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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ANGLO-INDIANS

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This article originally appeared in "The Australian People: an Encyclopedia of the nation, its People and Their Origins", in 1988. It discusses the origins of the Anglo-Indians in terms of the colonial practices of the Europeans and traces the valuable role the Anglo-Indians played in maintaining the British in India. The article then goes on to discuss the Anglo-Indian contribution to post-colonial India, this is followed by the role that Anglo- Indians are playing in Australia.

The term "Anglo-Indian" was first used by Warren Hastings in the eighteenth century to describe both the British in India and their Indian-born children. In the nineteenth century the British in India still separated themselves from coloured people but accepted fairer (and often wealthier) people of dual heritage as "Anglo-Indian". Darker (and usually poorer) people were given the name "Eurasian". Today (apart from literature still alluding to the British who have lived in India for a long time as "Anglo-Indian" the term rightly signifies a world minority who have settled in Canada, New Zealand, the United States of Americas the United Kingdom and Australia, with some 150,000 still in India and a total of well over 500,000 world-wide.

A figure of at least 300,000 Anglo-Indians living in India at independence in 1947 has been given by Frank Anthony, the present leader of the Anglo-Indians in India (and by other leaders before him). Census figures were notoriously inaccurate under the British Raj since it was a widespread practice to claim to be "British" (to escape prejudice). Anglo-Indians were of British descent and were British subjects; they were never accepted by Indians as Indian.

This world minority are descendants of Europeans and Indians, their mother tongue is English, they are Christians (mainly Catholics and Anglicans), and at

independence they lived throughout India, in the tiny towns up-country and in the cities of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Agra, Cochin, Lucknow, and Bangalore, a great centre of Anglo-Indian life. They travelled overseas, to Burma and Ceylon, to Europe, and especially to Britain, the birthplace of their male ancestors.

The 1820s saw the rise of political activity under John Ricketts, Louis Derozio and Captain John Doveton. Schools and colleges, training ships and agricultural schemes were set up. As a result of rising prejudice, self-help and community organisation grew, creating a real Anglo-Indian community with a sense of identity that never waned. These activities, coupled with later work by Sir Henry Gidney (a famous eye specialist and political leader), led to a certain security of employment for the Anglo-Indians. They were given some public positions in government, the police, customs, merchant navies and railways. They went into business, like the famous "Grand Mogul" Palmers and the Kellners. They were defined as Anglo-Indians by Lord Hardinge in the census of 1911. In 1935 and in Article 366 (2) of the 1950 Indian Constitution, they were again defined as a distinct "Community". After independence they were guaranteed representatives in the national parliament, yet today the situation of a large number in the subcontinent is precarious. For 300 years they have challenged racial prejudice in British India.

Anglo-Indians were brought into being by the direct policies of Portuguese, Dutch and British traders and colonists. The East India Company directors in the seventeenth century paid one pagoda or gold mohur for each child born to an Indian mother and a European father, as family allowance. Children with British or European fathers and Indian mothers were called "country-born" and included those with Portuguese, Dutch or French fathers. These offspring were amalgamated into the Anglo-Indian community, forming a bulwark for the British Raj, a buffer but also a bridge between rulers and subjects.

At every point of critical importance in the development of the British Raj, Anglo-Indians were present. At the Mysore wars, at the Mahratta, Sikh, Afghan and Gurkha wars, Anglo-Indian or countryborn men fought and helped win victories, defending their fathers' interests. The great regiments of the Indian army had among them the Khyber Rifles (founder, Sir Robert Warburton), the Shekwati Brigade (founder,

Colonel Henry Forster) and Skinner's Horse (founder, Colonel James Skinner). All these men were the sons of Anglo-Indian marriages, having among their ancestors Indian or Anglo-Indian women. From 1791 the Anglo-Indians were debarred from the East India Company's armies and many trained the armies of the Indian princes. The French-descended Bourbons served Bhopal; the Filoses served the Scindia maharajas of Gwalior. It is now acknowledged by biographers (as Anglo-Indians have long believed) that men like William Pitt, Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Lord Liverpool and W. M. Thackeray, who contributed eminently to political life and to literature, were of partly Indian descent.

