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Tape 868 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAME:

Mr. John Stubbs and Mrs. Kay Stubbs 4700.0591 Tape 868.1 (Tape 4 of 4)
Robin Adair 4700.0592 Tape 868.2 (Tape 2 of 4)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWER: Frank de Caro and Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:

Stubbses: 4/9/1978
Adair: 4/10/1978, 4/12/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 34 minutes

Stubbses: 47 minutes
Adair: 47 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 868, Side A

Stubbses (Part 4 of 5) (868.1)

- 008 there were some very good missionaries, along with some very bad missionaries
010 in one district, the Australians that ran a good hospital and college; they only mixed with the low-caste people because the they were the only ones that would convert; the higher-castes never converted
018 the head of the mission came to see Stubbs when he arrived; he complained that Stubbs had arrested some of the boys from his college for throwing bricks; Stubbs told him that he did not want the boys to get into trouble, but the only way to stop such vandalism is to take action because he was responsible for everyone
026 the head of the mission would come to see Stubbs on occasion, and they would discuss such people as Gandhi

031 Mr. and Mrs. Stubbs were invited to a dinner and the missionaries were amazed at the fact
that such superior British had any connection with common Indians; missionaries tried to
tell them what they should and should not eat and how they should behave

035 Mrs. Stubbs told them that they had been in India for the past five years and did nothing but
speak Hindustani and live with the Indians and there have not been any British near them

038 the head missionary sent Stubbs a note when he was leaving the district, saying that they
had never really met a British officer and never met ordinary Indians, just the type of
people they were teaching

041 the note told of how the missionaries were saddened at the fact that a British district officer
was coming because they had never had one; he told him that they wished they had him
back because they did not like the Indian district officer they had

046 they were prejudiced against British administrators because they had no idea what the
administrators were about

049 there were some Swedish and American missionaries in one district; Stubbs did not know
the church they belonged to; the missions on the border of Nepal, when the men died the
women carried on

057 they never made any converts but they were really good people and very popular; they had
great influence; no one would steal from them, no matter where they were

060 it was difficult to make converts; one of Stubbs friends in the Salvation Army ran the
settlements for the criminal tribes, and Stubbs asked him one day if he had ever made a
convert in all the forty or fifty years he was there; the friend replied that he did not

071 there were many missionaries, some good, some bad, some indifferent; established church
missionaries seemed to be better; there were the odd ones that had their own churches

076 it was almost impossible to convert either a caste Hindu or a Muhammad; there were a few
high-caste families that were Christian; however, a Brahman Christian was still superior to
a low-caste Christian; there were very few Brahman Christians

090 every province was different from the previous and unlike any other

097 the last large district Stubbs was in charge of had about four million people, which was one
of the largest in India; it was terribly over populated; during the war, they began a Cooley
core, which brought in a lot of money

101 the core was spread all over India; they doubled the railway, but did just about everything
106 they would organize in the districts; at one point, Stubbs had 80,000 men from the district
109 many times, Stubbs was the divisional commissioner as well; they kept changing his
commissioner

113 in between commissioners, Stubbs was the acting commissioner; that position paid very
well and he could pull from the whole district

117 there was a labor corps from the division; all the officers that were selected were Indians;
they were sent off for a short training period

121 every caste was represented; they had no trouble with the community messes; they all
earned a good amount of money; they would go out for six months and then come back

125 from Stubbs point of view, the labor corps was put in place to help with the war effort
because the army needed the labor and it was also an outlet for the lower populations; they
only had the money for it because of the war

133 when they left, they stole US army uniforms; when they returned, they all had medals
pinned to their chests

