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Tape 882 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

Brigadier Frank McCallum and Mrs. Sybilla McCallum

4700.0601 Tape 882.1 (Tape 3 of 3)

Audrey Spence

4700.0602 Tape 882.2 (Tape 2 of 2)

Edith Dixon

4700.0603 Tape 882.3 (Tape 1 of 2)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:

McCallums: 4/29/1978

Spence: 6/4/1978

Dixon: 6/17/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 34 minutes

McCallums: 19 minutes

Spence: 28 minutes

Dixon: 47 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 882, Side A

McCallums (Part 3 of 3) (882.1)

007 they were taken to the university

009 the family was treated very badly when they first went out; there were no arrangements for them

012 a day's pay was collected from everyone in the battalions, part going towards family housing and the other going towards a family hospital

014 even then it was pretty awful

015 McCallum remembers being asked to sign for various medicines; he did not know anything

about it except that they always seemed to want bottles and bottles of [Emgot?]
 022 the last time they went out, there was a fully qualified lady doctor was present in a larger
 facility; there were also a couple of assistants
 026 they had finally learned the normal hospital procedures
 036 all Gorkha regiments had some sort of tradition; there were no colors because no rifle
 battalion had colors
 039 the 2nd Gorkhas carried a truncheon, which was given to them by Queen Victoria for
 bravery on the Ridge during the Mutiny
 042 there was a great connection with various British battalions; there was a connection with a
 Sea Force from the First World War
 045 there was a connection the Northhamptonshire Regiment; they were first class
 046 the Gorkhas were always getting along well with the British soldiers; however, McCallum
 does not know “how in the devil they spoke”; McCallum does not know what they spoke
 about either
 050 McCallum’s regiment looked after the Northhamptonshire Regiment very well
 052 when Christmas came, a Senior Gorkha officer came up and asked if they could take over
 all the guards and such of the battalion; this was accepted
 060 after this great friendliness, they were always in McCallum’s canteen because they liked
 the rum; other men were in another canteen because they liked the beer
 061 no British soldier was ever “had-up” for being drunk because the Gorkhas always took him
 back
 066 when the Northhamptonshire Regiment left, they were given a presentation and such; in
 return, they gave the Gorkhas a silver armory member card, making them honorary
 members of their mess forever
 074 the severing of the goats was an annual affair; it went for all Gorkha regiments
 077 McCallum is unsure if it is still a strong a feeling as it used to be
 079 when there, the deputy commander said that he was going to stop this “slaughter”
 085 India is a funny country
 086 at Partition, terrible things happened; McCallum was there in 1947
 092 McCallum saw some of the rioting and such first hand; some of the after results as well
 093 there was a village outside Rawalpindi, which was half Muslim and half Sikh; they got
 along well together for years
 098 the trouble makers would then come around
 110 the Sikhs would attack the trains; one train pulled into the station with all dead passengers
 118 McCallum believes they tried to rush things and all the killings were a result of that
 127 McCallum does not see many people that he knew in India; there are few in the area
 131 there is a Gorkha association, but he is too old to attend; there is a yearly mailing
 135 McCallum’s regiment, the 9th Gorkha Rifles, still exists in India
 141 McCallum’s colleagues are rapidly “dwindling away”
 150 they discuss the Gorkha Museum; the secretary of the museum is a man named Maines
 172 end of McCallum interview

Tape 882, Side A cont’d

Spence (Part 1 of 2) (882.2)

173 beginning of Spence interview
 176 if you were born of parents who lived in India, you more or less accepted the fact that
 around age six or seven you came back to England to be educated
 179 this was not just for those English children in India, but any part of the British Empire

