

PREFACE

The date is mid June 1962, it is the annual school sports day in the small community of Paldi on Vancouver Island. All available mothers and grandparents have gathered to attend this special event.

The two teachers are white skinned as are only six of the students. The balance are East Indian, Japanese and Chinese.

Parents are first invited to tour the two classrooms comprising grades 1 - 6, to inspect the work books, art projects and science exhibits the children are so proudly displaying.

Most of the children have come recently from India or from homes where the parents speak little English. Under the careful tutoring of Mrs. Bea Coulter and Mrs. Lillian Cole, they have mastered the English language and are extremely proud to show the parents their work books, all in English.

As the excitement mounts it is reflected not only in the faces of the children but also in the faces of the parents.

Two mothers stand out, two white skinned mothers, one the daughter-in-law of the founder of this historical community and the other the daughter-in-law of the only resident left of the original men who logged and milled this area. Joan Mayo and Beverly Martin.

to — These two white women represent the minority in this unique community of mixed races. It is only when they drive the seven miles into Duncan, the nearest town, they blend in with the majority. However, it is these two women, the shy immigrants from India, look for their cue as to how best to help with the events of this special day.

But first we must go back

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Chapter 1

MAYO LANDS IN CALIFORNIA

Evoke

Paldi is a name bound to invoke memories of the old days of early logging in British Columbia. Carved from the bush in the middle of nowhere, it was once a bustling community of 1500 hard working pioneers of the logging and lumber industry.

Its founder Mayo Singh arrived by ship at San Francisco in the year 1906. His older brother Ganea and cousin Doman Singh were in B.C. working for the C.P.R. (Canadian Pacific Railway).

As to reasons to immigrate, the Punjab in North India is a land locked state with no sea ports. The land hungry Punjabi's were looking to spread their domain and an important event in the British Commonwealth was all it took to tempt these adventuresome Sikhs to cross the seas.

Punjabis without 9

Queen Victoria celebrated her 60th anniversary as Queen of the Commonwealth in 1900. No royal celebration could be complete without a battalion of soldiers from India. So it was, that a good number of Sikhs travelled to England to march in the anniversary parade. Sikhs have always formed a large percentage of the Indian army.

Some had heard of Canada and of the opportunities there. Sikhs also made up a large proportion of the police forces in Hong Kong and Singapore. As the soldiers passed through the orient they learned of large numbers of Chinese conscripted to build the railroad in Canada. The word was out that British Columbia had agreed to join confederation only if the east-west railroad was completed. And once completed the huge timber forests of BC would provide jobs for any who wished to come.

Rather than return directly to India from London the Queens Honour Guard boarded a ship to Canada to see for themselves. Many of the soldiers were considering either retirement or a change. This first group had no intention of staying, only to earn some fast money then return to India and retire on the money they had earned in B.C.

Word spread quickly back in the Punjab and the most adventuresome were quick to take up the challenge.

Ganea Singh, older brother of Mayo Singh, was one of the first to arrive. It was not unusual that his younger brother Mayo Singh should follow.

Various accounts of those early days have been written and although they differ slightly as memories fade, this account of the prosperous life of Mayo Singh is probably the most accurate as it combines the most probable of each version.

By his own admission Mayo Singh was born in 1888 in the Village of Paldi, District Hoshiarpur East Punjab, India. He claimed to have landed first in the bustling port of San Francisco. The Independence movement was already in full swing in India

and the Revolutionary Gadar Party was active in San Francisco. The party headquarters offered a safe haven for new immigrants and its members, all men, always ready to assist any newcomer.

Mayo found work with the Union Pacific Railway and gradually worked his way north to join his brother.

He secretly crossed the border under the cover of darkness near Grand Forks and with the help of the others immediately went underground. The immigration authorities had trouble telling which of the East Indians were illegal as all wore the turbans and full beard. One day the count would be 35 and another only 30. All were young men and to the unpracticed eye all looked alike and all moved about from job to job.

Mayo, like the others, worked awhile for the C.P.R. and then in several sawmills in the interior of BC before joining the others at a mill in Rosedale.

Eventually Ganea, Doman, Mayo and others prominent to this story made up the workforce at the Fernridge Lumber Co. at Rosedale near Chilliwack. The East Indian men, like the Chinese, lived in bunkhouses fending for themselves, as Canada's Immigration Laws forbade Asian women from entering the country, part of the hated white supremacy movement. *which was*

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Chapter 2

CLARENCE MARTIN

Mayo One of the most colourful and legendary characters associated with the Village of Paldi on Vancouver Island was a white man named Clarence Martin. Dependable, reliable, caring and a life long friend of the family, are all fitting descriptions of this wonderful man. His association with Mayo Singh dates back to the early days at Rosedale when "Chuni" as Mayo called him was but a child of 12 years of age.

As already stated, Mayo and the others worked for the Fernridge Lumber Co. at Rosedale. On a farm nearby lived the young boy destined to become Mayo's most faithful employee. Clarence Martin and his younger sister delivered milk, eggs and unsalted butter to the East Indian men in the bunkhouses. "They made me deliver twice a day", he grumbled, "they insisted it had to be right fresh".

its In 1912 the Fernridge Mill where Mayo and his relatives worked went broke. It's owners, McIntyre & Tate, were forced to lay off all their workers. Always the business-minded one Mayo rented a 40 acre potato farm where he employed 35 of the men on an owner-shareholder basis. Unfortunately the bottom dropped out of the potato market.

Clarence Martin recalls his brother Douglas and himself hauling sacks of potatoes from his father's plot, one sack at a time on an old sleigh to a Japanese family who were cutting shingle bolts in the area. Despite all the hard work they were paid only \$2.50 a ton for their potatoes.

Mayo and his shareholders were unable to pay the rent for the potato fields so he turned to Mrs. Mercer, the owner, and told her to keep the crop. "What am I going to do with it?" asked Mercer. "Well, you've got pigs" Mayo answered, "Feed them to the pigs". And that's what Mrs. Mercer did, she turned the pigs loose and let them root the potatoes.

Mayo's first attempt at running a business had failed. He and the others continued to live in the bunkhouses fending for themselves with young Clarence delivering the dairy products. Later Clarence and his sister were paid 5 cents each to help Mayo with his reading. Together they read the daily newspapers until Mayo became more fluent in English.

Mayo and his 35 shareholders needed jobs and a place to live. He approached the former owners of the Fernridge mill and suggested that he and his partners run the mill. He settled with the trustees for 10 cents on the dollar and all 35 workers were equal shareholders. On October 1, 1915, Mayo and partners took over the mill and renamed it Cheam Lumber Company, after Mt. Cheam a nearby mountain. That winter Mayo contracted typhoid fever and spent 32 days in Chilliwack hospital.

The Martin family were struggling to make a go of their farm too, with little headway. When Mayo returned to the Rosedale mill, Clarence asked him for a job for the summer holidays. His first job with Mayo was to pick up wood from the conveyors and throw it down to a Chinese man who was waiting below. "I threw it down and he stacked it to be used in the steam donkey", chuckled Clarence.

His fondest memories are of Mayo walking around with a newspaper in his back pocket, at every opportunity he waylaid the youngster, pulled the newspaper out of his pocket and asked the boy "What does this mean?" Forever improving his knowledge of the English language, Mayo used the newspaper as a school book.

was — By the end of summer the Cheam Lumber Co. was running out of timber in the Rosedale area. Reports of this early era are sketchy as memories fail, but it is certain that this group of shareholders ~~were~~ seriously considering the purchase of Marcum Lumber Co., at Strawberry Hill, near New Westminster. The two partners, Marlett and Cummings, were experiencing difficulty as there was no railroad to their mill. The 35 shareholders took over the Strawberry Hill operation, again as equal shareholders and Mayo was instrumental in having the rail line extended to the mill.

Clarence, or Chuni, as Mayo called him had a cheque for \$8.00 for the whole summers labour. But the promise of more money was enough to lure him away from school. He approached Mayo and asked "Take me with you to the new mill?"

He remembers Mayo tried to convince him to "go back to school and further his education", but the boy stood firm on his request. "If my dad says I can go, will you take me?" asked Clarence. And so Clarence Martin, the little white boy went to work for the foreigners from India at 5 cents an hour. A job he would honour long after Mayo Singh had passed away.

Mayo told Clarence to take the Great Northern to Coalbrook, then walk the three miles to the mill at Strawberry Hill.

Like the mill at Rosedale the Strawberry Hill mill was running short of timber and the shareholders realizing they needed a source which would last a long time, sent Mayo to Vancouver Island in search of a claim.

Before the move to the island two other prominent men had entered the picture. It started with a Mohamedan named Rahim. Rahim was a lawyer by trade, but was running a book store nearby. He was an educated man and Mayo and others like him trusted his advice. Rahim had another distinction, he was the first East Indian to marry in Canada.

On his advice in 1917, Mayo and partners sent for Kapoor Singh, who was homesteading in Ontario, another educated man, and in return for his services as bookkeeper, Kapoor was made an equal shareholder like the others. Mayo's co-workers had each chipped in what little they could spare for Kapoors' fare to the mill site.

A comical side to the story is the picture of Rahim sitting in the office offering his advice and all the while smoking a cigarette. The others found this offensive and Mayo was forced to give him the ultimatum, "quit smoking or stay away". Rahim's name never occurs again in this story.

And so to Paldi --

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Chapter 3

SITE CHOSEN

As Clarence Martin tells the story Mayo's friend Rahim, the learned one, knew of the timber rights on Vancouver Island owned by the C.P.R. 15 miles on each side of the railroad tracks. This they all agreed was the best place to look for a new source of timber.

Mayo was sent on behalf of the others to view the timbers first hand.

It should be remembered here that Mayo was a very small man, no more than 5'3" in height and more importantly not cut out for hard labour. Thus the 29 year old Mayo became the wheeler-dealer of the 35 partners. Upon arrival in Victoria, he learned of a rail line running west from Duncan to Lake Cowichan and beyond. This was a virgin area of big timber. But he must see it for himself. He took the bus to Duncan but was refused lodging in either of the two lodges, the Alderlea and the Commercial Hotel. *there*

"Well, where can I stay?" he asked. He was told there was a Hindu man living down the tracks in the section house, south of the city.

So it was to Sundher Singh, the section hand, Mayo made his way on foot along the tracks. "They told me in town I could stay here", he stated. "Well, who are you?" asked Sundher, "and how can I put you up when I only have this one bed?" But they made *how did they make do?* do and Sundher and Mayo became long lasting friends. *elaborate*

A comical side to the story was when Mayo looked at the only bed in the shack. "It's dirty" he complained. "Well I don't have time for housecleaning", replied Sundher. "I work all day and I have a cow to milk every morning and every night".

Mayo took the blankets outside and shook them, a small mouse fell out and Mayo exclaimed "there was a mouse in there". "So what" answered Sundher, "he sleeps with me every night".

As a section hand on the railroad, Sundher had the use of the little hand pumped scooter the railroad employees used to get about. He offered to take Mayo on the railroad scooter up the line to what is now Paldi, allowing Mayo a first hand complete look at the timber and adjoining lands.

The sight for the new mill was chosen because of its proximity to the railroad and a small creek (Sahtlam Creek) running nearby.

The creek could be dammed to form a mill pond into which the logs could be dumped.

Chapter 4

MAYO SIDING

Once the site for the new mill was selected, construction began immediately. As the shareholders of the new mill were the same ones from Rosedale and Strawberry Hill, a bunk house and cookhouse for these men would have been top priority.

The Government of British Columbia was looking for a way to extend the Esquimalt - Nanaimo railroad north to Courtney. The Federal Government would pay its share provided they build a railroad everyone could use. The E & N invited tenders to harvest the timber 15 miles on each side of the tracks provided the buyer shipped by rail.

This in turn created income for the railroad company. By purchasing small parcels at a time Mayo's holdings increased and the small community known then as Mayo Siding sprang up near the newly built mill. Already the community was of mixed ethnic peoples. The Japanese construction workers, the Chinese on the railroad and East Indian and whites in the mill. Out of necessity separate bunkhouses and separate cookhouses were built for each nationality.

Always the astute businessman Mayo would purchase a small tract of land, harvest the timber then neglect to pay the taxes, the land would then revert back to the government in lieu of taxes. He did, however, keep 800 acres, part of which became the unique village of Paldi.

Several reports copied from *The Western Lumberman* (WL), *BC Lumberman* (BCL) and Duncan's only newspaper the *Cowichan Leader*, set the scenes of the early days at Paldi.

(Author's notes)

W.L., May 1917: The Mayo Lumber Company operating a small sawmill at East Delta (Strawberry Hill) is getting out some expert material while cutting on local orders.

W.L., October 1917: The Mayo Lumber Company, a Hindu concern, is creating a new sawmill on the Cowichan Lake branch of the E & N railway. The bulk of the machinery now being installed came out of the Island Lumber Company plant at Duncan. The equipment being disposed of recently by auction. The Hindus who are backing the new mill project have acquired a considerable area of timber in the vicinity, and talk of putting a sawmill on the property.

W.L. December 1917: The new sawmill being erected by the Mayo Lumber Company, a Hindu Syndicate, in Cowichan District of Vancouver Island is about ready to start cutting. The daily capacity will be in the neighbourhood of 40,000 feet.

W.L. April 1918: The Mayo Lumber Company sawmill in Sahtlam District, Vancouver Island was started up March 9th. It is being operated by a Hindu Syndicate who picked up most of the equipment from the liquidation of the Island Lumber Company, Duncan. The daily capacity is between 40,000 to 50,000 feet.

Again the operation of the mill was on an owner shareholder basis and again Mayo was more involved in the business end of things. He had worked in several mills in the interior as well as Rosedale and Strawberry Hill and knew exactly how he wanted this mill to operate.

As stated earlier he was not cut out for heavy physical labour but as the brains of the outfit he wisely appointed himself cook of the mens cookhouse. This he did because his job in the cookhouse allowed him to be part of any after hours discussions which inevitably took place in the cookhouse.

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Chapter 5

CLARENCE ARRIVES

One of the first to arrive at the new mill site, was the young white boy from Rosedale, Mayo had nicknamed Chunie. He and another man had taken the bus that ran from Duncan to Lake Cowichan, as there was as yet no proper road into the mill site, the two young men were dropped off at a point the bus driver believed to be the nearest spot.

It was late in the afternoon and dusk was closing in. They walked what seemed a long way in through the forest, then as daylight faded, decided to spend the night in the woods. At first light they continued the short hike to the camp. Many years later Clarence Martin was still telling the story of his first night on Vancouver Island among the giant fir trees.

They were still building the mill when I came, recalled Clarence. We built the bunkhouse first and then the cookhouse for the men. We stole the cook from the Duncan hospital, he joked, he was the first cook at Paldi for the whites.

Once the mill was running my first job, said Clarence, was to walk about one mile down the tracks to get the box car numbers and bring back the number so we could bill them out. When Kapoor came he took my job as he was the only one of the partners who could read and write.

Kapoor who was destined to become Mayo's only partner was in charge of the books. He joked about his fast rise to power saying, "someone back in Ontario told me, you go out west you're not going to get no place".

The first married quarters at Paldi was the house built for George Boyer and his wife. He had worked in the office at Strawberry Hill. The only job he ever held was with the Mayo Lumber Company.

In the beginning only the whites could hold a boilers certificate and discrimination against orientals forbade them the role of P.L.I.B. (Pacific Lumber Inspection Bureau) inspectors. Clarence Martin recalled, it didn't take Mayo long to learn the ways of lumber inspector. And with the daily newspaper always in his back pocket, which he whipped out at every opportunity to demand 'what's that word mean?', he soon learned to sign the PLIB slips himself. Whenever possible, he was out with the English speaking workers learning the ways of a mill supervisor.

He didn't talk much, said Clarence, never gave away any of his thoughts. One day Clarence spotted a new man on the steam donkey. "Who's that?" asked Clarence. "He just came", replied Mayo, "His wife is pregnant. He needed a job". And so another warm and wonderful relationship was formed between Mayo and the Japanese couple who became grandparents (Geechan and Bachan) to the children of Mayo Singh.

Chapter 6

FIRST FIRE

The mill had a terrible string of bad luck following its opening. It burned down late in 1918 and was rebuilt in 1919.

It soon had a daily output of 50,000 feet of lumber and monthly shipments of 75 rail cars. A report in the B.C.L. dated January 1920, states Mayo has in their logging operation an 18 ton Shay locomotive, 6 trucks and 2 miles of rail. Horses and trucks also were used in the woods.

But on March 5, 1920, fire struck again, burning down the new lath mill and some other buildings. The report in the *Cowichan Leader* dated March 11, 1920 reads,

Mayo Lumber Company suffers severe loss. Mill at Sahtlam destroyed by fire last Friday night. Damage was about \$75,000 only partly insured.

E & N sent locomotive from Duncan to pull out three loaded cars. Much lumber in yard was burned. Participation by Duncan volunteer fire brigade. Pumping system close to boiler room where fire started was rendered useless almost immediately. Help from Stones mill at Sahtlam and elsewhere. Houses and temple escaped destruction. Mills capacity was 50,000 feet per day. It was built in 1917 by company of Sikhs. Debris being cleared to rebuild.

Chapter 7

THE URABE'S

Toemon Urabe

While working in Rosedale, a friendship had developed between Mayo and several Japanese men working in the same mill. Several of these men were offered steady employment at the new operation on Vancouver Island in return for their help constructing the living quarters for the men and the mill itself. One who features prominently in this story is TOEMON URABE. He had also been a shareholder in the ill-fated potato crop.

Mrs. Urabe often talked about the share-cropping potato venture. The potato crop was several miles down a dusty road from their home in Chilliwack. She and two other Japanese women walked the route regularly to hoe potatoes. She used to say, "Can you picture this? We dressed in our old gardening clothes and wore head covers to keep the sun off. By the time we reached home, we were filthy dirty." "One day," recalled Mrs. Urabe, "we were caught in a thunderstorm on the way home. With the dust on our clothes and the rain, we must have been a mess; but it was raining so hard, we took shelter on someones verandah. The lady of the house, a white woman, didn't know us but she invited us into her kitchen, sat us all down at the kitchen table and gave us tea."

There are so many of these stories of compassion between the nationalities. It would seem there was little evidence of racial prejudice in the work place in 1918.

TOEMON URABE (Tom) with his wife and two children was one of three Japanese men Mayo sent for to help with construction of the Island Mill. Their third child, SHIGEKO (Jean) was born soon after their arrival. Her birth certificate reads: Born at Sahtlam in 1921. Mayo Siding was also known as Sahtlam Siding. The other two Japanese families were the Matsumoto and the Oda families.

Jean vividly remembers the long walk along a dirt road from Paldi out to Cowichan Lake Rd. to catch a bus into Duncan. The trees on either side of the road were so big, they appeared menacing to a small child. However, it was under these same trees, the Japanese families came to pick pine mushrooms, a delicacy in the Japanese diet.

Tom Urabe had suffered a serious foot injury while working in the sawmill at Chilliwack. Having stepped on a rusty nail, he developed blood poisoning in his foot and had several toes amputated. This incident was to plague him all his life and because of the missing toes he was unable to work in the sawmill. However, his friendship with Mayo insured him a job and a place to live in Paldi.

The journey to Paldi was not without incident. The Urabe family were travelling with all their belongings from Nanaimo to Duncan when the train was stopped due to a rock slide near Westholme, after completing the journey by bus and having left most of their belongings on the train, they arrived in Paldi with no furniture and no bedding. Again, the lack of racial barriers came to their aid as the East Indian men already there loaned them a tent they spread on the floor and some blankets.

At the time of the Urabe's arrival in Paldi, Mayo was living with his brother Ganea in a house separate from the bunkhouse where the others lived.

The Japanese men helped with the construction of three large two-storey houses built side by side. One for Mayo, one for his brother Ganea and one for Kapoor.

