



Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India

Elizabeth Buettner

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What was life like for the British men, women, and children who lived in late imperial India while serving the Raj? *Empire Families* treats the Raj as a family affair and examines how, and why, many remained linked with India over several generations.

Due to the fact that India was never meant for permanent European settlement, many families developed deep-rooted ties with India while never formally emigrating. Their lives were dominated by long periods of residence abroad punctuated by repeated travels between Britain and India: childhood overseas followed by separation from parents and education in Britain; adult returns to India through careers or marriage; furloughs, and ultimately retirement, in Britain. As a result, many Britons neither felt themselves to be rooted in India, nor felt completely at home when back in Britain. Their permanent impermanence led to the creation of distinct social realities and cultural identities.

Empire Families sets out to recreate this society by looking at a series of families, their lives in India, and their travels back to Britain. Focusing for the first time on the experiences of parents and children alike, and including the Beveridge, Butler, Orwell, and Kipling families, Elizabeth Buettner uncovers the meanings of growing up in the Raj and an itinerant imperial lifestyle.

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