

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

Tape 838 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES: Margery Hall and Kate Garrod

COLLECTION: 4700.0576 Tape 838 (Tape 1 of 4)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATE: 2/1/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 93 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 838, Side A

Hall and Garrod (Part 1 of 6)

- 001 introduction, recording made in home in Middlesex, England
- 005 spent eighteen difficult months in India with her three small children
- 013 hearing from people returning from India, some said it was absolute hell, some said it was fascinating
- 018 drinking water in India
- 020 living without refrigeration
- 028 the government shouldn't post families to places like that
- 034 people not understanding how difficult the conditions were
- 038 they'd been sent to a "punishment area" of India
- 045 things too appalling to talk about
- 049 other posts in India and Kashmir before sent to the bad one
- 053 story about a dying man who was put in a soaking wet bed
- 059 helpful Maltese doctor who stayed with the man, no nurses available
- 066 appalled by everything getting so wet in torrential rains
- 079 Hall is always asking questions about why things happen
- 083 wife of dead Englishman wanted husband cremated in Hindu tradition, drawbacks of

cremation, cremation denied
 091 she wanted him burned so his demise would feel final
 095 two terribly incompetent doctors in India
 100 man buried on his 28th birthday, on rainy day
 105 troops involved in funeral, dropped coffin
 111 nurses didn't appear until funeral, Hall was horrified at their nerve
 120 repeatedly refers to memoir she wrote about her time in India, trying not to hurt people
 with her writing
 132 got champagne in bazaar after funeral, Hall trying to decide if she should go home to
 England or marry her fiancée and stay with him in India
 138 decided to get married
 144 a man she met who planned to write a book based on his experiences in India
 151 man from New Zealand who died in India
 156 Garrod found India interesting, but never the twain shall meet, lived there for 28 years
 160 she served in voluntary unit in WWI
 165 her brother was wounded in war
 170 Garrod used to walk four miles each morning, but now has health problem
 172 considers India very primitive, more than 260 languages spoken there, hard for British to
 make it the way they want, impossible to change the East
 178 ask why the interviewers are interested in India
 180 de Caro spent a year in India, same place as one of the women's husbands
 183 her husband was secretary to high-up British residents, got in a fight with lady of the house
 because one of his chores was supposed to be cutting the cake at tea
 190 one interviewee asks what de Caro was doing in India; he says he was teaching in an Indian
 college
 195 she hears the trains have improved
 198 de Caro elaborates on his interest in India
 207 when Margery was in India, standard of living had risen since Kate's time there
 212 British women trained Indian servants to perfection
 223 Margery lived also lived in Borneo, where the servants were appalling
 229 felt that on the whole, British rule was wonderful for India
 235 Indians won't touch beef and Muslims won't touch pork, so trouble finding a suitable
 cook
 244 standard of European living was high in larger Indian towns, but Indian standards
 appalling
 251 difficulty living on their low pay
 253 high quality British women went to India and trained servants; it takes someone
 knowledgeable to train servants
 264 squalor in some places was unendurable
 268 before WWI, all the people who went out from Europe were aristocrats, were used to high
 living and high thinking
 275 it was not a picnic going to India
 277 started her married life there in 1921, spent 30 years there, couldn't have had more
 interesting, educating or happier life anywhere
 285 both women agree we should not try to change India
 290 a party Garrod attended as a bride where a man told her she should make Indians get up and
 work early, but Brahmins wouldn't work for her until they finished their religious rituals

307 Hall[?] spent a few months in Poona, her husband in military, WWII broke out
 317 describes British community she lived in within city
 325 scarcity of supplies such as meat
 332 husband had to motorcycle to work
 334 opinions on Gandhi, caused bloodshed and trouble
 340 Gandhi's relations with a British admiral's daughter, interviewee's husband visited him
 every day
 350 Gandhi wasn't fasting, he was forcibly fed
 354 interviewees debate whether it was more of a crime to forcibly feed him, or let him die
 358 whereabouts of jail where Gandhi held, students who came to seek him
 371 husband was civil engineer, his promotions
 382 drinking champagne on birthdays
 389 feels we should help people, but should leave nations to sort out their own muddles
 399 now British are making trouble in Rhodesia, says maybe she'll be sued for saying this
 404 hazards of speaking on BBC
 415 her contributions to the Salvation Army, admires their work with the dregs of humanity
 425 will give money to medical missionaries, but thinks missionary work is wrong
 440 most people don't have much in the way of religion
 450 her religion is what you do from the time you get up till the time you go to bed, going to
 church on Sunday won't help
 455 she has friends with brown skin, let one family live with her because they were denied
 housing in some areas
 465 old Christian couple across the street who questioned her housing people with brown
 skin, interviewee questioned the neighbor's Christian principles
 489 brown-skinned friend who is coming to visit
 503 brown-skinned child asked her to explain racism, she told the child that some people are
 sick in the head
 527 children in this Indian family had very nice manners
 540 interaction with missionary named Sir Henry Holland, got cholera in interviewee's house
 in India