In 1925 Mayo travelled to India to marry the girl selected for him by his parents. Following the marriage, he returned to Paldi to make ready the home for his bride. There was an old chesterfield he wanted re-covered so as to provide the best for his bride's arrival and again he turned to his friend Urabe and asked if he and his wife would do this job for him.

As usual each nationality settled in groups. In conversation with Urabe's daughter Jean, she recalled, "The Japanese settlement was on the far side of the Sikh Temple. The children played close to home, playing games such as kick the can, softball, hide and seek, and cops and robbers. The small mill town offered lots of places to hide 'stumps and all,'" recalled Jean.

JOR MALLAS (festivals) at the Sikh Temple offered another source of fun for these youngsters. "We used to look forward to these festivals," said Jean with a smile, we looked forward to playing with the kids who came with their parents for these weekend celebrations. The same ones came each time and we soon became good friends.

Although the Japanese children stayed close to home where their mothers could keep a watch over them, this did not keep them out of the East Indian cookhouse. We must have been awful cheeky, said Jean with a chuckle, "my mother used to call me a little beggar because I would run into the cookhouse and say, Give me Bottera", the Japanese word for roti, the unleavened bread served with every meal in the cookhouse. "The cook was a nice man," she said, "he had a long white beard and was dressed all in white."

"By now there were many Japanese families in Paldi," said Jean, "we attended the regular public school with the other nationalities, then Japanese school following the regular classes. We had two Japanese teachers, Mrs Yoshida and Mrs. Ogura."

Not long after their arrival in Paldi, the first pangs of crippling depression were felt. The older Japanese boys and their fathers picked cascara bark by the sackful to sell for a few cents each. The bark was first dried, then pounded into a powder. Some of the teenaged boys even picked wild blackberries

on Hill 60, then after walking seven miles into Duncan to sell the berries, walked all the way back.

Once her children were of school age, Mrs. Urabe was able to look for work herself and it was because of her helping out in the Mayo family home, the strong bond of friendship was forged between Mayo's children and Urabe's children. As the trip to Victoria was long and difficult, Mayo and his wife often spent the night there. Then Mrs. Urabe and her daughter Jean would stay at Mayo's house with his children.

Mrs. Urabe also did housework for Kapoor Singh's wife who, recalled Jean, was very fussy about her house. Once, when Jean went with her mother, Mrs. Kapoor gave the little girl an orange to eat but made her sit on a newspaper to eat it so as not to get any stains on her beautiful rug from India.

There were tragedies of course, accidents in the mill and in the woods, a child who died of appendicitis and a Japanese woman killed by the train, who believing the train was stopped for a while, attempted to crawl under it in her hurry to catch the bus.

But it is the picnics and festivals that are best remembered by the Japanese who grew up in Paldi. Not having cars, they made their own fun by walking several miles down the railroad tracks, or up a logging grade with a picnic lunch on a Sunday afternoon, or into the woods to a pretty picnic spot.

Once or twice a year the elders brought in a movie to watch and on New Year's Day, the Japanese families got together to celebrate their biggest festival of the year.

There were times when they walked the narrow winding road out to Cowichan Lake Road to catch the bus into Duncan but most of their needs were delivered to the door. These door to door salesmen included a Chinese vegetable vender, a Japanese fish man from Chemainus; a white man brought fresh meat and another fresh bread and donuts. Dairy products, milk and eggs, were purchased from the East Indians. It's only natural that adults of today when recalling their childhood days in Paldi, remember most vividly the bakery truck with the fresh donuts and other goodies.

Chapter 8

FIRST SIKH TEMPLE

Wherever there are 5 or more Sikhs, there will be a Sikh Temple, often just a spare room in someone's house. As the journey from Paldi to Victoria to attend the Temple there, took as long as 5 hours on a narrow twisting road over the Malahat, Mayo's employees seldom if ever made the journey. Another factor was the lack of transportation, none of the East Indian employees owned cars.

The life of a Sikh revolves around his Temple. In their homeland even in the smallest village, everyone enters the Temple for prayers and blessings each day before setting off to work, school or simply the daily chores.

Therefore it was only natural that once the mill and bunk houses were erected the next building should be a Temple. Mayo built the first official Temple in Paldi in 1919 on the same spot where the present temple is located.

The community then took on the atmosphere of a village in Punjab with the Sikh Temple in the centre. It became a home away from home in a foreign country, this was particularly comforting for the women who spoke no English.

The early immigrants from India came looking for work in the forest industry. They settled in communities near sawmills. There were five areas with a significant number of East Indians and in each case there was the need for a temple. Strangers in a developing land, they made a pact with one another, that each temple would celebrate one of the auspicious days on the Sikh calendar and that all who could, would gather to celebrate these religious functions.

The original five temples were located in Vancouver, New Westminister, Abbotsford, Victoria and now Paldi and although their people were scattered across British Columbia, working in sawmills and on farms, they made the supreme effort to attend each of these functions.

The Paldi Temple was officially opened on July 1, 1919, in conjunction with Canada's Dominion Day. As Mayo Singh had no knowledge of his actual birthdate, he chose July 1st, Canada's birthday as his own birth celebration. The annual July 1st JOR MALLA, or festival, at Paldi hosted by Mayo Singh became one of the most important religious gatherings of the early Sikh Immigrants.

Even though the New Westminister, Abbotsford and Victoria temples were subsidiaries of the main Vancouver temple, the Paldi temple remained a separate Society. At first functioning as a private organization, later in the early 50's, it was officially registered under the Societies Act as the Paldi KHALSA DIWAN

Society with members from Lake Cowichan, Youbou, Hillcrest and Duncan on the working committee.

Naturally the priest of the temple would have to be an educated man, one who could read the GRANTH SAHIB, the Sikh holy book. BACINT SINGH, the first priest of the Paldi temple, also worked in the sawmill, as did most of his successors. Sometimes though, the duties of priest were carried out by someone too old to continue working in the mill but who received free rent in the bunkhouse and his meals in the cookhouse in return for his priestly duties.

Sikh travelers anywhere in the world know there will always be a room and a meal for them, provided there is a Sikh temple nearby and BC GURDWARRA'S (temples) were often the first place of refuge to a newcomer just off the boat. New immigrants, both men and women, would stay a few days, or even weeks, at either the Vancouver or Victoria GURDWARRA until they found a job and place to live.

But it was to Paldi most newcomers made their way, because of its status as a mill town with several bunkhouses, one a two-story building, an East Indian cookhouse and the sawmill operated by an East Indian who somehow always found a job for a newcomer.

By 1928 some wives and families had arrived and the temple as well as the community was enlarged to accomodate the newcomers. Mayo and his older brother GANEA SINGH had both returned to India to marry as did several others. With the arrival of the women the community took on the atmosphere of an Indian village, their lives revolving around their temple and although at first the men did most of the cooking for the religious functions, the women made the roti, the unleavened bread. Later a separate cookhouse for the women was built adjacent to the mens cookhouse.

The annual Paldi JOR MALLA, held the weekend closest to the first of July, was and still is the years largest function.

A JOR MALLA is a gathering of people. JOR means gathering and MALLA means festival. It is a happy occasion combining a religious service with sports, games and traditional foods.

The religious service requires the non stop reading of the GRANTH SAHIB, or holy book, from beginning to end. The reading is done in shifts. The opening ceremony with prayers and hymns begins Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. and is perfectly timed so as to complete the reading along with the closing prayers on Sunday morning when most people are free to attend.

The pact made by earlier settlers to attend each of the five temples' annual celebrations continued as more new immigrants arrived. The Vancouver temple, the first to be built in Canada, was built in 1906 on 2nd Ave. in Vancouver. Their special day was observed during the Christmas holiday. Victoria's was BASAKHI, the spring festival usually celebrated during Canada's Easter weekend. New Westminster held theirs on New Years Day and the Abbotsford JOR MALLA was celebrated on our 24th of May holiday.

Chapter 9

LUM BUCK CHEW

"Mayo always called me by my first name," said 84 year old Lum Chew, father of one of only four Chinese families who lived in Paldi. No matter when he saw me, he would call out "hello Lum Chew, how are you today"? Why I remember when Mayo was leaving for India to get married, he came over, shook my hand and said I'm going home to get married Lum Chew, I'll see you when I get back. Two young men, one Chinese, one East Indian but bonded by the unspoken brotherhood of this unique village.

Lum Buck Chew lived in the married quarters in a small house in the Chinese sector of Paldi. Although there were only four married Chinese men, there were enough single men to fill two bunkhouses and the single men had a separate cookhouse. The Immigration Laws of the day prevented the men from bringing their wives and families to Canada. Chinese immigrants were assessed a head tax. Lum Chew recalls having paid \$500.00 for the privilege of working in Canada. What marriages there were, were arranged by the elders back in China.

Lum Chew had worked only a few months in the Mayo Bros. Timber Mill when the first fire in late 1918 forced him out of work. On the advice of a co-worker, Lum Chew took a mill job in the Cumberland area near Royston on Vancouver Island. However the mill was quickly rebuilt and the Lum Family returned to Paldi.

The father of eleven children, six of them born while at Paldi, Lum had little spare time. Never one to refuse a job, he was constantly sought out to replace any workers on the sick list. Even on weekends the boss man would call out "Hey, Lum, I need someone to load a car". Lum never refused. Because of his large build, super strength and the size of his family, he was almost always the first choice when extra duties were required.

But his day never ended with the job in the mill. At home he raised 10 pigs at a time, chickens and a vegetable garden. He laughed about collecting the swill from each of the cookhouses to feed his pigs, then sold the meat back to them.

Recalling a comical story, he told of an East Indian man from the 'Hindu' cookhouse, who came to Lum's small quarters and said 'I need 10 dozen eggs'. When Lum reached for the special box to pack the eggs the other man said, "Give it to me, I'll do it myself". He packed the eggs in alright, Lum remembers, but he turned the box upside down to carry it. I knew he'd broken some of them but it was too late to say anything. Later that same day, the man came back claiming many of the eggs had been rotten and wanted them replaced, but the wiley Lum Chew knew better and the East Indian man went home empty handed.

*Refer
to
notes*

"Everyone was good to me, claimed Lum, the East Indians, the Whites and even the Japanese. I never had trouble with anyone while living in Paldi."

The four Chinese women seldom went to town (Duncan). There was the company store, their own gardens and a salesman came regularly from Victoria to take orders for the special Chinese supplies which arrived by rail from Victoria. "It didn't cost much to live in Paldi", said this father of eleven.

One of the Chinese families had a treasured gramophone and about once a month they all gathered at that home to listen to Chinese opera records. On rare occasions several of them hired an 8 passenger taxi, owned by Kyle Taxi in Duncan to take them into town to a picture show. As for the single men in the bunk-houses, when asked what these men did after work, Lum Chew's son Lum Hong Chun laughingly said, "why gamble of course, what else was there to do". Even in the logging camps there were poker games and here there was no colour barrier either. Just bring your money, he joked. Many of the Chinese men from this small community worked in the woods, some on the railroad and others as fallers.

In 1939, Lum's father Lum Yet Foo a faller on Hill 60 was struck on the head and killed by a falling branch. It is believed he was about 68 years old at the time. The job was extremely hazardous in the woods and apparently age meant nothing.

After the second mill fire in 1934, Lum Chew moved his family to Duncan where he found work in a Japanese owned saw mill.

In 1941 with the evacuation of the Japanese, the Paldi mill, now operating at full capacity, was short of experienced workers and Lum Chew along with his elder son Lum Hong Chun travelled back and forth from Duncan each day. "Me and Dad rode to Paldi with Leo Benard a master mechanic," recalled the younger Lum. "It was a real fancy car, a big black cadillac."

Shortly after his return to the Paldi mill, disaster struck. A new man on the job made an unfortunate mistake and the edger kicked back on Lum Chew smashing both his legs. He spent many months in the Duncan hospital before learning to walk again. Unable to return to mill work he formed his own company selling fruit and vegetables door to door.

His association with the Village of Paldi continued as he delivered his fresh produce to the householders of this unique community.

"My fondest memory of Paldi, the 84 year old recalled, was of the close relations between the East Indians and the Chinese."

Chapter 10

THE EARLY 1920'S

Following the second fire at the mill everyone's attention was directed to rebuilding. The sounds of hammering and sawing could be heard throughout the small community. More Japanese had arrived to help with the extra construction projects. More houses were needed and these were hastily built of clapboard, a low grade of lumber.

As the community grew it became necessary to build walkways, and in some cases roadways, of lumber, building them just high enough above the ground to keep pedestrians and cars up out of the mud. The homes were little more than wooden shacks built in a haphazard manner with little order but all connected by a maze of wooden walkways. One line came up along the north side of the railroad track.

Mayo himself never worked in the Paldi mill. Before coming to the Island he had suffered a serious bout of typhoid fever and spent many weeks in hospital. He was not suited for working in the dust from the sawdust and as he had already become the wheeler-dealer of the group, he continued to govern and to learn.

By now his English was improving and he made a point of associating with the white men watching and learning. Always with that newspaper in his back pocket.

An article in the *Cowichan Leader* dated July 15, 1920, mentions the recent fire with the work of construction underway. It continues:

"In June of 1920 40 cars were shipped, but output will be much higher. Capacity is about 75,000' per day. The surrounding limits contain enough timber for the next ten years. There are two miles of railroad track with logging cars and an 18 ton locomotive which is to be replaced with a 50 ton engine."

Is it possible that this young immigrant from India with the beard and turban ever dreamed that one day he would be the owner of a whole village in Canada? The community known as Mayo Siding was rapidly taking shape. A branch line of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railroad, ran right through the community, so it was only natural that a small train station and platform, known as Mayo Siding, should be next. It was still a long walk through huge timber out to Cowichan Lake Road and much handier to take the train into Duncan.

The fare was 45 cents into town and during an interview with Clarence Martin, he told of the time a conductor on the train was fired for stealing. So many interesting stories.

Set apart from the bunkhouses were the family quarters. Most of the Japanese, three of the Chinese and several of the whites had their families with them. Mayo soon realized providing employment for the men was not enough. His people needed provisions, so a company store was built. Supplies arrived by rail and employees were issued books of coupons which could be exchanged for goods in the company store. By the time the East Indian women and children arrived the road out to Cowichan Lake Road would allow delivery trucks to service the homes.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 11

THE SCHOOL

In 1921 the first school was built among the huge stumps and debris left from the initial logging site. An interesting article aptly describing the pioneer spirit of these early settlers appeared in the *Cowichan Leader*, March 10, 1921:

MAYO SCHOOL "Hard Times" Dance Proves Tremendous Success - Prize Winners.

The "Hard Times" dance held at the opening of the new Mayo school was a most successful and enjoyable event, some two hundred and fifty people being present. They came from all parts of the Cowichan district.

The new school is a great credit to all those who have provided such a beneficial asset to the Mayo and Sahtlam Station districts. The Mayo Lumber Co. donated all the lumber, building paper, nails and bunting for the building. It's size is 20 ft. by 40 ft. with 12 ft. walls and a cloak room, 12x20 at the rear.

The citizens of Mayo and Sahtlam Station gave their labour and furnished the doors, windows and inside furnishings with exception of the desks. The piano was a personal gift from Mr. Mayo and during the evening's enjoyment, Mr. Mayo was persuaded to come into the hall, when everybody sang "For he's a jolly good fellow."

The "hard times" costumes worn by both gentlemen and ladies were most realistic and amusing, while those who wore jewellery or attempted to array themselves in other than sacks or old clothes were immediately fined for not obeying the rules of this unique dance.

After the parade, the judges, Mr. McLeod, a Vancouver commercial traveller, Mr. Killam and Mr. W. Burnett, Victoria commercial travellers, awarded the ladies prize to Miss M. Payne, who was arrayed in the oldest of clothes, kept together mainly by safety pins. Mr. Robert Beech, Cowichan Lake, was awarded the gentlemen's prize.

Messrs. Powel & Macmillan donated the ladies prize and the Cowichan Merchants Ltd. donated the men's prize. Mr. Dawe, of Duncan, agent for Messrs. Wood, Vallance and Leggatt of Vancouver, donated two large lamps.

Robinson's orchestra supplied the music, dancing commencing at 9 p.m. while the crowd kept the fun going until 4 a.m.

Messrs. Burnett and Schlegel of Cowichan Lake and Miss Lydia Campbell, Duncan, provided some of the music, while two pipers of Duncan played for the grand parade.

The ladies at Mayo mill and the Yellow Fir Lumber mill, assisted by Mrs. Gregory and Mrs. Jordan, of Sahtlam, were responsible for the excellent refreshments. Miss M Evans, who is the first teacher at the Mayo school, was introduced to those present at the dance. She will have as her pupils children from the Mayo mill, Yellow Fir Lumber mill and Sahtlam Station.

A second school was built in 1938. Miss A.D. Ferguson was principal.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 12

LTD. COMPANY FORMED

The first record of incorporation as a Limited Company, is a document on file in Victoria, the Capital of British Columbia, stating that on the 21st of November 1924, Mayo Lumber Co. Ltd., has this day been incorporated under the Companies Act as a Limited Company.

Also on file dated November 26, 1925, is a list of shareholders which includes:

Isher Singh	BC Lumberman	Baryan Singh	BC Lumberman
Tara Singh	"	Basant Singh	"
Bachint Singh	"	Labh Singh	"
Kehar Singh	"	Bhan Singh	"
Sham Singh	"	Mayo Singh	"
Naurang Singh	"	Kapoor Singh	"

Most of these partners would have been with Mayo at both the Rosedale and Strawberry Hill operations and most probably partners in the potato growing venture near Chilliwack.

Some were old with long white beards and like other partners before them retired from heavy labour to return to their homeland.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 13

LOGGING BY RAIL

Logging by rail was still in its infancy and it fell to the ingenious young Sikh from India, to design an engine suitable for logging on a mountain side and as the original steam locies gave off a lot of sparks, the design must also be one to arrest sparks. *Mayo*

Old "3 Spot" is now on display in the BC Forest Museum, Duncan, BC, lovingly restored by local steam train enthusiasts.

The 50 ton Pacific coast type SHAY locomotive built specifically for use in the logging operations of Mayo Lumber Co., has a smoke stack with a spark arrester on top of the funnel to deflect any sparks that develop from the wood used to fire her boiler. There is also a rack on top of the tender to store the fuel.

Built by Lima Locomotive Works Inc., in Lima, Ohio, it is listed in the Encyclopedia of Sharp as sold April 22, 1924, to Mayo Lumber Co., Paldi, BC.

Another SHAY designed and built for Mayo Lumber Co., was originally constructed as a wood burner and the only 90 ton engine built as such.

This SHAY, then numbered No. 4, was converted to oil on Hill 60, when they were so far back in the forest they couldn't carry enough wood to fuel the return trip. The Encyclopedia of Sharp lists her as sold on July 26, 1928 to Mayo Lumber Co., Paldi, BC.

Chapter 14

FIRES IN THE WOODS

The one thing Mayo had little control over was fires. Already the mill had twice been hit by fires. The next fires were to occur in the woods. Quoting a report from the *Cowichan Leader* dated August 2, 1923:

"Forest Fire - Blaze in Mayo's Limits Under Control.

A forest fire which started in Mayo's limits on July 21, is now under control after burning over about 400 acres. There were 150 men fighting fire from the Mayo mill and logging camp. There are still 30 men watching for flare ups. The fire is believed to have been caused by a spark from a donkey engine."

Cowichan Leader July 3, 1924:

"Mayo in Danger For a Time - Fire Menaces Mill - Donkey Burns.

Concerns a 500-1000 acre fire in cutover land near the Mayo Lumber Co.'s mill on Cowichan Lake Road which raged since last Friday. One donkey engine in the woods was destroyed and some lumber for the new building of a water tank for the railway was burned. Most of the mill employees were engaged in fire fighting along with the Forestry Dept. people. In all there were about 150 people involved."