138 they came back in great physical condition; they went off after not eating half of the time,
 but came back with “meat on their bones”; they also came back with “nest eggs”
 153 not all things were easy; you had to put up with the bad; it was very trying
 157 because of the lacking of electricity you did not have fans or air conditioning; there was no
 running water, no public works
 168 from mid-October until the beginning of April, the climate was gorgeous and you felt
 wonderful when you got up in the morning; from April to about June, it was extremely hot
 and rainy; from June to October, you sweated, especially if you were in the east side
 because of the damp heat and everything got moldy
 185 Stubbs was once playing polo when a terrible dust storm came up. After sending the horses
 to the bungalow, Stubbs and a police officer went to the city to survey the damage. There
 were two trapped girls and they were able to save one.
 195 Stubbs came back and took a bath. When drying himself with the towel, he was stung by a
 scorpion; you really can’t do anything for it
 202 his orderly said he would pray it out of him; it did not work
 207 he could feel the poison in his veins; he sweated through three sets of clothes in one day;
 the next morning he went for a swim and it went away “like that” after the twenty-four
 hours were up since being stung
 215 Stubbs was once getting ready for church and the bearer put out some clothes Stubbs had
 not worn in a while. Right after pulling the pants on, he was stung on his bottom. He
 jumped, yelled and Kay just laughed
 226 that incident was not as bad because the scorpion got him on a fleshy area not near a vein
 229 a scorpion bite is only hazardous to young children and those with a bad heart; a bee sting
 can be just as bad because they both have snake venom; a bee sting will only last about
 twenty-four hours as well
 242 there were about 500 European men in all of India; it was rare for Stubbs to have any
 Englishman in any position of responsibility in any of the districts he was in
 248 occasionally white policemen in some districts; if there were police, they were Indian
 252 the top people in the district were the district magistrate, session’s judge, superintendent,
 and civil surgeon; Stubbs never had an English session’s judge nor civil surgeon; these
 were the top people of each department
 260 Stubbs had some very good Indian police officers and civil surgeons; the ICS had been
 recruiting Indians for a very long time, which is not generally known
 266 when the British left India, there was no revolution but merely the English handing India
 back to the Indians and walking out; the massacres were different; the structure, however,
 has changed some
 274 the Indians in the ICS and Indian Army have been keeping India going ever since; all of
 those Stubbs knew that were in the service with him have risen to very high positions; one
 of his joint magistrates was real big in the ambassadorial line, last he heard
 283 they kept it going because they had the training and tradition; Stubbs has been told that the
 Indian Army is now first class
 293 in the hills in the hot weather, the wives would get together; pre-war, there were weeks
 when people would come in from the stations and there would be dances, races; the
 governor would normally ask people in rotation to stay in Lucknow or in the hills
 308 there were so few people that everyone knew everyone else; you would almost always

know someone that would ask you stay; entertaining was easy because you could put up
 tents in the yard during good weather and house more people
 318 they were married in 1936; they went out in November and came home on leave in
 December 1937; Stubbs went back after six months, Kay did not because she gave birth
 328 she went out with the child in October of 1938; then in 1939 you were into the war
 331 before the war, Stubbs would occasionally escape to play polo in Lucknow or somewhere
 like that, if there was a team
 337 there was usually a Christmas camp in the jungle for about four or five days; they always
 got Christmas off; if you were in a jungle district, they would go shootings; they were not
 always able to do that
 346 Stubbs' parent's always had a Christmas camp and Stubbs would go out; Stubbs and Kay
 had two camps; the first one was just before the war (1938); there was one during the war
 when the missionaries came and stayed with them
 360 the blocks were divided up; there were closed and open periods, and no one was allowed to
 shoot during the closed period
 365 you applied through the Forest Department for a block; this gave you a week or so and
 specified what you could shoot
 370 district officers could get elephants, which you really needed in the jungle; you would have
 to buy them, but the owners would always let you borrow them if you were in the same
 district; British officers seemed to be the only ones able to do this
 392 after the war, tourists would go and were required to pay about \$500 per tiger
 399 if you were an ordinary soldier, you would have to be friendly with someone who would
 ask you out or go to the CP, take block and shoot on foot
 416 many people got the money for the [shikar?] with the reward money for shooting
 man-eating tigers
 422 some people were and some were not keen on shooting; if you were working hard under
 trying conditions, it made a difference because it was relaxing; Stubbs did a large amount
 of work when he would go out, so he would hunt in the morning and then get to work in the
 late morning and afternoon
 447 those in the service were encouraged to take up activities like shooting or riding; had to
 pass a riding exam before you could even enter the service (although many were able to
 avoid horses after that)
 455 Stubbs never had the opportunity, except for rare occasions, to ride before he went out to
 India; he could not afford it before; at Oxford, he joined a club so he could learn to ride
 468 Stubbs never really had the money to do such things as go riding until he went out to India,
 which is much cheaper and he was paid well
 475 the difference in titles stems from the old Company Districts under John Company; in
 those districts they were called "Collectors", the real function of a deputy commissioner;
 the new districts taken over after this gave them the names "Deputy Commissioner"
 487 you could be a deputy commissioner at one end of the providence and be called a collector
 at the other end; it was purely territorial, although Stubbs does not know why
 489 you began as an assistant commissioner and then became a collector or deputy
 commissioner or joint magistrate
 497 Stubbs was told that you were called a collector because that was the main function
 503 the basis of the British administration was the land; if a collector/deputy commissioner was

