

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

Tape 863 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

Philip Mason 4700.0589 Tape 863.1 (Tape 1 of 3)
G.N. Jackson 4700.0588 Tape 863.2 (Tape 3 of 3)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro and Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:

Mason: 4/4/1978
Jackson: 4/2/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1.5 hours [original and copy of Tape 863 are missing]

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 863, Side A**Jackson (Part 4 of 4) (863.2)**

- 001 every railway community had a regiment, some descending from the earlier military adventurers
- 012 many people that went out during the war found many attractive Indians and married them; their isolation increasingly diminished until the mutiny
- 019 after the mutiny, there was certain business between the British and Indians that concerned the women that were arriving on the steam ships
- 021 British women had no competition from the Indian or Eurasian women
- 022 up until the mutiny, it was very rare for British women to go to India; the arrival of the steamship allowed the women to come out during the winter; they came out in large numbers and introduced the stricter divisions
- 026 by the time Jackson left; he noticed many changes in the divisions and rapid Indianization
- 031 Jackson was the last recruit to the Indian political service; after him, there were no more British officers; before him, the officers were half British and half Indian

034 Jackson entered political service in 1939; the first district officer he worked for was Indian
044 on the whole, the British knew it was expected to put on a good show and present
themselves in a popular manner; there was a constant move towards simplifying it though;
the British were good at removing things that were not there
061 people working for the viceroy really earned pay; they were constantly moving about,
training and such; there was no idle part of life; this is the way it had to be
074 the British contribution to India was the rule of law and a complete integrity of the civil
service, building of canals and land revenue; there was no idea of any of this until the
British got into India
084 the work in India was not appreciated by the people back in England; they had no
conception of the work that was being done in India; the British public and parliament
never wanted India
097 the Moguls slowly fell apart; then the French Wars began and the country powers chose
sides, destroying anything being built administratively
112 when Clyde Hastings came home, they impeached him because no one really wanted India
113 the East India Company had its own army to guard its own trading stations; Clyde was
drafted as a quarter master; as things went on, the East India Company began to get more
and more involved in local disputes
119 the result was the viceroy of Bengal becoming involved with the East India Company and
began a hold on Calcutta
121 Clyde was sent with a modest force of the East Indian Company's army of Europeans to
face a large army at the Battle of Plassey and won
128 in that system, the soldiers were paid very little by the East India Company; they were not
allowed to loot anyone after they had defeated them; the valuables were distributed in an
orderly manner to everyone, based on rank
133 the system still survives in the Royal Navy; anything they capture in war or rescue on the
seas, they divide the proceeds evenly between everyone
142 this was the type of system Clyde had; after being impeached, he told the House that he was
"amazed by [his] own moderations"
164 Jackson sees plenty of people from India through various reunions and get-togethers; many
of the regiments had associations
174 Jackson remembers India very clearly; early years were a very happy, active experience
that is more easily remembered than his times in the diplomatic services later in life; he is
in regular correspondence with his cook from Pakistan
200 Argentina is the most Europeanized of all the countries in South America; British
established all the public utilities, shipping business
212 also a large Irish connection to Argentina because the Catholics fit in well with the
Spanish; there are establish Irish-Argentinian and Anglo-Argentinian families that now
only half speak English; they are settled
229 Ecuador is very inaccessible and has not really been influenced by Europe since the
sixteenth century, apart from the conquistadores; there were no European colonists until
they began fighting Spain for their independence and England sent troops to help; after the
first battle with the British troops, the fight was over
248 apart from the British general and admiral that stayed, there were no more Europeans there
until a boat of Jews from Germany landed seeking refuge from Hitler; by the time the
British got there, the twenty Jews that had landed in Ecuador had completely taken over

and were in everything
 261 one or two English and American families built a railway; about half a dozen British
 families stayed and are still there, but barely speak English; the same happened for the six
 or so American families that stayed
 270 with the arrival of the airplane and airlines, people began flooding into places like Ecuador
 272 the countries were at least 100 years behind the rest of the world; they skipped the carriage
 age, going straight from the pack horse to the airplane
 278 the roads are made for pack transport; automobiles were barely able to get up and down the
 roads until the Americans built the Pan-American Highway
 281 they enjoyed the time in Ecuador; it took about a year to become adjusted to it though
 284 the people in Ecuador were Christianized-Arabs
 289 end of Jackson interview

Tape 863, Side A cont'd

Mason (Part 1 of 5) (863.1)