Chapter 15

MAYO EXPANDS HIS HOLDINGS

The original purchase was about 400 acres mostly on the south side of the railroad track extending along Cowichan Lake Road. With this first purchase they bought both the timber and the land. This land would become a permanent settlement. As they neared the end of the timber a representative of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) asked Mayo if he was interested in the timber on the other side of the track which extended up Hill 60.

"Of course I am" answered Mayo. "Well you'll have to cross the railroad to get to it and for that you need special permission from the CPR". "How do I get that?" asked Mayo. "You'll have to go to CPR headquarters in Montreal", was the answer. In a lightening quick decision Mayo declared "I'll send Kapon, he's the educated one". And so it was that Mayo and Partners acquired a second tract of 1000 acres and eventually ended up with about 14,000 acres in the Paldi area.

It was now 1924 and the fast growing community boasted an office, store, post office, Sikh Temple, Public School and a school-cum Cowichan Valley Museum and Archives for the Japanese.

It had never been Mayo's intention to remain in Canada. Like most of the early immigrants, he planned to make a little money then return to India to marry and settle down. But as the small community began to take on the atmosphere of a village in India his next decision was to build a fine home for himself. On a low rise overlooking the mill site he built not one but three large 2 storey homes, each identical to the others. One for himself, one for his older brother Ganea and one for his business partner Kapoor Singh.

A long article about Mayo appeared in the *Cowichan Leader* dated March 19, 1925.

At The Mayo Mill

The mill of the Mayo Lumber Co., situated about eight miles west of Duncan has established itself as one of the largest producing inland mills in the Cowichan Valley. It was built in 1917 and started cutting in 1918. Since that time the plant has steadily improved and last year, operations were carried on continuously, except for a stop of two weeks as a result of the brush fire during the summer. A total cut of practically 20 million feet of lumber was made; an average of 60 thousand feet a day. The sum of \$175,000 was distributed in wages. Around the plant has been built a neat mill village which is increasing year by year. Among

the residences are the handsome residences of Mayo Singh and Kapoor Singh, the men who hold the principal interests in the company and manage its business. These two residences have all modern conveniences. The whole village and plant are electrically lit and some establishments have running water as well. In the centre of the long stretch which flanks the E & N Railway is a building which houses the company's office and a store and post office. Mr. George M. Boyer, is office manager and there are also on the staff here M.W. Kenyon and Hardayal Singh a young Hindu educated in and recently arrived from India.

On the opposite side of the track is the school house where the employees children are taught by Mr. J.H. Price.

At the present time about 175 men are being employed by the company at the mill and in the bush. This number is somewhat higher than the usual quota. Additional men are being employed at tracklaying work through the company's limits to extend over Mouats' Mountain to the Chemainus River.

see notes? May Do Twenty Years

Although the Company has some 6,000 acres of timber as yet uncut, it is estimated that there are enough logs in the tract to keep the mill running at its present capacity for fifteen to twenty years.

The sawmill is situated at the foot of a steep hill. Through the side runs a small stream which has been dammed to make a small pond of serviceable size into which the logs brought from the bush are dumped straight off the cars. A battery of four boilers with a capacity of about 350 horsepower supply the necessary steam to run the plant. The fires under them are automatically fed with sawdust and require the attention of only one man. The mill contains ten engines all together. To run the main part of the mill, three engines are used - one of 85 horsepower and two 75 horsepower. The planing mill is operated by a ninety horsepower engine. Two small engines are used for the saw carriage, two for the light plant, one for the lath mill and one for the machine shop. A new machine shop has recently been built and arranged to the best advantage and a new filing room is being fitted up. The planing mill already contains two planers and another is to be added immediately. A resaw is also being obtained and will be installed immediately. There are two tracks at the mill with a capacity of twenty cars. Rough lumber and sized dimension are specialized in and possibly because the best lumber is not picked out as at some mills for the purpose of making the dry kiln product, the company finds a steady demand for its

output which is mostly fir and a little cedar. At present, the mill is supplying from 50,000 to 100,000 ft. a month for export to Japan. Most of the output, however, is going to the United States. A little is going to the Prairies and Eastern Canada.

May Use Two Shifts

The eight hour law is cutting down the capacity of the mill somewhat. When the market improves, it is possible that two shifts will be put on. At the mill, Mr. A.J. Neff is day engineer and George Clough, night engineer. Mr. Robert Evans is sawyer, Mr. Frank Loftus, millwright and Mr. Robert Stevenson, blacksmith.

Logging operations of the company are being carried out on quite a large scale. Tara Singh is the foreman in charge.

The logging railway, which is standard gauge, runs between three and four miles up the side of Mouat's Mountain*. *gauge*

Three switchbacks are required to make the ascent. In the present trackbuilding operations, a number of switches have to be put in. D. Chisholm has the contract for this work.

All five donkey engines are in use in the various operations in the bush. They are being run, respectively, by Messrs. W. C. Piper, Harold Truesdale, Nat. Kingscote, W.A. MacLean and Marshall Liard.

The company owns three locomotives which are 18 ton, 24 ton and 50 ton, respectively. At present, the 50 ton engine only is being used. Mr. Gus Schultz is the engineer in charge. There are, altogether, sixteen logging cars in use which are kept in repair by Mr. J.C. MacGregor. At the point where the logging railway crosses the E & N Railway, Mr. A.B. MacLean watches the track and regulates the traffic by means of two semaphores.

Looking to the future, the management is keeping the plant up to date. The large locomotive, which was acquired only last year, facilitates the hauling of logs from the bush. A planer and resaw are now being purchased to allow quicker finishing of the product. The mill is well established and its owners look forward to many years of industrial activity. The concern was recently incorporated as a Limited Liability Company.

*Editors note: Mouats Mountain and Hill 60 appear to be one and the same.

By now most of the original shareholders had sold to either Mayo or Kapoor and in 1928 Mayo and Kapoor bought out the remaining few and formed their own company on a 50/50 share basis.

The outfit grew and began looking for a new location. After forming their partnership Mayo and Kapoor began a second operation which they called Kapoor Lumber Co., at Sooke Lake on

southern Vancouver Island. It was a good mill, there was lots of timber and a market ripe for all they could produce. Kapoor was president of the Kapoor Lumber Co., and Mayo remained president of the Mayo Lumber Co.

Several reports in the *BC Lumberman* and in the *Cowichan Leader* tell of equipment purchased, changes and repairs made to increase production. B.C.L. June, 1928, reports:

Two old boilers were replaced with new ones and another new one installed making a total of six. A new nigger and loader for handling logs was also put in. Three Ford lumber jitneys (buses) are in use and a Willamette carrier is the latest handling equipment to be procured. Shipments for 1927 totalled 26,700,000 ft. The market being chiefly the prairies, eastern Canada and the U.S.

Cowichan Leader, June 13, 1929:

Shipments from Mayo Lumber Co., in 1928 totalled 39 million feet. A large part of the company's cut consists of large timbers, No. 1 common and select common. A specialty is made of select common structural timbers. The mill cuts railroad orders, stringers, caps and ties, car materials, sills, frames, linings, decking, etc.

A new 72 x 18 boiler is now being installed at the mill and a new 9' smoke stack erected. It will be 130' high and will take care of all the boilers. Production averages three million feet a month.

The directors of the company are Mayo Singh, Kapoor Singh, Managing Director, Ganda Singh, Secretary and Paymaster. Ganea Singh is Mill Superintendent and Doman Singh is Wood Superintendent.

August 1929 right in the middle of summer when everything was tinder dry, fire struck again at the Kapoor site. Everything went. The mill, the timber, railway bridges, box cars, everything. Before the fire there were 65 different camp buildings, when the fire was out only 5 were left. At one point, the flames reached a wooden fuel tank set on top of a tower. Before anyone knew what had happened five thousand gallons of burning fuel oil added to the excitement.

That was the summer of 1929.

Chapter 16

HILL 60

By 1928 a camp had sprung up on Hill 60 near the logging operation. Twentyfive men were living there with Doman Singh in charge. A Chinese watchman lived there full time and one of his jobs was to keep the steam up on the steam donkey. At the end of a shift the other workers gave him their dirty clothes which he steam washed for them.

Most of the Chinese worked on the railroad, now the longest private railroad on the island. One Chinese man, Lum Yet Foo, working as a faller, was killed when struck on the head by a falling branch.

Two Japanese families lived in the woods and one operated a small supply store. The Japanese were mostly fallers and powder men, who blasted the right of way for more railroad track.

Prior to 1930 there were only two whites working in the woods. One the donkey engineer and the other the engineer of the locomotive.

A large machine shop had been built in Paldi to service the equipment and a second larger Sikh Temple was built.

The Cowichan Leader Nov. 21, 1929 reports:

The Mayo Lumber Co. Ltd and the Kapoor Lumber Co. Ltd. controlled primarily by Mayo Singh and Kapoor Singh, have plans underway for extending their operations. They are also acquiring new timber for their Mayo plant. Their most important recent acquisition is the right secured to a timber limit around Meade Creek, Lake Cowichan, which runs into the north arm of the lake.

{ The last article to appear in the BCL before the great depression of the 1930's caused a shutdown was dated August 1930, and reads:

Mayo using P.C. Shay locomotive. 5 to 6 1/2% grades and 26% reverse curve on 6 1/2% grade. Loco takes up 15 empties and a car of slab wood. Could take 4 or 5 more cars. It is an 11 mile haul. The time going up is 50 min. Coming out they have 3 % grade and handle 15 loads. Time out is 45 minutes.

Chapter 17

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

On October 31, 1930, the depression forced the closure of the Mayo Mill. Many of the single men living in the East Indian bunkhouse returned to India believing they could live cheaper there. The fare to India at that time was 45 dollars to Hong Kong and 45 rupies to Calcutta. This fare meant sleeping on deck.

Unfortunately the depression was world wide and those who returned to India became a burden on their families back home. Better to return to Canada and take what work they could find.

Back in Canada, the only job left at the mill was that of watchman and several of the East Indian men shared that one job. Each one worked for one month at \$1.00 a day and with his pay cheque purchased enough groceries to keep the small group eating for a month.

The depression hit hardest on the unskilled workers and coupled with an influx of workers from Europe, life became a human tragedy, those with the better skills and most experience being given preference whenever a job was made available. Some worked on farms where they were paid so little they couldn't even afford salt, a staple in the Indian diet.

Karm Singh, a local real estate agent interviewed for this story, recalls the foreman of a mill on the mainland, himself an immigrant from Germany and a very compassionate man, allowing several of the East Indians to sleep on the sawdust in the boiler room where it was warm.

Back in Paldi the Japanese families picked blackberries and blueberries on Hill 60 then following the rough trail from the village to the main road, walked all the way to Duncan to sell them at 5 cents a pail. Adults peeled cascara bark from the trees and sold it by the sack full.

Others like Doman Singh, former Woods Supt., purchased an old truck to haul fire wood. As there were no mills operating in the area and therefore no source of scrap for fire wood, several of the men would obtain a bush wood contract, whereby these men cut the fire wood by hand, then sold it to the truckers, who in turn peddled it in town to the homeowners.

Wages dropped to 10 cents an hour, and for many no work at all. Obviously the cookhouse continued to operate as the men had to eat. Those who worked shared with others. Perhaps as one looks back on these sad times it can be said that it was fortunate few of the East Indian men had no wives or children to support.

A report in the *BC Lumberman* dated January 1933, reads:

The Provincial Government has undertaken construction

of a new road into Mayo Lumber Co's. Mill as a relief project. Work is to begin Feb. 1. Mill expected to reopen about March 15th.

A further report in the *Cowichan Leader* dated Jan. 19, 1933, tells of the efforts of Mayo Singh to get the mill running again.

Quote: Through the enterprise of Mayo Singh, one of Canada's most prominent lumbermen and a leading figure in the industry, operations at the present time are a direct result of the Ottawa Conference Agreement. The 10% preference on Canadian lumber arising from the conference resulted in contracts for the company. This and the exchange rate, the fact that the United States discounted the British pound more than Canada did, gave a 22% preference for Canadian lumber.

The company soon realized it cost less for the mill to be run than to sit idle and operations at the Mayo Mill started up May 1, 1933, after a 2 1/2 year lay off.

It was at this time when jobs were scarce that the BC Government brought in the minimum wage law which allowed mill owners and other employers to pay 25% of their workers a lower rate than others. The law already permitted employers to pay Asians less.

With this new law, although not specifically singling out the Asian workers, it was clear from the start that employers could save on wages by engaging at least 25% Asians in their work force. There are even reports of some employers making out an Asian workers cheque for 35 cents an hour then offering to cash the cheque for him knowing he couldn't read English and get away with giving him only 25 cents per hour. It took a while before anyone caught on.

In an interview with a white worker who had worked in the mill at Youbou, I learned that he earned 25 cents per hour and paid 90 cent a day for room and board. The Chinese workers received only 10 cents per hour for digging hog fuel and shoveling it into the burner all day. On this meagre wage the Chinese operated their own cookhouse.

Fortunately for East Indians, Chinese and Japanese living and working at Mayo, the operation was run by an East Indian who treated all workers alike.

Chapter 18

THE 1930'S

In January of 1933, the *Cowichan Leader* carried the following story:

Mayo Singh has announced that the company's mill located six miles west of Duncan will soon resume operations with 150 - 175 men. The announcement followed assurance from the Dept. of Public Works that they would put in half the road between the Lake Cowichan Highway and the mill site. The work scheduled to begin Feb 1st is a relief project. The mill is scheduled to resume operations soon, after a two and a half year shut down.

On April 20, 1933, the *Leader* reported:

The Mayo mill at Sahtlam will start a trial run after a lapse of operations since October 31, 1930. Starting May 1st the big plant is expected to be in full swing and orders are now available guaranteeing work for approximately 250 men for the next two months at least.

A crew of 24 men has been putting into shape the company's 12 mile logging railroad. By the end of the month the scene is expected to be a hive of activity rivaling the busy days before the shutdown nearly three years ago.

One third will be white men it is stated, the remainder being Sikhs, Japanese and Chinese. The shrill of another whistle searing the atmosphere from the north of Duncan, will it is hoped, mark an upturn in the industry and conditions generally.

Unfortunately the good news of the mill reopening was not to last. On December 25, 1934, fire once again struck the mill. All the mill equipment including that of the machine shop was destroyed. Many of the whites and the Chinese left to find work elsewhere. However, some of the whites, most of the Sikhs and most of the Japanese continued to reside at Mayo awaiting reconstruction.

On June 27, 1935, the *Cowichan Leader* ran the following article:

Mill similar to that burned to be ready in fall. A new machine shop is rapidly taking shape on the site of the burnt out Mayo mill at Sahtlam. Some 20 men mostly Hindus & Japanese, under Mr. Sydney May, are working.

The Machine shop will be a separate building and an improvment on a former shop, located under the mill. Cars of scrap iron from the machinery destroyed were removed recently and more are to be dispatched. It is thought that ultimately it will find its way to Japan.

Plans for the new mill call for a plant similar to the one that burnt. Into it will go machinery from the Sydney Lumber Co., which closed last year, and the Mordon Mine near Nanaimo which has also been closed. For greater safety from fire, the mill is to be built farther away from the burner.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 19

KAPOOR LEAVES

It was during this transition in 1935, after 8 years of operation as Mayo's sole partner, Kapoor Singh left to live in Vancouver where he held a millsite on the waterfront.

The building of the new mill took almost a full year. It wasn't until late in November 1935 that the mill operated a few trial runs. When it finally did resume full operation it was to be under a new name, that of Mayo Bros. Timber Ltd., incorporated August 1935, with Fred May as chief engineer of the mill, Bob Evans as sawyer and Dave Miles logging superintendent.

The summer of 1936 saw some special orders for large timbers destined for the United Kingdom.

Cowichan Leader June 4, 1936:

Said to be the largest manufactured timbers to be shipped over the Lake Branch of the E & N railway, three or four double cars of fir lengths, varying from 61-70 ft. and 14" square, left the plant of Mayo Bros. Timber Ltd. last week. All destined for the U.K.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 20

NAME CHANGED TO PALDI

The settlement commonly known as Mayo continued to grow but the name of the community caused some confusion within the Post Office.

When Mayo Singh applied for an official post office in Paldi, the postal authorities were willing to comply but only if he would choose another name. The name, Mayo, was sometimes confused with the community of the same name in the Yukon.

In July of 1936 postal authorities approved the name ^{of} Paldi for the settlement which had grown up around the mill. The new name was chosen in honour of Mayo's home village of the same name in the Punjab.

Mr. W. Kenyon was post master and Mr. W. Gadsen, the store-keeper, his assistant. The post office was part of the company store. The new post office became the twelfth in the district. Others were Rounds, the Lake Logging Co's camp; Youbou; Lake Cowichan; Duncan; Westholme; Crofton; Chemainus; Koksilah; Cowichan Station; Cobble Hill and Shawnigan Lake.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 21

THE ROLLS ROYCE

Mayo Singh is remembered for many things. One of the most interesting memories of those who worked for him in the 1930's is of Mayo's private R/R car used to inspect his logging operations.

In fact there were two of these cars, the first a Marmon and the second a shiny black Rolls Royce, ~~with a big brass bell on the front.~~ *the mentioned on next page*

Both cars were worked on in ^{the} Paldi machine shop where they were converted from highway use to rail tracks. The machine shop in Paldi boasted the perfect set up for the job and as the story goes, when it came to a machinist there was none better than machinist Hughey Twist.

Many are the stories of Mayo's private car. John Robison recalled working on the Rolls Royce and fashioning special brake shoes like those on a locomotive because of the steep 6% grade on the mountain.

One story is that the E & N inspector in Victoria first acquired the Marmon and asked Mayo to have his men put R/R wheels on it in the machine shop at Paldi. He used it up and down Vancouver Island between Victoria, Nanaimo and Courtney.

Later when he acquired the Rolls Royce he again asked Mayo to have his machinist convert it to R/R use and persuaded Mayo to purchase the Marmon from him. *machinist*

When a supervisor from CPR headquarters in Montreal announced his intention to visit Vancouver Island to inspect the lines, the Victoria representative, afraid to let his boss see the fancy car he was using, asked Mayo to hide it for him in the Paldi shop.

Following the supervisors visit he was afraid to take the Rolls back and again Mayo was persuaded to purchase the car from him.

For awhile the Rolls Royce was stationed at the work site on Hill 60. Perry Ross, who operated the gas shovel used to clear the right of way for the railroad, explained that the Workers Compensation Board regulations stipulated an emergency vehicle must be available at all times when men were working. As the track crew often worked after regular hours, the Rolls Royce was kept on the hill in case of an accident.

Fortunately, it was never used for that purpose but Perry Ross recalled driving it up the mountain and how proud he felt, knowing if it was necessary, it would be him who would drive it down.

John Dunning, the electrician, told of driving Mr. Mayo up the mountain one day in the Rolls Royce to inspect the logging operations. "Mr. Mayo and another man sat in the back" he said,

and Dave Miles rode up front with me. Dave Miles came along to throw the R/R switches as we progressed up the hill."

The Rolls Royce is remembered as a sleek black car, a 1930 Phantom II, 138 GN, with Thrupp and Maberly "Sedan de Ville" body. It sported lots of shiny chrome and had a big brass bell on the hood.

Dharam Singh, who worked in the Paldi office, described it as "very luxurious". "I sat in there for fun", he said, "Between the drivers seat and the back seat was a glass window. When the window was up even the driver couldn't see those in the back. Small tables were installed where you could enjoy refreshments and it was sound proof".

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 22

BOB SWANSON

It is impossible to list all the people associated with Mayo Singh and the village of Paldi, but one whose name has cropped up often is Bob Swanson.

Mr. Bob, as he was called, first went to work at the Sooke Lake operation on September 15, 1928. "I remember my first day", said Bob, "I went for an interview, it was an East Indian man named Bal Makand who hired me. I was working towards my engineers ticket at the time and the practical work was what I needed. I was what we called a "donkey doctor" which means I monkey wrenched the steam donkeys."

