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SKILLS PROJECT: ORAL HISTORY

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BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

My mother's family had for many years lived in British India and I have grown up with tales from what appeared to be a very romantic period. My grandmother had been able to relate many different stories about her family's day to day life. However, if I asked her about the political developments of the period she always quickly replied that she did not like or know anything about politics. Thus, on a number of occasions, I had left her home thinking that while she might profess not to have an interest in history or politics, under the right circumstances and with the right stimulus, she may be able to provide illuminating and unique information not only about her life but the last years of the Raj and the birth of Pakistan.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

It was with this background that I decided to prepare for a preliminary interview to assess if my grandmother could provide the kind of information that would make my project viable. Whilst I felt that the object of undertaking this project was to examine the theory and practice of oral history methodology, I hoped to achieve two other goals,

1. To record a history of my grandmother's life in India.

2. To assess how the great political and constitutional changes in the 1940s affected a typical Anglo-Indian family. If direct information about these changes was not forthcoming, I wished to see if they could be reflected in what will be essentially a social history testimony.

WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

Samuel says that “The bias it [oral history] introduces into history is wholly welcome because it will necessarily direct the historians’ attention to the fundamentally common things of life: the element of individual and social experience rather than upon administrative and political chronologies.” Thus, the majority of oral history studies have concentrated upon the ordinary person, particularly the working classes and the underprivileged. However, it is important to note that the value of oral history is not confined to these historical sub-fields. Baum has said that “the definition of oral history have been roundly debated [but] no exact boundaries have ever been agreed upon.” In order to arrive at a suitable working definition it is important to distinguish between the way a social scientists use life story methodology and oral history techniques and aims. A life story focuses’ upon the subjective world of he interviewee, “whereas oral history is primarily concerned with gathering information about historical and social structures (although the persons subjectivity will be apparent and of interest too).” This has led Plummer to comment that “the oral historian’s goal-of recapturing the past-is altogether more ambitious than the sociologist...” To achieve this goal one feels that an oral history project should place the interviewee’s experiences within the total understanding (i.e. within the political, social and economic context) of the period or subject in question. Lummis suggest a definition of oral evidence as “an account of first hand experience recalled retrospectively, communicated to an interviewer for historical purposes and preserved on a system of reproducible sound.”

METHODOLOGY

Thompson has identified three ways in which oral history can be put together,

> "1. A single life story narrative. A single life narrative presents just one individual biography [but] in outstanding cases it can be used to convey the history of a whole class or community.)

2. A collection of stories. Since none of these need to be separately as rich or complete as a single narrative, this is a better way of presenting typical life history material.

3. Cross Analysis. When oral evidence is treated as a quarry from which to construct an argument."

The type of study that I envisaged when I first thought of this project was essentially a single life story narrative. However, I did not intend simply to take biographical details of my grandmother's life. As I have noted, oral history is particularly suited to social history, yet I am fond of political history. However, I feel that the two different facets of historical study are not mutually exclusive and I hoped to be able to assess, by examining my grandmother's personal and family history, whether the events that took place in Delhi and London were recognised and affected a typical Anglo-Indian family. If my grandmother was able to remember and recount events that took place up to sixty years ago, I intended to cross analyse her testimony by questioning my mother and referring to a collection of printed interviews contained in *Plain Tails from the Raj.*

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Before the interview took place I felt that, given my grandmother's dislike of politics and history, my goal of comparing the political developments of the period with her experiences may have been too ambitious. However, I was encouraged by a section in Thompson's *Voice of the Past*. He does say that there is "a danger that oral sources, used on their own, can encouraged the illusion of an everyday past in which both the cut and thrust of contemporary political narrative and the unseen pressure of economic and structural change are forgotten, just because they rarely impinged directly on the memories of men and women." I was concerned that my grandmother's dislike of politics would, either consciously and sub-consciously, affect the type of information that she might give me, and make it harder to find links between her experiences and the decisions of the politicians. (That is not to suggest a project that failed in this respect would not provide a valuable social history.) However, Thompson goes on to argue that the dynamics of social change are almost

always described “in terms of collective and institutional rather than personal pressures, of the logic of abstract ideology, through the economy, political union and pressure groups. But an equally crucial element is missing: the cumulative effect of individual pressure for change. It is this that immediately emerges through life history...” He feels that politics is a two may reaction between the local and the national opinion, between the ordinary people and the decision makers. The changing pattern of conscious decisions by individuals are equally important as the acts of the politicians. Thus, my grandmother's reactions and decisions to the changing circumstances may have formed a part of ‘local’, ground level reaction that helped to form government decisions (and which most political text books take for granted). Thus, I was conscious that the pattern and structure of the questions that I would ask her would be vital in elucidating the information that I thought my grandmother might be able to provide.

Asking the best possible questions in the most appropriate way is of fundamental importance to any interview. The interviewer improves his chances of untapping good quality information if the questions have been carefully structured. As I began to give thought about the style of the interview and the nature of the questions I would ask, another major misapprehension was allayed. I was concerned about my grandmother's ability to recall events that took place in the 1930s and 40s. However, I discovered that psychologists have identified a process called ‘life review’ that often occurs following retirement or a traumatic process such as widowhood. Life review is a process that occurs when one feels that active life is over and is marked by a sudden emergence of memories. The emergence of memories is normally accompanied with a diminished concern to ensure that the remembered past concurs with the social norms of the day.

The type of method employed to elicit information can range from ‘box ticking’ questionnaires (i.e. social surveys) to a free flowing conversation in which the interviewee is invited to talk as a matter of mutual interest. Questionnaires and social surveys are normally designed to obtain simple information from a large number of people and there is little scope for interviewees to elaborate on their answers. At the other end of the spectrum are free flowing interviews that are normally employed to obtain biographical data. This method was popular in the early 1970s, when oral history was seen to be the ideal medium to redress the under-

representation of the working classes. Therefore, it was felt that the interviewees should follow their own agenda and not that of the academic. However, to as Lummis says “the researcher should not duck the responsibility for deciding how evidence should be collected in the most historically valuable manner.” Given my relationship with my grandmother, her age, and that I anticipated that she would be reluctant to answer any direct political questions, I concluded that the questionnaire form of interviewing would be inappropriate. Thus, I planned to use an interview schedule. This involves using a list of questions as little more than an aide-memoir to ensure that I could attempt to steer the conversation and to prompt my grandmother's recollections in order to gain the most valuable information. In constructing the interview schedule I planned to initially place my grandmother's experiences in geographical, social and chronological context. I would then concentrate my questions upon matters concerning her family, their household, her husband's occupation, daily routine, and her children’s education. I hoped that not only would I be able to gain a useful social history of the period, but that the process of recollection would facilitate the discussion of matters of a wider import.

In constructing the interview schedule I began to appreciate Lummis’ claim that it would be a test of historical imagination and that one would have to identity what I wished to discover from the interview. Besides the important social history element, I wished to probe the question of the India, Anglo-Indian, British relationship. Furthermore, because my grandmother lived in Baluchistan during the 1940s, I hoped she could tell me about any experience of the breakdown of Indian collaboration, the rise of nationalism, and the creation of Pakistan. It may be thought that this is a wide range of topics but I thought that by using a shot gun technique I would stand a better chance of hitting upon useful information-I was relying upon one old lady’s experience and memory. Thus, many of the questions, particularly those concerning domestic routines, contained double edges. For instance, I hoped that information about her relationship with servants would illuminate my grandmother's domestic routine and provide an indication of the servants’ attitudes to events such as the Partition. A copy of the interview schedule can be found at the end of this essay in Appendix II.

THE INTERVIEW

I was also aware of the need to construct the questions in my interview schedule so that they were simple and not leading. However, I found it hard to break eye contact and disrupt the flow of the interview to consult the schedule. As I had a good idea of the subject area that I wished to cover this was not a great problem. However, when I subsequently analysed the interview I was struck by the poor phraseology of my questions. Furthermore, in my attempts to steer the direction of the interview by using simple questions, I found that I often asked two simple, but slightly different questions in order to make myself understood. The result of this poor technique was that my grandmother only answered the second question. However, I feel that my questioning strategy was quite successful. I think that this can be seen when, in middle of answer one question, my grandmother reverts to a previously discussed topic as new experiences and ideas are remembered. The increasing length of her answers as the interview progresses is also indicative of this. A full transcript of the interview can be found in Appendix III. Just after I transcribed the interview my uncle visited us whilst on leave from Germany. This was fortunate because he is the oldest of my grandmother's children and although I was unable to record our conversation, he was able to provide me with some valuable information about the Partition. This information is incorporated into the analysis section.

ANALYSIS

In attempting to analyse my grandmother's interview, I became aware of some of the general criticisms of oral history. The main alleged weakness of oral history concerns problems of how fallible the interviewee's memory is and what biases retrospective evidence may contain. Moreover, observers have questioned if the “past is remembered as a mirror image or whether it is reshaped and constructed through time as we grow to have new values, attitudes and perspectives on our lives, and as social values and practices change.” Critics of oral history contrast it to the assumed greater reliability of contemporary documentary evidence. However, documentary sources also have bias and weaknesses. The bulk of documentary evidence is retrospective and originally oral, thus, Lummis says that “...many problems of authenticity in oral evidence are simply the problems of documentary sources made

plain." Thus, one should consider oral evidence as any other source and examine the provenance, reliability, and typicality of the testimony. Furthermore, one needs to look for internal consistency, seek confirmation in other sources and to be aware of potential bias. Thompson argues that a major strength of oral evidence is that "untrue statements are still psychologically true and that these errors sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts."

Having read my grandmother's interview a number of times I am convinced of the strength its provenance. For instance, it is beyond doubt that she was born in India in 1915 and lived there until the mid-1950s and the content of the interview supports this. Besides understandable confusing on matters of specific chronological detail, the interview appears to be internally consistent which suggests that the my grandmother's testimony was reliable. I was aware that the nature of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee may produce bias and subject areas which neither of us may be willing to discuss. However, I feel that the interview schedule included sections on all the necessary subject areas to enable me to achieve the aims outlined at the start of this essay.

The rest of this section will attempt to present a thematic examination my grandmother's interview. In order to verify what she has said, I will make numerous references to the transcripts of the interviews contained in *Plain Tales from the Raj*. (It should be noted, however, that of the sixty seven people who contributed to this excellent book only three came from Anglo-Indian society, and majority were members of the administrative and military elites)

Before embarking on this project, I knew that my grandmother was born in 1915, and her maiden name was Antoinette Henrietta Sass. Her paternal grandfather was in the Royal Engineers. Her husband was a railway engine driver called Robert Henry Dias. Unfortunately because both of their parents had died at young age, there is a gap of knowledge in the family history. (Family folklore does say that my grandmother's father was nicknamed the German. This was not because of his nationality (he was British) but because of his harsh discipline, Victorian morals, and because he looked just like Bismarck!) During the course of the interview my grandmother spoke tantalisingly of her British Grandfathers 'papers'. However,

despite two long searches in my grandmother and uncle's attics, I was unable to find these documents.