These Westernised people, their culture inherited from their male ancestors but enriched by the spirit of India, have descended from all classes, from both Indian and European aristocrats, from missionaries and naval men, and from traders and soldiers. By 1750 they outnumbered the often transient British.

Australia had many strong links with the world of British India, and this fact is still reflected in Australian architecture. (The verandah was a gift of Anglo-India.) Administrators, army personnel, bishops, travellers and clergy moved between the two countries. Livestock from Bengal reached farms in New South Wales and horses from New South Wales were shipped to the Indian army for cavalry. The Anglican Church in Australia came under the diocese of Calcutta. There were Indian-born people (even convicts) living in the earliest colonies. Their English surnames make it hard to identify the Anglo-Indians, but one, James Sievwright, a convict clerk at the Hobart post office in 1844, was fluent in English, French, German, Bengali, Hindustani, Persian, Greek and Latin.

Colonel Light (whose mother was probably Malay) spent a brief period in India, but his life was characteristic of this group - he was refused a commission in the East India Company. Light's memorial is the city of Adelaide; his design was possibly influenced by the beauty of Regency Calcutta with its new Government House, which he remembered from his visit there in 1805. Caroline Chisholm and Lachlan Macquarie spent years in India. Some of Caroline Chisholm's students from a school she opened in Madras might have emigrated through the Bengal Australia Settlement Scheme.

A major shipment of Anglo-Indians was organised by Sir William Burton, a judge in Madras in 1844. Burton was president of the Madras East India Society and sought relief for those who "are Christians and look to England as the land of their origin". The society sent two groups from Madras to Sydney in the William Prowse (1853) and the Paltyra (1854). (A similar scheme for Albany in Western Australia ended with a shipwreck.) Those settled by Burton were surveyed by the Anglo-Indian author Henry Cornish in 1875 and the results were published in his Under the Southern Cross (republished by Penguin in 1975). Twenty-four had been compositors on Henry Parkes's newspaper, the Empire. James Spooner was at Towns and Company, Sydney; H. (Henry) Moreau was a hairdresser in New Road, Sydney; William Grogan, James Dias and John Gotting were at Cunningham's printing press in Pitt Street, Sydney, while Thomas Reynolds and James Baker had left Sydney to join the Brisbane Courier. Benjamin Franz, John Hovenden and Thomas Martin had died, and several others had returned to India. Most were satisfied with their wages and conditions. Young married couples would have made a complete success of the scheme, wrote Cornish.

The Indian mutiny of 1857, in which thousands of Anglo-Indians suffered, led to a rise in the number of Indian-born settlers in Australia, among them officers of Hodson's Horse and other regiments. Colonel Andrew Crawford (who was English) had also arrived in Tasmania; he was a former adjutant-general of the Bombay army. He began the Castra farming scheme in northern Tasmania, attracting retired Indian army officers. As early as 1825 an attempt was made to found an Indian Institution for the sons of Anglo-Indians and British men. Links with Tasmania and other areas (such as Western Australia) were strong. There were 372 Indian-born registered in Tasmania in 1881. Among them was Dr John Coverdale, born in 1814 in Kedgeree, Bengal. Coverdale was a medical practitioner at Moonah, where he lived for many years. The Anglo-Indian film star of the 1930s and 1940s, Merle Oberon (born in Calcutta), lived in an era of deception, giving her birthplace as Tasmania to evade prejudice in the American film industry, according to her biographers.

Anglo-Indians contributed en masse to the modernisation of India, as their schools (with 80-90 per cent Anglo-Indian enrolment) provided a network of European and

Anglo-Indian education across the country. Anglo-Indians also had a long tradition of military service. They fought in Britain's wars from Plassey to Assaye, from Waterloo to the Crimea and the Boer War. In the First World War Victoria Crosses were won by William Leefe Robinson of the Royal Flying Corps and Reginald Alexander Warneford of the Royal Naval Air Service. Between the two World Wars the veterans faced increasing difficulties as the Indian Home-Rule movement gathered momentum. In the Second World War they flew with "the few" in the Battle of Britain (Guy Gibson of the Dam Busters), and were at Dunkirk, North Africa, Malaya and the fall of Singapore. At the end of the Second World War many chose to be demobbed in Australia or Britain.