"There was a big fire at the mill, I remember it started on the log deck. I like to think I saved the mill that day, by organizing the fire fighting."

"I struck up a friendship with Mayo. I respected him and he respected my knowledge of machinery. We never lied to each other and I never cheated him and he knew that. I had the highest regard for Mayo."

"He loved junk and often sent for me to come with him to look at some used machinery or steel rails he was considering buying."

When Mayo purchased the old Mordon Mine in South Wellington he took me along and asked "Mr. Bob, what do you think?"

One day coming back from Victoria in my car, I literally ran into Mayo coming the other way. "I never thought you would ever run into me" said Mayo. I offered to pay for the damage to his car but he said forget it.

He was a very generous man. Each time his wife had a baby, always at the St. Joseph's Hospital in Victoria, Mayo would donate something to the hospital.

One time he sent for me and asked me to design a covered walkway for the nurses from the nurses residence to the hospital.

When I first sent to work at Sooke Lake there were only some flimsy bunkhouses with holes in the walls you could see right through and a few tents. Both Mayo and Kapoor wanted to move their families there, so they built two big houses, one for Mayo and the other for Kapoor.

Mayo sent for me and said, "Mr. Bob, you help, we need water". I engineered the building of a larger water tower for them and running water into both houses.

Then Mayo called me again. He gave me his silver coin which served as a credit card at Spencers Store in Victoria. I went to Spencers and purchased curtains and rugs and things for his house and charged them using the silver coin. I chose bright colours, yellows and reds, because I knew the East Indian women liked

ight colours. He also asked me to purchase a toilet and sink for the house. They were very comfortable there.

That was back in 1929. He and Mrs. Mayo lived at Sooke Lake during the week then went to Paldi on weekends so they could attend the Temple there.

Both Sooke Lake houses burned down in the big fire. They lost all their furniture but still had their fully furnished home in Paldi.

"When dealing with Mayo, you had to be straight forward and honest", said Bob Swanson. "It sometimes felt as though he could look right into your mind and know exactly what you were thinking."

"When you worked for Mayo, if he trusted you, you were like family. He always gave gifts at Christmas, usually a blanket or bedspread or something else for the house. He was an extremely kind and generous gentleman."

This interview with Bob Swanson was conducted at his home in Vancouver shortly before he passed away in 1995.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 23

NINE LUMBER CARS GO OFF TRACK

On December 3, 1936, Mayo Lumber again made headlines, this time a freak accident. Quoting the *Cowichan Leader*

.....after running downgrade for 6 1/2 miles from Mayo, 9 cars loaded with lumber and some mill wood went off the track of the Lake Cowichan branch of the E & N on Tuesday night at a curve about a mile above the Island Highway crossing at Mr. G.W. Brooklands home. No one was hurt, the train crew jumping off as soon as it became apparent that the brakes would not hold.

shrinking Night workers at Hillcrest had the shock of their lives when the *shrinking* apparition tore *thru* the mill yard raising a din that startled residents as far as a half mile *through* away.

Tearing out whole sections of rail, the cars left the track on a curve and spewed their lumber into the bushes. The scene attracted many spectators yesterday morning. By 9:00 o'clock however, trains were running again, a wrecking train equipped with crane having reached the spot from Victoria at 4:30 a.m.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 24

PHIL LEMARE

The late 30's and early 40's were an exciting time to be working and living in Paldi. Through several interviews with former employees and their families some interesting stories have evolved. Following is an interview with Phil Lemare I wrote in the *Cowichan News Leader*, November 4, 1987. The early days of logging on Vancouver Island are often referred to as "The Glory Days of Loggin". Although it is common knowledge the early immigrants from India played an important role in saw-milling, little is known of the brave few who tackled the job of Canadian lumberjack.

Last week I even learned of an East Indian high rigger, Harry the Rigger, who earned himself the nickname "Snow Ball" because of his speed in climbing the tallest trees.

The high riggers job was to climb the tree, lopp the top off and remove the highest branches. After completing that part of the job he would hang all the rigging, block, tackle and lines. The loggers referred to it as hanging the jewelry.

Phil LeMare, who operated the steam donkey, recalls the day Snow Ball's turban became snagged on one of the jagged lines. They were attempting to swing the block to another side of the spar tree. Snow Ball rode up the spar tree on the pass line operated by LeMare. As LeMare lowered the highrigger down his turban slowly unwound, with Harry yelling stop! stop! We had a lot of laughs in those days recalled LeMare. They were all good sports.

Another East Indian man whose skin was quite dark earned the nick name Satin Glo because he looked like the picture on the cans of Satin Glo paint. He was chockerman and a real good worker. "We were all so happy", says LeMare, we felt like brothers on the job. Everyone had a nickname and all poked fun at each other. *choku*

Another important worker was the head loader. He was a Chinese man who often used the term 'chicken shit ranchers' when referring to the logging crew. The term stuck and became his nickname but it was particularly comical to the East Indians because with his Chinese accent he pronounced it Lancers and to them it was synonymous with the Bengal Lancers.

Fat, the hook tender, was another East Indian. He wore no turban only a floppy rain test hat. He was not really fat just a big man who had no family here but many friends as everybody liked him.

Sundher was another worth remembering. His job was spare fireman and during the dry summer months he was spark catcher. Poor Sundher had false teeth that didn't fit very well. One day

removed his teeth and left them on a stump. Somehow they were knocked off the stump where they landed in the brush. At quitting time the whole crew were out looking for his false teeth. Everyone liked Sundher and he reciprocated by washing their dirty overalls with the steam hose and hung them on trees to dry.

Once Phil LeMare began recalling comical incidents for me more and more came to mind. Like the time when Bill Harvey was the hook-tender at Kapoor near Sooke. The whistle punk, a youth from Victoria, kept sending Harvey the wrong signals. One day Harvey lost his temper, jumped off the machine, grabbed a big stick and chased the youth far up the road. The poor kid ended up walking all the way into Victoria and never came back.

There was another East Indian worker who worked as fireman on the yarder LeMare was operating. The song "A Quarter To Nine," was popular at the time and LeMare liked to sing as he worked. His fireman who spoke little English, picked up the tune and sang over and over. "Quarter to nine, I love you. Five minutes more." He was a heck of a good guy and a real good worker.

site This was all back in the 1930's and because of the difficulty in transportation many wives and children had to live at the sight with their men. Close relationships were formed between the whites, Chinese, Japanese and East Indians. Every summer some of them come back to visit their former homes and look up old friends.

Because the Japanese families were sent away during the war, most never came back to work here, but every year several will come back after 30 or 40 years to joke and reminisce about the good old days when no one wore a hard hat and safety equipment was non existant but comradeship meant more to the men than anything else.

existent

Chapter 25

PERRY ROSS

Perry Ross and his wife Mary had not long been married when he started work for Mayo in the fall of 1935. Mary was seven months pregnant when they moved into one of the R/R coach cars Mayo purchased as living quarters for the logging and R/R crews on Hill 60. These railroad cars were brought in from Corbin Mines near the Alberta border.

"Ours was number 10", recalled Perry, "all the seats had been removed and stove and furniture installed. Mr. Mayo gave us shiplap (cheap grade lumber) to cover up the windows we didn't need. Mary made curtains for the windows and fixed it up real nice. It was awful cold in winter though as cold came in from underneath the car. The snow was real deep that winter, about four feet. Mayo never charged us any rent for living there.

There were others living in similar quarters. Rudy Drazich lived in one, he was a blaster and the contractor for building the railroad. John Kaliman and Rudy's cousin Joe Drazich lived with him. These coaches were on rails and were moved from site to site as the R/R progressed.

There were twelve East Indian men living in one of them. They were the steel gang. They layed the tracks. They had their own cook.

One week before the baby was due Mary Ross moved into Duncan and lived in a hotel until the baby came, then brought the baby on board the speeder back to her home in the woods.

Later, as other babies arrived, they took a house in Paldi. There they paid \$15.00 a month rent and \$5.00 a month school tax.

As previously stated Perry Ross worked on the R/R. His job was to prepare the site for the steel gang who laid the rails. "At first", said Perry, "I ran a 1928 N.W. Shovel, then later when it became necessary to have two shovels working, Mayo bought a Bucyrus Evie also gas operated. He brought it from Victoria. We were in such a rush to keep ahead of the loggers, one day I did 40' of right ~~away~~ *right-of-way*."

"I didn't get much time off", recalled Perry, "on Sundays I monkey wrenched to keep the machines in good working order".

About this time Mayo purchased a Climax locomotive from Corbin Mines on the Alberta border. The CPR agreed to run it on their tracks but insisted that one of Mayo's men accompany it. So it was that Clarence Martin (Chuni) was sent to bring home the Climax of which he became so proud.

Chapter 26

THE JAPANESE

Unlike the East Indians and the Chinese the early Japanese immigrants were allowed to bring wives from Japan. This was the period of picture brides. Young women from Japan seeking adventure in the rugged forests of British Columbia, answered these adds.

To help build the original mill in Paldi, Mayo sent for three Japanese men he had worked with on the mainland. Misters Urabe, Matsumoto and Oda, with their families, were among Paldi's first settlers. Others followed once the logging started, some 18 - 20 families.

Most of the Japanese settled on the far side of the Sikh Temple. A boarding house accomodated several single men.

Although the mothers were shy and tended to keep to themselves, the children ran freely, playing as only children will do encountering no racial problems.

"I had a very happy childhood there", said Sumi Kimachi, as she described Paldi as a harmonious miniature melting pot of Indo-Japanese & Chinese Canadians. She recalls nothing but interracial *harmonious*

Sumi spoke no English when she started school in the little 2 room school with Miss Doreen Palmer her first teacher. She remembered going to play at Mayo's. There were so many toys to play with and swings in the yard. "We all went to the toy room to play" she said.

Sumi's mother, Mitsuye Inouye, was killed while attempting to crawl under a train stopped at the crossing. She had been in a hurry to catch the stage to Duncan to take her little boy to the dentist. A Japanese Buddhist priest was brought from Vancouver for the funeral.

Her father Tomojiro Inouye was contractor for the fallers in the woods. Left with 2 small children, Sumi and Massaru, he sent to Japan for a new wife.

Tomi Inouye, his second wife, told of her arrival in Paldi in 1938. Mayo wanted to shake my hand but I was too shy. Shy little Tomi, just over 4' tall, was taken straight to the logging site on Hill 60 to live among the loggers. There were a few Japanese living there and one man ran a small supply store for the Japanese.

Later, when it was time for Massaru to start school, they moved to a house in the village. She remembered walking past the Sikh Temple one day to visit her inlaws. Several men were sitting outside on benches. She had never seen bearded Sikhs before, only in movies and she was afraid.

Another memory was of going to the company store, "because I

ouldn't speak English, I had to walk around looking until I found what I needed. The storeman followed me and watched everything I did."

Most of the Japanese had big families. After completing Grade 8 at the Paldi school, they went to work. The girls did housework and some even travelled to Duncan to work.

Jean Kitagawa (nee Urabe) recalled that the noise of the mill was a fact of life. "The whistle blew everyday at noon and I paid no attention. But if there was an accident or a fire I was terrified. Then the machinery stopped and everything was deathly quiet and I was filled with fear".

A long interview with Tom Tagami: Jor Mallas, the Sikh religious festivals, were a lot of fun. We kids, he said, used to go to the Temple when they were all inside and mix up the shoes, which according to Sikh custom were always left outside. Then we would hide and laugh as we watched the people trying to find their shoes.

They had a pole about 70' high, with a long rope on it. There was a contest to see who could climb the highest with their bare hands. They lifted weights and threw the shotput but there was this one East Indian man (it is believed it was Tiger Dola the wrestler) he was so strong he could stop a car with his bare hands. Mr. Boyer, who worked in the office, had a Model T Ford car and this man would plant his feet against two pegs then Mr. Boyer would try to drive the car, but the man was so strong he held the car back.

"They only ate goat meat I recall", said Tom, "Kapoor kept goats and he had a big billy that used to chase us home. We would run in the house and slam the door then the goat would butt his horns against the door and we were afraid the door would break".

When asked about blackberry and mushroom picking, Tom recalled whole families going off together to pick blackberries in the logged off areas and there were so many mushrooms they were able to pick up to 100 lbs in a very small patch. "It was amazing", recalled Tom, "there were so many we just looked for a mound of dirt with the mushrooms poking thru". They grew under the old growth timber and we soon learned to look for fir trees with moss growing on the north side and sure as can be, there would be giant mushrooms there.

When asked his opinion as to why there are no mushrooms in Paldi anymore he joked "Because the Japanese moved out".

During the depression the unemployed Japanese men built a road from the village out to Cowichan Lake Road. Tom's father, Mr. Tagami, was given a \$15.00 food voucher every month which had to feed 7 kids and 2 adults. "We used to fight over the crusts of bread", said Tom, "they were more filling. Sometimes I used to wonder what it would be like to have a full belly".

Tom recalled the night of December 25th, 1934, when the sawmill completely burned down. "It was Christmas so the mill was shut

down and there was no steam ^{up} to operate the pump. I was 14 years old at the time and I remember the night very well. The houses close to the burner on the south side of the tracks caught fire and for awhile it looked as though the office would go too.

We all threw snowballs at the wall of the office to keep it from burning. As luck would have it the wind shifted away from the office thus saving the rest of the camp. The office and houses were so close together, if one went the whole camp would go.

On that fatal night, Mrs. Mitsuye Inouye was living with her husband and children in the fallers camp on the far side of the mountain. She was the first to notice the glow in the sky from the fire. She was pregnant at the time and she grabbed her wrist with her other hand and exclaimed, "My God, I think the mill must be on fire". They all ran along the track up to the switchback where they could look down on Paldi and sure enough there was a huge fire.

Later when her baby was born he had a birthmark on his wrist and as the Japanese are very superstitious people she believed the birthmark came because of the way she grabbed and squeezed her own wrist when she first noticed the fire.

There was prejudice against orientals, East Indians and Native Indians in Duncan. "We had to sit upstairs in the balcony of the Odeon Theatre" said Tom. "It was not until about 1936 we were allowed to sit among the white people. We couldn't go into town for a hair cut either. The white barbers wouldn't cut orientals or East Indians hair. So my mother learned to cut hair".

I remember when someone newly arrived from India was dragged to my mothers house to have his first haircut. These were men who wore the turban and had never in their lives had a haircut. I used to laugh at them sitting there with tears running down their faces and mom snipping away.

It amused me to see these men cry. Of course I didn't understand the significance of the long hair then, I was just a child.

"I had to leave school early" said Tom, "my dad had a stroke, the depression was on and we were 7 kids and 2 adults to feed. I was just 13 years old and had completed up to grade 8. My brother and I were too young to work in the bush. You had to be 16 years old. So we collected beer bottles along the roadside and in summer we went in groups up where the men had logged and picked blackberries".

George Boyer worked in the office at that time and my brother and I used to hitch a ride into Duncan with him after work, sell the blackberries then walk all the way back to Paldi.

One time my brother was sick and couldn't go with me to sell the berries. It was quite late when I sold the last of them and getting dark when I started walking the 7 miles home. I was so young and the trees were so big and so close together it was

pitch dark on the long walk home. I remember, when I reached home I sobbed I was so glad to be home at last.

My brother and I also cut firewood and sold it to a man named Pritam Singh. He drove an old Model A Ford. He sold the wood in Duncan.

After completing Grade 8, my sister Shizuye, worked for Mayo's brother Ganea doing housework for \$15.00 a month. We all had to work, there were doctors bills to be paid.

When he was 16 Tom went to work in the woods as a whistle punk. He recalls being so cold because there was never enough time to build a fire nor was he in one place long enough.

Sometimes instead of riding the speeder down, which took a long time because of the switch backs, the younger ones would run all the way down and beat the speeder home.

Another fond memory was of the way the Japanese boys brought firewood home from the woods operation. When they found a round piece of a log, they would put handles on it by nailing two pieces of 2x2 onto the log then roll it down the hill. Sometimes the chunk would roll out of control and into a spot where the boys couldn't manage it alone so the mother had to be called to help.

There was a Japanese hall in Paldi. We used to go there in the evenings to play ping pong. But we didn't have much time for fun. After our regular school classes we had Japanese school. Tom's brother Ichiro Tagami was the first to have a wedding reception there. The marriage ceremony took place in Duncan with the reception at the hall in Paldi.

We got together for special occasions and for picnics in the summer. In the late 30's when some had cars we would picnic by the Cowichan River and sometimes at Beacon Hill Park and Butchart Gardens in Victoria.

Another recollection of Tom Tagami was of eating in the first Indian canteen. "The first one in Paldi and everyone helped himself", he recalled. "Although the Japanese boys took their food to eat, he remembers seeing the first Indian man from the canteen, come in and take a tin plate and an enamel cup, then help themselves. "Each one brought his own butter" he said. "They would come in carrying a pound of butter each. Then after eating each one would use his own plate and cup".

For another recollection, Paldi was the place to go. The first time I went to Paldi was to see a friend who was a doctor. There was a school, a hotel and a grocery store that carried a little bit of everything. A generator for the mill supplied electricity to the town.

During the war, I remember Mayo's who came to work in the office, looking to find a job like coming to a city, it was so bright. The electric light bulb in India seemed like a revelation. I was amazed at how bright it was in Paldi and I was excited to be in this fascinating place."

Chapter 27

THE UNIQUE VILLAGE OF PALDI

With the arrival of several women from India, the community really sprang to life. The village of Paldi became a unique cultural mixture of East Indians, Japanese, Chinese and whites. All spoke a form of broken English, unique to Paldi, started first by the men in the workplace and continued by the children who knew only the language of their parents. Any cultural barriers that might have been felt elsewhere were crossed again and again each day. Children ran from house to house and Mayo Singh was looked to as a kindly grandfather.

As the community grew, housing became a problem. Houses were hastily built and more R/R coach cars were brought in to serve as homes. To keep vehicles and pedestrians up out of the mud a complex system of wooden walkways wound between the buildings.

Tom Tagami, as a youngster, remembers the day April 19, 1930 when the Paldi dam burst. "Me and some other kids were fishing in the creek" he recalled, "the water started coming up higher and higher so we grabbed our poles and climbed up the bank to the R/R track. When the water kept coming we got scared and ran home. Next day we went back to look and the rails were just hanging there".

By 1937 the community had grown to a population of 1500. One hundred families and one hundred and fifty single men in the bunkhouses. Soon there were four sectors, one for each nationality. Every available material was used to make homes for the newcomers.

Another recollection of Tom Tagami was of eating in the East Indian cookhouse. "The food was in big pots and everyone helped himself", he recalled. Although the Japanese boys took theirs home to eat, he remembers seeing the East Indian men from the bunkhouse, come in and take a tin plate and an enamel cup, then help themselves. "Each one brought his own butter" he said. "They would come in carrying a pound of butter each. Then after eating each one washed his own plate and cup".

For immigrants from India, Paldi was the place to go. The mill was owned by an East Indian who always found a job for a newcomer. There was a temple, a school and a company store that carried a little bit of everything. A generator from the mill supplied electricity to the homes.

Quoting Dharam Singh Parmar, a relative of Mayo's who came to work in the office, "coming to Paldi was like coming to a city, it was so bright. The electric light bulbs back in India seemed dim in comparison. I was amazed at how bright it was in Paldi and I was excited to be in this fascinating place."

In those days when the mill was running there were so many families it was a wonderful place to be. Children playing, women visiting back and forth and in the evening all the electric lights on. You could hear the women singing & dancing.

This village style of singing and dancing in the evening has always played an important role in the lives of the East Indian women.

If it was a haven for the adults it was a paradise for the children. Barely 3 miles down the track toward Duncan was another multi racial community, Hillcrest Lumber Company. On weekends the women and children from each community walked along the R/R track meeting halfway for picnics. The East Indians from Hillcrest came to attend services in the Paldi Temple as did the Japanese from Hillcrest who came to attend church and other functions in the Japanese hall.

