

T. Harry Williams Center of Oral History

Tape 888 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

Doris G. Harlow 4700.0607 Tape 888.1 (Tape 2 of 3)
Kate Smith-Pearse 4700.0608 Tape 888.2 (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

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 34 minutes

Harlow: 47 minutes
Smith-Pearse: 47 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 888, Side A

Harlow (Part 2 of 3) (888.1)

- 002 [Golkada?] was perfect honeymoon spot; wasn't a hot weather place; it was a plateau; few Europeans; stayed for one month
- 013 was nervous when she arrived in India because everything was so different; became the senior lady
- 020 looking at pictures of honeymoon spot; thatched bungalow called Peach Grove
- 028 on the way up, one of local merchants met them and wished her many sons; wasn't thrilled about that because was young and just coming from England; he was a Muslim
- 038 went up by train, then by car; borrowed a car that was missing some of the cylinders
- 042 husband referred to her as his "Onionly Bride" because of the Irish onion stew she had for brunch
- 051 wouldn't use the word "brunch" in England; would use the word in India because wouldn't

- have breakfast or lunch in the small stations; may have breakfast and lunch in places like Bombay
- 053 in morning would eat toast, fruit, tea or coffee; had brunch around eleven o'clock after the men worked on paperwork in the bungalow office, and then they would go off to the office
- 061 tiffin refers to lunch in the larger places; they didn't have tiffin
- 063 talk about use of the word brunch in the States
- 069 brunch would start off with some sort of cereal, then sausage or bacon, eggs, then fruit
- 082 after honeymoon, went back to Raipur; when got off the train, was greeted with French marigold necklace and bouquet; offered to pay him, but was one of her husband's subordinates
- 100 as went into the compound, were greeted by a band
- 105 merchant gave them a creaky musical box for their wedding, but had to give it back because weren't allowed to accept gifts from those types of people
- 111 couldn't accept gifts from Indians because it was a government rule, it could have been considered a bribe; could only accept things like flowers, fruits, nuts, or potatoes
- 131 would always try to bribe the British
- 132 most British officials were honest; it was against the grain
- 138 Raipur was small station; fair number of Europeans
- 145 in Raipur was a college for the sons of the rajahs; had European headmaster and deputy headmaster; was run like an English public school
- 155 had "cooley hatchers": men that went around getting local people to sign up under indentures; wasn't disreputable job
- 169 other men were some type of official, doctors, judge, police, etc.
- 183 governor came to Raipur and she was invited; at the banquet, the local judge began to talk to her to distract during the royal toast; royal governor was very polite
- 210 had to talk to the governor like he was the king; treated the governor as the king because he was the king's representative
- 215 society had very strict rules of etiquette
- 219 sat down to dinner in order of social rank, even at dinner with friends
- 230 when you become a bride, you are invited to dinner by everyone for the first six months
- 236 learn what to do by picking things up as you go; husband gave her a few tips, but she had to learn as she went along; had to wait for the hostess to decide when the women could be excused from the table
- 245 as soon as got back from honeymoon, had to prepare to move into camp
- 258 bachelor only had one servant that did everything; once married, had to have the proper staff; got various tips from the women servants
- 294 cook had to have a mate to do the rough work; bearer was in charge of the food and the master's clothes; eventually had to have a butler to run the household; along with other staff members
- 311 all servants came with references from various places; couldn't depend on references
- 325 dobee only worked for them; later, they would have to share; would camp with them
- 333 couldn't think about having numerous servants because it was required by the caste system; was amazed by all of them
- 345 when went to a new place as a married woman, dropped cards on every lady; they dropped the cards back off and invited you to dinner; then you invited them to dinner and you knew each other; would also see each other in the clubs; it was a type of introduction