I began the interview, following the schedule, but I quickly ran into difficulties. By questioning my grandmother on where she lived in India I hoped to immersed her in the past and locate the geographical and chronological context of the interview. However, because my Grandfather was regularly posted to different areas, the family home often changed. The result was that both my grandmother and myself became confused. By re-examining the interview and questioning my mother and uncle, I established that she lived in Kotri, Sibi, Much, Quetta, Kotri again, Rohri, Rawalpindi, and Lahore (see appendix I).

Any administrative station that was on the railway line had a railway ‘colony’ which was composed of Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Allen says that Anglo-Indians thought of themselves as “the backbone of the British administration,” and there were a specific number of middle ranking posts reserved for them in services such as the police, customs, railways, and the telegraph service. One dominating theme of the British Raj is the extreme class consciousness. This effected every pool of society, and the Anglo-Indian railway colonies had their own unique place in the class system. Up to World War Two there was a gap between the Anglo-Indians and the British elite. Irene Edwards says that it “wasn’t that one was unfriendly; it was a sort of social taboo.” Eugene Pierce claims that there was a strong colour bar in force that was accepted by mutual arrangement and tacit consensus It appears that the degree to which one was deemed acceptable to the British establishment was simply determined by ones skin colour Irene Edwards describes a situation when she attempted to get her friend, “an Anglo-Indian girl in Peshawar, white with blue eyes” into her Club. “A lady doctor who had influence...told me that it was no use in trying ‘because everybody round here knows Celia is an Anglo-India’. I told this lady doctor, ‘Well so am I’ ‘Yes, but people don’t know it here. You have passed in the crowd, but Celia won’t.’ The Club was taboo.” Undoubtedly the pre-War British Establishment held such views. While Anglo-Indians did appear to remain within security of their own society, my interview nor any past conversations have indicated that my family had ever personally experienced such attitudes. As will be shown there was significant interaction and social contact between what was termed BOR (British Other Ranks. i.e. soldiers and administrators up to the rank of Sergeant

Major).Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that the breakdown of such prejudice during World War Two allowed some members of the Anglo-Indian community into hallowed Club premises.

The vast majority of the Anglo Indian community rejected any connection they might have had with Indian society and placed much emphasis on retaining and enhancing all the varied characteristics and traditions of their British background. The most striking example of this is the way Anglo-Indian society mirrored the hierarchical composition of the British Establishment in India. One factor that effected ones position in the community was occupation. Thus, a mail train driver or Police Inspector would have greater prominence and respect than an engine fireman or a telegraph operator. A greater determinant of social standing was the extent to which at family had married into the host society. Thus, Domiciled Europeans were placed much higher in the social structure of Anglo-Indian society than a darkly tanned Eurasian. As will be shown, being of British descent the Anglo-Indian community shared not only similar social attitudes but the life style of the more privileged British.

DOMESTIC ROUTINE

After attempting to establish the geographical and chronological context of the interview, I asked my grandmother about her domestic routine. Not surprisingly she was able to provide a lot of detailed information of about this topic. I feel that this is valuable for two reasons. Firstly, this section of the interview gives the reader a significant snap shot of every day Anglo-Indian life. In preparing for this project I found that there are very few secondary sources dealing with Anglo-Indian history. Thus, I feel that a permanent record of such matters is desirable. Secondly, this section provides an interesting opportunity to measure Anglo-Indian home life to the already well documented life style of the British elite.(In comparing the two different life styles I have relied heavily upon the testimonies in *Plain Tales.*) Moreover, domestic environment provides illuminating evidence concerning the attitudes to the servants and, by inference, Indians as a whole. This important area is considered in

the following section. I began asking my grandmother about what her houses were like...

-Railway houses.

What sort of houses were they? What were they like?

-Beautiful.

Yes? Can you tell me about them?

-They were four big bed rooms- they were flats. We never...

Bungalows?

-Sort of bungalows, we were never up stairs and downstairs and that's it.

So there were four bedrooms?

-Four rooms which we made into bed rooms, one for the boys, the girls used to be with me, or after the boys went to school and the girls were there, because the girls used to leave later than Nelson and Lola. Lola and Nelson used to go to Lahore for finishing their period of education, then I had Mary and Cynthia.

Did you have any domestic help-any servants or anybody?

-God, yes.

How many did you have?

-We had a sweeper, which we used to term ...what would you call it over here?

What did he used to do?

-They came to sweep the floor.

A cleaner?

-A cleaner. He was separate. He only had to do the cleaning and see to the toilet. Because we did not have flushers over there.

No?

-We had bloody potties which had to be taken out.

Where did he throw them?

-They had a special place far away, where they had to carry it.

I'm pleased it was far away! And so you had the cleaner-did you have somebody to help you cook?

-We had a cook who used to cook for us, then we had his assistant, another boy we used to engage. A young fellow, some mother would say come and take my child and teach him to do some work, and let him get some money-on a mere pittance we used to have him. He used to do the dusting in the dining room.

Was he full time?

-Yes, you could say it was full time.

Where did the servants stay?

-They went home...I don't know where they stayed.

They went home. I seem to remember you telling me that one of your houses had quarters at the back?

-Some houses we had but they never used to take-they would rather go and stay in their own house... they used to come back on time. They used to come about eight in the morning and leave about one, one-thirty to go home, and come back at four o'clock to give us out tea, then, I'm talking about the assistant to the cook and then he used to go away and the cook would serve us. He did all the washing of the dishes and plates, and we had the kitchen outside, say it would be [gesturing]as far as the fence here to the kitchen back there, they used to cook from there and bring it into the house and serve us.

Charles Allen says that the "memsahibs's domain was contained with the compound, generally enclosed by a wall...and containing garden, bungalow and servants' quarters." He quotes Rupert Mayne, who was born in 1910 in Quetta, "There was no kitchen as such in the bungalow because all the cooking was done by the natives in the cookhouse, which was part of the servants' quarters. The food had to be brought in from there in a hot-case in the pantry which was in the bungalow. The memshaib did not do her own cooking, it was always done by an Indian cook on an Indian type oven." It appears that not only did the Anglo-Indian colonies share similar housing and cooking arrangements to the British elites, but that the bathroom arrangements

were the same. Rosamund Lawrence says that the two main features in the bathroom were the earth closet - “in the ordinary household you sat on a thing called a ‘thunder box’ for your daily task and the sweeper removed the remains - and the hip bath.”

Did you have someone to help you with the children when they were young?

-Yes, I had a women who used to bath and dress them and take them out for a walk in the evening in a pushchair or pram or whatever.

Can you remember how much you paid the servants?

-The cook I used to pay him...the most I used to pay him was twenty-five rupees.

A week? A month?

-A month.

A month. And was that not much? Can you remember how much granddad was getting for a month's work on the railway?

-He was getting between 3-400 rupees.

Was that when he was a freight or express train driver?

-No. When he was a mail train driver he used to get more, say over 500. It used to range from the overtime he used to put in, you see?... The cook we used to pay twenty-five. Sweepers we used to pay eight rupees.

Did you talk to them? I mean did you pass the time of day with them or were you distanced from them?

-The only one I used to talk to was the women who used to stay with me-she used to sleep, the poor thing, under a little bundle and at night she’d go into the next room , lie down and go to sleep, wake up early in the morning, pick Nelson up or whoever it was, and give them their tea, and take them into the pram for a walk, and I used to be fast asleep.

So were you friends with her?

-...Yes.

And did you talk about everyday things?

-But the women I had, she had no husband. And she had a little girl and, of course, that was her life.

Where did the little girl stay?

-With the mother...We used to change over servants-servants gave you lip so out you would go and get another one.

Was that regular occurrence?

-It wasn't a regular but if an occasion arose...there was always somebody to fill in that gap.

It appears that in the above section my grandmother's memory has focused upon one individual women. My uncle remembers the woman and her daughter and says that she was his 'ayah', or nanny. As was practice, many ayah slept outside the childrens' room. Lewis Le Marchand recalls his ayah - "she administered after me during the day and very often during the evening...Ayah used to wait and, if necessary, sleep outside the doors of her children's rooms, lying down outside on the mat until such time as my mother would say, 'You can go, ayah, little master's asleep" It is understandable that my grandmother should recollect the one servant with whom she was closest but my uncle was able to back this up with a wider overview of the period. Thus, he said that the servants did live in the quarters provided and that it was only when four rooms were occupied that other servants had to live elsewhere and return to the house at specific times.

Did you talk to your servants in English all the time?

-No.

So you picked up some of the language?

Just to make myself understood.

Would you say you were fluent in it...Could you a conversion?

-I could understand and again I will tell you this, that I can understand now but I can't talk the bloody thing. When I am out passing people talking on the road I understand every bloody word of it. But I can't talk.

What language was that?

-Urdu.

Charles Allen argues that it was a matter of honour for ICS officers to speak to their servants in their native language. This resulted "in much better type of servant...English speaking servants were often thought to be untrustworthy...In the Indian Army it was held that British Army wives got 'scallywags' for servants because you couldn't expect British Army wives to know enough to treat them well enough." I have been unable to pin point whether these opinions effected my grandmother, but I suspect that she learnt to converse in Urdu more for practical rather than social reasons.

What about the food you ate?

-What we eat here darling, curry and rice, roast, we used to have chops. The cooks were excellent over there. They were very good...because the British and they learnt then some cooks became elderly and couldn't cook...they used to bring their sons into the kitchen and sons learnt from them so when the old ones [----] or couldn't work, like say he had asthma or he had something wrong with him, we used to take the sons in.

Was there any problem in getting the food at all?

-No... but then we got all fresh food, darling, we never had anything.

So you didn't keep anything in the larder, you would just go out and buy it?

-We had to buy it every day.

RELATIONS WITH INDIANS

The Anglo-Indian relationship with Indians is extremely complicated. A prime determinant of how an Anglo-Indian regarded natives depended upon the prejudices the go the root of the community's collective psyche. Being of British descent but being, to a large extent, excluded from the mainstream of British society in India, Anglo Indians strived to distance themselves from the host society. Many, like the character 'Patrick Taylor' in John Masters' *Bhowani Junction* regarded Indians as "bloody Wogs." Indeed, my grandmother said that her brother was...