The community grew to the point of needing two schools. One for grades 1-4 and a second for grades 5-8. The villagers were fortunate to have a nurse living in their midst. She, along with an interpreter from the office, took any who needed it to the hospital.

Later, Miss Black, a Public Health nurse from Duncan, came once a week to give the children a health check. Once a month they were weighed and given a full check over. This included preschoolers. Once a year Dr. Watson came and later Dr. McHaffie.

Miss A. Ferguson, a teacher from 1930-40, recalled the Public Health nurse having to peel some of the sweaters off the East Indian children.

Delivery trucks brought supplies door to door. The Buckersfields truck brought feed for the animals and flour for the roti. A Japanese man from Chemainus brought fresh fish and a white man from Duncan brought fresh meat. The Chinese fruit and vegetable truck came twice a week and a bread truck from Cobble Hill brought fresh bread. "Two loaves stuck together" recalled one former resident "with a soft piece in the centre". Almost everyone had their own garden and some had cows and chickens. Several times a year a Japanese merchant from Vancouver would come from Vancouver to display his goods in the Japances Hall.

To the East Indian men living in the bunkhouse, it hardly seemed a foreign country. With the temple, store, post office and newspapers and mail from home it was a good life. In the evenings and on weekends, the men played soccer, volley ball and practiced lifting weights and other physical sports.

This little corner of Vancouver Island was home to the largest congregation of Sikhs yet in Canada. A close knit community that survived in a foreign land on its own merits through love, compassion and sharing with one another.

A June 1939 story in the *Cowichan Leader*, tells of a band concert in Paldi:

"The Cowichan District Band returned from the operations of Mayo Bros. Timber Co. Ltd. on Thursday night with a generous gift of \$50.00 from Mayo Singh, at whose invitation the band presented an outdoor concert in honour of his birthday.

For an hour and a half before practically the whole populace of the community, the band rendered marches, dance music and other selections. Refreshments were served afterwards."

And again on July 7, 1940 another article in the *Cowichan Leader* reads:

People of Paldi raised \$86.00 for the Red Cross at a bazaar and concert in the school last week. Mrs. W. Stubbs and Mrs. H. Douglas convened the bazaar and the school teachers arranged the concert.

The Mayo employees did not take many holidays but always on May 24, the Queen's birthday, they shut down. Mayo Singh arranged with the City of Nanaimo for the use of the Haliburton St. playground for his annual picnic. Those who did not have cars were bused in one of the company jitneys. Arrangements were made with the residents of two homes across from the park for the use of their washrooms. One for the men and the other for the women, all paid for by Mayo.

At a popular beer parlour in the Globe Hotel in downtown Nanaimo, it was all the beer you could drink courtesy of Mayo Singh.

Back at the childrens playground the women served roti and curried vegetables wrapped up like a hot dog. There were cases of fresh fruit, all you could eat, and across the street from the park was the Bright Spot, a confectionary store that sold ice cream and pop.

Cowichan Leader, July 1948...

With the completion of a water main to the Mayo School, the small town of Paldi now has an official waterworks system which supplies all the houses, offices and other buildings in the community. A machine shop, store and offices give employment to 40 men.

An electric generating plant in the machine shop supplies light and power to all buildings.

Chapter 28

PALDI JOR MALLA

In the Punjabi language, a Jor Malla means a happy festival. One that usually begins with a three day religious program and ends with sporting events. Many are the stories of Paldi Jor Mallas. Everyone turned out to watch the sports. The East Indian men from Paldi and other temples in BC competed in high jump, long jump, and flip jump. But the most exciting event to watch was the weight lifting. Sometimes it was a heavy piece of iron with a prize to the one who could raise it and lower it the most times. Other times it would be a large boulder.

One Phuman S. Johal, is remembered to have lifted a man on his hand with his arm straight out. Another time Nanjo Singh created excitement when he played tug of war with a car.

Others remember the wrestling ring Mayo set up in his front yard, where all comers were welcome to try. There was Indian Stick fighting, shot put and races. Also games of soccer, volley ball and Kabudhi, the traditional game of the Punjab.

Prizes for the men were usually handkerchiefs and ties, with ice cream and fresh fruit for the women and children's races.

It was not unusual for the Paldi volley ball and soccer teams to be made up of East Indian, Japanese, Chinese and whites. Everyone joined in the celebrations.

As the population of Sikhs in Canada grew, whole bus loads of holidayers from Vancouver, Victoria and Lake Cowichan arrived in this small community to celebrate Paldi's JOR MALLA. Every house in Paldi was scrubbed and cleaned with every available bed made ready for the women. The sleeping rooms under the temple, were cleaned and made ready for the men and boys.

Meetow Singh, at the time of this writing, the president of the Paldi KHALSA DIWAN Society, recalls as a child, the week before the JOR MALLA all the school children made flags from coloured construction paper, then strung them between the temple, cookhouse and bunk houses, using twine from the mill, the type used to tie bundles of 1 x 4's.

He also remembers anyone able to play a musical instrument being given time off from the mill every time a busload of devotees arrived. The band would meet the bus beside the company office and escort the passengers to the temple where everyone gave thanks. Already the temple and cookhouses were bustling with activity.

On Friday evening there was the flag raising ceremony. The Saffron flag of the Sikhs was raised in an outdoor ceremony of hymns and the evening prayers, an integral part of the three day JOR MALLA.

On Saturday evening the sounds of women dancing and singing in one another's homes and the happy sounds of children as they ran between the houses and the cookhouse could be heard throughout the entire village.

The cookhouse well, like the well in any village in India, became a focal gathering point where stories and experiences were told and related many times over. Three generations of Paldiites and their visitors have insisted the water from the Paldi temple well was sweeter than any other source.

In 1959 the old temple was torn down and a new one built on the same spot making it the oldest surviving Sikh Temple at the same location. In fact, on the same spot and facing in the same direction.

The building was enlarged once again in *?1978+1983 check date*

A fire, August 4, 1994, destroyed both cookhouses and all washroom facilities. Temporary cooking and dining arrangements are situated under and alongside the Temple (dated October/95).

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 29

PURN KAUR BAWA

Following is a copy of an article I wrote for a local Duncan newspaper:

A TRUE PIONEER

How many of you ever give thought to the hardships and struggles of those few brave women who were the first East Indian women to come to Canada? I recently enjoyed an afternoon at the home of Sarge Bawa on Sherman Road interviewing his mother Beba Purn Kaur Bawa.

There were fewer than 10 East Indian women in Vancouver when she landed in 1929. She was young, frightened, and pregnant. A three month sea voyage with all its hardships hardly compares with the smooth air travel of today.

Mrs. Bawa's story is typical of any of the first few women who arrived in Canada as brides for the hard working men who preceded them. Her husband, Bawa Singh, came to Canada in 1906 and along with other young immigrants from India worked first for the railroad before proving their worth in the sawmills. He made his first trip back to India in 1920 to be married then leaving his bride behind he returned to Canada returning once more to India in 1928. In April of 1929, he and his young wife left his village Tooto Mazara by train for Calcutta.

It took 10 days by train to reach Calcutta. While there, they lived at the Sikh Temple waiting for a ship. As there were no passenger ships, they took space on a freighter and while in Calcutta purchased food, clothes, bedding, a small cooking stove and a sack of coal, all the things necessary to survive the rough ordeal of the voyage to Hong Kong. A rope ladder was the only means of boarding.

There were no staterooms or dining rooms on the freighter. The young couple along with two other couples, one child and two single men, were forced to live outside on the deck under a small overhang. They cooked, ate, slept and washed on the open deck. At times, when the sea was rough the waves came right up over the sides and they were all soaked only to be dried again by the sun and the wind.

The small party looked forward to putting their feet on Rangoon only to be disappointed when told there was a sickness on shore and they were forced to stay aboard while the ship lay at anchor for 10 days in Rangoon. They continued this rough style until the freighter reached Hong Kong where they thankfully transferred to a CPR passenger ship, the Empress of Japan.

After three months at sea, with stops at Rangoon, Hong Kong and Tokyo, they arrived in Vancouver at 10 a.m. June 30. Here they were forced to wait six hours before boarding the ferry to Victoria. As one of the male passengers had relatives waiting for him with a car, Mrs. Bawa and her husband were given a lift to the Victoria Sikh Temple. They took shelter there until they left for their new home in Nanoose Bay where her husband found work in the sawmill. Their first son Ajeet was born while they lived in Nanoose.

In 1931, after two years at Nanoose, they moved to Sidney where Bawa Singh worked in a Sidney lumber mill. It was while living in the Victoria area she first met Mrs. area Mayo, who invited the young family to move to Paldi and work in the sawmill there. The close knit community of Paldi was in its early stages. There were only four East Indian families there at that time but many more single men lived in the bunkhouses. Although they had running water in their home, for 18 years they carried their drinking water from the well beside the Sikh Tmepole. The water from the church always tasted better.

For social life, the women and their children enjoyed long walks, tea parties and Sunday chruch services. The church ringing of the church bell signalled the end of the service when all the children came running to receive their prashad.

After the closure of the Paldi mill there was some talk of moving the Sikh Temple to Mesachie Lake, where there was a larger community of East Indians. However, the women protested the move and said "leave our church where it is and we will look after it". It is now 55 years later and Mama Purn Kaur is still looking after her church.

Mama Purn Kaur passed away peacefully September 16, 1992. She was well over 80 years of age.

Chapter 30

MAHON KAUR LASHMAN

Mahon Kaur Lashman arrived in Canada in 1928 as a 16 year old bride. Her husband Lashman Singh had been among the first immigrants from India. She settled first in Paldi where she bore three daughters and two sons.

In an interview at her Duncan home in April 1987, Mrs. Lashman's eyes sparkled with mischief as she recalled her earlier days in Paldi. Those were the days she reminisced of close neighbours and companionship, a time when each shared in the others' joys and sorrows and a time when they made their own fun and always as a community.

The problem of citizenship, the right to vote and independence for India, were left to the men. The women had no time for such things as they lived a life of almost total self sufficiency.

They grew their own fruits and vegetables, making jams and canning for the winter months. She recalled with a broad smile, the berry picking excursions up the mountain, where all the women and children picked together.

The women made their own clothes without patterns and all the clothes needed by the children. For a long time, only two families had cars. Mayos and Kapoors.

Mrs. Mayo and Mrs. Kapoor would purchase the sewing materials and notions for the women. Everything they needed to make their families clothes, curtains, bedding, towels etc. Most families had their own cows and as the Sikhs did not eat meat, very little was needed from town.

The women made their own fun meeting in each others homes with their sewing, knitting and embroidery work. The Lashman family had one of the few wells in the village and as usually happens, the well became a gathering place.

As most of the women came as young brides, the well became an outlet for children's play, with water fights a common occurrence during hot weather. Of course none had ever seen snow before coming to Canada so snowball fights in winter and other frolicking were regular occurrences around the Lashman well.

Lashman Singh died in 1969 but Mrs. Lashman continued to live in the house he had built for his family in Duncan on Lashman Avenue, named for her husband, until her death in 1989.

Chapter 31

SHANTI MAYER - ONE WOMAN'S STORY

The struggles and hardships faced by some of the early immigrants from India make interesting telling. Mrs. Shanti Mayer weathered more than her share. Her husband, Bal Singh, had slipped across the border from the U.S., entering Canada illegally. It was to be a long and hard struggle to remain in Canada.

He had known Mayo in India as their two villages were quite near one another and had heard Mayo operated a sawmill on Vancouver Island, so taking a chance, he made his way to Paldi. He knocked on the door of Mayo's house and said simply, "I need help". Like so many before him he was given a room in the bunkhouse and a job. "What can you do?" asked Mayo and upon hearing of his background with the Ford Motor Co. in the U.S., Bal Singh was given a job driving a truck each day to Victoria.

Bal Singh's first wife had died in India and now with a steady job he was able to save enough to return to India and marry again. Shanti's father, a doctor in the civil service, had always said he wanted her to marry a Sikh. When Bal Singh's relatives began making inquiries re. a suitable match for him, Shanti's father and brothers were approached. It's a simple procedure in India. First, one makes inquiries to locate the eligible girls, then after determining which one is the most suitable and willing, photos are exchanged and the deal is made.

And now Bal Singh with his 15 year old bride Shanti, was on his way back to Canada. They left Bombay March 3, 1937. Like so many others they were subjected to the rough seas and the elements. Huddled under a piece of canvas on the deck, Shanti 'made do' with a small cooking stove and little or no privacy at night. The seas were rough and Shanti was violently sea sick all the way to Hong Kong, a two week journey.

Once in Hong Kong, they took refuge in the Sikh Temple, where again Shanti cooked all their meals. They waited a full month for a ship to Canada. Although Shanti has forgotten the name, she does remember it was a Japanese ocean liner.

Before leaving Hong Kong, Bal Singh sent a telegram to Mr. Mayo, informing him of the name of the ship on which they were sailing and approximate date of arrival in Victoria. The two week trip to Victoria on board a proper passenger ship was considerably more comfortable. But it was on their arrival in Victoria the storm broke.

Bal Singh had been asked to bring with him the son of a man working in B.C. This he attempted to do and was successful until they reached Japan. The authorities in Japan discovered the

Young man's papers were not in order and Bal Singh was forced to leave him behind in Japan.

The youth's father was so angry when he learned his son would not be on the ship with Bal Singh and his bride, he contacted the immigration department in Victoria claiming Bal Singhs' papers were forged. When the ship docked in Victoria April 28, 1937, Bal Singh and Shanti were detained on the upper deck from which they could see the other passengers disembarking.

Fortunately, Bal Singh had sent the telegram to Mayo. Mr. and Mrs. Mayo were both on the docks in Victoria to receive them. Mayo stood waiting for some time from where he could see Bal Singh and Shanti. Realizing something must be wrong Mr. & Mrs. Mayo boarded the ship where Mayo demanded "What is wrong?" "We've had a telegram from India," replied the immigration man, "it claims this man's papers are forged." "Nonsense" replied Mayo, "this man works for me. He is my good friend. I have known him a long time." Once again Mayo's word influenced the authorities but not before he promised to return the next day at 10 a.m. with Bal Singh and Shanti and a \$2000 bond.

Mr. and Mrs. Mayo drove the couple to Paldi where they took them into their own home. But next morning, early, the four of them returned to Victoria where Mayo paid the bond allowing Bal Singh to remain in Canada.

Shanti had come from a village in Punjab, her mother had died while the children were quite young and Shanti and her sisters rarely left the house. She was tiny in stature, barely 5' tall and extremely shy and like many young brides from India she wore a jewel, a koka in her nose. One morning while washing her face in the bathroom sink of Mayo's home, the jewel dislodged and slipped down the drain. Too shy to mention it to either Mr. or Mrs. Mayo she told her husband of her loss. Immediately Bal Singh made a move to remove the drain pipe. "No, don't break my sink" cried Mrs. Mayo. "It's too late now anyway, it's already gone down the drain." The incident was never forgotten. Fifty years later Shanti is still being teased about losing her koka in the bathroom sink.

A home was found for Shanti and her husband in what had formerly been the Chinese bunkhouse. Most of the Chinese had left Paldi in search of new jobs. There were two East Indian families living in the downstairs portion, said Shanti, and we were given the upstairs which was one big room. People were so good to us.

The women scrubbed the floor for us and the people gave us furniture and dishes. Everyone understood that when you come from India you come with nothing but some clothes and a few personal possessions. The people of Paldi were like one big family. They made us feel so welcome especially Mr. and Mrs. Mayo. They too treated us like family. Mayo's pet name for Daddy (Bal Singh) was Padsha. An adaptation of the word Bhadsha which means king in India. "Even when our first baby, Bhagwan, was

born, they gave us all the baby clothes. The only things Daddy bought were the baby carriage and one sweater set."

One day, recalled Shanti, Daddy realized we needed some firewood so he asked one of the truckers to take a load to our house.

Once when I was outside trying to split the wood, Daddy was watching me from the mill. He wasn't watching the timbers and one came down and crushed his hand. He spent two weeks in hospital and when he came out he was given the job of fire spotter.

Later he was given a job with Bawa Singh and several Chinese workmen on the railroad. One day I saw the pushcar coming back earlier than usual, with a man lying down on it. It was Daddy. The car had jumped the tracks and Daddy was hurt again. Again he spent time in the hospital.

As he lay in hospital Bal Singh thought about his future. It was then he decided to buy his first truck. He had met a Japanese man in hospital also concerned about his future. You come to work for me, said Bal Singh.

Unfortunately, Bal Singh was forever plagued with immigration problems. In 1938 the Government requested all East Indian people to register their whereabouts. Afraid he would be sent back to India Bal Singh neglected to register. Shanti spent anxious months watching through the window for the man in the black suit. There were those in the mill who because of minor quarrels were only too willing to point out the illegal entrants, but there were just as many or more who rushed to inform Bal Singh of an impending visit from the immigration man. Shanti and her friends can laugh now of the times the women hid Bal Singh under their beds or in one of the upstairs bedrooms. He sometimes hid for days. If they should show Shanti a picture of him she simply shook her head and repeated "No English, No English."

By this time Shanti was pregnant with her first child. The shrewd immigration people decided to wait. We'll catch him when his wife goes to hospital, they said.

When the day came Bal Singh left for work at 7 a.m. as usual. I'll ask the nurse to take you to hospital said Bal Singh.

Fortunately for the women of Paldi there was a nurse living there at the time. But it wasn't to be as simple as that. He waited until dark then slipped into the hospital for a brief visit and was arrested as he was leaving. It was in the Duncan jail Bal Singh learned he had a son.

Poor Bal Singh, he cried so much he made himself sick. He began vomiting and urinating blood. He was moved to a hospital in Victoria. "What have I done wrong?" cried Bal Singh. This was too much for the immigration people. Once again they sent for Mayo. You look after him now, they said. If he dies it's your problem. And again Mayo Singh paid out another \$2000 bond.

Shanti had begun to wonder why her husband had not been in to see his son. When only the women came to visit, she gave one

of them 10 cents and pleaded with her to phone Paldi and tell her husband she needed to see him. No one wanted to tell her he was in jail.

"When finally he did come to see me", related Shanti, he looked so sick and his clothes were covered in white dust. "What happened?" I cried. "It's okay", said Bal Singh, "I've been helping Mayo load sacks of flour to take to the people in Paldi".

He was so sick the doctor admitted him to the Duncan hospital. While in hospital, he wrote Shanti a long letter explaining everything that had happened to him and why he hadn't been able to visit her. "I cried so much when I read it", recalled Shanti; but Daddy just told me its all over now so don't cry anymore.

Shanti and her small family settled to a pleasant life in Paldi. "I was so happy there", she recalled, "people were so good to us. I never missed home. Paldi was just like a village in India. But I had a lot to learn. We had no stoves in India. We cooked over little camp fires and when my husband brought me a broom, I had to ask him how to use it. We had our own cows and a small garden".

"The doctor used to tease Daddy", remembered Shanti. He said "you're so big and she's so small and she doesn't talk much. She won't give you much of a family". But she bore him seven children, five boys and two girls. Said Shanti, "I guess I was stronger than I looked".

At one time we had two cows and two heifers. I was taking the cows out to graze one day when Mayo drove by. He stopped the car and said, you sure have changed. You laugh now and talk a lot. Shanti had adjusted to life in Paldi.

The day came in 1940 when all illegal immigrants from India were granted amnesty. Shanti and her family were truly free. Bal Singh had started his own trucking business and decided to move to Duncan. But no one would rent to them. One day they were looking at a house when a white lady came out of her house and yelled at them, "you blacks, that house is not for you."

Finally they were able to purchase a lot on Howard Avenue in Duncan where they built their first home. Bal Singh's trucking business flourished and he and his family made many friends.

"When my family in India suggested we come there to live I realized", said Shanti, "I could never leave Canada".