391 had "Mister and Misses" cards and you had "Mister" cards
 397 way of getting introduced; couldn't walk around and talk to everyone because was such a
 large place
 401 people knew who you were when you got there; also knew husband's profession
 405 European clubs was where Europeans went to meet other Europeans and could hear their
 language; was nice being around people with a similar background
 410 clubs had important functions too; officials could talk freely to each other
 418 small clubs had verandas and beer table, one or two servants, drinks were served by
 servants; would sit, chat and play bridge; size of club decided what facilities was in the
 club
 432 describes typical day for the men
 438 husband had an office in compound of bungalow when first married; when wasn't touring
 would go and do office work
 500 post would come in the morning to sort needed things out, then send them to the office
 511 rule was to never would have drink before sundown; wasn't the rule, but it was the
 recognized thing to do
 514 would have drink and play bridge at the club, then go back and have dinner around eight
 o'clock; then would sit around the bungalow for a while then go to bed
 526 started by dividing forests into divisions, with a divisional forest officer over each;
 officer's job was to arrange working of forest for next fifty years
 550 working plans decided what was to happen to each section of forest, divided into ranges
 556 officer would go through patch of forest and decide which trees were worth saving, which
 were not, which were good for sale, and so on; decisions would be made depending on how
 healthy that particular area of the forest was; if was not healthy, they would clear it all
 574 also did good deal surveying and bridge work; also road making just to get into forest
 581 Central province was around good bit of jungle, some of which had never been entered
 before
 584 husband was in [Rahl Pur?] for three years
 595 once officer returned from leave, he would return to different district
 606 game was minor part of job; natives would report animal attacks and forestry officers
 would have to go out and hunt for it
 630 end of tape

Tape 888, Side B

Smith-Pearse (Part 1 of 3) (888.2)

004 grandfather was in Indian Medical Services (IMS) as surgeon general; interested in
 anything medical
 011 awful poverty; terrible diseases; wide-spread malaria where she was
 014 deputy commissioner, Mrs. [Solomon?], wanted to start "village nursing"; she was
 permanently there, everyone else there for about year or so
 018 tried to choose sensible woman in the village; had simple medicine box and medicines, like
 zinc, ointment, boric, things for eyes
 021 children had awful eyes; sometimes eyes would be congested with flies; three applications
 of one percent strength medications in the eyes would clear up in three days
 027 had two villages down one road and two down another when first started; tried to go at the
 same time on the same day, and would have large number people waiting with primitive

- ailments; small amount of advice seemed to be big help, even if it wasn't from trained nurse
- 031 only had Red Cross training
- 033 all of other women in Rahl Pur gave up except for Mrs. Solomon; her husband was some sort of official; other women were always changing places and going to another station
- 039 only did four villages
- 041 was called to mud hut to tend to man with septic knee; man refused to go to hospital
- 048 fermentation involved some type of lint or other material placed in cloth, then boiling water was poured over it. The lint would then be removed and placed on injury, covered by oil-silk and cotton wool. This drew the poison from the body; very popular during World War I
- 055 told man the only way to heal instead of going to the hospital was to keep it hot; showed them how to tend to the rags; returned four days later to find man was still alive; then fortnight after that, man was walking around dragging stone around his leg; he recovered
- 069 caught conjunctive [?] from children; very painful; feels as if there are knives inside eyelids and unable to close eyes
- 078 discuss the large number of those living in poverty
- 083 there was terribly sick woman who was unable to produce milk for her child; returned to Rahl Pur to get woman doctor, Dr. Abraham; woman had small pox, but recovered after returning to home village
- 099 used good deal of medicine Permanganate; is very mild; one village put it into the well and no one got cholera
- 110 went to Rahl Pur in 1923; left in 1944; stayed there entire time; never traveled around because husband became vice-principal, then principal, at the local college
- 115 husband had been a gunner, but thought he wasn't getting enough money
- 121 was born in [Bensigi?]; never had birth certificate; got passport on marriage certificate
- 126 father was member of Royal Engineers working on the railways; became agent to the Northwest railway; discuss her father's various duties, all dealing one way or another with the railways
- 135 missed the Prince of Wales's visit, but met her husband instead
- 138 there was big game shoot every Christmas; had to choose partners very carefully; went with two couples one Christmas that were only concerned about their ginseng in the morning and being back in time for their whisky and soda in the evening, which contrasted with Smith-Pearse's style, who would never have that in the morning and never rushed back in the evening; was the only shoot they went on that they never killed a tiger
- 155 always shoot during cold weather so they could cross the rivers and reach the areas; few water holes allowed jungle people to know where the tigers were, and they would tell the hunters
- 169 decided one Christmas to have a children's Christmas and not shoot any tigers; people came and begged them to come and shoot the tiger because they were eating all the buffalo
- 174 wasn't tropical jungle, but more of a dry jungle; tiger lives in long grass
- 183 discuss declining tiger population
- 185 [Rahl Pur?] had, on average, fifteen Europeans; always had Indians in the clubs; played tennis and golf
- 191 college was main attraction and place of entertainment; had three viceroys come to the college; was all rajahs; eventually became the public schools