any good, he had to know the land positions and had to be an expert
 511 the two main points of a deputy commissioner/collector's job was managing the land
 revenue and maintaining peace; he also had numerous of other jobs
 518 the peasant's life revolved and was determined by his piece of land; if he knew that land
 was safe for him, he would be alright; all the laws that were passed were passed with this
 key thought in mind
 526 they began with a system where all the land belonged to the crown and there was no private
 ownership; when the British came, they began the landlord system, just as it is in England
 549 the rights to the land were based on the fact that they had to pay the land revenue to the
 government; in early times they could do whatever they wished with the land, be it
 subleasing, rack renting, and so forth
 555 throughout the years, a number of tenant acts were passed; when they left, a tenant was
 very well placed in his land and could not be kicked out as long as he paid his rent
 566 India resembles a large checker board when flying over it; it is flat in the north, with fields
 all across the land that do not have hedges; they were separated by a small mud divider
 585 they maintain the boundaries because they were such law-abiding people; if any of the
 boundaries would be cut away, a lawsuit was sure to immediately follow
 592 all of the fields and villages are mapped out that is held by the village accountant; the maps
 detailed the fields and the paperwork to who owns what area; also had paperwork detailing
 how much revenue was payable
 601 a settlement officer's job was to the settlement every seventy years
 606 [*mendh?*] is what the little field borders were called; they were little paths that had not been
 worked
 621 Stubbs made a request to the secretary one day that the prime minister at the time forego his
 right to a procession because it would only lead to the British shops being vandalized;
 Stubbs never said he could not have it, but asked that he not have it
 665 there was a retired British colonel; he once shot Punt's, his neighbor, cow to scared it off of
 his property; it was normally funny because it did not hurt the cow
 679 Stubbs was given the case when Punt filed a lawsuit against the British officer; Stubbs
 thought it was a petty matter and did not want to waste his time on it
 688 Stubbs told Punt that he did not think it was an extremely serious matter and asked for a
 compromise; Punt refused; Punt was mad that Stubbs did not take the matter more
 seriously while the British man was upset that Stubbs did not take the case more seriously,
 only fining the colonel a few dollars
 714 Punt was very intelligent but he would ask your opinion and did not like it when Stubbs
 told him the truth, rather than what he wanted or expected to hear
 725 under the old British system, a district magistrate was expect to rule his district and not
 bother the government about things
 729 end of Side A

Tape 868, Side B

Adair (Part 2 of 5) (868.2)

002 it was the job of the Calcutta station to bring the diplomatic bag up to Kathmandu, which
 was a nice perk; they would bring a bag up there about once a month; who ever brought the
 bag would spend four days there while the ambassadors would write their reports and