290 beginning of Mason interview
 305 he went to India very young and was fascinated with Kipling
 311 his father was a doctor, but he did not care to follow his father
 312 there was something very appealing about India; it was strong in the culture of the
 middle-class English before 1914
 328 by the time he left school at eighteen, he hated Kipling; the idea of service was very strong
 333 when asked why he wanted to go to India, he said the only reason was because it was an
 exciting place; he wanted to be part of the attempt to build-up India like they had done in
 Australia and South America
 345 those thoughts "went into the background" when he arrived in India; he still believed it
 in a remote concept, but did not think about it that much; he was more concerned with
 doing the job they had to do
 353 Mason had no family connections to India
 355 he was curious about India and a felt that he knew it when he got there
 360 after his first night, he saw people wrapped in sheets sleeping on the stations in Delhi; he
 felt that was how Delhi was and how he expected it to be
 369 by age fourteen, Mason knew everything that Kipling had written, although at that time
 Kipling had not written his later books
 371 they prepared for India at Oxford; the concept was education; it was a very bad year
 391 the details to Indian history are really pointless; he found his courses in Indian history
 extremely boring because the points were boring
 404 Mason did not read a lot about India in his last year
 411 he went straight from Bombay to his first assignment, arriving at midnight and was put into
 a tent; the next morning, he was delighted to find the freshness of the morning
 428 at breakfast, he was introduced to the chief magistrate; the job of the first year in India is to
 get a feel for the atmosphere, no one really does work their first year in India
 454 he was visited by an official, who asked if Mason had any orders for him; he was like a
 quarter-master general for the collections office and commands all the messengers; for the
 first couple of days, Mason could never figure out anything he could do
 469 gradually, the jobs Mason was assigned became more and more difficult
 471 his first job was to certify that the corpses that were being brought in were those that

deserved an award for being in wars; was educated in the ways of faking recent deaths with older corpses

498 after about three weeks, he received word of a new case that was to be tried in his court; when he arrived at court, he learned it was a standard village case between two different parties claiming the same thing and beating each other up because of it; there was not any real damage done and Mason could not understand a word that was said

514 his clerk did not speak English; the case, which would normally have taken three days, took Mason about three weeks

523 after that, there were a few other criminal cases; he also went around the camps and did various inspections, especially such things as sanitation

538 they would always push things into your face in order to get your attention

545 he then went to a training camp; it was a terrible waste of four months; there were dull lectures on code and criminal procedures; they were treated like schoolboys

564 he then took the exam; no one really fails the exams because they were so easy

572 by the spring, he was put in charge of one of the divisions; this kept him very busy and was very hard work the first few days; the criminal work was simple and varied; the principles of the criminal work were the same

586 the main part of the work dealt with the land disputes; there were cases that had to go to the civil judges and concerned the actual ownership of the land; they operated on the basis of possession: if a man worked the land and paid taxes on it, his name went on the papers until a judge ordered the change

612 the only way a man could lose the land was if he stopped paying rent or had committed a crime

617 end of Side A

Tape 863, Side B

Mason (Part 3 of 5) (863.1)

004 ten to twenty pounds a week was the object for every Indian

008 the Indians influenced the English by their attitudes to authority and readiness to accept things

012 horses allowed you to go where automobiles would not; horses also allowed the Indians to see you and to talk to you

016 Mason's friend had a car, given to him by his parents, would only start after being pushed; it was used in the station only.

026 the Indians had an authoritarian regime for thousands of years, but were eager to accept new things

029 the caste system made the English worse; the English were taught the caste system by the Indians

033 the attitude to interracial relationships with the Burmese was different because the Burmese did not have a caste system and were a different religion

040 Buddhism seems to be a more cheerful religion; the people in Burma seemed to be more cheerful than those in India

050 intermarriage caused a different attitude

052 a good number of British that went out to Burma intermarried; it was very common and considered nice by many of the men

064 in Morris's day, English men living with Burmese women was unheard of for various

reasons

072 there was a difference between north Anglo-India and south Anglo-India; the north was more efficient

084 the Hindu concept of ritual pollution did have an influence on the actions of the people

102 it was a great thing for a woman to have her own team of servants to carry and care for her bags and luggage; these men were chosen at the beginning of the season and given uniforms for that season; the men were highly competitive, especially at the beginning of the season

112 tells the story of the woman who learned that the men were outcasts from a familiar subdivision just by them telling her where they were from; men from Mason's area would only go on a job like that if they were outcasts

087 the [Bungies?] were the sweepers, which was their class name

096 Mason never got the feeling that people were frightened of the Indians, even though they were a minority

115 tells the story his sister's French hairdresser, who thought India was a terrible and dangerous place; it was not hard to believe that because of the attention from the media

122 when she arrived, she would be sent to the bazaar with a messenger that would show her around; she would go shopping by herself while Mason never really felt he had to worry about her safety

130 during the last few years of the war in Delhi, they would rarely chance upon soldiers that were unknown in the area and would be shooting peacocks

135 the British were not concerned about "going native" because they had their own communities and were too isolated from India; the army was even more isolated

145 there is a difference now because it is more dangerous for an American to go now and become absorbed into the culture; their once was an established system that one could fit in to that were superimposed

182 the British were very concerned with punctuality and their clothes