202 had only sixty students there when husband was there; then moved to 200 students
 212 students that stayed with them were very orthodox at first, wouldn't eat with them; liked
 bread with butter and apricot jam; had to break caste, but didn't matter because no one was
 really there to see them
 227 fear that one boy may poison another; one may be abducted by another country
 237 story of viceroy sending word to not let one son eat with his father because a different wife
 wanted her son to succeed
 243 nearly all sixty males at the college were either princes or big land owners
 253 college was building with classes down below, proctor in the middle, and two boarding
 houses; had English matron, hospital; very good at games
 262 Indians were gifted at tennis because of their wonderful style; can't figure out why an
 Indian has never won at Wimbledon; played hockey, soccer and basketball; couldn't play
 some sports because ground was so hard
 278 had house with eight bathrooms; huge rooms; never had sanitation; all bathrooms had
 toilets, which was good because had so many little boys; had two intelligent sweepers
 302 as soon as American's arrived, they would set up a type of pump system to allow for
 sanitation; English were there twenty years and never had "to pull the plug"
 307 never had hot running water; always had man bring heated water in
 213 boys would play up and down passage in bungalow as soon as they would get home;
 concerned about them not having any shoes and playing because always killing kraits and
 scorpions when rains came; thankful when it was time for bed and they were in bed safely
 321 always had mosquito nets; believes made people feel safer
 324 boys who came to their house would have nice English meals; each boy in the house had
 his own cook, but had to make sure they didn't eat too much curry; tried to get them to eat
 fruit; one boy had bad skin disease because he only ate curry
 337 sometimes had six boys, sometimes had eight; had many English boys; never had more
 than about five Indian boys; had English boys only during the war
 351 had maharajah's son there that had been adopted by another state; he had to send certain
 number of telegrams a year; story of the chicken pox at the college and the telegram
 363 maharajah was good shot, shot over 1000 times; stayed in his state; from capital, five roads
 went outward, and members of his family went out and shot every night; concluded it was
 better that they went out shooting every night than to stay home, drink and have women;
 there wasn't anything else to do
 397 life span isn't very long in India; sorry maharajah's don't exist because she believes they
 brought glamour into lives of the jungle people
 409 maharajah's grandson is in the Indian government now and doing well
 415 rajah's had to learn English because everything was taught in English; most of them knew
 English before they came
 429 there were five colleges in India for the princes; [Raspetana?] chiefs are the most
 "blue-blooded"
 440 people around them were [Ghomes?]; one of their chiefs had fought with [Maratas?];
 [Marata?] chief told two brothers they could have whatever territory they can run around in
 a day; formed [Suctie?] state; they were always excellent runners
 455 chief would always arrange the menu when the governors would come to stay because he
 was so good with English food, but had never been to England; had a flair for food
 467 she and a friend had asked to stay in the state before governor's visit; told rajah he should

have pipe attached to the basin in the bathroom to keep the water from getting all over the floor; never did though
485 visited many states; there were a lot of bears in his state though
490 jungle people were more afraid of bears than tigers; tiger would sneak away, never letting you know it was there; bear wouldn't hear people approaching, then it would get startled when saw people approaching
504 at [Suctie?], was so proud of his record player that he put on twelve Indian records that would play continuously so you were stuck for twelve records; he thought it was good entertainment
514 he did have nice food; stayed with them a lot; had a lot of duck because would hunt duck a lot
524 sanitation was very primitive
536 British officials didn't spend to have elaborate sanitation, but as soon as congress came, all the Indians had sanitation
557 husband was big on boy scouts, and she believes that helped to break down the caste system
562 looking at pictures from India
583 she was sitting near very shy man at tea that didn't want to mix with everyone; wanted to keep the same circle; because she was the principal's wife, she had to stay in that circle with all the other rajahs; conversation was lacking so viceroy inquired about a nearby tree that had green pigeons when the figs were right; viceroy thought that would be good shooting, but shooting wasn't allowed; asked about catapulting and then left
629 end of tape