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Tape 861 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

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

4700.0587 Tape 861.1 (Tape 3 of 3)

G.N. Jackson

4700.0588 Tape 861.2 (Tape 1 of 3)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro and Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:

Edges and Debretts: 3/31/1978; 4/1/1978

Jackson: 4/2/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes

Edges and Debretts: 47 minutes

Jackson: 46 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 861, Side A

Edges and Debretts (Part 5 of 5) (861.1)

- 002 the appealing thing about Islam is its cleanliness; no Christian could fight with the beliefs of one god; the mosques were very clean
- 008 trouble with the Greeks were the shady priests; they were lawless and "roughnecks"; could not believe a word they said
- 015 the ordinary instinct of the British was to prefer the Muslims over the Hindus, and the Turk to the Greek; this is because they were ordinary people
- 023 they were both in Cyprus at the same time and never knew each other
- 026 the cleanliness of Islam must appeal to those who like their religion free of superstition
- 029 she gave their neighbor's Greek servant a coat and denied payment for it; after losing their

servant, the Greek servant came and said she would work at their house that day
 037 you were forced to pick a side between the Turks and Greeks when you lived in Cyprus
 when they were there
 040 in all fairness, they gave both of them chicken pox after picking up two hitch-hikers while
 their daughter was sick with chicken pox
 069 it's dull living in England because there is not a real chance of your car being blown up
 072 while in Cyprus, she would always walk behind John so no one would shoot him in the
 back
 083 while going with their children on a trip, they had to stop and excuse themselves in a
 wide-open area because of security precautions; when they got out of the car, John
 automatically took out his gun, cocked it, and waited until they were back in the car safely
 to put it away
 108 there were different pressures; there were pressures of mutual absorption; the British and
 the Indians were all happy, but they all knew it had to end
 119 Edge never resisted the end; everybody always knew that India was a different country and
 it would have to run itself
 127 there were a few (Edge included) who were really fond of India
 131 no one would suggest that England should not have handed India back over
 135 those that were fond of India wanted it to be handed over peacefully and happily; they
 knew it would not happen that way though
 144 they cannot help but feel guilty about leaving because it felt like they were letting the
 Indians down
 157 you could see communal hatred growing and it could not be stopped; in the end, if you
 were Muslim you severely disliked the Hindus and you would murder them; same was true
 for the Hindus and their feelings towards the Muslims; the English were stuck in the middle
 173 there was a tented hospital outside Rawalpindi where they brought all the mutilated Sikhs
 and Hindus; there would be a line of women and children in line waiting for milk to be
 distributed
 181 the military policeman that was there to ensure no one came back up for seconds was
 unable to stop the children for going back up two or more times
 182 Mrs. King, the wife of the Commissioner, demanded respect; everyone listened when she
 spoke
 197 if you were the wrong religion in a particular community, you had a good chance of being
 murdered
 208 talk about the scared Indian doctor that would just pass out medicine
 210 talk about their cat
 236 end of March 31, 1978 interview
 237 April 1, 1978 session; went to Bombay Service Minors, one of the three corps of sappers
 and miners, when he first arrived in India; performed the regular garrison duties: built
 railways and bridges, waited on war supplies, suppressed the local riots
 249 there was always some type of intra communal riots because there was a great deal of
 Hindu/Muslim tension; both had very large populations
 254 whenever one would have some type of festival, the troops would always have to go and
 assist the police
 257 the rest of the time you helped train troops, practiced your shooting, engineering
 260 Edge's company was due to go to the frontier; he looked forward to the frontier because