Her children are all grown now, the boys have followed their father in the trucking business. When this story was told in 1990, she had just become a great grandmother.

Bal Singh died in 1987 at the age of 97. Shanti now lives in a neat little house near the Duncan hospital surrounded by her family and many friends.

Shanti Kaur passed away May 21, 1994.

Chapter 32

BILL KENYON

For many years Bill Kenyon was the store keeper. Mayo's employees were issued books of coupons which they exchanged for goods in the company store. One comical recollection when dealing with the East Indian people was that when they came to purchase canned milk, they would only buy the Borden's brand because it had a picture of a cow on the label. He remembered various travelling salesmen trying to sell him their brand but he insisted the only one that will sell here is Borden's.

When asked what the whites in Paldi did for recreation, he explained they often moved all the desks to one side in the school and played badminton. Sometimes on a Saturday night they would organize card games such as whist in the school. "Paldi was a good place to live", he recalled, "we each made our own fun and we really enjoyed eating in the East Indian cookhouse, particularly their curried chicken".

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

quotation marks

Chapter 33

JIM FALEN

"Mayo was a real gentleman. We never saw him in casual clothes. It was always a three piece suit, white shirt, tie and a hat. He was clean shaven and always immaculate. He was warm and friendly but never, like some of the others, partied on a Saturday night.

I never knew Mayo to take a drink. A real gentleman recalled 90 year old Jim Falen.

I never lived in Paldi but I used to go there to socialize with the boys. I liked them, they were a nice bunch. I visited in their homes and in the bunkhouses where the single men lived. We had a lot of fun in those days. They had one room in the bunkhouse where they wrestled. Not fights, never in anger, just games. I often ate in their (East Indian) cook house and always enjoyed the food. They were a happy bunch."

Jim Falen lived and worked in Youbou, where he was hired as a buyer to purchase the food supplies for the cookhouse at the Youbou mill. He often came to Paldi to buy beef from those who had their own cows. They would say to me "you're not going to kill it are you?" And I never lied, I said "no, I'm not going to kill it", even though I knew they were to be butchered, it wouldn't be me who killed them. The East Indians did not kill cows nor did they eat beef.

"The East Indians I knew were all nice people", said Falen. "They used to come to my house in Youbou sometimes to visit. The ones from Paldi were like one big happy family. Some came to work at Youbou after the Paldi mill shut down. One thing I remember about the ones from Paldi, they always had lots of fruit. Some of them had big grapefruits stuffed in their pockets. Mayo always looked after his extended family".

Chapter 34

THE EVACUATION

The Cowichan Leader, April 21, 1942:

On Tuesday morning shortly before 10 O'clock all remaining Japanese residents of Cowichan District - 470 of them - left Chemainus on the Princess Adelaide for Vancouver. Of the total 119 were from Duncan, 104 from Mayo camp and 40 from Hillcrest.

Four Vancouver Island Coach Lines buses were needed to bring the men, women and children from outlying points and to take them from Duncan to Chemainus. A preliminary to the movement started at 4 a.m. on Tuesday morning when Island Freight Service trucks went to Hillcrest & Mayo to pick up the larger items of baggage, such as suitcases and bedrolls.

At 5:45 a.m. four buses left Duncan for the two mill centres. A few residents there - white men and women, East Indians and Chinese were up early to see the Japanese off.

Mrs. Tomi Inouye vividly remembers the day two very tall R.C.M.P. officers knocked at her door. She spoke no English and was terrified by their actions. They came in looking for her husband. He was not at home, he was up in the logging camp. As she watched terrified the two R.C.M.P. officers ransacked her house and took away the radio, maps and all her Japanese music records.

The men were taken first and later the women & children. Tomi like many others had two babies still in diapers. They were housed in the animal barns at Exhibition Park in Vancouver, there they remained for several months before being sent by train to the interior of BC.

While at Exhibition Park, Mayo came many times to bring supplies to his friends and to ask what their needs were. Earlier, before they were taken away, he had offered to be responsible for his people if they would leave them in Paldi but his pleas fell on deaf ears.

In an interview with Perry Ross and his wife Mary who lived in Paldi at the time of the evacuation they told me, "It all happened so fast we didn't really catch on to what was happening till suddenly they were all gone".

"I was at work in the woods", recalled Perry when a couple of R.C.M.P. officers showed up one day. They rode up with Hughey Douglas on the speeder. I remember a young fellow we called Itagi, he was the bull cook for the grade camp. They just walked over to him and told him to gather his gear and in only a few

minutes he was gone. Rode back down on the speeder with the two R.C.M.P. officers.

Said his wife Mary, "I remember all those people coming from Duncan offering to buy their furniture, cars and other belongings real cheap. It was criminal. They took their hard earned belongings for next to nothing. We bought a chesterfield from the Toyotas but we paid them a fair price. It was real sad to see them go like that.

Later the Ross family moved into one of the two large two-story houses the Toyota brothers had built for themselves. The other one was lost in a fire.

Another sad story I learned from Shigeko Urabe now Kitagawa. Jean, as she is more commonly known, and her brother were both working in Vancouver at the time, although not together.

The young single men were the first to be taken. Concerned about his parents, young Fred refused to leave until he knew his parents would be alright. He was concerned with how they would all keep in touch.

For refusing to come he was arrested by the R.C.M.P. and put behind bars. "We never saw him and didn't know where he was," said Jean. Later a censored letter came to us at Exhibition Park. Fred was in a concentration camp in Ontario. He was forced to wear a black uniform with a red circle on the back. Although they were told the red circle was a Japanese symbol, it soon became apparent the red circle made a good target.

Not until the end of the war was the family reunited.

Another story about the Japanese that might help understand the urgency of the evacuation has to do with the paranoia and the senseless propaganda at the time. Perry Ross was a member of the Pacific Coast Militia, a group of reservists who trained in preparation for the expected attack from Japan. There was an old school in Paldi they used as their training headquarters and where they stored their weapons.

One of the foolish rumors circulating at the time was that Japanese planes were dropping troops by parachute onto a mountain on the south side of the Cowichan River near Skutz Falls. The spot is about five miles from Paldi. The rumour was that Japanese troops were hiding in caves on the mountain.

"We had to go there once a week," recalled Perry, "climb up that mountain and inspect those caves to make sure the enemy was not there".

Chapter 35

THE WAR

The outbreak of W.W. II in 1939 brought with it a tremendous increase in activity. Local mills scrambled to keep up with the orders along with the shortage of help. Wages increased and overtime was common.

From the *Cowichan Leader*. Dated October 19, 1939:

Two Mills Running Extra Shifts; Ships Coming Steadily

Officials of Mayo Bros, Timber Co., which is working with two shifts a total of 19 hours a day, said this week that they have orders enough on hand to keep the mill running at least until next February. Of the 4,500,000-foot output for that period, about 3,500,000 is destined for Great Britain and about 500,000 million for Australia. The company has been shipping regularly.

Osborn Bay Wharf Company reports that there has been a "fair average booking" for this month, with two or three more ships expected before October 31, and four ships already booked in advance for November.

There is talk of ships being brought to Crofton under Government supervision for immediate transportation of what cargo is ready to points where it is needed. No official word has been received yet, however.

Hillcrest Lumber Company Ltd., recently started an extra half shift in its large mill. The E & N Railway Company has seven train crews on the Lake Cowichan-Crofton-Chemainus run this week to deal with a heavy volume of logs on their way to the sea. Four train crews is the normal number.

However the presence of enemy submarines in the Atlantic soon put a halt to shipping and as most of B.C.'s lumber was destined for Great Britain, some mills were forced to lay off many of their employees. A subsequent article in the *Cowichan Leader* dated November 16, 1939 reads as follows:

Mayo Bros. Timber Co. Expects to Keep Going At Full Speed

None of the 375 men employed by Mayo Bros. Timber Co. in woods and mill are to be laid off, if Mayo Singh, who owns the controlling interest, can avoid it. He says he will operate at a loss for a time, if transportation difficulties force him to do so, but he will try to keep his plant running at full capacity.

The 4,000,000 board feet which the mill's two shifts produce monthly are reaching market, and will continue to do

so, he declares, as long as the freighters ply between Canada and the United Kingdom. There has been no trouble with marketing, and prices remain satisfactory. Transportation is the only potential difficulty, as has been emphasized since the war began.

In order to keep running as long as possible, even if the supply of ships temporarily fails, Mayo and other companies are enlarging their storage facilities. A steam shovel is now excavating the foundations for an extension to the Mayo craneway. Lumber is piled on either side of the craneway, and an extension of the craneway simply means that the travelling crane can deposit lumber on so many more square feet of ground.

Use Barge For Storage

Should a freighter scheduled to call at Crofton for a parcel of United Kingdom lumber on November 20, say, be delayed until December 20, the lumber is stored beside the craneway to await its arrival; or upon the company barge at Crofton, which has a capacity of 1,000,000 board feet.

There are no demurrage charges to pay, as there would be if the lumber waited in box cars; the lumber is disposed of quite as efficiently as it if had been stored aboard the ship, and the mill can keep turning out new orders.

"It has orders enough for two months", said Mayo Singh, "and if all ship service were to cease for two months, starting today, and if no more orders came in, the mill would keep running for that period. Orders show no sign of ceasing to come, and neither do the ships", but Mayo Singh is taking no chances.

In March of 1940 the first B.C. produced lumber was transported by rail across Canada to the Atlantic Seaboard destined for the U.K. war effort.

From the *Cowichan Leader*. Dated March 7, 1940:
Local Mills Participate in First Rail Shipment

The Industrial, Wellburn, Hillcrest and Mayo Sawmills of this district all have carloads included in the first shipment of Trans-Canada export lumber cargo which has now gone forward and will be placed aboard ship at the Atlantic seaboard.

This first overland shipment totals four million feet and consists of a general specification of smaller lumber sizes. No timbers were included.

Mr. J.A. Humbird, Chemainus president of Seaboard Sales Co. Ltd., and Mr. H.R. MacMillan, head of the H.R. MacMillan Export Co. Ltd., representatives of the two chief lumber sales organizations in B.C., have been in Britain as members of a mission in connection with the export of B.C. lumber to the Old Country. They are expected back in about two weeks

and will have full details of arrangements made. Their organizations, it is reported from Vancouver, have shared equally in this initial four-million shipment.

Mr. G.E. Wellburn, who was in Vancouver on Saturday in connection with the new trans-Canada arrangement, says that there is no idea yet as to how extensive the shipments by that route will be, but he was able to gain some general information on the subject and has given The Leader the following information and comment:--

Depends On Handling

Additional trainloads will be arranged if it can be shown that the rail shipments can be made to synchronize with the ship dockings on the Atlantic, and so eliminate congestion in eastern terminals. Already there is a considerable quantity of eastern lumber (spruce, etc.) in storage at Atlantic coast docks; the eastern ports are unusually busy, and preference cargo space is being given to foodstuffs and war materials.

The rail rate set for export lumber to St. John is 82 cents a 100 pounds, which on rough lumber works out at about \$25 a 1,000 feet. This cost is being borne by the British Timber Control Board. A 70 cent rate has been established to St. Lawrence ports, where there are more and better dock facilities, but at present navigation is not open on the St. Lawrence, hence the first experimental trans-Canada shipment to St. John.

Overland Route Faster

It is interesting to point out that if all the lumber cut in British Columbia mills since war started could have been moved by rail across Canada for Atlantic shipment, there would now be practically no lumber in storage on the Pacific, as all lumber ordered from the United Kingdom could have moved across the Atlantic without the use of any additional boats. A lumber boat from B.C. to the United Kingdom can make only two or three trips a year, whereas crossing the Atlantic even in convoys, a ship can make double the number of trips.

It is important that the Canadian railroads have sufficient rolling stock and facilities to handle 50,000,000 feet of lumber a month across Canada, but it is not known yet what volume the eastern docks can handle.

In 1939 nearly one billion feet of B.C. lumber was shipped to the United Kingdom, averaging shipments of over 80 million feet a month. When the war started, this dropped in October to 65 million and then levelled off to a little over 50 millions a month, a volume much greater than is generally realized.

Chapter 36

IMMIGRATION AND THE VOTE

An illegal immigrant has no right, no privileges, no status. In 1938 there were 300 illegal East Indian men living and working in B.C. They had neither citizenship nor landed immigrant status and therefore could not send for their wives and children. These men had been working in Canada for many years separated from their loved ones. Some even owned their own businesses.

It should be remembered these men were all British subjects having come from a country within the British Commonwealth.

Many are the stories of East Indians sneaking across the border from the U.S.A. Others arrived in ones and two's most on a visitors permit. Some came as students then faded into the workforce. All wore beards and turbans making it difficult for identification.

Some who felt the immigration people were getting too close, left work for awhile on farms in the Interior for less pay. Jealousies and minor feuds among the men sometimes resulted in one revealing the whereabouts of another.

Meetow Singh, for many years president of the Paldi Sikh Temple, vividly recalled his arrival in Canada. Born in the village of Paldi in India, Meetow Singh knew what it was like to be separated from his father. His father, Thaker Singh, had come to Canada when Meetow was only a baby, to join his brother Doman Singh, Woods Foreman on Hill 60. In 1930 Mrs. Doman was allowed to join her husband in Canada and brought Meetow, then only 7 years old, claiming him as her own son.

Immigration officers, suspecting he was not really her son, pointed to Doman and asked the child, "who is this man?" Thia, meaning Uncle, said Meetow. "Ah ha", thought the officials, we've caught this one. "Oh no", said Doman "in the Punjab Thia and Papa mean the same thing". And so it was, another young boy sneaked into Canada, the land of promise.

It is miraculous how so many were able to come to Canada without being charged as illegal entrants or aliens. As there were no passports they were usually identified by the ship on which they had travelled. The shipping companies tried to keep a list of passengers names. The ships were referred to as the 500 ship or the 700 ship, etc. When they returned, the ships company would put a checkmark by their name. One means of entry, was to use the name of someone who had died or gone back to India. The newcomer would point to that name on the list and say "thats me".

Another way was to pretend not to be able to read English. They would stare at the list until they found a name with no check beside it and say "thats me".

One of Mayo's brothers, illegally in the country, wanted to bring his wife to Canada. He was forced to use the method of having his friend, a legal who had never married, claim her as his wife.

In 1938 the Canadian Government requested all East Indians to register their whereabouts. Many, afraid of deportation, failed to register. Under threat of deportation, a group of East Indian men including Mayo Singh, hired Mr. Hogg, a lawyer from Victoria, to take their case to Ottawa. He met with the Federal Immigration Minister where he lobbied for their landed immigrant status and although the Federal Officials agreed to consider the matter, the results were not encouraging.

Dr. Pandia

In 1939 with the arrival of a prominent law student from India, things began to change. Dr. Pandia was 34 years old when he arrived in Vancouver by ship. Having already made a name for himself in India through his association with Mahatma Gandhi's Freedom Movement and with Mrs. Margaret Basant, head of the Theosophical Society, which maintained all religions are equal. he was invited to lecture in Canada to speak about India and its problems.

Entering Canada on a visitors permit, he immediately ran into the anti-Asian, White Supremacy Movement. Fortunately, a group waiting to receive him saw him being taken off the ship and intervened to obtain his release.

In 1936 there were 1,000 East Indians in Canada, concentrated in Vancouver, Victoria and Paldi, and already one-third were threatened with deportation. The situation was tense as several young men had entered the country illegally, claiming to be sons of men already here.

In 1936, one jealous individual had informed the authorities that approximately 29 or 30 men were here illegally, forcing them into hiding. Hearing this, Pandia became angry.

Determined to help his people, Pandia came to the Duncan area where he met with the leaders of the Indian community already active in the fight for equal rights. "They were so afraid," he recalls, "they wouldn't even give me the fugitives' names". "I told them, I was going to Ottawa and told them, to send a delegation of at least three people to meet me there. I told them, "It is your duty, but I am prepared to help".

"My lecture tour was very successful," he continued. "I saw Canada for the first time and was very impressed with the Canadian people. I was treated very well."

After three months, he arrived in Ottawa. A delegation of Indian businessmen were there to meet him.

"I realized," said Pandia, "that the Supreme Court had already made its ruling, but decided to try anyway, if just to make some changes. I decided to see the Prime Minister. My Canadian friends arranged for me to meet P.M. McKenzie King."

He argued the Sikhs fought for Britain during the war, they were not criminals and none were on welfare. As they were already in the country, he asked the P.M. on compassionate grounds to consider and order-in-council.

"He asked me, How many?" said Pandia, "and I told him 29 or 30." It took six months, but we all stayed all that time Ottawa. I had to cancel my plans to go to England. "I kept telling them", he said, "its a very small problem."

Eventually they decided to pass an act of grace, allowing the 29 to stay.

"They asked us," recalls Pandia, "to go back to B.C., obtain the correct names and addresses of these men and take them to the immigration office." They wanted me to be responsible. So I came back and went all over looking for them. They were so frightened they wouldn't trust me.

"Slowly, through encouragement from the other mill workers, they were convinced. They came to my room at the Empress Hotel in Victoria and in Vancouver and Duncan. But when they came forward, there were close to 300.

"I asked the government to use the words approximately 29 in the Act. The government accused me of knowing there were so many. It was a difficult struggle, but we succeeded. All these men had jobs. Some even owned their own mills", Pandia said.

In 1946, Pandia married his Canadian wife, Muriel, who he *whom* fondly remembers as a great civil rights worker who believed in equal rights for workers regardless of race or colour. They lived a few years in India until Pandia was called to the Bar in England in 1954, then returned to B.C. because of Mrs. Pandia's failing health.

Dr. Pandia's tireless efforts have resulted in increased immigration, family reunification and voting privileges for all Asians. His influence has spread through most of the Indian community where his presence is requested at many religious and social functions, particularly among the families of the earlier immigrants.

Through the efforts of Dr. Pandia funded by East Indian businessmen, including Mayo Singh, the fear of deportation was removed and many families were reunited.

THE VOTE

Legal immigrant status and reuniting with their families was only the first step. The next step was obtaining the right to vote.

Asians were allowed to vote federally only if they had the right to vote provincially. Unlike most Canadian provinces, B.C., had not yet recognised Asians on the voters list.

This same group of East Indian men had been lobbying Ottawa for voting privileges with no results. However, when Dr. Pandia came, he suggested they try first at the Municipal level. Led by Dr. Pandia, a small group of businessmen arrived at a conference

of B.C. Mayors taking place at Harrison Hot Springs and asked permission to speak.

Dr. Pandia spoke on their behalf. Pointing to these mill owners, he explained how many years these men had worked in Canada, how many whites as well as Asians they employed among them and how they had contributed to the economy of B.C. As a result all Asians were given the right to vote in Municipal Elections after which the Provincial Government was forced to follow their example.

It was 1948, right after India gained its independence from Great Britain, that East Indians in Canada won the privilege of voting at all levels of Government. These same men who fought for voting privileges had been active in India's Freedom Movement.

Heestow was educated in the little school at Paldi, six miles west of Duncan, named after the counterpart in India. He took over the printing business when his uncle, Ganan Singh, became ill and could work no longer.

Under threat of deportation in 1952 a group of Indian businessmen led by Heestow, a lawyer from Victoria, to take their case to Ottawa. He met with the federal immigration minister where he lobbied for their landed immigrant status and although the federal officials agreed to consider the matter, the results were not encouraging.

In 1949 a prominent scholar arrived from South India as a visitor to the Cowichan Valley. He was interested in the plight of Indian immigrants and agreed to take up their cause. In 1949 Dr. Pandia and three other prominent men were sent to Ottawa as a delegation to lobby the government. It took two months of lobbying but they were successful in obtaining landed immigrant status for the 100. Following this breakthrough, the 300 applied for and were granted citizenship.

By this time Canada was deeply involved in WWII and the immigration system was closed down for a while. Dr. Pandia had gone as a visitor to the Cowichan Valley where he remained for the duration of the war.