Tape 838, Side B

Hall and Garrod (Part 2 of 6)

002 transitory nature of British in India, hard to make friends, had 16 houses in 8 years
 007 again questions interviewers' interest in India
 012 Kate trained as nurse, ran away to Serbian War
 018 describes her training as nurse under a surgeon in Belgium, promotions, working under a
 matron, matron made Kate a sister
 029 tried to join voluntary unit, matron prevented her, used other connections to help her join
 048 was in Serbia in 1915, then spent six months at Watermore[?] Castle because her brother
 was there
 053 people's dislike of officers in hospitals, nurses prefer lower ranking men because nicer
 060 phone rings, phone conversation
 068 next Kate worked at Red Cross hospital
 072 after war, worked at hospital in London during flu epidemic
 075 friend urged her to go to India
 080 early impressions of India

090 inability of West and East to understand each other
 094 friction with hospital staff where she worked in India
 100 went to India in 1919, traveled in Northern India, Taj Mahal, Kashmir
 103 wanted to retire in Kashmir, but not possible now
 108 back then, a woman couldn't go to India and live in a hotel, had to be with friends, if
 alone you're not respectable
 115 British can't understand why Indians think women need protection
 119 the country you're in dictates what is right and what is wrong
 121 man convinced her to marry and stay in India, first had post in small town
 127 viceroys in India
 133 use of swords, violence, Kate is anti-war
 142 slept in a converted tomb
 151 transferred to Poona at end of 1920
 155 took care of 15 boys as assistant to the secretary
 158 house had only two bedrooms
 162 you don't have the servants because you want them, husband gets allotment of servants
 depending on his salary
 170 many expenses in India
 174 even the servants had servants
 177 the servants were mostly very good, trustworthy, loyal
 183 tried not to tempt servants by leaving valuables or alcohol around
 190 night watchmen were criminal tribesmen from jail
 194 man who didn't want a watchman had all his clothing swiped in the night and hung from
 trees
 201 sadness in life
 207 King Edward VII's trip to yacht club at Bombay Harbor, yacht clubs segregated between
 Indian and British
 220 many benefits of joining clubs, including libraries, difficulty in finding books outside
 Bombay and club-owned libraries
 230 types of books they liked to read
 238 read *Sunday Mirrors* at club in Borneo to try to learn what ordinary people were doing
 and thinking
 244 while in Poona, had subscription to have books sent from home, excitement of getting a
 new book
 253 wrote angry letter about the low quality of the literature sent to her
 259 describes her tastes in books
 267 age of her husband Bill when he arrived in India
 280 features of Poona
 285 Bill's executive post in Poona, all the people adored him, he worked for the people
 293 fighting for the people to get more money for their rice
 296 phone rings
 299 other officers who supported indigenous people
 304 Bill's region included people who spoke four different languages
 320 segregated Indian clubs
 329 wealthy club-goers in Bombay
 339 mixed club called "Bi Color Club"
 347 people with different ways didn't mix well

354 Bill's first night in Bombay, stayed in hostel
360 before war, people who went to India had independent means, didn't depend on salaries
374 people thought we lived at ease and did nothing, but it was a very busy life
380 had no stoves, makeshift furniture made of boxes
401 business people in India lived luxuriously
411 British wives had to boil all water and milk and bottle it, way to keep milk cool, worries
about cobras at night, inspecting kitchen once per day
434 had to make bread, jam, chocolates
440 huge dam built, luxury of having lots of water
448 had electric lights but no refrigerators
453 beautiful place but very lonely for her, she's from a family of ten
457 inadequacy of telephones
464 got short notice that 11-14 people were coming to visit and stay with them
482 played tennis
489 bathed daily
500 houses built off ground to keep away from wild animals
512 encounter with a cobra near the bookcase
525 de Caro offers lozenge for interviewee's cough
535 they talk about her throat irritation, their recent colds
555 would like to visit India again