

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

Tape 847 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES: H.P. and Margery Hall

COLLECTION: 4700.0581 Tape 847 (Tape 2 of 4)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWER: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES: 3/1/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 33 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 847, Side A

Halls (Part 2 of 7)

- 001 sports popular with 15th Punjab regiment, ethnic makeup
- 009 choosing a regiment to join
- 014 joined 3rd 15th Punjab regiment at [Sorgo?], awful little place in central India
- 016 moved up to Fort Sandeman
- 017 differences between British and Indian Army, fewer people, less hierarchy in Indian Army, easier to get promoted, Hall quickly made company commander
- 024 role of quartermaster
- 028 in 1934, damaged his Achilles tendon while playing soccer with Gorkhas, couldn't run
- 032 no electric lights at fort, primitive medical facilities, sent Hall 200 miles to Quetta (now Pakistan), for medical attention
- 043 his claim for cost of journey to Quetta, was denied because paperwork not done properly
- 048 officer who died from anesthetic gone wrong, Hall temporarily assigned to fill in at captain's pay
- 056 Quetta earthquake in May, 1935
- 069 Hall was responsible for bombs, grenades and other weaponry, missing grenades after

- earthquake
- 080 other administrative problems caused by earthquake
- 089 a marshal of the air force flying down from [Noshiro?], forced landing, plane hit a school, no one badly hurt
- 108 one of the man on the plane treated for nose injury, but killed in earthquake
- 114 stories of people's earthquake experiences, deaths
- 123 a colonel who arrived at Fort Sandeman, thought he was too sick to continue to Quetta, Hall had to force him to go
- 130 reasons why Hall left Indian Army, got bored, no room for advancement
- 140 places in Persian Gulf where British political agents operated
- 146 political agents allowed to have wives with them, military people weren't, got to know two political agents in Fort Sandeman, played tennis with them
- 155 decided to transfer to political service
- 168 Hall's relations with other men in service
- 180 moved to Jhansi in central India, went with an advance party to open new station at Jhansi, station there had been closed for several years
- 190 Jhansi well known for its tiger hunting opportunities
- 194 lots of snakes around Jhansi
- 196 few opportunities for entertainment at Fort Sandeman
- 200 Hall had two polo ponies, got up early to school them, played tennis and squash in afternoon
- 206 attended signal school in Poona
- 220 already knew more about electricity and wireless than the instructors
- 230 his classmates at signal school
- 242 Hall refused to take notes at school because he knew it all already
- 250 Hall called up in front of commandant for having large bar bill, but he'd spent it on ginger ale
- 263 rejoined his unit at Jhansi, discovered that the colonel wouldn't release Hall to transfer to political service
- 289 went to see brigadier at his house about his wish to transfer to political service, brigadier wanted him to stay but allowed him to go to his interview for political service in Delhi
- 305 his arrogant attitude toward political service
- 311 viceroy wanted to see Hall, sent car for him
- 330 had casual chat with viceroy's assistant
- 343 went home on leave, played lots of cricket
- 349 returned to India in October 1937, his unit, the Jhansi Brigade had been sent up to war on frontier
- 360 learned that he'd been accepted by Indian Political Service, but his colonel had answered for him that he wanted to stay in the Army
- 378 fought battle on frontier, description of mountain warfare
- 395 couldn't shoot until you were shot at, which put British at disadvantage
- 401 casualties during attempt to take ridge
- 410 people going haywire, shooting up hillside
- 422 spent about ten days up there, then got word that he should report to duty for political service to central India
- 440 differences in amount of leave depending on where you were stationed, how he financed trips home to England

- 456 took two months leave to Kashmir in 1936, stayed on houseboat with two other officers,
had many hungry and thirsty visitors, wound up costing him a lot of money
471 got friendly with maharajah of Cooch Behar in Kashmir, who was fond of tennis and
drove a Bentley
490 maharajah hit and killed a cow, had to pretend his driver had done it, driver had to leave
Kashmir because cows were sacred
503 lived with a family in India for a while
530 pre-Christmas ball that was well attended by Brits and Indians

Tape 847, Side B

Halls (Part 3 of 7)

- 002 an assistant political agent, Hall had lots of power in area of Singh and Punjab
008 relations with tribe on Punjab border
017 someone who offered to “bump people off” for Hall
020 description of terrain
023 popularity of mail routes, dispute between locals who wanted mail contracts
027 rode militia lorry on trip from Lora Lai to Fort Sandeman
035 protocol regarding militia lorries
038 attack on mail lorry, Hall had almost been on it
045 dealing with locals shooting each other, assassinations
051 Hall once held up by a gang when he was mistaken for a corrupt garrison agent
061 work of a political agent, performed diplomatic role
065 administration in Baluchistan, a northwest frontier province
074 appointed director of food and civil supplies for Baluchistan during war, in charge of
rationing of food and consumer supplies
080 meeting in Delhi to decide on cloth allocations
080 got word that bigwig was coming to visit him during conference
091 Brits administered India effectively because Indians obeyed them until the end of their
reign
098 called upon to give viceroy account of situation in Baluchistan, description of situation
there
109 Baluchistan tribal leader said he’d rather have his country as a British colony than to be
absorbed into India or Pakistan, more akin to Afghanistan
115 twelve Brits administered 2.5 million people of Baluchistan
125 setting date for hand over to India
133 Baluchistan complied with British rule
137 tragedy of Indian Independence
150 deployment of troops, leadership of Mountbatten
173 problems and alliances between India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Hyderabad
183 relation to Persian Gulf, extent of British administration
194 roles of political service versus foreign service, including Nepal, Afghanistan, other
neighbors of India
207 compares India to main character of *Three Faces of Eve*, who suffered from multiple
personalities
216 Americans spoiled Indians during WWII by paying them double what Brits paid
224 advent of air service to India
226 in 1947 it suited Hall to come home and stay home, he had small children

- 233 readjustment to England after life in India
238 difficulties of people who tried to enter commerce and industry
243 people who went to colonial service in Africa, a lot in Kenya
248 many more officers per capita in Kenya, less autonomy and power than in India
255 people who entered diplomatic service had best post-India careers, examples of careers of people he knew
280 man who became high commissioner of Tonga
288 careers of other people he knew in India
296 people who went to India were looking for wider horizons, escape economic problems of England
310 man who traveled overland to get to his post, by the time he got there had heard so much criticism of ICS that he resigned upon arrival
329 other examples of career paths of people he knew
335 Charles Duke entered foreign service and wound up as ambassador in Israel, others
353 Mrs. Hall recounts story of man they knew who was so cheap he wouldn't feed his guests
368 man who went out to Kenya as a deputy lieutenant
382 India bred eccentric characters, people became a bit more of what they were
387 Mrs. Hall didn't like the person India made of her
420 several conversations at once
427 description of colonial office, people who worked for it
448 worked for British interests in Hong Kong in 1949
460 complications of American interests in Hong Kong
470 intrigue involving Chiang Kai-shek and some airplanes, famous court case in Hong Kong
492 Hall became head of Pacific and Indian Ocean department, covering, Fiji, Tonga, Seychelles, etc.
510 conference in 1958 regarding Mauritius, people there are Indian, African, Chinese, Hindu, Franco-Russian
530 George Wilson, member of the Mauritius conference