

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**Tape 880 Finding Aid**

**INTERVIEWEE NAMES:**

Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Lamarque

4700.0599 Tape 880.1 (Tape 3 of 3)

Brigadier Frank McCallum and Mrs. Sybilla McCallum

4700.0601 Tape 880.2 (Tape 1 of 3)

Brigadier Frank McCallum, Mrs. Sybilla McCallum, Benjamin and Lady Bromhead

4700.0600 Tape 880.3 (Tape 2 of 2)

**IDENTIFICATION:** Britons in Pre-Independence India

**INTERVIEWER:** Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

**SERIES:** British Voices from South Asia

**INTERVIEW DATES:**

Lamarques: 4/28/1978

McCallums and Bromheads: 4/29/1978

McCallums: 4/29/1978

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 34 minutes

Lamarques: 41 minutes

McCallums and Bromheads 46 minutes:

McCallums: 6 minutes

**OTHER MATERIALS:** None

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**Tape 880, Side A**

**Lamarques (Part 3 of 3) (880.1)**

002 in the ordinary way, one would never do more than three years at the secretary job before they sent you back into the districts again; you oscillated from one to the other

004 Lamarque enjoyed a certain amount of shooting, especially in southern India; fishing was another big thing in south India, although Lamarque never did much of it

007 Lamarque kept a horse, though it was mostly for pleasure at one stage; it was a nice change  
from tennis  
009 the Indians were great tennis players  
010 there was always a golf course: where ever the British go, they build one; there were no  
“greens” but “browns”  
013 the golf course in Delhi was a very good one; Madras had some golf courses; some could  
also be found in the hill stations  
016 India was an outdoor life because you were always touring and going out to do inspections  
and disputes  
021 you could always combine the outdoor work with recreation, like going to an inspection  
and stopping for a shoot on the way home  
023 for a young man, there was nothing else like India in the world; they enjoyed it and they  
consider themselves very lucky for the opportunity  
029 one had to pass the Lower Standard Exam, followed by the Higher Standard Exam; these  
were both language tests  
031 one had to do a second language up to the Lower Standard  
035 drawback of some of the languages is the length of the words; the language organizations  
are slightly complicated and “ties you in knots”  
048 Lamarque had a lot of contact with the Eurasians in [Madurai?] because of their  
occupations  
049 the great occupation of the Anglo-Indians was the railways; [Madurai?] was the  
headquarters of the South Indian Railway, so there was a large Anglo-Indian community  
052 the Anglo-Indians lived very strict, formal lives; their social life was very much like the  
Victorians  
056 the Anglo-Indian girls could be very attractive, especially when they are younger  
063 Lamarque would occasionally go to one of the dances at the Railway Institute  
069 the younger British tended to mingle more with the Anglo-Indians, more so in southern  
India  
072 when Lamarque went to Delhi, he did not come across any Anglo-Indians except through  
the course of the job; there were many Anglo-Indian secretaries or junior staff members  
075 in the districts, however, one would come across Anglo-Indians, with the frequency  
depending on the location  
079 one came across Anglo-Indians through subordinate jobs in the Public Works Department;  
they were the “blue-collar workers” because you did not see them socially  
082 British-Indian marriages were not frowned upon, for a few people did it; it was unusual  
085 in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were many Europeans that had the Indian girls as their  
mistresses; this tended to die out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but not all together  
087 one great advantage of south India, especially on the west coast, it is a matriarchal society  
and the children would take their mother’s name; this made it easy for everyone because  
the children were bought up and educated by the mother  
091 the father would provide a certain financial backing and were not seen as responsible  
otherwise  
098 it was not regarded as anything “out of the way” but marriage was unusual; Lamarque does  
not remember any of his contemporaries in Madras who married Indians but there one or  
two in other provinces  
105 Lamarque believes that would be a difficult relationship, or at least tended to be