181 you expected not to see your parents except when they came home on leave, until about the
 age of eighteen or when your parents retired
 184 if your parents were not retired by the time you were eighteen, you perhaps went out and
 joined them (especially if you were a girl)
 185 now, it is part of everyone's contract that, if you are working abroad in the forces, they pay
 for your children to go abroad for two holidays
 188 the main obstacle was time; it took about three weeks just to get out to India, so you had to
 be separated
 191 Spence's mother came home every six months to see her children
 198 Spence tells of how her sister had to stay with a grandmother, a cousin and at school
 202 they were considered lucky because her father had leave every three years; some fathers
 had leave every four years
 204 during the rest of the time, the children had to spend their time with strange people
 206 she compares it to one of Kipling's novels
 207 there seemed to always be a weekly letter; Spence was considered lucky because both her
 mother and father would write to her; most children got letters only from their mothers
 211 even parents in England would send their children away to school, but not at such a young
 age; they would send them when they were a little older and for not as long a time
 212 it was more common, especially in the middle class, to send one's children off to boarding
 schools; it was more common to send the boys away when compared to the girls
 215 Spence's paternal grandfather brought his three children back to England when his wife
 died; the children first went to his mother, then a governess/housekeeper
 222 the housekeeper lived with the children until their father retired
 227 life for Spence's father and siblings was not very thrilling; however, one would accept this
 "rather stoically" and a part of life
 232 when the war came, Spence's mother came home and decided to stay with the children in
 England for their education
 236 in those days, one did not expect English children to be in India during their childhood, so
 there were no schools to educate them
 239 disease was the main reason why parents wanted to send their children home; there was a
 high infant mortality rate
 242 there were no vaccines for malaria and such
 244 Spence and her brother both contracted dysentery and malaria
 247 Spence's brother was only four when he came home; he lived in the school nursery with his
 nanny and went to kindergarten
 252 this meant that Spence could go in and be with the nanny as well; this made things easier
 255 they always had some sort of nanny; this was how it was done in England
 257 in India, it was unheard of not to have a nanny or something
 263 sending children away to school is not as common now, partly because of the financial
 situations; it is almost impossible now, unless your family is well-off
 266 Spence tells of how sending children off to boarding school is more political now; the
 schools are becoming comprehensive
 271 in the old days, grammar schools were given grants, where you did get a good education;
 these are being "squeezed out" now because they are seen as "elitist"
 275 they are becoming private now because they no longer receive grants; this makes them
 much more expensive
 276 more common to send your children as "day children" because it is less expensive; families
 settle in areas surrounding a school they consider to have a strong academic background

282 because of the high mortality rate, the British were reluctant to establish schools for the
English children in India; one really wanted to get their children out of the country
286 children always seemed to be ailing; some were alright
289 Spence remembers going to a British cemetery in India and the whole area “was stiff with
the graves of children”; most of the children were about three years old
293 people do not realize the difference the discovery of antibiotics and cure for malaria made
295 Spence tells of one man covering all stagnant water with oil or petro; this was to stop
mosquito breeding
299 Spence tells of her mother getting up in the morning and having a swarm of mosquitos fly
out of her slippers
300 one always had to sleep under a mosquito net
305 the British became very big on boarding schools when it became a necessity to have
somewhere for the children to go; it has been a part of the culture
309 Sidney Smith, an 18th century clergyman, had a terrible time at Winchester because of
bullies and such; he was offered a place at Winchester when his son was born and took it
because someone offered to pay for it
319 his son was terribly beaten up and bullied as well; it is estimated the son died in his early
twenties as a result of the beatings
323 Arnold started a system of prefects, after which many of the schools were started with the
purpose of boys going into the army or Colonial Service or Indian Civil Service
333 this system was supposed to teach virtues and such
338 Spence remembers having a strong sense of doing things for the community while at
school; this was very much instilled as part of your education
343 one had to accept a certain amount of things without complaining, which was also part of it
347 this “stiff upper lip” philosophy has completely gone overboard now
351 the British have always been callous about their children in many ways; the children of the
upper class were often set-out to wet nurses and nannies
355 one never saw much of their children; they were brought down to the drawing room around
five, which was after tea; they were there for about an hour, all bathed, dressed and tidy
357 other than that, you saw your nanny; the nanny basically raised you
359 this has disappeared for the most part now, since people have done away with domestic
servants
364 this system did produce a different type of person
365 one had the slight feeling that it was bad form to become too emotional about things,
perhaps especially in boys schools
376 now, this is not the case
379 it was a sheltered existence in some respect because you never really saw the outside
world; in other ways, one had to learn how to cope with things on your own
382 Spence remembers traveling back and forth under a guard when she was around seven; no
child now would be able to see if their luggage had gotten off one train and onto another
and so forth
387 in many ways you were tough and independent; in other ways, you lived a regimented life
in a boarding school; one lacked learning about certain things, like the opposite sex
391 one was kept within their own sex until about the age of eighteen; there was little
opportunity for meeting anyone of the opposite sex
394 at Spence’s first school, many of the girls were from families that were out in India; at the
second school, there were a few but not many
403 at about the age of fifteen, Spence took the School Certificate and went on for another two