The handover of political power in August 1947, the end of the Raj and the communal killings all engendered insecurity among many minority groups. Over 100,000 Anglo-Indians emigrated initially, mostly to Britain. While the first census after independence did not record Anglo-Indian numbers, Frank Anthony believes that almost all of the 191,979 "native speakers of English in India" were Anglo-Indians.

The late 1940s and early 1950s saw some emigration to Perth and other centres. Among those migrants were John Buckle, who had survived the atomic attack on Nagasaki while a prisoner of war; Adrian MacDermott, who came to Melbourne from Changi and the Burma Railway; Patricia Pengilley, who won a Churchill Fellowship and spent a lifetime teaching the adult deaf; Norman Oehme, who farmed in the west and left his land to Aborigines; and Basil Sellars, a director of such companies as AFP Investment Corp, Elders IXL and British Gestetner.

Noreen Lubeck, an ex-officer of the Women's Army Corps (India), moved to Victoria, where her son (like many after him) encountered teasing because of his race. One man recalls that families faced being split, the fair being accepted and the dark rejected. However, their desire to settle in a Christian country made them persevere.
The educational levels and competence in English of Anglo-Indians were of a high standard. Several graduates from St Joseph's, Northpoint, who arrived in the early years, did well. Ed. Patterson became chief engineer of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme; the Gidneys, kin of the late Sir Henry Gidney, have several doctors

among their number and have settled throughout Australia. Others went from journalism to writing histories (Reginald Maher in Perth), from Dehra Dun to Duntroon (both military academies), and from the railways to mining in Western Australia.

In the 1960s thousands of Anglo-Indians who had emigrated to Britain were considering remigration with their British-born children to new countries. The relaxation in 1966 of the restrictive entry policy, and the adoption in 1973 of a policy of non-discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or nationality in the selection of migrants, resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of Anglo-Indian settlers in Australia. Between July 1969 and June 1972 Australia admitted 6,892 Indian-born of "mixed descent", of whom 39 per cent went to Victoria and 33 per cent to Western Australia. To this figure must be added the thousands who remigrated with their children to Australia from the United Kingdom or Canada. All these countries now have sizeable Anglo-Indian settler groups. Of the 41,657 Indian-born settlers recorded in the 1981 Australian census, Ken McIntyre (and leaders of the community) believe that at least 75 per cent (who are Christian) are Anglo-Indian. The largest number arrived from India in 1969. The Anglo-Indian community is less than 0.03 per cent of the total population of India. Virtually a stateless people, they face increasing difficulties in education and employment in India.

In 1947 Roland McGready became a gazetted officer, with 70,000 men under his command, in the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. He left for Melbourne in the 1960s. His son, Dr Roland McGready (a biochemist), has a successful academic research consultancy. A daughter, Kathy, toured India with an Australian women's cricket team and is writing its history. Malcolm and Bonita Prior and Peter Savedra opened factories which employ hundreds of people between them. Tony Archer and former boxing champion Peter Prince are in the insurance business. Henry Roach, Colonel Charles Campagnac and Colonel Denzil Alexander (whose family served the maharajas of Jaipur for seven generations) opened the Independent Oil Company, which plans to build its own refinery in Westernport Bay, Victoria. Kris Noble, who arrived from the United Kingdom, produces satirical television programs for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), such as The Gillies Report. Some have opened restaurants, such as the Gardners and Parkers (Melbourne), the Bretagnes

(Sydney), and the deRosarios (Adelaide). Others have moved into real estate and investment, like Ivan Phillips, formerly of Northpoint. Those who arrived in 1948 could bring savings. From the 1960s, however, Indian currency restrictions meant that most arrived with $7 per person. Father Murphy of the Catholic Immigration Office in Melbourne remembers helping many adults who had sacrificed good careers for their children's future.

Anglo-Indians are stable, conscientious workers, with extended family networks and a lively social life. They remained interested in India and the East, showing concern for Anglo-Indians still in India. Their settlement has been smooth and trouble-free, and they maintain good relations with other groups. Unfortunately, some have encountered discrimination at work. Philosophical, adaptable and with a strong community spirit, they assimilate more readily than the other Indian-born such as Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Those who have lived in the United Kingdom or Canada are now accustomed to doing their own domestic work, although all at first missed the comforts of India in this regard and their unique social life there. All prefer the climate and informality of Australian life. Opposition rarely exists to out- marriage into other groups, and Anglo-Indians are marrying increasingly often into other ethnic groups. Since they have the same language, religion and culture as the mainstream society, they may well lose their ethnic identity.