107 one had to eat a good deal of Indian food because that was served when you entertained  
 them or were a guest at their meal  
 109 Lamarque did not mind the curry, but there were some sweet cakes that he could not  
 tolerate  
 113 the cook would prepare European meals, unless you asked him not to; the cook would be  
 European trained  
 116 when Lamarque first went out, he did not have electricity and there were problems finding  
 storage for cold food items  
 119 there was an “icing bowl”, which was run off of kerosene as a type of refrigerator  
 122 the good thing was that the station was not far from the main railway line; Lamarque would  
 send the cook and the bearer to the station to get ice from the dining car  
 128 the ice would keep them going for a few days  
 129 interesting how one grows accustomed to life without electricity; looking back, Lamarque  
 believes it must have been pretty grim  
 132 the best thing was that all one had to do was clap their hands and the servants would come  
 and light the lamps  
 133 Lamarque had a large staff, which seems absurd now; there was a bearer, who stuck  
 through him through thick and thin  
 135 all of the staff were south Indians, even in Delhi  
 136 there was a cook, waterman, gardener, sweeper (who was usually a woman), someone to  
 see after the horses, and maybe an assistant boy  
 141 when Lamarque first went out to India, his pay was roughly 600 pounds a year, and he was  
 better off then; he does not know how, but Lamarque says he lived very well  
 148 certain nationalities had an affinity for each other  
 150 it seems that they got along well in personal terms  
 153 in Lamarque’s experience, you immediately establish a friendship when meeting an Indian  
 diplomat; you have them to your house to stay  
 158 somehow, they get along; there is no particular reason for it; the British are useful in this  
 way because they act as a bridge between the Europeans and the Anglo-Saxons and the  
 third world  
 165 the British tend to get on particularly well with the Indians  
 167 going back to the misconception that the British were turned out of India, the truth is not  
 like that; it was a handing over that most people realized was there from the beginning  
 173 personal relationships between the British and the Indians were in fact very good  
 177 Lamarque talks of someone commenting that during the British rule, many of the best  
 young British men went out to govern India; they went on to say that it was a pity that the  
 best was not good enough  
 180 Lamarque does not know what he means because he is turning everything upside-down  
 182 if the British had been defeated in some war, Lamarque believes then one could say that  
 was true  
 184 the handing over of power was a deliberate act, long planned for and thrust upon the  
 Indians in the end, whether they liked it or not  
 188 the idea of the British being forced out of India is a falsification of history according to  
 Lamarque  
 190 if the British had wanted, they could have stayed on in India without any great difficulty  
 after the war; the fact was that the majority of people in Britain thought it was time to go

194 the British in India felt it was time to go; the Indians thought it was time for them to go  
196 the world opinion was that it was time for the British to leave India; if they had desired,  
however, the British could have stayed  
202 this story cannot be considered a complete success story because no country has been a  
success story; mistakes were made, but it is easy in retrospect  
205 people, especially the troops that went to India were horrified by the intense poverty and  
low living standards; it was easy to turn to the British and say “that’s the best you can do?”  
210 it is hard to know what one can do; the British built them roads, bridges, and railways, as  
well as educated them and gave them law and order  
212 they did not have the basics of a civilization when the British arrived; the British gave it to  
them, as well as the opportunity to better themselves  
216 it was never regarded by any country, until 1945, as the thing to do for one country to give  
money to another country  
221 the British so organized things that the government of India was perfectly able to borrow  
money if they wanted; the railways and roads were financed in such a way  
227 in retrospect, the thought was wondering why they did not spend more money; the fact of  
the matter was that the opinions at home did not accept it  
232 now that the Indians have been independent, they are better off in economic terms than  
they were in the beginning  
235 Lamarque does not know if the Indian government would be any more successful in  
governing themselves than the British in getting them off the ground  
240 India is a difficult country to govern because it is so vast and the people are so different; it  
is difficult to remain democratic while retaining another order and keeping it running  
246 Lamarque would not say the British rule was a failure, although it may not have been a  
huge success  
254 the life of a bachelor was very much different from that of a married man  
255 one of the problems for the British in India was when you got married and your children  
came of school age  
260 it was a tough life for the British administrator until about 1947 because once the children  
reached aged seven, eight or nine, they had to go back to England  
262 the children could only get higher education in England; the climate also forced families to  
send their children home  
264 very often, the wife would go back with the children and the husband would stay; this was  
a tough life that one often forgets about  
270 it was impossible to get the children out to India even once a year without interfering with  
school because of the time required to get to and from Bombay from England  
273 once you had children, one had to face some painful partings  
275 Lamarque’s first experience with India when he was about nine years old: three of his  
friends had not seen, and were not going to see, their fathers for years because they were in  
the ICS  
280 during one summer term, one of the fathers came home on leave; the father taught in the  
school to be near his son  
292 when they first joined the diplomatic, they were given one paid holiday a year; they saved  
for another and she would be at home for the third  
303 Mrs. Lamarque went out to India at the end of the war; everything was exciting; they were  
shot at the moment they pulled into Bombay

311 Mrs. Lamarque thought this was typical and believed she should show no reaction; this was  
the Indian Naval Mutiny

315 Lamarque's office was in the Reserve Bank of India building at this time, in which all the  
gold and currency reserves for the government; his office was on the second floor

322 one man got on the roof of the building to take a picture and was shot; the office car was  
burnt on the street below

326 Lamarque was unsure whether or not the doors were closed because the mob could come at  
any moment and burst in; Lamarque called downstairs to question this and he was told that  
regulations state they were open from ten to three