-... was hell fire against the bloody Indians and Pakistanis.

I then asked her about who her friends were...

Before the Partition, when the English were still there, how did you socialise? who were your friends?

-All Anglo-Indians.

Did you mix with any Indians?

-Well, not as such. But granddad had a lot to do with Indians because he used to work on the railway.

It was considered unacceptable by very many Anglo-Indians to mix socially with the natives. In particular when the British were still in India, Anglo-Indian girls who married Indians were shunned. However, race and social restrictions were not the only factors that determined Anglo-Indian relations with the natives. During the Second World War fewer positions on the railways were reserved for the British. Thus, my Grandfather worked with many Indians towards the end of his career, and he appeared to forge an excellent working relationship with the Indians in his charge.

My Grandfather suffered severely with asthma and my grandmother said that when he was ill that...

...the bloody firemen used to come and put him on the bloody engine and then in those days it was such bloody [----] that the firemen used to bring the bloody engine out of the shed up to the house and carry granddad and put him on the bloody...

Really? He must have been ill-did his asthma affected him a lot?

-He couldn't walk and then the firemen used to do all the driving...they respected and loved granddad - they never...I used to tell him Henry you trust this bloody fellow to much, I said; no he's a bloody good worker, he said. All he was worried about was work and that he had no trouble on the engine, and so he loved granddad and granddad loved him.

My grandparent's relationship with their servants provides the best example of the dual nature of both Anglo-Indian and the British Establishments attitude to Indians. It can be seen from the section dealing with their domestic routine that my grandmother was firm in her dealings with the servants. She shared that same attitude as Olivia Hamilton who said that one must "Unless you're firm at the beginning, and also fair, they won't respect you...yet at the same time there was a great deal of respect between master and servant, and you felt responsible for them. You were the person who knew whether they were ill, whether they should be sent to the doctor or whether a dose of castor oil would do the trick...They gave you the most wonderful service in the world and in return you felt that they were your people, and that you jolly well had to look after them" My uncle says that my grandmother felt a similar sense of responsibility for her servants, and recalls that when his ayah became suddenly very ill, my grandmother fought to get her treated in the railway hospital, which was reluctant to admit Indians.

THE INSTITUTE

The Institute was the Anglo-Indian equivalent of the Club. This was the hub of the railway's social life but it is interest to note that Indians were not allowed into the Institute.

So were did you go to socialise-your friends houses?

-We went to the Railway Institute- a big hall. there was a reading room, a billiard room, the bar...I'm talking about before the Partition, and we had a big hall and we used to get, we used have dances.

How often were they?

-It could be one or two a month...because it slowly got scare because there were no bands...we used to have the bandsmen...and they and to be booked from Karachi to come to Lahore or Rawalpindi to play for that night only.

Did you do the Charleston?

-The Charleston, the Valetta.

Did you like doing that?

-The Valetta, yes.

Did granddad dance?

-Yes, but he wasn't a dance on account of his chest-his asthma.

Did the Children go along to these events?

-I'm trying to think-yes and no Up to a certain age I never used to take them. It was just ones own...my rule was that a child should not enter the dance hall up to a certain age. You see, when they were small the servants stayed with them and we went to the dances...at Christmas time..the Institute used to lay on a full programme for the full week. You see, a certain amount of money was taken from each railway man's wages for the upkeep of the institute. It was an institute for railway people only...it must have been two or three rupees but there was such a big colony that that was quite an amount to go into the Institute.

Did you play Badminton...is that right?

-They started with Badminton, they had a tennis court, and a hockey ground. The Hyderabad was five miles out from Kotri, were we had Britishers over there...the soldiers, and darling, so when I think of it now I was so bloody ignorant...I knew there was military there but for what I don't know.

So did you didn't mix with the soldiers?

-Oh God yes, they used to come and dance with us and all that.

Regularly?

-Whenever there was a show or a dance. the secretary used to go and invite them, or write a letter to them and they would come. Some used to come and misbehave, some used to get bloody well beaten up and thrown out.

Was that the Officers and Men, or just the soldiers?

-I would say up to sergeant.

Ah, so it was the NCO's?

Yes. The NCO's... talking about Christmas week in that Institute, everyday from the 24th father Christmas used to come right up to the 31st, when we'd have the New Years Eve Ball-there was always something doing in that place

Did you go during the day time and weekdays?

-Only in the evenings, everyday.

That sounds fun.

-On this hockey ground they used to have the sports from the Institute. They had all kinds of sports-different ages of children running, getting prizes, donkey rides, we. ..we used to throw darts with our eyes blind folded.

What at each other? [laughter]

-No, no on a dart board, on a dart board.

It sounds very nice...

-Then we used to finish from the hockey ground, go to the Institute, and then there was catering laid on and a band playing and we used to have dancing...it was very good.

HUNTING

Did granddad used to go hunting?

-uncle Austin had a gun and I somehow never...granddad used to borrow his Dad's gun and they used to go out shooting.

What did he shoot?

-Duck, goose, pigeons.

Did he shoot wild boar?

-Oh, wild boar as well. But granddad couldn't stand going out into the wild, though.

Why?

-Because they had to sneak behind bushes and remain in the cold. You understand?

What sort of countryside did he go in?

-jungle.

Jungle. Where was that?

-Now, there is another place where granddad used to work called Gadoo.

How did granddad found out about the hunting grounds, through uncle Austin?

-Uncle Austin and his gangmen-I'm talking about uncle Austin having these gangmen under him to see these bolts and all that, they used to say our fields are getting outraged with these blooming pigs. Being Muslim...

They couldn't touch them.

-They couldn't touch them, so they wanted them shot. So uncle Austin...

So it was all right for non Muslim to shoot them but they couldn't touch them?

-They couldn't touch them.

Did you eat the pigs that granddad brought back?

-Oh yes, we eat it, if they brought back one pig, wild boar, how much can you eat? So we used to distribute it to the railway people.

THE HEAT

When I began this project I was worried that my grandmother might provide me with an idealised and romantic view of her life in India. However, I was pleased that her testimony appears to present an honest picture of that period. I include these two sections as they add to depth of understanding of Anglo-Indian life, and testify to the provenance of her evidence.

Did you live there [Sibi] ?

-I didn't live there because of the heat, it was terrible, and used to effect the children, they used to break out in boils

Really? How hot was it?

-It was like..like a shield...they used to say, to term it, a tissue paper between hell and Sibi...But if I ever wore my heart down it was in Rohri, and, my god, what a bloody place, you talk about me telling you there is, they say, a tissue paper between Sibi and hell, Rohri was next to it, the next place...it is very hot.

Clearly, the hot weather effected everyone. However, it also illuminates a significant difference between the Anglo-Indians and the British elites. While both communities slept outside, the majority of British families used to be able move to the hills during the hot season. While a mail-train driver was not poor, very few members of the railway community were able to finance an annual migration to cooler climes

THE EARTHQUAKE

-He [Uncle Alf] was in Sibi and from Sibi he went to Quetta and after some months, I wouldn't know how many months or years when the 'quake took place. It was just a rumble and the whole place came down.

Can you remember what year it was?

-It could be 1935. I know that Nelson was born in 1935, that's the year it took place. He was a month old. I was getting ready, because they had asked me, Uncle Alf's wife was very fond of me, and she said you bring the baby, I want to see it and you stay with us, by then they were in Quetta, and I was getting ready to go-we had to collect money, we didn't have to go.

Yes?

-Well not as such, we weren't that badly off but you want some spending money-you don't want to go empty handed, you want to buy something and take it over there and I was getting ready to go when the quake took place.

-...They were putting them into mass graves...when I say mass graves-one on top of the other because there was such a lot of dead and remember Uncle Alf telling me that the fellow that came, he went to some fellow in charge of the burials and I believe he joined his hands to him and said I beg of you give me a separate grave for my family-I don't want a mass grave-she was very dear to me and my children, three children he lost...

That's terrible.

-A baby of six months, a girl, a boy of two and a half, and a girl of five years. The others were in school-that's how they were saved.

POLITICS: PRE AND POST WAR ATTITUDES

Apart from the servants you had, what contact did you have with Indians

-Darling, it became after the Partition, the Muslims rode the bloody high horse.

What about before that?

-Before that they were mediocre, like friendly but not riding the high horse and trying to look down on a Christian or something, but then the majority of Christians and the English left.

POLITICS: THE WAR

-I can't tell you anything about that. No. We only knew there was a war but we never felt the want. We used to have a ration card. They had rationed rice, flour, cooking oil, sugar, all this was rationed but according to each member of the house you got a quantity, you were given that much.

CREATION OF PAKISTAN

Nana, you said something just a minute ago, you said don't call it India, call it Pakistan. When did you start calling where you lived Pakistan and not Baluchistan?

-Baluchistan is in Pakistan.

But before the war, before World War Two, in the 30s or the 20s, when you were a little girl or a teenager, it wasn't called Pakistan then, was it?

-No it was India, British India.

So when did you start calling it Pakistan?

-Darling, it was compulsory once Jinnah took over.

But did you here about it before then?

-No.

It was only was only when Jinnah came in...when Jinnah became Premier, or when he came to prominence?

- President, yes.

So, only when, up to, when the British were leaving and Partition happened that the word 'Pakistan' entered your vocabulary?

-Yes it was named by him, by Jinnah.

Can you remember about the Muslim League and what your servants felt about it-the All India Muslim League?

-There was no such thing as I know of? But there was. We were hearing of it, that it was getting stronger and stronger. I don't know, granddad used to get all the information from the [engine] shed and come and talk about it but it went over my head.

Was it remote? Did you think that it would never affect you?

-Darling, I never anticipated any such thing. But, it was only Uncle Alf who used to be well up on this information.

Why was that?

-Up to then we had no bloody passports. We were living off the land.

What about Gandhi?

-It was when Partition took place that Gandhi first came but I can't tell you anything about when he came...whenever he came to Pakistan to tour, now I think that's the time that Jinnah sprung up and confronted him with rules and regulations, and Partition and everything...But the Viceroy was there and they never did anything without the consultation of the Viceroy.

Who didn't?

-Both Jinnah and Gandhi.

Did the Muslims, your servants or whatever think highly of Gandhi?

-They used to abuse him because he was a Hindu.

And was that before the War as well?

-You see the Hindu was the untouchable and because the untouchables [----] they are a very finicky people. they never drink out of the same glass as yourself-they have their own utensils and all that. So that was the difference between...they wouldn't let the Muslims touch their plates or anything...that's how grievances arose..barriers.

So Gandhi wasn't a popular chap?

