

T. Harry Williams Center of Oral History

Tape 889 Finding Aid

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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INDEX**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

045 all servants would be taken to the camp with them; had two enormous tents; each had
 separate area, complete with own "thunder box"
 057 when first went out to [Rahl Pur?], there were no roads so had to use ponies while in camp;
 did have an elephant
 062 took children to camp, too
 064 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
 071 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
 078 daughter would wear her out during the night because she didn't sleep well
 088 got malaria right before daughter was born, still had it when she went into labor; daughter
 had a high temperature when she was born
 094 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
 104 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
 126 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
 128 by the time her sons came, she was not nearly as careful or worried so much; didn't have as
 much trouble either
 131 one of her friends had lost her child
 139 spent time in Nagpur when her husband was Senior; it was capital of Central Provinces
 139 divisional forest officer was sent to small district; when became senior, he had several
 districts under him and was called a conservator;
 143 conservator's used to have headquarters in various places; in later years they all
 congregated in Nagpur
 146 chief conservator always stationed in Nagpur, which was the position her husband held
 148 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
 165 was notably different; from forest office point-of-view it was ghastly difference because
 nothing had been done
 172 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
 179 anyone who displeased the maharajah was thrown into prison; thinks even his mother was
 placed into a remote place in a type of prison
 185 lived in the capital; had a specially built bungalow just for them
 189 other Europeans included a corporal in charge of the army and an Anglo-Indian doctor;
 there was also an English companion for the maharajah
 198 dull life; for last year or two there was also an English advisor from the diplomatic service
 208 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

217 when congress came in, he was dethroned
 218 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)
 227 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
 230 liked the freedom of the jungle
 239 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
 253 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
 264 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
 277 end of Harlow interview

Tape 889, Side A cont'd

Smith-Pearse (Part 2 of 3) (889.2)

278 interview begins
 281 tape jumps couple of times
 285 the boys were up to sixteen or seventeen years old; had to pass Cambridge exam; sometimes came very small; tape jumps again
 289 servants were mixed; had [versachie?], who was a "washer-upper"; glitch in tape
 297 rajahs loved picnics by the river
 301 didn't send postcards; weren't such things as post cards where she was staying
 305 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
 345 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
 354 weren't allowed to eat in the house
 360 Indians loved orators; husband wouldn't stop speaking so orator could get the mail
 373 masters were Indians; took a rajah out to see the commissioner's wife; made awful noise in the car
 388 believes rajahs were eccentric people; but thinks the Indians have lost a lot of glamour in doing away with them; glitch in tape
 395 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
 431 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
 442 husband walked up on two wounded tigers

443 out into the jungle often because it was only thirty miles in any direction
 446 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
 464 some states were very remote
 473 [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
 484 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
 525 money she made for the maharajah by selling his furs was given back to her for the
 medicine in the villages
 527 it was difficult to raise money for the villages
 532 in 1948, they went to Pakistan; tell the story of Mrs. Sherwood
 556 dark bungalow's bathroom was awful
 564 when first reached India, she was not allowed outside without a topi
 565 talk about photos
 571 there were about 25,000 people in their camp
 578 college was well endowed by the chiefs; they all had to contribute money
 586 he had to join the Indian Education Service; don't receive any pension; was keen on school
 not being just for the rajahs
 597 had a hospital in refugee camp
 598 discusses what the women wore; the style for men and women
 629 end of side

Tape 889, Side B

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

006 used powdered milk, made with brackish water in a tub; weak babies got stronger
 015 very big irrigation scheme in Punjab; to produce two crops on soil, raise the water level
 022 almost impossible to toil the land; if had money, they could farm onions the first year;
 gradually get off after the soil improves
 034 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
 041 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
 049 people didn't have their children in India because they sent their children to England; was
 very expensive
 057 would love to go back to India
 059 college still running in India; still hears from the principal
 062 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
 066 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

084 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
 108 loved going out into the jungle because the people were so pleasant; enjoyed seeing the
 different sites in the jungle
 112 talk of a place that was very remote; talk of the dirt road
 121 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
 134 in [Rahl Pur?] station, there were so many people; trains stopped there; at times, were about
 600 people; station master was very nice
 138 would make biscuits because it was too expensive to buy them; gave everyone large
 amount of tea with the biscuits
 143 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
 149 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
 167 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
 171 her son Robin got dysentery from bad water; American missionary doctor cured him of the
 dysentery and dehydration
 193 Hospital in [Valor?] treats lepers
 205 huge irrigation tank in [Perique?]; flooded 200 mile area
 209 goddaughter wants to go to India, and she told her to definitely go to Kashmir
 213 end of interview

Tape 889 Side B cont’d

Roy (Part 2 of 3) (889.3)

214 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
 228 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;
 236 he was dismissed
 238 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
 244 his friend wrote a book *The Chancellor of Power*; was in charge of constitutional changes
 252 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
 258 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

279 gives an example using [Hydrobar?], who was the richest
 291 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
 295 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
 303 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
 328 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
 341 they negotiated the whole of the transfer of power from the 382 states to the union of India
 347 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
 365 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
 387 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
 395 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
 404 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
 424 knew once they took away all this activity, the economy would indeed flop
 426 by 1946/1947, Sir Jeremy was back in England and the English government sent out
 [Archibald Rollands?]; he was private secretary to Lord Beaverbrook
 433 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
 440 British government, seeing the war was coming to an end in India, sent Archie as the
 Finance Minister of India
 448 Roy had done seven years’ service with Sir Jeremy; said he was going home because Sir
 Jeremy was going home, and he agreed
 458 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
 470 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
 484 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

492 Roy was able to do something that no other ICS officer was able to do: he went to every
princely state in India
496 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
521 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
538 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
553 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
595 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
610 went to Tibet because it had treaty alliances with the British government of varying
natures; British government maintained a political liaison
634 end of tape