everyone wanted to go where the action was
 266 there was a fairly long leave times: you were given eight months to enable you to go back
 to England
 267 because someone was going on leave, Edge was posted at a training camp instead of on the
 frontier; he was very angry; that morning, he was given a great opportunity
 281 learned how to make maps, triangulate in the jungles around [Dorado?]
 296 his next job was in southern Indian, where he did triangulations; it was different type of
 country because it was a dense, tropical region
 303 while serving in India, you did all the field work during the winter months because the
 weather was nice then; in the hot weather, you usually went into a hill station where it
 tended to be much cooler
 309 you drew up the maps and did the calculations for the in the summer months; you surveyed
 in the cooler months
 312 was posted in northern India at a station named [Murray?]; it was a hill station that
 concentrated on land surveying; made maps of the less accessible areas on the frontier that
 dealt with the tribal rulers and tribal control
 326 was then sent to Calcutta, where he got married; he began printing and drawing positions;
 also did research; when the war started, they were shipped away from Calcutta
 343 they shifted all four anti-aircraft guns to Calcutta; the highest their guns could shoot was
 well below the modern aircraft, but they did not want the general Indian population to
 know this
 351 the guns were operated by British personnel, but they had to have a local defense, which
 was run by one of the Calcutta volunteer regiments
 356 there were territorial volunteer units; the Calcutta Scottish regiment was comprised of
 Calcutta business men
 362 the Calcutta Scottish were in charge of local defense; they had the machine gun set-up
 under a nearby tree with table full of whiskey bottles
 366 he was sent back to the frontier, where they started doing exercises and things concerned
 with duty
 378 to add to his frustration, he was then sent to Delhi; then the Japanese war started and he
 began to be mobilized
 382 he was sent out to survey an island area the government wanted to use to hold of the
 Japanese, who had taken control of the Indian Ocean
 398 the guns the used were so sighted that they could not see beyond the breakers on the reef
 403 the island was a pleasant place to be
 410 he would eventually move into Burma and found himself AD Survey for Fifteen Corps;
 failed to bring any of the maps of Burma out of Burma, so they were forced to start again
 from scratch
 422 came back to [Cambe?] and was in India for a while; rejoined former corps
 432 when they arrived, the war had actually finished by then, but only for a few days and it was
 still unknown as to what the Japanese would do
 439 was also given the job of taking group of troops to survey islands around Singapore to
 determine if there was a good island to put all the Japanese prisoners on; threw all the
 Japanese rifles (which were really Belgium rifles) into the sea because they saw them as
 useless
 453 present when the Japanese surrender envoys arrived; the Japanese arrived in an airplane

painted white, a signal of the surrender
 470 from Rangoon, Edge went down to Singapore; there, the Japanese surrendered in an
 official ceremony; they were determined to humiliate the Japanese generals to some extent,
 so they made the generals walk through the streets to the place of surrender (the town hall);
 the generals were not forced to walk much, as there was a fear that the crowd was going to
 get out of hand and hang the generals themselves
 490 the next day, there was an open-air service of thanksgiving near the cathedral
 498 Edge then went back to India and was put on peace time duties
 504 on the twenty-fifth, Patricia was sent back to England and Edge was put in charge of the
 training school
 517 then the pre-independence riots began; there was burning down of Hindu villages by the
 Muslims, along with the murdering of many Hindus
 546 every now and then, you would come across a huge crowd of men with knives spread all
 over the road going from Hindu village to Hindu village, burning everything and killing
 everyone
 556 Edge had a Muslim orderly with him, so he was fairly safe but you could never be too sure;
 it was very unnerving
 566 Muslims were particularly anti-Sikh
 573 Patricia had been asked by the governor's wife to help at the local hospitals with the large
 numbers of Hindu and Sikh patients that were coming in
 584 Edge went out again; he was making arrangements to get some of the Sikh (or Muslims) to
 India, which was a little safer
 594 on the way back, there was a man in the road so Edge nervously stopped. The guy was a
 Muslim and asked Edge to take the Sikh he had hidden into Rawalpindi; the Sikh was a
 member of the anti-Muslim league
 611 end of tape

Tape 861, Side B

Jackson (Part 2 of 4) (861.2)

001 He was over the frontier in the political agency, then he was the state's royal battalion in
 the Rajput states; he was then an assistant agent to various commanders in the Persian Gulf;
 he was then in Iran on the staff of the resident for the Persian Gulf, who was also the
 Council General for southern Iran
 012 He also acted as political agent of Kuwait a couple times; acted as an ambassador at one
 time for Kuwait
 015 then he went to western India; he was on the staff of the resident
 018 on Independence in 1947, he went to England and took the exam for the diplomatic service;
 he was accepted and was sent back to the Persian Gulf
 021 his close friend that had already gone out to India had written to him, talking of how nice
 and how much fun it was in India; that made him decide to go
 024 Jackson agreed that it was very fun
 025 it was a wonderful life for a young man; you had large responsibilities at young age with
 great opportunities; offered a great experience; there were a large number of young people
 out there in a variety of services
 032 the Indian Civil Service was considered the elite of the groups
 034 it was a very nice community because members of the groups were hand picked