-He was in a sense, because he was well in with the Viceroy, Mountbatten. granddad always said Gandhi was in love with Mrs Mountbatten, he said that's why Mountbatten gave bloody home rule. He, Gandhi was the one who started with Home Rule and the Jinnah sprung up.

...what I am trying to get is, was it seen that Congress was in India and the League in your area?

-Yes.

Was there any overlap?

-No. That's how the fighting took place, you see, the massacres between India and Pakistan. But then they stopped the trains coming into Pakistan-trains never used to go to India and we had nothing to do with India so we never bothered. We were quite content with living our usual life, existence.

My grandmother's comments about the rise of the Muslim League and the use of the word 'Pakistan' to mean a separate Muslim home land are particularly interesting. While she is unable to provide the kind of detailed information that an official in the government could, my grandmother's non-interest in politics or history means that her testimony is not corrupted by subsequent private study or examination. She

appears to confirm that the rise of the Muslim League only became strong towards the very end of the Home Rule campaign and was in response to the strength of Gandhi and the Congress. My grandmother also indicates that the demand for 'Pakistan' was not popularly accepted until Jinnah became President. While my grandmother would have little reason to follow Muslim politics closely, her claim that she did not hear about 'Pakistan' before Jinnah came to power, lends credence to the idea that Jinnah used the idea of a separate political home as bargaining card in response to Congress' power.

THE COMMUNAL RIOTS

Were you ever afraid?

-Never afraid.

Why do you think that was?

-I think that the Muslims had to carry down what was said , that was from Jinnah, that no Christians would be touched or interfered with

Right. You don't think it was due to the British presence ...the police maybe?

-No. He studied in Oxford and he carried it out that Christians were not to be touched, our Churches were never touched.

Did you ever think at all that this was going to bad for the British in India?

-Jinnah made it a very firm rule, a pledge, that the Christians would never be interfered with. Granddad was assured by his English bosses that nothing would happen to us. Only to be vigilant-they could take the bolts from the rails

Who would do this?

-There were rioters...

This was after the war?

-There was a little friction.

Were you affected...were there a lot of riots?

-Yes, in the bazaars.

Was it between Muslims and Hindus?

-Just a clash darling, you know, there would be a Hindu over there, some would pick on him, some would make him his best bloody friend, so you didn't know how you stood over there.

It sounds quite dangerous, was it?

-It was dangerous

Were you worried that you might get caught up in the violence?

-Never worried.

What about other, non-Muslim, Indians?

-If some bugger came from India, they were told to bugger off to India-this is no place for you, whether he went or he was harboured I don't know.

Was this even before Partition that they were saying...[interrupted]

-Many Hindus were saved by Muslims because they couldn't bear to see the massacres

Really? Would they shelter them?

-Shelter them, some got killed for harbouring Hindus.

It must have been very bad...

-Yes it was very bad, this was where the riots used to take place but, darling, to be honest with you...Pakistan was coming into being...I used to sit in the tonga, the tonga man used to take me where I wanted, he used to bring me back when I wanted, there was never a pass, never... a word out of place.

Did granddad take his trains to India or was it just Pakistan?

-No, he went as far as Amritsar and stopped. that was the middle point between India and Pakistan, and they stopped that because it was getting dangerous over there, because when Muslims came into Amritsar there always used to be a clash.

Were his trains attacked?

-Not so much the trains, darling, as human beings, between each other.

Were the clashes put down quickly?

-Some were slaughtered some got away but we never knew what happened, and I wasn't bloody interested to be honest with you, being safe, holding a British passport. We didn't worry about the next person.

I feel that this section is perhaps the most interest part of the interview. This is not so much because of what my grandmother says but for what she leaves out. When I asked my uncle if he experienced any of the communal violence he said that there were disturbances even in the remote foothill town of Muree. He also said that my grandfather witnessed many of the most severe riots in what was to be Pakistan. His trains were attacked because they were carrying Hindus who were trying to leave the area. On one occasion he was forced to stop the engine because the mobs had blocked the entrance to Lahore Station. His fireman was then dragged of the footplate and murdered with all the other Hindus on the train. In the above section my grandmother refers to the sheltering of Hindus by some Muslims. My uncle also told me that on one occasion she hid a Hindu, who ran into her railway carriage, under her seat, and saved him from a mob waiting to attack the Hindu passengers at the next station. Furthermore, he said that many other Anglo-Indian families took advantage of their neutrality and railway connections to ensure safe passage out of Pakistan for their Hindu servants. I subsequently asked my grandmother if any of Grandfather's colleagues were ever attacked and if any Anglo-Indian families tried to help there Hindu servants. In reply she told me about the incidents that my uncle had described.

LEAVING INDIA

Unlike many of the people involved in the Army or Indian Civil Service I think that the majority of Anglo-Indians did not realise that their peaceful existence was going to be shattered. Indeed, I feel that many shared Sir Olaf Caroe's feelings that "We were in the centre of a vast typhoon which was going on all around us, but of which we were curiously unaware at the time."

When War was declared and going on, did you think that time was running out for the British in India?

-We heard whispers but nothing came along.

Did you think five, ten twenty years?

-That's what Uncle Alf was thinking about.

What was he thinking?

-That in another five or ten years we would be classed as one of them. He thought that time was running out and that it was time we left , and make a move, then we started obtaining our passports...all we held on to was our British Grandfather's certificates and all that thinking they were very precious, little realising that when the time came for us to get passports that we had to produce all this [to prove] that we were from British descent.

When was this?

-This was in nineteen...we started off in nineteen forty-five or six.

Really, did you realise that...

-Something was going to happen.

Was it a shock when Mountbatten set a date for the British withdrawal, he said that...[interrupted]

-Darling, still I don't think it sunk through...what are existence was going to be like over there by the British leaving, because Jinnah had promised that no Christians would be interfered with and no Church would be desecrated. That's all we were interest in.

Charles Allen states that the Anglo-Indians were the least prepared of those in India for Independence. Eugene Pierce says "I didn't believe any of us ever visualised that British rule would come to an end and certainly not as abruptly as it did. When it was announced we were very jittery about it. We immediately started discussing what we were going to do." Irene Edwards says that "it was the end of our world...I thought the flag would never come down. We were proud of being British...now we did not know whether we were Indians or British or what."

So, Nana, tell me why you decided to send the children over, and you stayed on over there for a while?

-Because it was getting so nationalised. You had to learn Urdu, none of them wanted to lean Urdu, you had to learn the language of the country. Take for instance if you lived in France, they would expect you to know something of French and you can't go and talk bloody French over there if you don't know anything. I had no intent of staying there. I wanted them to finish their Cambridge education and come and make a new life over there, one by one, because it was expensive for me to educate them and send them over here. And then, finally when granddad retired, we came over here. It was Uncle Alf that said that this place will be taken over. He used to be very much into politics, reading politics, and he used to call us bloody ignorant-'you'll don't worry, you'll live from day to day, you'll don't know what's going to happen to you.' This was the way he was thinking, which arose a little feeling in us as well. But then after he left from there and we had educated our children, it became natural that we noticed how things were changing.

How were they changing?

-It was compulsory to wear the National dress

Really?

-There were making it...they wanted you to speak Urdu.

Even though you were British?

-Even though we were British. When you went out you were not supposed to wear a dress, you were supposed to wear the national dress

Really?

-That was the rumour. But I never did. I said come what may I'll never change. They can do to me what they like. When I found uncle Austin came over here, Uncle Alf and Len had gone, I thought what was I doing over there, let's come over here.

Did you ever consider going back?

-No.

It's not the same place?

-Darling we were too...we were spoilt by the railway. We had a house to go to, which we were not obligated to the next person for, we paid our rent through granddad's pay and we had that house, nobody could take it away from us. But once we left, there really there was nothing left. We had to pay through the nose for houses over there to get accommodation, anywhere at all. And then the class of people had gone down, there was nothing left. I would love to know what happened to that Railway Institute-what could shows we used have over there... We had good days, darling, very good days.

CONCLUSION

I was pleased with the way the interview developed, however it was not without its difficulties. In particular, I found it hard to conduct the interview with strict reference to the schedule. I felt that my grandmother would best respond to an informal and relaxed situation in which we had a conversation, as opposed to a taped interview. I therefore placed the tape recorder to one side and out of direct sight. I began the

interview by constantly referring to the schedule but I quickly realised that this action was disrupting the flow of the conversation and breaking my grandmother's train of thought. Therefore, I quickly abandoned this practice and only referred to my list of questions during the natural breaks in the conversation. The result of this compromise was a rather disjointed interview. This can be seen if one compares that structure of the above sections to the rambling nature of the interview transcript in appendix III. Rather unexpectedly my grandmother became confused trying to recall all the places in India where she had lived. Some research prior to the interview may have prevented this problem. As I have discussed above, I hoped that such detail would improve her powers of recollection and in general I feel that this tactic was successful. Thus, I was pleased to notice that my grandmother would return to a previously discussed topic when I jogged her memory by referring to a related subject or asking a pertinent question as it struck me. Moreover, the degree to which my grandmother's evidence was corroborated by the testimonies contained *Plain Tales* was particularly gratifying. Whilst preparing for this project I was surprised at the severe lack of secondary material concerning the Anglo Indians. Social and political histories alike either examine the last few decades of the Raj from an Indian or British point of view, and Anglo Indians are relegated in most text books to a few isolated and oblique references. Yet their position as a minority community who bridged the gap between ruler and ruled meant that Anglo Indians are uniquely placed to provide a historians with a evidence that owes little either to the Indian nationalist nor British high political traditions.

During the course of this project my doubts and misapprehensions about the reliability and usefulness of oral history, which are identified at the beginning of this essay, were largely dispelled. Like all forms different forms of historical evidence oral history has limitations and weaknesses, but as long as they can be identified and treated with circumspect there is no justification to assume that oral history is any less reliable than more conventional forms of evidence. Indeed, because historians who use oral testimonies should be conscious of this criticism, a properly constructed, researched and verified interview may well be more reliable than some documentary sources. Moreover, Lummis argues that "the issue of authenticity is also germane to historical methodology at large...oral history has had the important

effect of revitalising debates on common sense interpretation, methodology, and theoretical formation which lie behind the interpretation of most forms of historical evidence."

A successful oral history interview depends not only upon the experiences of the interviewee, but the on preparation and research of the interviewer. It is vital for the interviewer to be able to steer and direct the course of the interview in order to gain the most valuable and pertinent information. Indeed, the freedom to intervene directly and shape the generation of historical evidence is a unique and powerful asset. Yet, perhaps the greatest advantage of this methodology is that a well conducted interview with the correct subject can recreate events of many years ago with a clarity and detail that documentary evidence can never match. Although the increasing use of video footage, such as news reports from the Vietnam War, comes close to the power of oral evidence, the ability to question and empathise with one's subject marks oral history as a tool that modern historians of all persuasions should consider employing.