In 1947 India gained its independence and the new government of India sent a mission abroad. The first high ranking Indian official to visit Canada was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Although most of the Indian population was in B.C., Patel was stationed in Ottawa.

Patel was determined to travel many times to Canada to plead for the right to bring in family members and brothers and sisters. Instead of this request, the federal government imposed a quota of 100 immigrants per year.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 37

MEETOW SINGH

Sixty four year old Meetow Singh remembers the difficulties many of his countrymen endured before the law recognized them. Born in the village of Paldi in India, Meetow Singh knew what it was like to be separated from his father. His father, Thacker Singh, had come to Canada when Meetow was only a baby, to join his brother Doman Singh who operated his own trucking business in Duncan. In 1930 Mrs. Doman was allowed to join her husband in Canada and brought Meetow, then only seven years old, claiming him as her son.

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Under threat of deportation in 1938 a group of Indian businessmen hired Mr. Hogg, a lawyer from Victoria, to take their case to Ottawa. He met with the federal immigration minister where he lobbied for their landed immigrant status and although the federal officials agreed to consider the matter, the results were not encouraging.

In 1940, a prominent scholar arrived from South India as a visitor to Canada. For no apparent reason he was detained for one week by the immigration officials. Because of this unpleasant experience, Dr. Pandia P.H.D., became interested in the plight of east Indian immigrants and agreed to take up their cause. In 1941 Dr. Pandia and three other prominent men were sent to Ottawa as a delegation to lobby the government. It took two months of lobbying but they were successful in obtaining landed immigrant status for the 300. Following this breakthrough, the 300 applied for and were granted citizenship.

Fiji By this time Canada was deeply involved in WWII and the immigration subject died down for a while. Dr. Pandia had gone as a visitor to Fiji where he remained for the duration of the war.

In 1947 India became an independent nation and the new government of India sent ambassadors abroad. The first high commissioner to Canada was Hardil Malik. Although most of the East Indian immigrants were in B.C., Malik was stationed Ottawa.

Because of this, it was necessary to travel many times to Ottawa to plead for the right to bring in family members including brothers and sisters. Instead of agreeing to this request, the Federal Government imposed quota system of 300 immigrants per year.

By 1953 the waiting list was so long a committee made up of 11 men and calling itself "the East Indian Canadian Citizenship Committee" was formed. Meetow Singh, Dr. Pandia and another known local man, Karm Singh, were part of that committee.

They stayed ten days in Ottawa but failed in their efforts. After their return to B.C. they approached the provincial Liberal Leader, Arthur Lang, who better understood the situation in B.C. He conferred with the Federal Fisheries Minister Jimmy Sinclair from Vancouver who in turn intervened with the Federal Immigration Minister. The Immigration Minister wrote to Arthur Lang advising him to tell the E.I. Committee to make a list of all the applications outstanding and to send it to Ottawa.

There were 850 names on the list they sent but only 115 relatives were allowed in.

Following the election of John Diefenbaker's government, the Hon. Davey Fulton was appointed Minister of Immigration. He met with the citizenship committee and asked how many applications were pending and was told 850. Fulton promised to process all 850. Meanwhile, others in the community were asking, if they filled out applications would they be included?

Meetow Singh recalls telling them, "it only costs 5 cents for a stamp, why not try"? The number of applications suddenly rose to 1200. Fulton instructed his staff to clear up the entire backlog.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chaper 38

NEWSPAPER REPORTS FROM THE 40'S

Clippings from the *Cowichan Leader*:

March 5, 1942

Japanese Dies in Hospital Following Logging Accident

As the result of a logging accident at Paldi, last Wednesday, Yashio Uchida, a Japanese, died in Duncan Hospital a few hours later. Uchida was caught between two logs and badly injured.

March, 1945 (BCL)

Mayo Company Founder Dead

Doman Singh, 55, Duncan, one of the founders of Mayo Lumber Co. Ltd., died on Vancouver Island this month. Born in India, he came to Canada in 1906. He is survived by his widow, three sons and two daughters.

July 26, 1945

Mill at Paldi Is Closed Until More Timber Available

One direct result of the disastrous forest fire at Rounds, which destroyed over 27,000,000 feet of bucked and felled timber, is the closing of Hunter Mill, Paldi, operated by Lake Logging Co. It will remain closed until more timber is available.

A good percentage of employees have transferred to Honeymoon Bay mill, where a double shift is in operation. The increased output will be useful in helping to relieve the cut-wood shortage which has developed in Duncan since the Paldi mill closed. Duncan City Council has requested the fuel administrator in Victoria to send a number of carloads of cordwood from Mesachie Lake.

Paldi School will remain open, as most of the families will remain in their quarters there.

May 9, 1946

Sikh Millworker, Father of Five, Dies from Fall

Dalep Singh, Paldi, died in Duncan Hospital on Monday night from injuries received on Friday afternoon when he fell from a lumber pile at Summit Lumber Co., Cowichan Lake Road, and struck his head on a railroad rail, according to police.

Picked up by fellow-workmen in an unconscious condition, he was rushed to the hospital, but all efforts to save his life failed and he died without fully regaining consciousness.

Mr. A.E. Green, coroner, conducted an inquest in Davis Funeral Service Parlour last evening.

The late Dalep Singh is survived by five children of school age who are living at Paldi. His wife died several years ago. He had been employed at various mills and logging camps in the district since coming to Canada from his native India some years ago.

August 27, 1946

Mayo Holdings Limited Company Incorporated

Mayo Holdings Ltd., Paldi, was incorporated last week, with a capitalization of \$1,000,000, from the holdings of Mayo Singh.

Several years ago, Mayo Singh disposed of most of his holdings at Paldi to the Lake Logging Co. He has built, however, a new and modern mill at McKay Lake, near Ladysmith, with sufficient timber reserved to maintain it for 20 years in full production.

The Mayo Company's head office and Mayo Singh's residence are still at Paldi.

Formerly of Punjab, India, Mayo Singh arrived in Canada in 1905, and after some years of work started a successful mill at Chilliwack. Later, he started another profitable venture in New Westminster, before coming to this district in 1917.

He purchased a tract of timber in the Sahtlam and Cowichan Lake area and built up a large enterprise. Duncan Hospital is among the many public institutions which have benefited from his philanthropy.

August 28, 1947

Mayo Singh Has New Yarding Unit At Operations

Mr. Mayo Singh, Paldi lumberman, has installed a new yarding unit, the first of its kind to be manufactured, at his large operations at Cassidy.

The new unit has six speeds with instantaneous change and is equipped with a skidding drum on the front end which enables the machine to serve as a slack line unit, as well as a straight yarder.

A number of other installations have been made at the operations, these including a diesel-powered truck with a trailer capable of hauling 18,000 feet of timber per trip, an electric bridge crane at the McKay Lake mill, a new carriage with electric set work and a new lumber carrier.

October 9, 1947

Paldi To Have Water System

Paldi is to have a gravity waterworks system. Work on the project has been inaugurated by Mayo Singh, of Mayo Bros. Timbers. Ltd.

The source of supply is in springs on the hills to the north of the community. For a number of years the residents of the mill centre have obtained their water from wells. Reports that some of the wells had become contaminated led Mr. Mayo to decide on the installation of a modern gravity system which would provide pure water.

Another improvement at Paldi is the recent surfacing of a portion of the road into the town from Cowichan Lake Road. Part of the road had previously been repaired by the B.C. Department of Public Works.

July 1, 1948

Paldi Not Ghost Town

With the completion last week of a main to the Mayo School, the small town of Paldi now has an efficient waterworks system, which supplies all houses, offices and other buildings in the community.

The system obtains its supply from ever-flowing springs of pure, sweet water to the west of the town.

In spite of the fact that the sawmill in the town has been closed for a number of years, Paldi is not a "ghost town".

A machine shop, which does work for Mayo Timbers Ltd., a store and offices give employment to 40 men. In the machine shop is an electric generating plant which supplies light and power to all buildings.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 39

THE 50'S AND 60'S

With the end of W.W.II, Japanese Canadians were allowed to return to the coast. In 1950 there were 8 Japanese households in Paldi. Mr. & Mrs. Urabe, "Geechan and Bachan", Grandpa and Grandma to the Mayo family, were back in the family fold.

The one big event of the year for the Paldi Japanese was New Years Day. Looking back on it now one realizes the expense and hours of work that went into this festival each year. The small community, with the houses close together, made house hopping easy. Each home had a display of traditional holiday foods, artistically arranged on the kitchen table.

Very few of the East Indian families took part in this festival as most were newcomers from India, but everyone else in Paldi came.

For the next 25 years, Paldi rang with the voices of children. As the immigration laws were relaxed, the married men living in the East Indian bunkhouse, were able to send for their wives and children. More houses were built to replace some beyond repair and telephones were installed.

The Paldi Sikh Temple and adjoining cookhouse were the gathering places for the East Indians. Their festivals and special days drew friends and relatives from all over B.C.

Through the late 50's and early 60's, Paldi enjoyed a baby boom. Although the mill was gone the men continued to work for Mayo Lumber Co., in the mill at Summit then later in the new mill at Nanaimo. The Japanese and the few remaining whites worked in the logging camp, first behind the Summit mill then farther west in the Robertson River camp.

The East Indian bunkhouse housed about 10 single men, but it was the mixed bag of children that gave Paldi its unique reputation. The two room school was enlarged to two classrooms and a gymnasium and a second teacher was engaged. Mrs. Bea Coulter, the principal, drove each day from Lake Cowichan and Mrs. Lillian Cole lived with her family at Paldi. These were the fun filled days. With about 35 children of all nationalities there was always something to do.

The children invented games such as bicycle tag, where if you were caught, you exchanged bikes with the one who tagged you.

They played stealing sticks till it was too dark to see, the older boys keeping the younger ones out of mischief.

During the summer they picked fir cones to sell at 50 cents a sack to the Government Nursery. They picked blackberries, raided cherry trees and built rafts on the swamps.

Paldi Jor Malla at the Sikh Temple, was always looked forward to as the youngsters ran in and out of the cookhouse several

times a day, wolfing down fresh hot roti and curried vegetables. The meal wasn't complete for these youngsters until they had enjoyed a mug of hot sweet Indian tea.

Author's note...As a mother of 5, I never worried where my children were. This one big happy family looked after each others children. My children enjoyed the unique childhood of one day eating Chinese food, another Japanese, sometimes East Indian and other times plain old white folks food.

During the lazy summer evenings the adults came out for walks. The women and small children keeping to the roads while the men, with all the young boys in tow, walked through the woods along the rough road to the resevoir.

Lest anyone think the children had all the fun, the adults too jumped at any excuse for a get together. Baby showers were common as was the annual Halloween bonfire, Christmas parties and all school functions. With such a close knit community, it was a common sight to see the women walking to a neighbors house for a short visit and a quiet cup of tea before the children came home from school.

A new modern mill had been built in Nanaimo in 1965. The office too was relocated to Nanaimo. Workers were taken by bus to the new mill. People began to move away, closer to their place of work.

In 1969, due to the dwindling number of school children, the Paldi school closed and those remaining were bussed to Lake Cowichan.

From 1965 to 1975 Paldi was a haven for Hippies. They took over every abandoned shack they could. These were pleasant friendly young people, mostly from Ontario, who desired nothing more than a quiet rural setting, and to be allowed to live their own way with their horses, dogs and goats.

All during the summer months they gathered in the evenings to play softball on the school field with the local youth.

By 1975 all the Japanese and Chinese had left and there were only a few East Indian families left in Paldi. By 1980 the "old times" were all gone and the 15 houses remaining were rented to a more transient clientelle

For a few years the Paldi school was rented to a private group but at the time of this writing it sits forlorn and boarded up.

A new Sikh Temple has been built in Duncan and although the Paldi Temple retains a resident priest there are fewer services than in previous years.

Joe Saroya, Mayo's son-in-law, continuous to live in the old family home and my husband Rajindi, Mayo's oldest son, and I with some our children continue to live in the home we built in 1957 high on a hill overlooking the village.

Chapter 40

FUNERALS AND THE PALDI CREMATORIUM

As the Sikh religion instructs, following a death the body is cremated and the ashes scattered in a flowing river. Due to the lack of facilities in Paldi, bodies were disposed of in a makeshift crematorium alongside the mill burner, using hot ash from the burner. Clarence Martin recalled having to shut down the mill for a day so as to stop scrap going to the burner. As the burner cooled down the men would build a funeral pyre right up against the burner, then using a long pike pole, pull some of the burning slabs out to start the fire. Unless the deceased died in hospital, there was no need for the services of an undertaker and in these early days, they rarely used a coffin.

In 1946 a small brick structure was constructed alongside the road leading out of Paldi. By 1954 the Cowichan Valley East Indian Community had grown sufficiently to warrant the building of a much larger and more appropriate structure where the mourners could stand inside out of the weather. A 21 acre tract of land was purchased three miles east of Paldi on Cowichan Lake Road.

By 1980 most of the Sikh families previously living in Paldi had moved closer to their places of work in Duncan, Ladysmith and Nanaimo and although Nanaimo has a modern facility serving the general public, the Sikh families prefer to use the crematorium near Paldi.

Families as far north as Nanaimo were canvassed for funds to extend the structure, adding washrooms and a fresh water well.

The facility and property on Old Lake Cowichan Road was owned by Paldi Temple and Lake Cowichan Temple Societies up to 1987 when Sikh Temples at Nanaimo 1974 and at Duncan 1985 were built. Their names were added to the title for wide range of funds and management. It is itself a separate Society under the name of Cowichan Valley East Indian Crematorium Society, with its own funds, funded by and controlled by all four Temple Societies.

The building is constructed of cement bricks and is just one large room with a few benches for the women. The windows are covered with heavy wire mesh to discourage vandals and the space containing the huge burner is enclosed by a wrought iron gate which is kept padlocked. Against one wall is a barrel stove to provide some warmth during the cold winter months.

The Sikh funeral service begins at the funeral chapel in Duncan, with just the immediate family present. The larger gathering of mourners wait at the crematorium site for the family to arrive behind the hearse. The Sikh priest travels with the coffin and upon arrival at the crematorium the casket is opened while each of the mourners files past. The casket is then closed and the congregation stands while the priest offers the last rites according to the Sikh scriptures. The coffin is then

placed inside the burner by the men and the oldest male members of the family ignites the flame. Following this emotional ceremony the entire congregation drives to the Sikh Temple where the priest conducts a short but consoling service which concludes a very difficult day.

Funeral chapel workers have very little to do with the death of a Sikh. If the deceased is a woman, the senior women of the family travel to the chapel where they bathe and dress the body then tie a red ribbon in her hair in preparation for cremation. Likewise if a man has died the senior men of the family perform this duty covering his head with a turban before cremation.

Three days after cremation the ashes are gathered by the men of the family and usually scattered in a fast flowing river. The Cowichan River, four miles south of Paldi has carried the ashes of many of the Sikh pioneers. The Sikh people do not normally erect a headstone.

At the short temple service following the cremation the GRANTHI, or priest, begins reading the holy book out loud in the presence of the mourners. Upon completion of the first part the congregation disperses but the priest continues the reading the rest of the week. One week after the funeral, all who know the family, from near and far, gather at the temple for the conclusion of the reading. This part of the reading is preceded by the singing of hymns or KEERTAN by the priest and his assistants. *preceded.*

If the deceased was a young person who met an untimely death the service with the closing prayers is fairly short. However, if the deceased lived a long, full life this short ceremony is replaced with a three day AKHAND PATH, similar to a JOR MALLA which begins Friday morning and ends with lunch on Sunday.

Chapter 41

MR. AND MRS. MAYO

A summary of the life of Mayo Singh would not be complete without mentioning his roots. Born in the village of Paldi, District Hoshiarpur in East Punjab, India in the year 1888, he was the son of a village farmer. His father Bhulla Singh and his mother Relli Kour, said farewell to their 17 year old son in 1906 when he made the decision to join his older brother Ganea, already working in B.C.'s lumber industry. He landed first in San Francisco, took a job on the R/R and quickly worked his way up the coast to join his brother working near Chilliwack.

He began his career as a lumber stacker.

With his arrival in 1917 at the spot that has been renamed Paldi, after his home village, his life took on a new meaning. Deciding it was time to marry and begin a family, he built a fine house for himself, then in 1925 said goodbye to his co-workers and returned to India to marry the girl chosen for him by his parents.

Following is an excerpt from a Victoria newspaper article in an interview with A.O. Tate:

"My father was a farmer and my wife's father was a farmer. While I was out here my father and mother made an engagement for me. It's not like Canada where a fellow picks his own girl. In India the father and mother find the girl or boy".

Mayo's father and mother sent him a picture of the girl. He was impressed by her looks. "She was a beautiful girl. I got a nice photograph of myself and sent it to India. My father and mother showed the picture to her father and mother and they must have thought I was alright, because her father said, "okay, you send the boy".

I didn't know anything about her. You're happy if you get the best. But if you don't, you have to take what you get. I went back to India and we were married. For six months we lived at the house of my father and not once did I mention to her that I owned a sawmill, that I had wealth. Finally I said I should be getting back to Canada. For all she knew, I was going back to be a laborer, but she said that where I went she would go.

The fact there were only two or three East Indian women in the camp that was to be her permanent home made no difference to Bishan Kaur. She quickly made friends with the Japanese and white women already settled there and continues to be fondly remembered by those who knew her.

Mayo's first child, a girl Joginder Kour, was born in 1927, seven others would follow in quick succession. With the birth of each child Mayo donated a full days pay to the hospital. Because of his many philanthropies through the years, Mayo was regarded as a virtual Santa Claus by more than a dozen institutions in Victoria and on the lower mainland. There is a Scholarship in his name at the University of Victoria, also a hospital in India and an auditorium in a college near his birthplace.

Another of his pet projects was the Queen Alexandra Solarium for crippled children then at Mill Bay near Duncan. Arrangements were made with A.P. Slade Wholesalers in Victoria, to have all the bills for fresh fruit and vegetables for the Solarium sent to Mayo.

Life in Canada for Mayo and his wife Bishan Kaur included much sadness. Perhaps this explains his generous donation to local hospitals. There are many who remember the death of his six year old daughter Rajinder Kour, who succumbed to burns. Miss A. Fergeson, a former teacher in Paldi, describes her as a beautiful child, as pretty as a picture. She had come home from school that day and finding no one at home attempted to light the stove herself. Her clothing caught fire and not realizing the danger, ran outside for help. Her death was a terrible blow to Mayo.

Lum Chew, a former employee in the mill, recalled Mayo's grief. "He called her his 100 lb. baby", said Lum. "Following her death he kept a picture of her in his bedroom window".

Another child, Joginder Singh died of Spinal Meningitis in St. Joseph's Hospital in Victoria. Tom Tagami, a youngster in Paldi at the time remarked "it was the longest funeral procession I have ever seen, all the way from Victoria and so many people". The whole village mourned the deaths of Mayo's two children.

Through several interviews, a picture of Mrs. Mayo as a young woman begins to evolve. She spoke no English at first then soon picked up the international dialect unique in Paldi among its various nationalities. Said Tom Tagami, "She was outstanding, such a handsome woman. Very quiet, always well dressed and wore a big Indian Shawl. She wasn't snobbish or anything like that but there was something about her. In fact both her and Mrs. Kapoor, I guess you could say they had class. My mother, Mrs. Tagami, made dresses for both Mrs. Mayo and Mrs. Kapoor".

Like her husband, Bishan Kaur too is remembered for her generosity. "Come to Paldi", she would say, "my husband will give your husband a job". Rajinder Kaur Manik of Duncan, remembers her as being "so very friendly. She was always inviting me to stay overnight". Rajinder Kaur lived in Duncan with no East Indian women near by. At times she was very lonely and looked forward to attending functions at the Paldi Sikh Temple where she could mix with women of her own nationality. When she hesitated saying "but I have children" Mrs. Mayo would answer, "that's no problem, I have a woman to help in the house. She will wash the diapers. Bring the children too."