replies to the supplies he had brought; he would then take the bag back to Calcutta
010 the deputy commissioner in Calcutta originally had that job but his staff were not “that
thick on the ground” and were happy to have someone from the Dhaka office
014 the Dhaka office would meet with the Calcutta office frequently because they would visit
the shops in Calcutta when they wanted to go shopping; they would normally stay with one
of the office colleagues
018 one of the perks of Adair’s office was to bring the bag to Kathmandu; Adair did on one
occasion
020 Adair met the Indian Ambassador of Kathmandu; he was one of the Indians that had been
recruited to Bihar at the same time Adair was recruited; they had their probationary time
together at Cambridge and were together when they were working for their first exams
027 he had been recruited for the ICS in India and then sent to England for his year
030 many of one’s colleagues were Indians as district magistrates or subdivisional officers; in
the district headquarters, you would have the collector or deputy commissioner that was, in
most cases English, a superintendent of police that was probably English, there may also be
an English doctor and a few business men; the rest of your friends would be Indians
040 when Adair was an assistant magistrate, he was one of two British people there; in other
places he would be the only Englishman there
047 there was an old indigo farmer that owned a plantation that Adair liked to visit from time to
time
057 he had no electricity; the punkawalla would sometimes go to sleep, so some would sprinkle
sugar around the punkawalla’s seat to attract ants that would keep him awake by giving
him a little nip every once in a while
071 the punkawallas would get used to this and did not resent it too much; they regarded it as
part of the hazards of their occupation
075 the house was brick, but the ceilings were made of linen cloth stretched across the roof
construction
080 ceiling clothes were popular, especially in the more rural areas; you could not tell a
difference because it was stretched across a light wooden frame; a thin piece of canvas
would then be stretched across and it would then be white washed so all you could see was
a nice white ceiling
088 the trouble with the ceiling cloths would be that lizards and things like that would
congregate above them; one morning, Adair saw something fall through the ceiling onto
the mosquito net, through the mosquito net and onto the bed; he never got out of bed so fast
as that morning because it was a krait, a small deadly snake; it had been living above the
ceiling cloth
107 it was made of some fairly stout cloth and then whitewashed; it was very normal, even in
the “well-to-do” bungalows
114 there were a good number of snakes but one would not come across them very often; there
were a number of cobras, but one does not see them often; in ten years in India, Adair did
not see more than three or four snakes face to face
126 they would spend the evenings at the club playing tennis and drinking lime juice
132 Partition came in 1947 and Adair was in the Agricultural Department, director of
agricultural research; the [Gromal Food Campaign?] was considered an important thing for
India at the time because there had been a series of bad crops, and Adair was directly under

the Agricultural Administrator in Bihar at the time
150 they wanted Adair to stay on in the government and continue in the ICS, and he did have
the option to do so; considering the possible conditions of India after Partition, Adair
decided it would be best for his career to opt for something else
157 this was a difficult decision to make because it was interesting work; at the time, Adair had
his own small aircraft and would fly all over the province, inspecting the new irrigation
systems and such
163 in India, the major concerns were irrigation and getting the Gromal Food Campaign up and
running
166 irrigations were a major part of Adair's job responsibilities at the time; he was able to get in
more work with the airplane than by car
170 during the war, they began providing small airstrips across the country, mainly for smaller,
recreational aircrafts; Adair enjoyed flying around, inspecting projects and getting new
ones underway
181 Adair felt that while things were good at that time, they were more than likely going to
change as time passed and Independence got a firm grip; reluctantly Adair decided not to
continue on
188 very few English civilians did stay on; one was Adair's brother-in-law; there was also one
from Bihar, and would eventually go on into the central Indian government and remained
for a number of years in the customs department
196 many had to eventually give up their jobs because of the corruption and the seriousness of
it; Adair also felt that the British kept corruption under control while in charge
201 you cannot get completely free of corruption because it is one of the things that cannot be
removed but it can be controlled to some extent, which is what the British administration
tried to do
205 Adair felt that once the local government took over completely that "things would go from
bad to worse", as in fact they did in his opinion
215 it was a traumatic time in one's career and everything needed to be carefully considered
219 one option would have been the colonial service, but it was obviously a contracting service
as more of the colonies became independent and were handed over to their own people; the
common wealth offices would go on for a while, which is where Adair ended up
225 he never regretted his move; he stayed on with the common wealth offices until the end of
his career; he could have been posted anywhere
243 shortly after arriving in Araria as a subdivisional officer, there was a communal trouble,
meaning trouble between the Hindus and the Muslims; the Muslim minority in most parts
of India was part of the reasons why there was two countries after partition
252 Pakistan was established where there was a large Muslim concentration; the rest of the
country remained India
255 there was always a considerable minority of one around the majority of the other; in this
subdivision, there was a considerable Muslim minority
265 the trouble stemmed from both communities being consumed by their religious affairs; the
was a Muslim festival that called for a sacrificial animal, preferably a cow or bullock; the
Hindus hold cattle high in adoration
288 in one particular village, it was time for the Muslim festival and Adair received information
from the police in the area that there was trouble; he interviewed the Muslims then tried to