035 the Indians were nice people and easy to get along with; there was a happy relationship
between the British and the Indians;
038 there was a consciousness of the movement toward independence
040 the Indians were a very capable people, able to run their own country
042 the problem was trying to establish everything while trying to avoid fighting between the
religions and between the sexes; the matter was not about whether or not the Indians should
have independence or whether or not they were capable of running their own country
049 did plenty of research before going out to India, mostly by talking to people who had been
there or who were on leave
053 Jackson was not surprised when he went out; he felt like he had been there for years after
about a month
056 Indian police were like any other police force; it administered British concepts and law,
which was implemented into codes that were the models of all the colonial police codes
061 there were sections of the codes that dealt with personal religion; they were adapted to the
laws of the people as well as it could be
066 there were British procedures in the courtrooms
068 the police tried to maintain law and order; tried to keep crime down and prosecute
criminals; they wanted to look after the people, just as any other civil police service
071 there was separation of the executive and judiciary; every opportunity given for defense,
sometimes too much opportunity and that made it difficult to get convictions
074 in India, there was no such thing as conviction on the entrance of a police officer, not even
being allowed as evidence
079 the law served to ensure there was no arbitrary behavior and that the people were looked
after
081 the police were not an instrument of rule, but of maintaining order and public safety; it was
designed to protect and was very liberal
085 the British frontier was patrolled by armed police; their job was to stop raiding parties from
entering British India; when the raiding parties would raid a village, the police would
provide a pursuit party
098 the frontier police's main concern was closing the frontier passes to keep the parties from
escaping to their own land; the civil police would chase them from behind
106 the raiders under took easy operations because they knew the land so well, from growing
up in the area to using the area to raise livestock
107 it was disastrous if they were caught; they could not stand casualties, but they could inflict
them easily
110 the frontier police recruited most of their men from tribes outside British India and
generally not from inside British India; this provided the disadvantage because they were
not as familiar with the territory
120 British would be the supervisors in the pursuits and very rarely went on pursuits; there were
times when there were a supervisor frontier officer and an assistant officer, but they were
not always filled at the same time; if the assistant was there, he would be involved in the
pursuit
129 Jackson was once involved in a pursuit; he was pursuing them in a large personnel carriage
that had gotten stuck on a mountain road and was forced to get out and walk
136 there were both foot and horse-mounted pursuits; there was a force that would leave from
headquarters that would try to get the raiders from behind

139 raiders normally had a camel or two and a pony to carry their gains and hostages, but they
never really raided on horseback; they would always abduct girls and sell them back to
their fathers

144 the raiders would steal anything they could carry away; usually all they would ever capture
were the camels

149 the frontier life did have a romantic feel because, when you were not at war, you would
have a good relationship with the people; it was a rugged, tough life that is loved by
younger adults; it was no place for married couples with families

158 it was a hard climate; very hot in the summer, but a nice winter

161 the British administration was a very serious, hard-working administration

163 the people devoted themselves to India, more than a contract could; it was very hard to give
so much when being compared to the diplomatic service, where everyone is comfortably
housed and fed with office hours

174 the physical living conditions of India were very demanding, except in the large capital
towns that had established housing; for example: Jackson never sat in a soft chair, like the
one he is sitting in now, while in the Punjab, except when in the government house,
because there were not any

179 if you went to see a district officer at his house in the winter, he would not be there because
he would be in camp; in the summer, his house would be furnished with camp furniture that
he had used all winter

184 you would only see furniture in a government house or a senior district commissioner's
headquarters in the winter; the comforts of today did not exist there

187 in the area of political officers, the more senior officers did more administrative tasks;
young officers were very active, as well as some of the senior officers

191 the officers would visit with the maharajahs every winter, along with inspecting the
administration in every state to help complete each state's annual report

197 he was an assistant political agent in South Waziristan; by being neighbors with other
states, he was able to look at the border from the other side

204 the problem in South Waziristan was that the people spent most of their time stealing from
each other or fighting; when not doing that, they would go across the border to British India
and steal such things as girls, money, and livestock

213 the political agent's problem was to pacify the tribes; the main problem was to find a better
standard of living for those that were stealing livestock because they were hungry

218 their first task was to make peace between the different tribal groups in the area; the second
task was to keep these groups from raiding British India; the main task was to establish an
economic base that would support the tribes and not force them to steal from each other

222 the British taught the tribes how to grow different crops, including things like peaches and
apricots, and how to better their agricultural system; they tried to get them into contracts
with British India; they tried to recruit them into government services to allow them to earn
money for themselves

231 it was an extremely hard area to try and raise the standard of living; the various rivers did
help

237 they tried to get the tribes to go into British India, but they did because they did not want to
go there