APPENDIX I

A Map of Political India in 1930 from J. Brown, Modern India, the Origins of an Asian Democracy (Oxford 1991).

A Diagram showing the Principal Railway Lines and Towns of Baluchistan and the North West Frontier c. 1930, taken from C. Gammell, Relics of the Raj (London 1985).

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

1. What is your name, age, date and place of birth? What were your parents' name, age, date and place of birth? When did you meet Granddad and when did you get married?

2. Where and when did you live in India? What was the ethnic composition of the areas?

3. What type of house did you have? Did you have domestic help, i.e., a cook, a cleaner, a nanny? If so how much were they paid? Where did they live and what race/religion were they? What sort of relationship did my grandmother have with her servants-was it strictly formal or was she able to pass the time of day with them? If so, in what language? Did she learn any 'native' language?

4. Did you ever feel that the Indian servants resented working for you? Were they always courteous?

5. Where did your children go to school? Why did you send them to boarding school? What standard of education did they receive? Was it expense? Prestigious? What was the racial/religious composition of the school?

6. Apart from the servants, what contact did you have with Indians? Did you socialise with any Indians? Did you eat curry or English food?

7. Who were your friends, what were their jobs, and how did you spend time with them?

8. Was Murree a garrison town? If so, what British officials were there? Was the bureaucracy staffed by Indians or Englishmen?

9. Was there a provincial governor? Did the Viceroy ever visit the areas were you lived?

10. Did you read the papers? Where were they printed-were they provincial or state? Did they contain information about Britain and world affairs or did they concentrate upon Indian news?

11. Can you remember when you first voted? If so when, where and how old was she? Were they provincial elections?

12. Can you remember when Gandhi first made an impact? What did you think of him? What did your servants think of him?

13. What did the Muslims think about Congress? Was Congress active where you lived? Did the Muslims express the desire for a separate Muslim homeland before the War?

14. Was Jinnah popular with other Muslims or did they prefer local leaders? Did the Muslim League make their presence felt in the areas which you lived?

15. Did you and Granddad feel that your children's future was secure or did you think that they were born at a time when Britain's time in India was running out?

16. Was the declaration of War a shock? Where many men drafted for the War? Were there any food shortages? Can you remember the Quit India movement? Did you think that Britain's authority was still strong during the War years?

17. Did you think that thing would return to normal when the War ended, or had things changed for good?

18 Where you affected by the communal riots? Did Britain deal these effectively? Did you feel threatened at any time?

19. Was there a time that you thought that it was inevitable that Britain would leave India? What did you think when they announced they were going? Did the Anglo-Indians feel abandoned? Did those who decided to stay feel that their life would alter drastically? Why did you decide to stay? What made you leave India?

APPENDIX III: TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW WITH MRS DIAS

Interview conducted on 15 February 1995 at the interviewee's home.

(Three dots are used in this transcription to indicate a pause in the conversation, unlike in the main body of the essay where this is used to indicate omitted sections of dialogue. The only omissions in this transcription concern areas of the interview concerning purely family details, stuttering and terms of endearment.)

What is your name Nanny?

-Antoinette Henrietta Sass, I was.

Now Dias?

-Now Dias.

When where you born?

-1915

And where was that?

-Karachi, Pakistan-that it was British India.

And what about your parents-who were they?

-Darling, I wouldn't be able to tell you very much about my parents, in a sense. There names were...I think his name was Henry Edward Sass.

And what job did he you do?

-He was a driver on the Railway.

What about your mother?

-Housewife.

What was her name?

-I wouldn't know her name...[laughter].

No?

-To be honest with...I know he used to call her Bobbit, it was her pet name or what...he used to call her [___] or something like that, I don't know .

All right, when did you get married to granddad?

-1934.

1934, where abouts?

-That was in Kotri, Kotri, Sind, Pakistan. Now like you have Isleworth here and Heston there-this was in Kotri, Sind.

Right. Okay, was it a small town?

-Yes you could say that.

And was it a railway town?

- Well, we were in the railway colony and there were other there too...It was more or less a railway colony.

When did you come to England?

-I came to England for uncle Nelson's wedding...in 1962.

And did you stay here after that?

-No I went back and when granddad's retired and we came together...I forget what year we came in-Mummy should be able to tell.

So where in India did you live, when you were there? I know that you lived in a few places...

-Having married a railway man we were never in one place for very long...so we were in Kotri, we started in Kotri, Sind.

Okay, I'll look it up on the map, so you lived in Kotri first?

-Yes.

Then where did you go to?

-We lived there for many years then I married granddad.

So before you married granddad you lived in Kotri?

-Yes.

As a girl and a teenager?

-Yes as we are all living here.

And where did you live with him?

-I lived with him in Kotri then he moved, he was on the go because he was a railway man, and from Kotri we went to Baluchistan, Quetta, Baluchistan, from there back to Rohri, Sind, then from there ...

Did you not live in Lahore for a long time?

-Yes! And from there we went to Lahore, from Rohri we went to Lahore.

Where did you spend the most amount of time do you think?

-Kotri, I should say.

And you lived in Lahore from...what, during the war years?

-You mean the British or the Partition?

No, World War Two.

-We were in...I can't think whether it was Kotri or Lahore, I think Lahore.

Lahore?

-I think so.

Was that were you lived when Mum was born?

-Mum was born...from Kotri I went to Karachi, I went to hospital and Mummy was born in Karachi.

All right, okay from Kotri.

-From Kotri, because it was a small station.

So then you could say that from when Mum was born, then after that you lived in Quetta, Rohri, Sind, and then Lahore?

-Say it again?

When Mum was born you lived in Kotri so then after that you lived in Quetta, yes?

-Yes.

Then Rohri, Sind?

-Yes.

Then to Lahore?

-The to Lahore.

That's good. And so, was granddad a railway man all his life?

-He started his apprentice, if you want to know, worked himself up to a fireman, Dad will be able to tell you that, then, from there, he took up driving, then, being a junior driver, he used to drive, you know, these bloody wagons.

Like freight trains?

-Freight trains. After a period of that he went on to the passengers. There were two kinds of trains over there, the passengers and then the mail. The mail was supposed to be the fastest. The Passenger would take you there in its own sweet time.

So when you think back to when you lived in India, which place out of Kotri, Quetta, Rohri and Lahore do think of the most?

-Oh, we used to live in Rawalpindi too.

When did you live there?

-We lived in Rawalpindi from 195?. From Rohri, let me tell you, we went to Rawalpindi.

Right from Rohri to Rawalpindi

-Yes, I know I've forgotten. I can't think of the days...Mum should know because I used to take them to Muree school. Rawalpindi is at the foot of the Muree hills.

Did you say from 1952?

-1953.

Before you went to Lahore?

-I'm...I don't know whether I took off from Rawalpindi or from Lahore. I took off from Lahore.

It must be easy to get mixed up.

- I am getting mixed up. No, we went from Rawalpindi to Lahore and from their we took off.

What about when you had your children-uncle Nelson and Lola, Aunt Cindy and Mum- when they were small and before they went to school, they obviously lived with you, where you living?

-Like, for instance, if I was two years from here, I would take them to school and back

Which area were you living when they were small?

-Now, for Nelson, part of his education was done in Nanitol, that was in India, you understand?

Yes, but where were you living?

-Kotri.

Kotri.

-Then after he finished there ...not...he did finish from there...granddad used to get foreign passes to go over there which was difficult, so from there we decided...what did I say from Rawalpindi?

Kotri.

-Kotri...he was a little chap and I took him to Delhousie which was run by the Nuns, infants, that's in Pakistan, Delhousie, and from their, he when he finished there, when they come to a certain age , children come to a certain age you have to put them into a senior school. I had to put him into a boarding school. I put him into Nanitole

That was with the Brothers, was it?

-With the Brothers, and from there for some time we were finding it difficult to get passes and all that. I withdrew him and then, the CSE, yes when he was about to be in the CSE, I brought him, I withdrew him from Nanitole and sent to Lahore.

Right,

-We were in Pindi, Rawalpindi at the time.

You have told me before about when you used to send Mummy to school at Muree, and used to go on the bus...

-From Rawalpindi we used to go on the bus to Muree. No trains go up the hill. Muree was the hills so we used to catch the bus. Go by train up to Rawalpindi, catch the train and go up to Muree.

So when you used to catch the train from Rawalpindi, where were you going from? Where were you living?

-We were from all over the place, even from Quetta, from Kotri, from Lahore.

Right, I understand, your houses kept changing.

-Because granddad was transferred.

So in your houses, your various houses in Quetta or Rawalpindi or wherever ...[interrupted]

-Railway houses.

What sort of houses were they? What were they like?

-Beautiful.

Yes? Can you tell me about them?

-They were four big bed rooms- they were flats. We never...

Bungalows?

-Sort of bungalows, we were never up stairs and downstairs and that's it.

So there were four bedrooms?

-Four rooms which we made into bed rooms, one for the boys, the girls used to be with me, or after the boys went to school and the girls were there, because the girls used to leave later than Nelson and Lola. Lola and Nelson used to go to Lahore for finishing there period of education, then I had Mary and Cynthia.

Did you have any domestic help-any servants or anybody?

-God, yes.

How many did you have?

-We had a sweeper, which we used to term ...what would you call it over here?

What did he used to do?

-They came to sweep the floor.

A cleaner?

-A cleaner. He was separate. He only had to do the cleaning and see to the toilet. Because we did not have flushers over there.

No?

-We had bloody potties which had to be taken out.

Where did he throw them?

-They had a special place far away, where they had to carry it.

I'm pleased it was far away! And so you had the cleaner-did you have somebody to help you cook?

-We had a cook who used to cook for us, then we had his assistant, another boy we used to engage. A young fellow, some mother would say come and take my child and teach him to do some work, and let him get some money-on a mere pittance we used to have him. He used to do the dusting in the dining room.

Was he full time?

-Yes, you could say it was full time.

Where did the servants stay?

-They went home...I don't know where they stayed.

They went home. I seem to remember you telling me that one of your houses had quarters at the back?

-Some houses we had but they never used to take-they would rather go and stay I their own house. Take for instance, if I say Roger, I've got a room over here, stay over here. You'll say no I've got Mum and Dad why should I stay with you? But they used to come back on time. They used to come about eight in the morning and leave about one, one-thirty to go home, and come back at four o'clock to give us our tea, then, I'm talking about the assistant to the cook and then he used to go away and the cook would serve us. He did all the washing of the dishes and plates, and we had the kitchen outside, say it would be [gesturing]as far as the fence here to the kitchen back there, they used to cook from there and bring it into the house and serve us.