years at another school
 405 Spence talks of the headmistress at her third school; they were radicals and forceful
 414 Spence's second school was a delightful school with a wonderful headmistress; there were
 actually two headmistresses, both of which Spence kept in touch with and would visit
 418 in many ways, the headmistress acted like a mother
 419 the last school was very radical, led by a formidable headmistress; Spence found it a shock
 to go there after the first two schools
 424 at her first two schools, they never discussed the British Empire or such; one just accepted
 "there they were"; at the third school, this was thrown out and Spence had to be very quiet
 about her father being in the ICS
 431 when her father came home on leave in 1944, he saw the headmistress, who was amazed
 because of her pre-conceived notions
 450 the ICS was considered the elite of the Colonial Services because you had to make the top
 grades and such; the lesser ones went to Africa and various other places; India was
 considered the "cream"
 461 the ICS was a very small service when compared to the numbers of the Indian population;
 it was such a small number of people trying to rule a country
 468 on the whole, getting rid of the Empire after the war was done with little trauma; India has
 done very well on the whole
 478 Spence was amazed at how all the laws are the same as they were under the British; the
 only difference with the driving codes were that donkeys had the right-of-way
 484 the Code of Justice remains as it was
 486 although there is a lot going on that one wishes would not, one cannot expect a newly
 emerged country to be superbly governed from the go; it is marvelous that it has not been
 worse
 501 during the Victorian age, all of Spence's ancestors had ten or so children; with her father
 and his two sisters were two girl cousins, whose parents were in India but had died
 513 if you look at their family heritage, Spence's brother is the only male Spence left
 523 one never really settled-down there; you accepted the fact that you were eventually going
 to go back to England
 530 when Spence's father returned in 1947, every now and then Indian friends would come and
 visit; they were horrified because they were living in a little house across the road
 542 end of Side A

Tape 882, Side B

Dixon (Part 1 of 2) (882.3)

003 Dixon's father was an officer
 006 Dixon mentions the book *The Raj*; Dixon is the first person in the collection
 009 in the original hardback, there were some misleading statements concerning the railway
 workers
 013 Dixon's mother went out as a bride and was looked down upon by some people; the only
 way to overcome this, according to Dixon, was to look down on the people below you
 015 the colored fraternity were definitely a poor outcast
 018 the book gives the impression that the railway people were mostly from the Eurasian
 society; this was true of the subordinates, like the drivers, guards and station masters
 021 these people were drawn from the colored part
 022 Dixon first remembers her father as District Traffic Superintendent; as such, he had his

029 own coach to travel in and was forced to tour for the Northwestern Railway Company
they would spend weeks at a time on the trains in comfort; the saloon was very large and
broad gauge by standards

031 everyone that goes out to India is impressed by the vastness of the railways

032 Dixon describes the layout of the train and cars

036 it was a wonderful experience; they would go and stop at little wayside stations; her father
would inspect the station, making sure the office and signals were working properly

039 they would often take the opportunity to go off and have a shoot

041 Dixon remembers laying in her bunk, having her mother or father pass her a duck leg or
something of that nature

043 there was one experience when Dixon's father was going into the Low Hills; the morning
after the inspections, Dixon awakened to find the carriage moving

049 the Indians were moving it to where they thought was the proper place, to be hooked onto
another train; the train got out of hand and they had to chase it down the main line with the
express coming up

051 Dixon's mother jumped, Dixon was thrown out; Dixon's father went back for the servants

058 they pulled the brake and stopped the cart; they then pushed it off the track, just in time

061 there was a young man in one of the remote stations who loved playing the violin in the
evening; some of the locals would come down and play their version of the instrument

066 they became friendly; their priest told them the only way to get to Paradise was to kill the
station master and they did

070 the whole staff was involved in the killing, except for one who had gone up the side of the
hill to get water; he lived to tell the tale

072 it was a wonderful time full of wonderful traveling; the rail stations were crowded;
everyone was in a panic to get on board

074 there were people asleep on the platform, so one had to jump over them to get past; there
were vendors

076 the train would probably pull out with people hanging on all over the place

078 Dixon remembers having a very large and roomy bungalow; there were plenty of gardens
around it

080 Dixon was the only child until she was four and a half years old

083 there were about fifteen servants; they were all known just by their job, with one exception

085 Dixon talks of speaking nursery rhymes in Indian and English; she talks of the little games
she would play with her father

