through the trouble of helping an Indian because he was a friend of
 his; at the same time, he held a dislike to Indians in general
 120 the same mind frame applies today: you may like a particular Indian, but as a whole you do
 not like them; the same is said to be applied to Americans
 139 talk about their cat and dog
 149 talk about Gilbert Fletcher and Thomas
 175 terrible ecclesiastical problems in England; John was in charge of about eighteen different
 area churches
 198 everyone has had different reactions and opinions about India and the British in India
 206 John did not like India, but he was not there for very long; if he had gone there knowing
 nothing and starting from scratch, he thinks he could have done better; however, it had
 encoded in his mind by different family members that it was "heaven on earth"
 212 one of the very first lessons you learn once you get to India is how insufficient everything
 is; you also get homesick
 217 once you are over the hump, you cannot seem to get it out of your system
 218 it was different for the women because they did not have the hard work and never
 concerned themselves with certain affairs
 230 there were some funny jockeys that had been thrown out of Australia; you had to know
 who bribed whom in order to win
 256 at the Governor's Cup, Kashmir wanted to win so badly that they bribed every jockey
 except one outsider; Kashmir's horse was set to win, but the outsider won; Kashmir won
 the next year because it did not want to make the same mistake twice
 270 whether or not the Indians liked the English or if the English did any good or not, the

amazing thing about the Indians is that they cannot seem to get rid of the British; English is
 spoken more now than ever before there
 277 human beings, when left to run themselves, they will make a terrible mess; when there is a
 reasonable system of life, humans reach their highest potential
 291 you can be too hypocritical about self-government; the object of government is to give
 good government to the people; Edge's grandson argues that the object of government
 should be to give self-government
 300 it maybe that the best form of government is self-government, but the object of the
 government should be to give good government
 304 we are worse hypocrites today than the Victorian Age because we try to hide our
 hypocritical tendencies
 325 good government is defined by allowing you to go out and do your own business without
 fear; you want to be free to develop ideas
 340 the British are the experts on saying one thing but meaning another
 358 she bought Manchester's books right away because everyone seemed to object to them so
 they must be good; it is appalling and blood-chilling
 374 believes there is something odd about the Kennedy assassination; the obvious thing is how
 all these articles speculated on Oswald, but never concentrated on or asked why Oswald
 was assassinated
 387 Manchester states the plain facts, which is why is such a chilling account
 398 she bought the book for her children because she wanted to have something written
 because you never know what will be said in the future; the family objected to it so there
 must be something in it
 418 after living through it, Jordan believes the reactions come from everyone being stunned
 419 continue to discuss the Kennedy assassination, the family's objection to Manchester's
 work after they had asked him to write an account, and the discussion of a cover-up by
 different organizations
 447 it is not always because there is something to hide, but more with professional jealousy
 489 talk about John's sermon's and the congregation's response; talk about members of their
 community and church congregation
 508 talk about the Australian man whom they all thought was atheist until he showed up at
 church Easter Sunday
 544 Edge talks of his son, whom he believes has probably been very immoral, and of his
 moderately-moral daughter
 555 children never really pay attention to what their parents say
 586 Edge's son-in-law is a very nice gentlemen; his daughter wasn't sure if she should marry
 him, and asked if she should; she eventually came to the comment that she was "going to
 drag him to the altar"; he thinks she has been happy ever since she accepted him on the
 platform at the station
 610 end of side B