persuade them to sacrifice two or three goats instead; they asked for a camel
 315 in northwest India, it was considerably easy to get an old animal that was not very useful; in
 Dhaka, there are no camels available and to get a camel from the northwest would not have
 been possible because of the time constraints
 326 the Muslims were ready to consider such propositions, but it came back to where it having
 to be the bullock
 331 on the morning of the festival, a half a dozen police came over to help control the situation;
 the Hindus surrounding the village numbered in the thousands
 343 about four in the morning word came that the bullock had been slaughtered; trouble had
 begun because the surrounding Hindus got word and there was a confrontation between
 3,000 angry Hindu villagers ready to fight the Muslims
 359 starting at about five in the morning, Adair was there with the police arguing with the
 Hindu leaders, saying that it had already been done and they would try their best to prevent
 it next year; it was like a field of battle because the mob consisted of 3,000 to 4,000 Hindus
 ready to attack the Muslim village
 374 this went on all day; they had nothing to eat in the hot sun; Adair finally ordered the police
 to load up and aim at the leaders of the mob; before any shots were fired, the leaders agreed
 to call the mob and attack off
 391 a district officer was supposed to keep a tour diary; they were normally left as part of the
 office archives; it was supposed to be a sketchy record or what one was doing; it shows
 how much time was spent "on tour"
 403 when going on tour, you usually took your tent and camped; in those days, the tents were
 very luxurious; there be a bathroom, hanging partitions and not very different from the
 bungalow in the subdivisional headquarters
 417 they used kerosene a lot, especially the cooking and lighting; it was always provided in tins
 about a foot to fifteen inches wide and eighteen inches high; these tins were useful once
 emptied, using them for such things as carrying and heating water
 440 camping was civilized; as soon as the sight was determined, tents would be put up; there
 were different tents for the servants; carpets would be put down as well
 456 the supplies would sometimes be carried by elephant, sometimes by horses
 458 court was frequently held at the camp; furniture and such was brought along that was like
 that at home
 467 most of one's touring was done in the cold weather, from about October to about February
 or March; it was optimal climate because of the bright sunshine and warm days; the nights
 were cold though
 476 in December of 1937, after just arriving in India, Adair was invited on a tiger shoot; a large
 camp was set up; the chief secretary was there and probably the district commissioner and
 a number of their friends
 506 the younger civilians, like Adair, were invited mainly to give them the experience of a tiger
 shoot; Adair was fortunate to be invited so soon after arriving in India
 511 one went out thinking that India had a tropical, hot climate; in the tents on the shoot, you
 had to break the ice off the water in the bathroom; by day, it reached about eighty or so
 525 the tiger shoots were interesting, definitely part of the Indian lifestyle of those days; they
 would use the local hunters to track the tigers by searching out recent kills; camp would be
 set up in the area and the local hunters went and tracked where the animal could be

543 there would be little platforms built in trees, normally facing a fairly open area where the
kill was; the theory was the tiger would always go back to his kill, only eating some
initially and then going back to finish or drag it away

555 there were beaters that would make great noise and form a line across the jungle; they
would crash through the jungle, forcing the tiger out and allowing for the hunters to take
shots; this was the theory that normally worked

567 they did get a tiger on this occasion; it was very exciting, hearing the noise from the beaters
and expecting a tiger to jump out at you at any moment

580 one thing that impressed Adair the most was the kill; it had been left lying in an open space;
the tiger had ripped the stomach open and you could tell what the kill was eating

602 on another shoot, when Adair was in Dhaka, Adair was invited to stay at the palace of the
local maharajah; the shoot was organized by elephant; instead of standing in trees, one
would sit on the elephant; the beaters would actually be elephants; the elephants were
trained not to be frightened by the rifle noise

665 this was more exciting because, as they made their way through the jungle, the elephants
would be trumpeting

676 Adair was on one elephant that was near a stream, facing a clearing where the animals were
expected to be coming out of; on this occasion, a leopard came out and Adair got him with
one shot

694 shoots would be organized by the large estate owners and maharajahs, with large numbers
of elephants and wealth; those without these means would do it by hiring local villagers to
be beaters and anxiously wait in the trees

705 this is one of the pastimes in India

715 beginning of April 12, 1978 interview

727 there was an old indigo farmer

738 end of tape