336 they finally agreed to shut the main doors and leave a smaller side door open for business to  
follow regulations

340 Mrs. Lamarque enjoyed her time in India; they did go up to Kashmir after their first child  
was born

347 Mrs. Lamarque could not think of a better place to raise a child because of all the help from  
the servants; one could sit back and enjoy their children

349 young babies thrived in the warm climate

373 at breakfast, the [marley?] would get a basket of vegetables and arrange them in the basket;  
the bearer would bring it in every morning while Mrs. Lamarque was having breakfast

382 when they were coming home in 1947, Mrs. Lamarque remembers Mr. Lamarque standing  
on the rails of the ship making the comment, "Well, there goes my career. From now on, it  
will be a job."

395 nothing like India for the intelligent men now, which is sad; the jobs now are not the same

405 they look at the various pictures and comment on some

423 the houses on the corner seemed to always be the grandest because they seemed to have a  
"double garden"

432 there was no air conditioning; the houses were built as winter homes, so summer in the  
house was terrible and forced them to sleep in the garden

442 there were insufficient ways to keep cool; the boy would normally fall asleep

445 end of Lamarque interview

### **Tape 880 Side A cont'd**

#### **McCallums (Part 1 of 3) (880.2)**

460 beginning of McCallum interview, April 29, 1978

468 McCallum's father was a soldier

473 during World War I, one got the feeling one ought to go; McCallum's brother was killed in  
1915

478 McCallum was longing for some sort of revenge; McCallum's father was not too keen  
about McCallum going out

485 his father asked why McCallum wanted to spend his life killing people instead of getting on  
the Armistice then came along

490 in those days, it was expected of a member of the British army to have some money;

495 McCallum joined the Indian army

505 it was expected that a soldier could live off his pay in the Indian army

513 going to India was no picnic; when he arrived, McCallum realized the weather was very  
cold

522 McCallum arrived by boat to Bihar; he was then told to get on a train

526 in those days, the train was a combination of carriages and box wagons; one box wagon  
 could hold thirty horses and thirty men  
 535 there was a first and second class carriage; McCallum and others tried to get into the first  
 class carriage, but there were too many senior officers  
 541 there was the option of the second class carriage; after one night with no glass in the  
 windows to keep out the cold, they all decided to set up camp in the box wagons  
 546 the train ride lasted ten days  
 552 before going, they had been issued some ugly, red drill clothes that did not fit the bill at all  
 557 end of side A

### **Tape 880, Side B**

#### **McCallums and Bromheads (Part 2 of 2) (880.3)**

003 no one ever thought the worse of participating in the religious ceremonies  
 005 there was a bamboo enclosure near the triangle that contained all the officer's swords, a  
 portion of each company's arms and the medals  
 011 there was a guard who was asking for blessing on the arms for the next year; many say one  
 should not do it, but McCallum saw nothing wrong with it  
 017 McCallum had the greatest respect for the men in the religious ceremonies  
 027 Mrs. McCallum does remember some of her early days in India; she went out the second  
 time just after World War I, when she was about eleven years old for two years  
 031 she went out a third time when she was about seventeen or eighteen for a few years; she  
 went a fourth time in 1938  
 033 Mrs. McCallum was fortunate to have the opportunity to go back out when she was eleven;  
 she was happy to be back with her father because they had been separated during the war  
 036 it was not normal for an eleven year-old British girl to be in India; they were usually at  
 school  
 041 she remembers being taken up to Kashmir when she was about four or five by her mom and  
 English nanny; she remembers eating lunch with the Prince of Wales  
 050 Mrs. McCallum remembers being served two dinners, having to eat both; she remembers  
 going riding and hunting with her father  
 061 McCallum tells of how one of the regiments walked all over the man that was in charge  
 while the General was away  
 062 when Mrs. McCallum's father went away, the guard moved his bed into their dining room  
 to keep watch; he would fall asleep and they would creep around him and got in  
 070 the guard did not like his wife though; when on leave, he goes to the townhouse and his  
 wife goes to the country house; when he goes away, she would go back  
 057 McCallum tells of the trip to the General's Conference when their train car became  
 disconnected from the rest of the train, leaving them halfway  
 076 there only possibility was to hire an engine; they went into the bar, had a few double  
 whiskeys, went back and rented their own engine  
 084 they spent the night in a baggage car  
 088 once they arrived in Delhi, Freddie and McCallum went out and washed up; the General  
 came out at about half past nine, asking about their night; they replied it was a good night  
 095 when the story got out, the General wanted to know if his command flag had been flown on  
 the engine  
 100 everyone had plenty fun and games with the others