Did you have someone to help you with the children when they were young?

-Yes, I had a women who used to bath and dress them and take them out for a walk in the evening in a pushchair or pram or whatever.

Can you remember how much you paid the servants?

-The cook I used to pay him...the most I used to pay him was twenty-five rupees.

A week? A month?

-A month.

A month. And was that not much? Can you remember how much granddad was getting for a months work on the railway?

-He was getting between 3-400 rupees.

Was that when he was a freight or express train driver?

-No. When he was a mail train driver he used to get more, say over 500. It used to range from the overtime he used to put in, you see?

Yes. Did granddad do a lot of overtime?

-When he felt like it, darling, when he was well he used to work.

Did his asthma...[interrupted]?

-Even his asthma and all that, the bloody firemen used to come and put him on the bloody engine and then in those days it was such bloody [----] that the firemen used to bring the bloody engine out of the shed up to the house and carry granddad and put him on the bloody...

Really? He must have been ill-did his asthma effected him a lot?

-He couldn't walk and then the firemen used to do all the driving.

I guess that the coal dust got to him?

-That I don't know my darling, sometimes it used to be a coal engine, sometimes an oil engine-it didn't strike me at the time to take account of all that, an engine was an engine.

Going back to the servants and, maybe granddad's firemen...[interrupted]

-The cook we used to pay twenty-five. Sweepers we used to pay eight rupees.

What race were they, what religion?

-There were...weren't Muslims...they were more from India. I wouldn't know what class of people they were.

Did that depend on were you lived?

-India was again separate, I do not know anything about India.

Yes, but, they weren't Muslims. Did you not have any Muslims...[interrupted]

-In among the India's there are a class of people, like high class, middle class, and low class, so a low class of people who decide to come to pick up your bloody pooh, and take it to the latrine, they were a separate type.

Did you talk to them? I mean did you pass the time of day with them or were you distanced from them?

-The only one I used to talk to was the women who used to stay with me-she used to sleep, the poor thing, under a little bundle and at night she'd go into the next room , lie down and go to sleep, wake up early in the morning, pick Nelson up or whoever it was, and give then their tea, and take them into the pram for a walk, and I used to be fast asleep.

So were you friends with her?

-...Yes.

And did you talk about everyday things?

-But the women I had, she had no husband. And she had a little girl and, of course, that was her life.

Where did the little girl stay?

-With the mother.

In your house?

-In my house.

Can you remember her name?

-No...

When was that? When uncle Nelson was a baby?

-We used to change over servants-servants gave you lip so out you would go and get anther one.

Was that regular occurrence?

-It wasn't a regular but if an occasion arose...there was always somebody to fill in that gap.

Were they always courteous and civil to you?

-Well anyone that came and was a bit arrogant, in manner of speech, you'd put him down a bit and he'd even tell you I don't want to work or you can get somebody else, he'd give you a bit of notice-I don't feel like working .. I'm not suited to this job.

Who did the hiring and firing, you or granddad?

-Not granddad so much as myself because he used to be on the line most of the time.

How often was he away?

-It could be know take for instance this, if he took the train out this morning he would come back again tomorrow morning...or tomorrow afternoon.

The distances must have been so vast. Did you talk to your servants in English all the time?

-No.

So you picked up some of the language?

Just to make myself understood.

Would you say you were fluent in it...Could you a conversion?

-I could understand and again I will tell you this, that I can understand now but I can't talk the bloody thing. When I am out passing people talking on the road I understand every bloody word of it. But I can't talk.

What language was that?

-Urdu

Urdu. So if you ...[interrupted]

-It's a mixed class of Sindi, people from Sind, from Baluchistan, could be from Kashmir, one or two. They were a very genuine type, you know, provided that you got the correct fellow to come and work for you. Kashmir was in a bad way at that time.

Why?

-I wouldn't know, my darling, I don't know anything about India. Kashmir is in India.

Why did you say it was in a bad way, was there...[interrupted]

-Em, terrible cold over there, no work over there because, while British were over there they were all right, when the British started moving out they started coming down to Sind and Baluchistan.

So we have talked a little bit about sending the children to boarding school...You sent Mummy and Aunty Cindy to the convent at Muree-that was in the foothills of the Himalayas, yes? Was it expensive to send them there?

-Yes, I used to pay 2-300 rupees a month

Nearly half granddad's wages...

-Yes. More than half because the bloody Nuns used to put on the bloody extras, your mother would be able to tell you that, and I used to pay up, and never had them on. The Nuns, knowing we were Catholics, made us believe it was a concession, but it was no bloody concession because there were other children that paid less fees, and some were on charity-which was, your Mum will be able to tell you.

Yes. Was it a very good school-do you think that they got a good education?

-It was a good school but depended on your intelligence. They took an interest in you, like...showed a little more, how should I say...favouritism, a little more favouritism if you were a clever child . But the backward one would get a smack around the head or get reprimanded, or something like it.

Was it only Roman Catholic children?

-No it was a mixture

Was that from the start, when Mum went to school, after the partition?

-After the partition, darling, I can't think, whether I still had Cynthia there after the Partition-I think so...When did the Partition take place?

1947.

-Oh God, yes they were in school.

Aunty Cindy has just gone back for a holiday, and the school is still run by Nuns but now it is full of Muslim girls.

-Now, I'll tell you there were people from Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Baluchistan, they were called Pathans, a class of Pathans.

They were tribesmen?

-Yes, they were tribesmen but they got educated, darling, or they saw, like ...take for instance a servant working for me and he would be friendly with you, you and he were of the same age, and you were writing and he'll say show me how to write. He'll go back and tell his mother and father I want to go to school, so they used to send him to school. Do you understand? That's how education...

Even so the convent was run by Nuns- it was a convent. Were they not too bothered if they had girls from other religions?

-No. There was St Dennys there, a Church of England school, a boarding school, a Church of England children went there, but some came to our

school, the Catholic school, because they weren't quite satisfied either with the teachers or the teaching.

When you lived in, say, Rawalpindi, or Quetta, or Lahore did you go out much- to the market or...?

-Oh God, yes, we were never interfered with, the Christians were never interfered with.

Why do think that was?

-I think it was...Jinnah was a very educated man, I think he was educated in Oxford or whatever, and he mixed around and the class of the people.

So this must have been in the late 1940's? What about before the War?

-Before which war?

World War Two. Say the 1930s, when...[interrupted]

-I can't tell you anything about that. No. We only knew there was a war but we never felt the want. We used to have a ration card. They had rationed rice, flour, cooking oil, sugar, all this was rationed but according to each member of the house you got a quantity, you were given that much

I was thinking about when uncle Nelson and Lola were very small, and even before you had any children...was it the same, and did you still wonder around unafraid?

-Never afraid.

Why do you think that was?

-I think that the Muslims had to carry down what was said , that was from Jinnah, that no Christians would be touched or interfered with

Right. You don't think it was due to the British presence ...the police maybe?

-No. He studied in Oxford and he carried it out that Christians were not to be touched, our Churches were never touched.

That's good...Apart from the servants you had, what contact did you have with Indians

-Darling, it became after the partition, the Muslims rode the bloody high horse.

What about before that?

-Before that they were mediocre, like friendly but not riding the high horse and trying to look down on a Christian or something, but then the majority of Christians and the English left.

Before the Partition, when the English were still there, how did you socialise? who were your friends?

-All Anglo-Indians.

Did you mix with any Indians?

-Well, not as such. But granddad had a lot to do with Indians because he used to work on the railway.

So were did you go to socialise-your friends houses?

-We went to the Railway Institute- a big hall. there was a reading room, a billiard room, the bar...I'm talking about before the Partition, and we had a big hall and we used to get, we used have dances.

How often were they?

-It could be one or two a month...because it slowly got scare because there were no bands...we used to have the bandsmen, when I say bandsmen, each one had an instrument, we never had a radio or anything like that, and they and to be booked from Karachi to come to Lahore or Rawalpindi to play for that night only. And the secretary of that Institute, when say that, he was in charge of running the finance, and he used to pay them.

And what sort of music did they play?

-All English music

Waltz?

-Yes.

Did you do the Charleston?

-The Charleston, the Valetta.

Did you like doing that?

-The Valetta, yes.

Did granddad dance?

-Yes, but he wasn't a dance on account of his chest-his asthma.

Did the Children go along to these events?

-I'm trying to think-yes and no Up to a certain age I never used to take them. It was just ones own...my rule was that a child should not enter the dance hall up to a certain age. You see, when they were small the servants stayed with them and we went to the dances.

Did they have any other functions there-I remember you telling me about the sports you had there...

-Now that was at Christmas time. The Institute used to lay on a full programme for the full week. You see, a certain amount of money was taken from each railway man's wages for the upkeep of the institute. It was an institute for railway people only...it must have been two or three rupees but there was such a big colony that that was quite an amount to go into the Institute.

Did you play Badminton...is that right?

-They started with Badminton, they had a tennis court, and a hockey ground. The Hyderabad was five miles out from Kotri, were we had Britishers over there...the soldiers, and darling, so when I think of it now I was so bloody ignorant...I knew there was military there but for what I don't know.

So did you didn't mix with the soldiers?

-Oh God yes, they used to come and dance with us and all that.

Regularly?

-Whenever there was a show or a dance. the secretary used to go and invite them, or write a letter to them and they would come. Some used to come and misbehave, some used to get bloody well beaten up and thrown out.

Was that the Officers and Men, or just the soldiers?

-I would say up to sergeant.

Are so it was the NCO's?

Yes. The NCO's.

What sort of other contact did you have with English people?

-We were all an Anglo Indian family, like say Mummy married an Englishman and I was married to granddad, and so on.

I was thinking more like... say in the town. Was there a post office?

-Yes. There were English people running the P.O. The G.P.O general manger was an Englishmen but there were sub-post offices we used to go to.

Okay, did they have Indian staff?

-Both. Mixed.

Would you say that the Indians had the lower jobs?

-No. Walk into a sub-post office over here, you'll see an English man sitting there and an Indian sitting there.

And it was the same there?

-It was the same there.

Right. And you said about the soldiers you met and saw at the dances-did you see them walking through the street or...[interrupted]

-No, once they used to go back-they used to come in lorries, which was the done thing for the military, and they used to get into those lorries and get taken back. There was nobody lying in the road or anything like that...

On a day to day level would you say that the level of the British presence was small?

-No. It did not diminish until partition.