238 the British never considered themselves as very successful; however, after the war broke
out, there was no trouble in that area throughout the war; the British also pay subsidies in

order to help keep the peace
 242 all the roads in the area were built by the British government and were guarded as such;
 they would pay road guards
 246 the British never considered themselves successful, but they never had any trouble with the
 Indians until independence
 248 Jackson assumes that, when the Pakistan government took over, they abandoned the
 Indians
 255 the political agent had two headquarters: a tent in [Guama?] and a house in Tank, inside
 British India; the agent was rarely at his house; his assistant was always in Guama
 263 when there was a tribal disagreement, the agents would go and try to resolve the conflict
 266 the British would ride around in armored cars if there was a real danger threat when dealing
 with a large amount of money; most of the time they would drive in regular cars; they
 would travel by airplane sometimes
 277 the British political officers felt caught in the middle sometimes because they were the
 arbitrators between the tribes and the British government; would regularly receive a hostile
 greeting from both sides
 289 they wore white flags on their uniforms
 292 after the frontier he went to the Rajputana States
 296 there were civilized maharajahs
 304 they represented the crown to the maharajahs and to carry out the treaties the maharajahs
 has entered with Britain; they were trying to raise the standard of administration to equal
 the one found in British India
 311 there were one or two richer states that may have had a higher level of administration than
 those in some parts of British India
 315 it usually dealt with getting the states to agree to bring their levels of administration up to
 the levels found in British India; suggested naming them in personnel or finding them
 suitable administrators and by simply giving them advice
 318 under the treaty, they were supposed to accept the advice and suggestions the British made;
 most of the treaties had a clause, stating their recognition by the British crown; some
 offered protection against aggression from anywhere
 337 Jackson was the assistant to the resident for the western states; he was first the personal
 assistant to the resident of the Rajputana
 355 while living in [Byronia?] as the assistant, he was concerned the smaller states
 359 immediately after the war, there was widespread famine
 366 while dealing with the famine and the ending of the war, the British were trying to get the
 smaller states with the same ethnic background to join and make larger entities; they were
 trying to prepare for independence
 376 there was a great move before independence to move about 600 states into around 150
 states; in the end, because the British were unable to achieve the a certain level of unity, the
 maharajahs were unable to confront the Indian nations
 388 there were a great number of maharajahs, ranging from larger to small; because there were
 around 600 of them, which were all seen as administrative figures, you are unable to avoid
 the eccentrics
 402 it is cited that one of the causes of the mutiny was the absorption of the states without an
 heir by the East India Company; Queen Victoria reconciled this by guaranteeing the
 maharajahs their positions and, if an heir could not be found, the country would begin a

new line
414 the maharajahs were firmly in place and it was very difficult to remove them; there was a
strong security, which made them very arbitrary
426 the political officers had the task of instilling a sense of responsibility to their subjects,
while trying to preserve the maharajah; the lesson would be learned the hard way by the
maharajahs if the British had not been there: they would have had their heads taken off
435 there was a balance of maintaining their position and trying to make them act responsibly;
there were eccentrics: one maharajah's pleasure came from writing and producing his own
plays, funded by the money designated for education and schools
466 another maharajah had a fine administration, but his oldest son thought of himself as an
amateur doctor. The son would go into the hospital and perform some surgeries himself
479 in all, the maharajahs were not irresponsible in their conditions; they were not unpopular
amongst their subjects and maintained excellent administrations
489 the India national congress took them all over
497 in some of the Indian states, there were small British communities; in many Indian states,
there was a political agent and no other British person there; very few had British
businesses, which seemed to be more concentrated in Calcutta and Bombay
507 very much on your own in the frontier; the British military was the only time you would see
another British. Once you left that area, you wouldn't be able to speak English for days
516 you picked up language by reading it, writing it, and taking exams to test your knowledge
522 almost everywhere in India, if you wanted to be social, you would go to the club; there
were tennis courts and a bar at the clubs; you could go for months and spend time with your
English friends, just as you would have done back home
533 there were clubs in places even when there were not any British; in British India, the clubs
would begin being European clubs but soon Indians would join; by the time Jackson went
out, there were more Indians in the clubs
559 the British "were very thin on the ground"
563 you were discouraged from marrying until you were twenty-seven years old because the
junior officers had to be extremely mobile, being dragged many different places and not
always guaranteed a place to stay at night; the junior officers were not paid enough to
support a wife
578 the opportunities for temptation were enormous
587 in his first fourteen years of service, Jackson lived in about twenty-five different places
590 you become settled at moving around
594 the junior officers would live in tents or with someone else when housing was unavailable;
India has the perfect climate for tents, you could almost live in a tent all year long; it is a
"highly organized tent country"
605 the British did not live in great style in India; there were not many accommodations or big
houses
608 end of tape