103 there were many feuds on the Frontier, ranging from intra-family to tribal feuds  
 107 there was one tribe that was troubled because they did not have a shrine of their own  
 109 they invited a holy man to come and stay with them; they murdered him and made a shrine  
 in memory of him  
 116 there was a man who could never go on leave without a guard and could never take the  
 direct route home; they thought nothing of this because it was a way of life  
 135 there was a major disturbance and the army “butted-in”; McCallum protests  
 138 McCallum tells of the various militias and scouts; these people were located in forts along  
 the Frontier, beyond the normal border  
 146 their job was to patrol the Frontier to make sure things remained quiet  
 148 behind them was the army; although, sometimes the army was in front of them  
 156 comment on the scouts and how they believe they are “the cat’s whiskers”  
 158 tell the story of a political officer returning back to the mess one evening, talking of how he  
 thought the boys had fought very well  
 165 he was not talking about their troops  
 171 when in the scouts, they were allowed to wear ordinary clothing; McCallum would always  
 wear a tweed jacket instead of a tunic  
 173 early one morning, the brigadier was giving orders and was taking a rather long time;  
 McCallum made an impatient remark, to which someone replied “Who’s that fellow in the  
 rat catcher?”  
 184 Alex Moore was the second-in-command; his response was, “That’s my commanding  
 officer!”  
 199 in 1936, the [Kishor?] Operation was on; it “was a bit of a party”  
 202 McCallum tells of the [Kishor?] Operation; the idea was for one of the regiments to come  
 around and meet McCallum’s regiment  
 213 McCallum’s regiment was opposed; the other regiment never made it  
 230 no one ever wanted to be shot at or shoot because there was a fear of starting a blood bath  
 236 one spent a lot of one’s time on the Frontier  
 239 the Afghan War was not much, but there was vicious fighting for about three days; they  
 wanted to be assured that the regiment established themselves  
 245 McCallum remembers it being extremely hot; the temperature was about 124 degrees  
 under the tent; the flies were terrible  
 249 the great joy was that they were close to the river; they could go down and bathe, but there  
 was always someone set-up on the other side to take “pot-shots” at you  
 256 one day they went out foraging; they were stopped because the Afghans came down  
 another line  
 263 there were few officers in the Indian Army Battalion; the maximum was thirteen  
 267 they were told to go out and pick a site; it started at four in the morning but then “the heat  
 got going”  
 273 they eventually decided they could not continue on  
 278 they then had lunch, which was a baked potato; they were all terribly thirsty  
 291 McCallum was about nineteen at the time  
 292 they reached the bottom and it was there that McCallum learned his first lesson of war  
 317 one of the things to do was to never let people guard water under certain circumstances  
 333 the sand fly could get through any mosquito net; they caused shaking  
 347 it was right on the Afghan border that there was a picket, through which you could look

down on the Afghan frontier  
355 there were two tribes, one of which owned the territory  
359 every year, the Afghans would go down for trading and grazing with an enormous amount  
of camels; the people that owned the land would levy money on them but the Afghans  
refused to pay the levy  
376 there was a railway and two roads at the time; the people started going up both roads and  
the railway  
388 Dehradun was a hill station that was very pleasant; McCallum spent for years there and two  
years on the Frontier; something always blew-up and you were always sent off  
396 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of India had to go to Southern India to one of the rebellions there; it was  
Hindu verses Muslim  
404 one never knew where you were going next  
410 the McCallums moved a great deal; when Mrs. McCallum was on her way out to meet  
McCallum, McCallum was put under orders to go down to Bengal for the terrorists  
429 about a week after she arrived, he left her and went to Bengal; no ladies were allowed to go  
to Bengal  
437 there were no barracks and no troops in Bengal; McCallum was amazed at how the locals  
“got busy with bamboo”  
445 they would split the bamboo and chop it; they would open it flat, leaving the pieces to be  
woven together to make the walls and roof  
458 the officers requisitioned a bungalow from the mess; when the women were allowed to go  
down, the men wondered where they would put them  
463 there were some funny things that were typically Indian; there was a great archway with a  
veranda and a tiny circular room on each side  
471 there were two rooms only; there was a wonderful porch that reminded Mrs. McCallum of  
a palace  
481 the place was surrounded by barbed wire and lights shining down; there was a bungalow  
further up that had been taken over by the terrorists  
491 there was a Gorkha guard at night  
498 when McCallum went out, he had to have an orderly with a revolver behind him; they were  
given automatics; McCallum is thankful they never had to use them  
504 when the wife went out, she had to have two armed orderlies behind her  
510 one of the most terrible things was the number of flying insects and bugs; it did not matter  
what you did because you could not keep them away  
517 they would have their evening meal without any light to try to keep the bugs away  
522 end of Side B