Before the Partition, on an average day, would you say...[interrupted]

-We knew they were departing the British from Hyderabad back to England over various places, ...surroundings, they only new were the trouble was, we didn't know, that was a secret. I'm posted here, I'm posted there and just as we came to know them by this dancing they used to talk, I'm going to be posted and won't see you-I'll send you a card. Some sent, some didn't. We didn't bother they had gone. Some came back, some decided to go back to England. That's how the Military, the British vanished.

What about the police force when the English were still around. Can you tell me anything about them?

-There were quite a few English in the Police, but there were Anglo Indians as well. You understand?

Yes. Were they quite visible like the British Police force?

-They had bloody motorcycles here, there, and everywhere. They weren't standing in one place. The poor old bloody Indians used to be standing giving bloody signals [----]

All the horrible jobs?

-All the horrible jobs-you know, like, if your traffic lights goes off the policeman used to go and stand in the middle there and wave you and when the road was clear he would turn this way and wave you, that is how it used to go.

I was going to ask you again about your friends-most were on the Railways...?

-Yes.

Did you go around to their houses for food-did you have meals with them?

-Mrs Dias was kwon as very conservative and never went anywhere. granddad was the one who used to go out. He used to go his friends place to play cards.

And leave you behind?

-Er, I didn't want to go darling, I used to be engrossed in knitting and all that at home but after the children left, like Nelson and Lola, your Mum, and Cynthia, in school, I had nobody in the house then he used to say what the bloody hell are you sitting like an old bloody hag in the house, come on let us, come on watch us play cards. I used to get angry over bloody cards because I begged with granddad's gambling. You know? And I saw that I would never...by my presence being there he would be encouraged to play.

Really, I would have thought it would be the other way around.

-No, no, now listen. What I want to tell you, he said he'd being going for cards, but he would say I've only got...lend me some rupees, but when I'd go there he'd be losing and ask me for more money.

What about the food you ate?

-What we eat here darling, curry and rice, roast, we used to have chops. The cooks were excellent over there. They were very good...because the British and they learnt then some cooks became elderly and couldn't cook...they used to bring their sons into the kitchen and sons learnt from them so when the old ones [----] or couldn't work, like say he had asthma or he had something wrong with him, we used to take the sons in.

Was there any problem in getting the food at all?

-No.

No. It was it all plentiful? Did granddad used to go hunting?

-You're terminology is not exactly how I would have thought. uncle Austin had a gun and I some how never...granddad used to borrow his Dad's gun and they used to go out shooting.

What did he shoot?

-Duck, goose, pigeons.

Did he shoot wild boar?

-Oh, wild boar as well. But granddad couldn't stand going out into the wild, though.

Why?

-Because they had to sneak behind bushes and remain in the cold. You understand?

What sort of countryside did he go in?

-jungle.

Jungle. Where was that?

-Now, there is another place where granddad used to work called Gadoo. When he first started driving, there were stations, he first had to go to Dadoo and back. You couldn't have a failure, you had to be on time with your engine and your train. Then you went up and were recommended, you see to go up to the mails, when this was on the passengers. Now, uncle Austin used to work as permanent way inspector, he used to see to the lines, you understand?

That's to make sure that the lines are I order and not need replacing.

-...the bolts and all that are all right, he had quite a gang of men under him, he used to do this work, you understand-it could be hundreds of them and he had to inspect those things or have somebody under him and see that they are going their work because if the engine got derailed, or their was something wrong, a bolt loose or something...the line wasn't in order, and he had to answer for that. He was stationed in some outlandish places, where there was just a small little house and he had to stay there and give his services...

And that's how granddad found out about the hunting grounds, through uncle Austin?

-Uncle Austin and his gangmen-I'm talking about uncle Austin having these gangmen under him to see these bolts and all that, they used to say our fields are getting outraged with these blooming pigs. Being Muslim...

They couldn't touch them.

-They couldn't touch them, so they wanted them shot. So uncle Austin...

So it was all right for non Muslim to shoot them but they couldn't touch them?

-They couldn't touch them.

Did you eat the pigs that granddad brought back?

-Oh yes, we eat it, if they brought back one pig, wild boar, how much can you eat? So we used to distribute it to the railway people.

Did you have a fridge then?

-No. Food would have gone off. Later on, before I left, I got a fridge but not before that.

It must have been very hot...

-But then we got all fresh food, darling, we never had anything.

So you didn't keep anything in the larder, you would just go out and buy it?

-We had to buy it every day

I just want to make sure I've got it right about where granddad used to go hunting. From where you lived in Pakistan or India he used to get on a train...[interrupted]

-Don't say India say Pakistan-oh, it was India.

It gets confusing doesn't it? He used to travel on to somewhere quite a long way away, go hunting, and get back on the train? Did he hunt socially?

-Now let me tell you. uncle Austin was working for the permanent way-he used to see to the lines and all that-so he used to take his people that wanted the pigs shot in their fields. They used to be all crowded out on this trolley, a four wheeler, you know, pushed by men on the rails

Right.

-Just think of a cart.

Is it like a pump cart?

-No, no, just four wheels and a platform and a seat on the top and two handles, and they used to catch it like a pram

Right. That must have been hard work.

- And they used to run on the rails.

They must been fit.

-Oh God yes, and how they used to balance themselves and push it and balance themselves on the rails and go to the next station I don't know.

Nana, you said something just a minute ago, you said don't call it India, call it Pakistan. When it you start calling where you lived Pakistan and Baluchistan

-Baluchistan is in Pakistan.

But before the war, before World War Two, in the 30s or the 20s, when you were a little girl or a teenager, it wasn't called Pakistan then, was it?

-No it was India, British India.

So when did you start calling it Pakistan

-Darling, it was compulsory once Jinnah took over.

But did you here about it before then?

-No.

It was only was only when Jinnah came in...when Jinnah became Premiere, or when he came to prominence?

- President, yes.

So, only when, up to, when the British were leaving and Partition happened that the word "Pakistan" entered your vocabulary?

-Yes it was named by him, by Jinnah.

That's very interesting...

-Then there was a another Pathan fellow that took over from Jinnah, he was a Pathan chap, he was an excellent fellow and, he again adhered to the rules that when Jinnah died, the rules...

Another thing I'd like to ask you about, Nana, is.. did you get Newspapers?

-We used to get newspapers but not to the door ,as such.

How would you get them?

-If you wanted a paper you'd go to the shop and buy it.

Was that a daily newspaper or a national?

-Daily Gazette, Daily Gazette, the Daily Mail...I think so. something with daily in it.

Were they English papers?

-Yes. Everybody used to go for the Daily Gazette because it was more English, more about England, it was a mixture, as the next paper to it was about the surroundings

Are, so, the Daily Gazette gave you information on what was going on in the rest of the world?

-The rest of the world.

Did you have a Radio, a wireless set.

-We had a radio

And did you listen to it a lot?

-Yes.

What sort of programmes did you listen to?

- There were certain times we used to get BBC...but other times I can't think where we used to get the music.

Was that the World Service?

-It was.

Can you remember when World War Two broke out in 1939, was that a shock?

-Darling, you know in a sense nothing was a secret. granddad would come with information from his workmen, that there is going to be trouble, be careful and he used to tell me. Now, I couldn't go to my neighbour and tell her that I've heard this.

Why not?

-It could be true, it could be...

It would just be spreading gossip?

-It would be spreading gossip.

So you had some idea that...

-And the cooks go to the bazaar, daily, to buy our groceries and meat, For our dinner, breakfast, lunch, whatever, and they used to sit down, the cooks used to sit down together among themselves in a gang, and talk about all this and some used to come home from the bazaar, I call it a bazaar, the market, Memshaib, they used to call me Memshaib, there's going to be trouble, we heard it in the bazaar that such and such a thing is happening. We used to take note of some and some just wave it off as gossip.

Did you ever think at all that this was going to bad for the British in India?

-Jinnah made it a very firm rule, a pledge, that the Christians would never be interfered with. granddad was assured by his English bosses that nothing would happen to us. Only to be vigilant-they could take the bolts from the rails

Who would do this?

-There were rioters...

This was after the war?

-There was a little friction.

Were you affected...were there a lot of riots?

-Yes, in the bazaars.

Was it between Muslims and Hindus?

-Just a clash darling, you know, there would be a Hindu overthere, some would pick on him, some would make him his best bloody friend, so you didn't know how you stood over there.

It sounds quite dangerous, was it?

-It was dangerous

Were you worried that you might get caught up in the violence?

-Never worried.

Because of Jinnah's promise?

-Jinnah's promises and besides the Christians...I forget, mummy would have known his daughters used to be in school with Mummy.

Really?

-Jinnah's ministers, just ask Mummy that. His daughter and sons, his sons in Guragully in Muree...Guragully was a C of E school for boys, St Dennys was a C of E school for girls.

So Jinnah's sons went to a C of E school?

-Yes.

Even though they were Muslims?

-And they were Muslims. Because he was an educated man...

So they carried on their faith but had an Western education?

-Mind you, no Koran or anything was taught in schools.

Really?

-Yes, only afterwards when Pakistan got a grip on itself that they insisted that the Koran be taught, and as a second language Urdu.

Would you say before Partition that Jinnah was a popular chap in the areas that you lived?

-He kept his status, he never harmed anybody and his ruling was all right

What about before he came to power, before the Partition...

-No, during the Partition he took over.

But before then,

-Before then, as I say, he was an Oxford University lad, and he tried to keep the balance of the Christians and the Muslims over there

What about with the other Indians, non Muslim Indians?

-If some bugger came from India, they were told to bugger off to India-this is no place for you, whether he went or he was harboured I don't know.

Was this even before Partition that they were saying...[interrupted]

-Many Hindus were saved by Muslims because they couldn't bare to see the massacres

Really? Would they shelter them?

-Shelter them, some got killed for harbouring Hindus.

It must have been very bad...

-Yes it was very bad, this was were the riots used to take place but, darling, to be honest with you...Pakistan was coming into being...I used to sit in the tonga, the tonga man used to take me where I wanted, he used to bring me back when I wanted, there was never a pass, never... a word out of place.

Do you think that your safety, your neutrality, was because you were Anglo Indian or because you were a Christian?

- Both. in a sense. He respected you. You paid him what he asked for and that was it, whereas others used to haggle. you know? If there was another Muslim getting into a tonga, he would say "what will you charge to take me to Heston?", he'll say so and so, he would say no, no, no, I'll give him so much. I never used to haggle.

Can you remember about the Muslim League and what your servants felt about it-the All India Muslim League?

-There was no such thing as I know off? But there was. we were hearing of it, that it was getting stronger and stronger. I don't know, granddad used to get all the information from the [engine] shed and come and talk about it but it went over my head.