100 Dixon talks of a Sikh who had served her father

102 Dixon's father was one of five boys; the Sikh grew up with her father and they went off to
service with him

105 the servant served until her father retired; there was a deep-down devotion, shown when he
cried as her father was leaving

113 Dixon escaped being a spoiled child because she was followed by brothers; the oldest
brother was terribly spoiled, still to this day in fact

121 Dixon tells of knocking off the turban of her father's friend when they were playing; he
became upset; children hugged and kissed him, saying everything was going to be alright

123 Dixon could not sleep one night while her parents were at a party; the servant laid on the
side of the bed and rubbed her back until she went back to sleep

125 her father would have trusted him with anything

127 the other servants were all nameless

129 Dixon rarely heard her father being really angry with a servant; Dixon only remembers one
incident in which an Englishman got very angry with a servant
131 it happened when they were staying in a hotel in Delhi; the man was supposedly the
strongest man in the British army; the man picked up the servant by the neck and threw him
over the stairs when the servant upset his wife
140 it was rare to get angry with a servant
141 Mrs. Donovan was as strange as her husband; she had a beautiful golden wig and you could
see the stitching along the side; it is rumored she wore a black wig when King Edward died
148 Dixon talks of the mothers taking the children into the hills during the hot weather while
the fathers stayed in the plains
149 they moved after her father received a promotion
153 they had just moved into a very nice house when her father went out on one of his tours;
when they returned, there was servants waiting on the platform, talking a lot between them
156 the servants had to report that they could not go back into the house because plague had
broken out and they had found dead animals around the house, like rats and such
159 Mr. Martin Leek came along with pictures of beautiful botanical gardens that he was the
curator of; he offered for the Dixon's to stay in his house until they got back into their own
home; they accepted the offer
162 while staying with Mr. Leek, Dixon's aunt, who was in Army Nursing Service, received
leave; she went and stayed with them, bringing her puppy with her
164 Dixon talks of how the puppy was very "snappy" and bit her one day; that night, the dog
began roaming around the house, rolling about and howling
166 the vet believed the dog had rabies
168 people at one time had to go to Paris for rabies treatment, normally not making it there in
time; there was now a treatment center in India
174 on the verge of coming back to England; it had to be canceled as they went up to the clinic
178 they had to walk to the Pasteur Institute every day to receive their anti-rabies injections; it
went on for three weeks
180 for the first half of the time, there was an injection on both sides of the stomach every day;
after that, you received an injection on one side then the other side the next day
182 one would become rather sore
184 amongst the patients there, there was a man who was in the Burma Forestry; he made his
servants hold him down and cut a large area out of his leg where he had been bitten
188 he did this because he knew his chances of making it to the Institute in time were very
small; he did make it there in time and did not get rabies
191 Dixon knows what rabies can be like and takes the threat of it coming seriously
194 there was a tour in England, then they went back out to India; her father went out again
with another promotion; he was stationed in Calcutta
198 now, all the government service moved up to Shimla for the hot weather, so her father got
to go with them; they had a very lovely house in the suburbs
204 Dixon could tell from her mother's actions and mood that it was a good time; her mother
was always going off to a ball or party
207 Dixon went to a fancy dress party at one of the lodges
209 Dixon was around ten at the time, so she began a sort of schooling; she had no real
schooling at all at that point
212 there was an old woman that gave lessons; Dixon and her neighbor would go
215 one day, while they were on their way to the tutor, they were thrown out of the car; this was