Anglo-Indians have made a significant contribution to teaching in Australia. They can be found throughout all the networks of schools, private and State, from Scotch College to Geelong Grammar, and in Australian universities, although they are under-represented in these so far. Government departments, the police, the armed forces, customs, hospitals, libraries and the arts all employ Anglo-Indians. Their children often move into the professions.

Anglo-Indians are sports-loving and were the sports stars of India. Leslie Hammond has settled in Ballarat, and the brothers Richard and Laurie Carr live in Melbourne. Gene Raymond and Dusty Millar (boxers) went to Melbourne (Raymond via the United Kingdom). The Pearces in Perth helped win Olympic victories for Australian hockey. Rudy Pacheco, Marcus Syms and Julian Maugey began the Springvale/Noble Park Hockey Club, which draws all groups and ages, as does Ken

McIntyre's Australia-India Cricket Club - both in Melbourne. Kingsley Hayes-Rosario, a former Scots Guard, coaches cricket in Victoria. Dennis Fallon and Dudley Beeby coach hockey teams in Glen Waverley, Melbourne. Fund-raising charity functions are a feature in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, as they are in the United Kingdom and Canada. The Melbourne Rangers, the Australia-India Society of Victoria, the Sydney Rangers, and "old school" associations (such as those of Bishop Cotton of Bangalore and Campion-Vestry of Trichinopoly, in Melbourne), all flourish and provide scholarships for youth in India or grants to charities in Australia. The Indian Ex-Service Club of Victoria hosts visiting generals, admirals and air vice-marshals from the Indian armed forces, such as Admiral Ronald Almedia and Brigadier-General Desmond Hayde, a hero of the battle of Dograi in the India-Pakistan conflict, in September 1965.

The recently formed Australian Anglo-Indian Research Association in Melbourne aims to encourage, co-ordinate and supervise all aspects of research on Anglo-Indians - their history, settlement and welfare. To date there is little useful or valuable information on the Anglo-Indians. Attempts are now being made to change this: Gloria Moore in The Lotus and the Rose and The Anglo Indian Vision, Eric Stracey (Canberra), former inspector-general of police (Tamil Nadu), and General J. G. Henderson-Brooks, have all written histories or their autobiographies. Adrian Gilbert intends to work on postgraduate research in this field. And Christine Walker epitomises the many who continually re-educate people about Anglo-Indian life and history.

June D'Rozario held the seat of Sanderson (Darwin) in the Northern Territory Assembly for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) from 1977 to 1983, and Anne Warner was elected to the Queensland parliament for the ALP in 1983. Fred Cress's brilliant art, influenced by the spirit of India, brings riches to Australian life. Others have contributed to Australian society by their unique traditions as bridge-builders between East and West, as ambassadors of both Europe and India, and of multiculturalism. Their activities include teaching English (Vivienne Wheeler, through the English Speaking Union); researching rural development projects in the subcontinent (the late Major Clarry Goff); working voluntarily for the Epilepsy Foundation (Joe D'Souza); and reading and illustrating books for the blind (Noreen

Lubeck). Indira Gandhi paid a warm tribute to "The Community, the whole country admires their spirit of zest and adventure". Malcolm Fraser encouraged hockey player Leslie Claudius to emigrate to Perth.

Anglo-Indians were among India's most international, emancipated and democratic people, a Westernised minority amongst the vast Indian population. Their families are now scattered all over the Commonwealth and extend world-wide.

Dr. Gloria Moore *is an Anglo-Indian. She was born in Lucknow, India and grew up in Jamalpur, Bihar during the final years of the Raj. She can be credited with assisting in the latest resurgence in Anglo-Indian pride and commitment and the growing interest in the maintenance of their identity, history and culture. She is the author of two books dealing with the Anglo-Indians and many articles. She has a Master's from the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Monash University, Melbourne Australia and has recently been awarded her Ph.D.*