The Magnus family’s travels in India

This amateur film reveals a colonial family at leisure as it holidays around north and eastern India.

Watch an English family record of its tour of 1920s India takes in the Victoria Memorial and Maidan in Calcutta and the exclusive Nedou hotel in Srinagar. The film reveals the ways in which colonial life transplanted familiar British practices (such as picnics on the beach) to rather different conditions and contexts (the heat of the tropics requiring sola topis and shawls).

Made during an era of state reform and expansion in India that helped to make global travel more accessible to middle class Britons, a film like this would have allowed the family to represent itself as worldly and urbane as well as serving as a memento of special times.

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