the end of their education
 218 Dixon was sent to boarding school in England; she could read well, although she pretty
 much taught herself
 223 the most traumatic thing was to leave your parents and go to school in another country
 226 you did not know the school ways or language; you did not know what was meant by all the
 school terms like “prep” and such
 227 dress attire at school were very severe costumes, dress blouses and such; Dixon’s clothes
 were not like the other girls, so she was laughed at and mocked
 233 Dixon was desperate and had to endure two years of this before her mother came home
 234 next to go was her brother, probably worse for him because he was very pampered
 238 Dixon believes she had a longer educational career than others, partly because of where her
 parents were stationed
 240 her brothers came home much younger when compared to Dixon
 241 it did not matter to Dixon; she could read
 242 she attended an east school, a private school for girls; they learned many things, but none of
 the things they needed later
 249 while growing up, Dixon wanted to be a doctor; after school, Dixon had to learn physics;
 Dixon went on to medical school and passed her first medical exam
 255 her husband then asked her to marry him, and that was the end of medical school
 257 Dixon’s uncles were all in India in various services; all rose to the top of their profession
 264 they always spoke Hindustani while in India; the children may have spoken it better than
 English; speaking English was not encouraged
 272 it was believed that speaking English would allow the Indians to determine what you were
 talking about; you learned their language
 277 the medical set-up was rather inferior; Dixon remembers being sick and the doctor coming
 and prescribing an ointment for her cough
 288 in those days, doctors would make their prescriptions in their own offices/pharmacies
 289 Dixon was in bed and her mother was giving the baby a bath; the baby began coughing
 when the medicine arrived
 292 her mother put some on the babies chest, who began screaming; the skin came right off his
 chest; he still has the scars today
 298 years later, her mother went up in the hills with the two boys; her brother broke out in a
 rash; the doctor thought it was scarlet fever
 305 it was serious because it was not well known in India; once it began to spread, there was no
 immunity to it
 309 her brother went into the new isolation hospital; he was ordinarily going to be placed in a
 damp bed but her mother discovered the problem; he was eventually put into a dry bed
 332 her mother noticed the wall in the back room was bulging because of the rains from the
 monsoon; the doctor told her not to worry and left
 340 a little later, the wall in the back room came crashing down
 345 her mother had to leave the door to the room open because there was no other ventilation
 and it was extremely hot
 346 her mother awoke to a nasty smell; it was a wild hill man lying next to her bed; she hit him
 over the head with her shoe
 356 the next morning, she sent for a guard and her father
 362 the rash turned out not to be scarlet fever, for it disappeared just as fast as it appeared
 366 Dixon’s aunt was in a remote area in the hills when her small son fell and almost severed

his tongue; there was trouble in getting to the doctor because there was a small strike
 373 when they reached the doctor's office, they found that the doctor had been called out and
 was not likely to return that night
 376 the aunt told the assistant to sew the wound, but the assistant said he could not because he
 was not allowed to
 380 after the aunt stated she would take responsibility, the assistant said he could do it but he
 could not give the boy any anesthetic; the aunt gave the boy some chloroform
 383 the aunt said there is nothing worse than trying to do something to aid the tongue of a
 wailing child
 386 they finally got the child calmed down and the tongue stitched
 388 in many ways, life in India was a pioneer sort of life
 391 women were coming very young from a sheltered life in England
 396 while growing up, people were constantly telling stories about India; it was something
 people talked about regularly
 402 Dixon did not really hear a lot about her ancestors that had served in India; she did her own
 research on the subject; she knows the least about her father's side
 406 Dixon's paternal great-grandfather arrived in India about 1820; his son had retired to
 England by the time Dixon met him
 412 Dixon's grandfather was in the police force; they were Irish
 414 Uncle Vincent wrote *The Silken East*, *The Isles of Fiji*, *The Charm of Kashmir* and others
 421 Dixon's brother read an article in the paper concerning someone very anxious to get a hold
 of writings about Burma; Dixon's copy was reserved for her grandson
 443 they look at pictures from India
 456 Dixon remembers her father seeing his brothers in India fairly frequently; Dixon has clear
 recollections of them all
 459 after they had returned from England, they were on their way to Shimla when they broke
 down at her uncle's police camp
 466 Dixon remembers sitting in a tub and scooping ants out of the water; it was awfully hot
 469 after two more days of travel, they reached Shimla under heavy snow
 480 they stayed in a hotel once arriving in Shimla; it was infested with monkeys, which you
 could hear in the overhanging trees
 487 the hotel was arranged in two blocks, connected by an outdoor staircase; Dixon would go
 down the stairs to get her meals
 492 Dixon's brother refused to get out in the cold and had to have his meals served to his room;
 he had to wear gloves until his utensils were warmed
 497 the next morning, their mother found their dog made hole in the couch; you could only see
 his head poking out
 505 her mother would sit on the sofa when someone was coming to hide the hole until a new
 cushion arrived
 510 there were great temperature extremes that had to be dealt with
 518 India was very much a family thing; it was not uncommon to have brothers, sisters and
 other relatives in India at the same time
 520 generations of the same family would keep going out to India
 523 after her father's generation, fewer children began going back to England for schooling;
 this also coincided with the fact that India was gaining independence
 537 in their younger years, Dixon's mother would go up to a small place where they had a
 cottage; the grounds were full of flowers