Was it remote? Did you think that it would never effect you?

-Darling, I never anticipated any such thing. But, it was only Uncle Alf who used to be well up on this information.

Why was that?

-Up to then we had no bloody passports. We were living off the land.

So how did you get your passports?

-We never got a passports, all we held on to was our British Grandfathers certificates and all that thinking they were very precious, little realising that when the time came for us to get passports that we had to produce all this [to prove] that we were from British descent.

Its a good job that you held on to all that then. When did you get your passports?

-Now poor granddad, his people were, I'm sorry to say they are dead and gone, were very careless about all this, they didn't worry, everyday was one day for them so the next day came along. Uncle Alf was the one who said get your passports now.

When was this?

-This was in Nineteen...we started off in Nineteen forty-five or six.

Really, did you realise that...

-Something was going to happen.

Was it a shock when Mountbatten set a date for the British withdrawal, he said that...[interrupted]

-Darling, still I don't think it sunk through...what are existence was going to be like over there by the British leaving, because Jinnah had promised that no Christians would be interfered with and no Church would be desecrated. That's all we were interest in.

Did it seem that Britain would be replace by Jinnah's lot and that as long as every thing continued as normal...

-No it was slowly, slowly coming and that so and so was going to be Prime minister, all Muslims with the British leaving, so we took it for granted.

Were you worried?

-Not really.

I want to back a bit again, can you remember when you first heard about Gandhi?

-It was when Partition took place that Gandhi first came but I can't tell you anything about when he came...whenever he came to Pakistan to tour, now I think that's the time that Jinnah sprung up and confronted him with rules and

regulations, and Partition and everything...But the Viceroy was there and they never did anything without the consultation of the Viceroy.

Who didn't?

-Both Jinnah and Gandhi.

Did the Muslims, your servants or whatever think highly of Gandhi?

-They used to abuse him because he was a Hindu.

And was that before the War as well?

-You see the Hindu was the untouchable and because the untouchables [----] they are a very finicky people. they never drink out of the same glass as yourself-they have their own utensils and all that. So that was the difference between...they wouldn't let the Muslims touch their plates or anything...that's how grievances arose..barriers.

So Gandhi wasn't a popular chap?

-He was in a sense, because he was ell in with the Viceroy, Mountbatten. granddad always said Gandhi was in love with Mrs Mountbatten, he said that's why Mountbatten gave bloody home rule. He, Gandhi was the one who started with Home Rule and the Jinnah sprung

Was there much Congress activity...[interrupted]

-No, it was more in India.

Where any pamphlets produced

-I don't know anything about India

No, say in Pakistan, I'm guessing know, but may be from the League saying...

-Some we used to believe, some we never used to believe. Like you read in the papers and then someone contradicts it says it is all untrue.

Can you remember if there were any Congress ones came through.

- The Congress was very strong with Gandhi.

What I am trying to get is was it seen that Congress was in India and the League in your area?

-Yes.

Was there any overlap?

-No. That's how the fighting took place, you see, the massacres between India and Pakistan. But then they stopped the trains coming into Pakistan- trains never used to go to India and we had nothing to do with India so we never bothered. We were quite content with living our usual life, existence.

Can you remember when you first voted...can you remember elections taking place?

-Elections used to take place like between Labour leaders and Congress and Conservatives and it used to come out in the papers. Some [----]but we, being Britishers, we never used to bother with it.

Did you have the vote then, were you able to vote...did granddad vote?

-...We must have.

What about your brother, uncle Al?

-He was hell fire against the bloody Indians and Pakistanis

You said he took more an interest in that sort of thing...so did he vote?

-No. Not as far as I know.

Jumping back again, we were talking about the War and the rationing...were many Indian men conscripted for the army...did many go away to fight?

-My darling, they may have joined I don't know.

Was there a noticeable drop in the population?

-No. I don't know.

For instance, did granddad's firemen all continue in their jobs?

-No. They respected and loved granddad-they never...I used to tell him Henry you trust this bloody fellow to much, I said, no he's a bloody good worker, he said. All he was worried about was work and that he had no trouble no the engine, and so he loved granddad and granddad loved him... the firemen used to go around the engine and oil it, but granddad and my Dad were so experienced in driving [that] sitting on the engine they knew at the next stop what they had to tighten and oil. Some knock on the engine used to give them the indication.

When you living in Kotri or Quetta, what sort of routes did granddad go on, local routes..long ones?

- Oh God yes, when were in Sibi, that the first stop to Baluchistan.

Did you live there?

-I didn't live there because of the heat, it was terrible, and used to effect the children, they used to break out in boils

Really? How hot was it?

-It was like...like a shield...they used to say, to term it, a tissue paper between hell and Sibi.

Did granddad take his trains to India or was it just Pakistan?

-No, he went as far as Amritsar and stopped. that was the middle point between India and Pakistan, and they stopped that because it was getting dangerous overthere, because when Muslims came into Amritsar there always used to be a clash.

Were his trains attacked?

-Not so much the trains, darling, as human beings, between each other.

Were the clashes put down quickly?

-Some were slaughtered some got away but we never knew what happened, and I wasn't bloody interested to be honest with you, being safe, holding a British passport. We didn't worry about the next person.

When War was declared and going on did you think that time was running out for the British in India?

-We heard whispers but nothing came along?

Did you think five, ten twenty years?

-That's what Uncle Alf was thinking about.

What was he thinking?

-That in another five or ten years we would be classed as one of them. He thought that time was running out and that it was time we left , and make a move, then we started obtaining our passports.

I remember you telling me some time ago about one of your relatives who lost his family in an earthquake...

-Uncle Alf's family.

Uncle Alf's family. What happened?

-He was an inspector, he started like granddad-fireman, shunter, driver-then he became inspector, then he became higher than inspector, or DME (District Mechanical Engineer) so he was posted over there.

Where Nana?

-He was posted on, he was in Sibi, then from Sibi, you know, it's not easy, it wasn't easy for the drivers, you had to finish a period of time in Sibi to learn the track, you see, then there was another track because Quetta is quite high up and there was another track where you needed to know how to control your engine, because it's up grade and down grade. You understand? So you finish your time in Sibi, when your record is clear and your time is up, you had to do two years there, then you went to Much, which was the middle station between Sibi and Quetta, so they, we had to stay in Much. He [Uncle Alf] was in Sibi and from Sibi he went to Quetta and after some months, I wouldn't know how many months or years when the 'quake took place. It was just a rumble and the whole place came down.

Can you remember what year it was?

-It could be 1935. I know that Nelson was born in 1935, that's the year it took place. He was a month old. I was getting ready, because they had asked me, Uncle Alf's wife was very fond of me, and she said you bring the baby, I want to see it and you stay with us, by then they were in Quetta, and I was getting ready to go-we had to collect money, we didn't have to go.

Yes?

-Well, not as such. we weren't that badly off, but you want some spending money, you do not want to go empty handed, you want to buy something and take it their. I was getting ready when the 'quake took place. Uncle Alf, on compassionate grounds got himself transferred back to Pakistan area.

Did he get married again?

-Yes, he married in Rawalpindi, the second marriage was in Rawalpindi. By then his daughters got married and grown up. But I think he rubbed off on me were education's was concerned. He used to keep on telling me do not neglect their education-put them into boarding school because if they are at home they won't learn, and learnt it from him. Can you imagine Nelson and Lola reaching the standard they did with bloody...poor family boys, mixing with them with no initiative, no forethought of bettering themselves.

Yes. You are right.

-...They were putting them into mass graves...when I say mass graves-one on top of the other because there was such a lot of dead and remember Uncle Alf telling me that the fellow that came, he went to some fellow in charge of the burials and I believe he joined his hands to him and said I beg of you give me a separate grave for my family-I don't want a mass grave-she was very dear to me and my children, three children he lost...

That's terrible.

-A baby of six months, a girl, a boy of two and a half, and a girl of five years. The others were in school-that's how they were saved.

So, Nana, tell me why you decided to send the children over, and you stayed on over there for a while?

-Because it was getting so nationalised. You had to learn Urdu, none of them wanted to lean Urdu, you had to learn the language of the country. Take for instance if you lived in France, they would expect you to know something of French and you can't go and talk bloody French overthere if you don't know anything. I had no intent of staying there. I wanted them to finish there Cambridge education and come and make a new life overthere, one by one, because it was expensive for me to educate them and end them over here. And then, finally when granddad retired, we came over here. It was Uncle Alf that said that this place will be taken over. He used to be very much into politics, reading politics , and he used to call us bloody ignorant-you'll don't worry, you'll live from day to day, you'll don't know what's going to happen to you, this was the way he was thinking, which arose a little feeling in us as well. But then after he left from there and we had educated our children, it became natural that we noticed how things were changing.

How were they changing?

-It was compulsory to where the National dress

Really?

-There were making it...they wanted you to speak Urdu.

Even though you were British?

-Even though we were British. When you went out you were not supposed to wear a dress, you were supposed to wear the national dress

Really?

-That was the rumour. But I never did. I said come what may I'll never change. They can do to me what they like. When I found uncle Austin came over here, Uncle Alf and Len had gone, I though what was doing over there, lets come over here.

Did you ever consider going back?

-No.

Its not the same place?

-Darling we were to...we were spoilt by the railway. We had a house to go to, which we were not obligated to the next person for, we paid our rent through granddads pay and we had that house, nobody could take it away from us. But once we left the really-there was nothing left. We had to pay through the nose for houses overthere to get accommodation, anywhere at all. And then the class of people had gone down, there was nothing left. I would love to know what happened to that Railway Institute-what could shows we used have overthere-talking about Christmas week in that institute, everyday from the 24th father Christmas used to come right up to the 31st, when we'd have the New Years Eve Ball-there was always something doing in that place

Did you go during the day time and weekdays?

-Only in the evenings, everyday.

That sounds fun.

-On this hockey ground they used to have the sports from the Institute. They had all kinds of sports-different ages of children running, getting prizes, donkey rides, we. ..we used to throw darts with our eyes blind folded.

What at each other? [laughter]

-No, no on a dart board, on a dart board.

It sounds very nice...

-Then we used to finish from the hockey ground, go to the Institute, and then there was catering laid on and a band playing and we used to have dancing...It was very good ...good days. But if I ever wore my heart down it was in Rohri, and, my god, what a bloody place, you talk about me telling you there is, they say, a tissue paper between Sibi and hell, Rohri was next to it, the next place...it is very hot. ...The best years of my life were spent in Kotri because I didn't...I was married in Kotri, Nelson, Lola, and Mummy were born there. We had good days, darling, very good days.

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