Others who remembered Mrs. Mayo related she was the only one in the village with a washing machine. She was always inviting others to use it free of charge.

The Mayo home soon became the gathering place for all the East Indian women. Mrs. Mayo thrived on company. The women and small children gathered daily for tea and local gossip in Mayo's comfortable living room. Mayo Singh is reported to have complained one day "can't you women find anything better to do with your time"? To which his wife simply smiled her sweet smile, telling the others "don't pay any attention to him".

She also enjoyed picnics. Many people, some complete strangers, will remember the Mayo family arriving at a popular swimming hole on the Cowichan River with a cardboard box full of sandwiches to which she invited everyone to partake. Mr. Mayo supplied boxes of fresh fruit.

Again they were a common sight on a fine day at Beacon Hill Park in Victoria and always the annual 24th of May picnic in Nanaimo.

When Mayo and his wife went shopping in Victoria, they shopped for others as well. There are many stories of Mrs. Mayo buying up childrens clothes, sheets, towels and bolts of material and bringing them back to Paldi so that others need go no farther then her home to shop for their needs. It is the custom among the Sikhs for the mother of the bride or groom, to give a length of cloth to each of the women who helped with the wedding. Many is the time Mrs. Mayo supplied all the gifts, telling her friends, "don't worry, pay whenever you can".

25 YEARS IN CANADA

On July 22, 1934 a Victoria newspaper carried the following article

Mayo Singh, president of the Mayo Lumber Company and the Kapoor Lumber Company, operating on Vancouver Island, is today celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his arrival in Canada. Mr. Singh was born and raised in Punjab, India, and came to Canada as a young man.

By dint of hard work and able executive ability, gained by experience, Mr. Singh has gradually built up a lumbering industry on Vancouver Island employing over 600 men, with modern machinery operating at full capacity. His company is now exporting to the United Kingdom and Japan.

As a mark of appreciation of his success in Canada and of the services tendered to him and members of his family by the institution, Mr. Singh yesterday made a cash donation to St. Joseph's Hospital here, adding to his previous gifts to the hospital in the hope that the gifts may help others, less fortunate, in these times.

The photograph of Mr. Mayo Singh, Mrs. Singh and family was taken outside their summer home at Duncan.

On Sept. 13, 1935, the magazine section of the *Vancouver Province* carried the following story - Cowichan Lumber King by John Logan.

Although he is one of the wealthiest men in the district, Mayo Singh lives very simply. He may be seen driving not an expensive limousine but a heavy truck through the streets of Duncan and nothing in the way he dresses at such times proclaims the fact he is owner of a large timber company. His house at Mayo (before name was changed) is a comfortable one but not at all pretentious. Mayo has probably given more money to the local Sikh Temple than he has spent on his own dwelling.

The tall flagpole which looks out over the Strait of Juan de Fuca from Beacon Hill Park is yet another example of Mayo's fondness for his adoptive country.

In June of 1936 the *B.C. Lumbermen* reported

"through the generosity of Mayo Singh, head of the Kapoor and Mayo Lumber Companies, a 165' flag pole has been donated to the Victoria City Council for erection in Beacon Hill Park".

A second pole, to replace the aging original is still standing. The second one donated by his family in memory of their father.

The following article is taken from the February 14, 1948, addition of the *Victoria Daily Times*:

Plays Santa Claus All Year Round by Aileen Campbell

He is Santa Claus all year round to nearly a dozen institutions in Victoria and on the lower part of Vancouver Island.

And just like Santa Claus, none of those who benefit by his gifts and few of those who administer them, have ever met him.

He always seems to know just what the Institution is in need of - whether it's asparagus out of season as a special treat or warm blankets and flannelette for babies' clothing, it arrives at the opportune moment.

The name of this Santa Claus - Mayo Singh, a Sikh mill owner who has made his home at Paldi, near Duncan, since 1917. A quiet modest, middle-aged man with a cheerful smile and friendly manner, he drives into Victoria two and three times a week, conducts his business in an hour or two and is gone again.

An interview with him was bound to be a hurried affair and while he was quite willing to discuss Paldi or mill work or his early years in Canada - his philanthropies had to be learned from others. But they were not hard to find.

GOOD WORDS FOR HIM

"Mayo Singh," they would repeat the name after it was

mentioned, and then launch into a very enthusiastic eulogy of a man they had in a number of cases never met, but of whose kindnesses and generosity they had much experience.

Mayo Singh, who seeks no public acclaim for the good he has done, and whose reasons for his various philanthropies are surmised, by those who benefit, and not given by himself.

Unlike Santa Claus, his gifts arrive not only on Dec. 25, but in every month of the year from January to December, according to administrators and officials of the various institutions he has helped for years.

St. Joseph's Hospital and Royal Jubilee in Victoria; King's Daughters' Hospital at Duncan and the General Hospital at Ladysmith, Chemainus and Nanaimo are all recipients of Mayo's regular gifts which usually take the form of much needed blankets, bedding, linen and sundry other items.

His last gift to the Children's Aid Society was 250 yards of flannelette for babies' clothing.

For the past three years he has supplied all the vegetables and fruit used at the Queen Alexandra Solarium. They merely order what they want from a wholesaler in Victoria and the bill is sent to Mayo. Last New Year's he sent 1,000 pounds of turkey and 1,000 pounds of potatoes for a New Year's dinner for staff and all the patients of the two Victoria hospitals.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

NATURALLY KIND

None can say exactly what prompts Mayo's generosity, other than that they feel it is his "naturally kind nature." His love for children, however, is the keynote of his philanthropy in the minds of many who administer his charity.

As if bearing out that impression are Mayo Singh's own remarks about his own brood of four boys and two girls, the oldest of, *whom* is 20.

"They are very good company," says Mayo flashing a big smile.

Mayo's own vital statistics are that he was born in a place called Paldi in the Punjab in India. He came to Canada in 1906 and to Vancouver Island from the mainland in 1917.

He settled near Duncan and started a mill in 1917. When he asked the postal service for a post office at the community they decided to call it Mayo, but on learning there was another post office of that name, it was impossible.

"They asked me where I was born and if I would like to have the community named after my birthplace," he said. "I have been in the lumbering business all my life and like Vancouver Island very much."

There are about 15 to 20 white families at Paldi and 14 or 15 Sikh families. There is a Sikh Temple for the community. Mayo went back to India in 1925 and came back in 1927 with his bride. He has been contributing to hospitals since his first child was born. Mr. and Mrs. Mayo have lost two children and there are six living. Several of the children were born at St. Joseph's Hospital.

GIVING FOR 25 YEARS.

He has been contributing to institutions in Victoria and the lower Island area for nearly a quarter of a century and perhaps the man who knows of his philanthropy best, is one who prefers to remain anonymous. He was however, been Mayo's emissary over the years,

"I have known Mayo for many years and I think his great love for children underlies his generosity," he said.

"He usually asks me what the various institutions need and I make inquiries. He then has the goods needed sent out through me. He always gives to those who can't help themselves."

He told how Mayo planned that each youngster at the Solarium should have an individual gift from him. The anonymous emissary got in touch with the Solarium auxiliary and members picked out the gifts according to the age, sex and tastes of the youngsters.

As can well be imagined, though the children did not know him, Mayo was a pretty popular fellow as the gifts were brought from the Christmas tree to the children.

"Why he's just a walking Santa Claus" said Mrs. R.D. McCullough of the Solarium Junior League, "I don't know when he started giving things to the Solarium, but it seems as if he has always done it."

"He is always doing endless nice things for us," she said. "If any new delicacy comes on the market, dates when they are hard to get, the first strawberries, he sends some up. That's the way he does business."

STARTED WITH FIRST BABY

Sister Superior of St. Joseph's Hospital told of Mayo Singh's long association with the hospital and his constant generosity. His gifts to the hospital started in the early 30's, when Mrs. Mayo had one of her children at St. Joseph's. Mayo sent gifts of fruit in summer and at Christmas presented the hospital with a dozen pairs of blankets. He has been doing it ever since.

"Ten years ago, he gave the covered walk from the nurses' home to the hospital, which is known as the Mayo Singh Walk," said Sister Superior. "It has been a great convenience especially on wet days. We are able to light the path since it has been covered, where before it was in darkness at night."

delete

She told also of the time Mayo read, in the paper where Sister Mary Peters, a nursing sister for 30 years and at the hospital for 50, was celebrating her golden anniversary as a sister.

"Through his emissary he found out what we needed and the result was a gift of two bedspreads for each year of the sister's service, a total of 100 bedspreads," said Sister Superior.

"He takes care of his own people and is a big man among them".

She said that following the annual festival at the Sikh Temple, gifts of fruit are sent to the hospital patients. Mayo furnished a five-bed ward in the T.B. Villa when it was first opened.

"He is modest with his giving. He is a naturally kind man and one who recognizes that he has been blessed with good fortune", the sister said. "He is a consistent benefactor and it is an outstanding characteristic of him, 'that he has kept up his charity so steadily and for so long a period."

"Mayo is keeping up an old tradition that has fallen into disuse," Sister Superior added. "In the early days it was a common thing for people to give regular gifts of food and bedding to the hospitals."

Gifts come during any month of the 12 and just when they are most needed, according to an official at Royal Jubilee Hospital, who said he felt that Mayo was a man of wide sympathies and one who did not limit his gifts to any one type of charitable endeavour.

"You must know Mayo Singh very well," Miss Lena Mitchell Director of Nursing at Royal Jubilee was asked, after she had told of Mayo's generosity to the hospital for many years.

"As a matter of fact I have never seen him," Miss Mitchell replied, "Oh, we have written him many times and I have sent personal notes thanking him for his kindness, but I've never met him. I wouldn't know him if we passed on the street."

She said he seemed to see neither the recipients of his gifts nor the men and women who administer them.

"However, his name is a household word at the Jubilee though 99 per cent of the people have never met him. He is outstanding in his philanthropy," she said.

Mrs. Ada Barner, supervisor of the B.C. Protestant Orphanage said that Mayo was a steady donor to the linen shower and pound parties and frequently sent up linens and towels. She said that he never came to the home, but always sent the gifts with someone else.

Family Welfare and Children's Aid Society consider Mayo Singh one of their best friends, according to Miss Mildred Wright, acting superintendent.

"He never forgets us at Christmas and this year gave us bolts of flannelette for babies clothing. It was wonderful during the war years, when we just couldn't obtain flannelette for the diapers, the gifts always came.

Miss Wright, who has been with the society for the past seven years, said that Mayo has been sending gifts since before she came.

Down at Ryan-Wilson, Harry Woodston, Manager, says he has been told by Mayo to fill the order for produce for everything the Queen Alexandra Solarium asks for. He adds, "that whenever Mayo happens to be down and sees something new in season, he always orders so many cases to be sent up to the Solarium".

Mayo Singh, is a very busy Santa Claus, even in the middle of June.

He is remembered to have said - "Yes, I'm a wealthy man, but no matter how much you have, you can only eat three meals a day and sleep for eight hours. The rest isn't important."

In 1952, when Mayo realized his wife's health was failing fast, he took her on a final visit to her homeland. Her elderly father, as well as other members of her family still lived in her home village of Kalra in the Punjab. *wife's*

A close friend of the Mayo family told of coming home from Victoria High School one day to find her own mother sitting on the back steps sobbing. "My sisters' dead, my sisters' dead," she wailed. Word had just been received from India that her dear friend Bishan Kaur Mayo, had died while visiting her family in India. It was April, 1952. She was only 42 years old. *sister's*

Mayo Singh passed away quietly in his own bed at his home in Paldi, February 23 1955. He was 64.

Chapter 42

PALDI MILL CLOSED

Logging operations on Hill 60 had extended nearly as far as Lake Cowichan. Track was laid all along the route. Mayo looking for more timber to keep the mill running, had signed a deal with the CPR to log the Meades Creek area northwest of Lake Cowichan.

In order to reach the logging site, the track laying crew were faced with blasting their way through huge rock bluffs. This one piece of track alone is remembered as an extraordinary feat of track laying and earned Mayo the distinction of owning the longest private R/R in BC.

Sadly, when the crew were only about four miles from their destination, Mayo called a halt to the track laying.

War had taken its toll. Not enough men to operate both the mill and the logging operations. In 1941 all the Japanese had been forcibly removed to the interior of BC.

As well, Mayo was seriously considering hauling by truck rather than rail. Falling had already started on the Meades Creek claim where the logs were hauled by truck, dumped into Cowichan Lake, towed across the lake to the loading works then loaded onto rail cars to be hauled to the mill. Truck logging was the way of the future.

At this same time Lake Logging Ltd., building a mill at Honeymoon Bay, was looking for timber and the Americans were trying to get a foothold in BC's lumber industry. An American, H.W. Hunter of Rounds & Hunter, was a main shareholder in Lake Logging. The Meades Creek stand would be ideal for their purpose. Logs could be dumped in the lake and towed to the mill.

Perhaps the main reason for his change of heart was the purchase of another logging claim at Blind Lake near Cassidy, South of Nanaimo. His new mill was already under construction at Blind Lake.

In 1942 Mr. Hunter approached Mayo. He was interested only in the timber at Meades Creek. They got to talking and the first thing anyone knew they had closed a deal for the timber at Meades Creek and a lease on the Paldi mill until their mill at Honeymoon Bay was completed.

That same year Mayo Bros. Timber Co. was reorganized as Mayo Lumber Co. In 1943 logging ceased at Paldi.

In 1945 a disastrous forest fire destroyed 27 million feet of bucked and felled timbers. The Paldi mill ceased to operate and most of the employees transferred to Honeymoon Bay.

Mayo had other things on his mind. With the mill at Blind Lake almost ready, he was forced to make another decision. The Number 5 coal mine at Cassidy nearby, had electric power. Realizing it would be cheaper to operate a mill powered by

electricity, he abandoned the Blind Lake site and built a more modern mill at McKay Lake close to Cassidy's No. 5 mine taking advantage of the electricity there.

The closure of the Paldi mill had little effect on village life. The Paldi school remained open and the men were bussed to their jobs.

After disposing of most of his holding at Paldi; Mayo Holdings Ltd., was incorporated August 1946. The company head office remained at Paldi as Mayo and his family continue to live there.

Closer to home, yet another mill was in the works. Earlier Mayo had formed a partnership with a man named Sam Cowan who had worked at the Sooke Lake operation. They called their company Summit Logging & Lumber Co., and they logged the area on top of the Malahat near Spectacle Lake. A small sawmill was built there as well.

Then in 1946, realizing the mill at Paldi would no longer be practical and the Malahat area would soon be depleted Mayo, Cowan and a third partner, Alec Sereth, keeping the name Summit Logging & Lumber Co., built another mill at Charter Siding on the E & N R/R half way between Paldi and Lake Cowichan.

The small community of Summit grew up around the new mill. Other workers from Paldi & Duncan were bussed to the mill. Logs were hauled by truck from the hills on the far side of the Cowichan River.

In 1947 Mayo bought out Cowan and Sereth and was once again sole owner of the mill.

Chapter 44

THE MARRIAGE OF RAJINDI MAYO TO JOAN TAYLOR

It may seem strange for me to say that I met my husband through the Alcohol Anonymous Association but when I explain it will seem right.

My father James H. Taylor had been an alcoholic from as far back as I could remember. He and my mother operated Taylor's Red & White Store in South Wellington, 7 miles south of Nanaimo. The war years had been particularly difficult for him and realizing the only way he would beat this habit, would be to sell the business and move away. He bought a small farm on Somenos Lake east of Duncan.

As fate would have it, he was partnered with Leo Benard a machinist from Paldi. Leo's wife Marian had served as private nurse to Mrs. Mayo during several illnesses. My husband Rajindi often spent his Saturdays and Sundays at the Benards home.

One fateful day in July of 1948, Leo came to visit my father and brought Rajindi with him. A friendship sprang up between him, my brother and myself. One which has survived many pitfalls.

At first Mr. & Mrs. Mayo were kindly towards me until they realized ours was more than a simple friendship. My parents too began to worry that our relationship was much too serious. As both sets of parents had forbidden us to meet we began our system of lies and deceit so that we might meet.

In the fall of 1950 I became pregnant. His parents took him away from Duncan in a bid to keep us apart. My mother had died 6 months earlier so my father sent me to a foster home in Nanaimo where I remained until the baby was born.

What I hadn't counted on was that my father had instructed the Social Worker that under no circumstances was I to be allowed to keep the baby. My baby was literally taken away from me and given for adoption.

Later when we had both returned to Duncan we began secretly to meet again. Determined to keep us apart his parents asked him to accompany them to India where Mrs. Mayo, already in poor health, hoped to visit her father one last time.

In one final bid to keep us apart his dying mother persuaded him to marry a girl from India. Three days after the ceremony she died. Rajindi stayed to perform the duties of oldest son then leaving his father and bride behind returned to Canada, to me.

The unfortunate marriage in India was annulled and we were married secretly in Port Angeles, Washington, April 27, 1953.

It took a few months for Mayo Singh to accept the fact we were married but as he had lost his own wife and he too was in

failing health, he allowed things to stand. Although he accepted my husband back into the family business I saw very little of him. We lived the first year in the family's weekend home in Victoria with my husband commuting daily to work with his father. Following the birth of our son Darshan we moved into one of the company houses next to the mill at Summit. Less than 2 years after we were married, on February 23, 1955, Mayo Singh passed away in his own bed in his beloved Paldi. At 21 years of age, my husband Rajindi, took over the reins of his father's business. I bore him a daughter and three more sons after we moved to a new home in Paldi.

There is a happy ending to this story. On March 20, 1987, just as I finished decorating my youngest sons 21st birthday cake, the phone rang. It was Linda McDonald from the Canadian Adoptees Reform Association, to tell me she had found our first born son.

Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Chapter 44

THE DEATH OF MAYO SINGH

The funeral procession moved slowly out of Duncan and turned west onto Lake Cowichan Road. My husband Rajindi was driving the lead car directly behind the hearse. Sitting next to him in the front seat a kaleidoscope of emotions fought for prominence in my mind. I had no way of knowing exactly how many cars there were behind us, only that there were many.

As we came around the corner commonly referred to as Richardson's gravel pit onto a straight stretch of road I noticed an oncoming car pull over to the side of the road. The driver, a middle aged white man wearing a hat, removed his hat and solemnly bowed his head in respect. That simple show of respect in February 1956 of a white man to an elderly East Indian, touched my heart, caused the tears to well up in my eyes and changed my life forever. With one simple gesture, much of the hurt inside me vanished. My father-in-law, Mayo Singh, whom I barely knew had passed away peacefully in his own bed 3 days earlier.

The simple service at the funeral chapel recited in the Punjabi language and the almost hysterical weeping of the women were strange and alien to me. And what was to come next was even more so.

When we reached the Sikh Temple in Paldi I was startled to see such a large crowd waiting outside in the snow. The coffin was carried up the steps and into the Temple. It had been arranged that only the immediate family would be allowed inside.

I stood quietly at the back watching what to me was a strange but solemn ceremony, little did I know that this same simple service would one day seem right and ordinary to me.

Following the family viewing and simple prayers, the coffin was again carried outside and placed on a tressel table in order that the huge crowd, many of them Whites, Japanese and Chinese, could file past, to pay their final respects to this great man.

The coffin was again placed in the hearse which led the solemn procession through the tiny village of Paldi, past the family home then up a narrow road to a quiet spot where a funeral pyre had already been built.

Again the hysterical weeping and a few prayers, then my husband Rajindi, oldest son of Mayo Singh, lit the fire which would bring an end to an illustrious career.

Chapter 45

MY OWN RECOLLECTIONS OF PALDI

My first visit to Paldi was to meet my future Mother-in-law. The year was 1948 and I was 17 years old. My husband to be Rajindi and I had been dating for almost a year when one day he said, "My mother wants to meet you".

Arriving at the Mayo family home, I was led in through the back door to an empty kitchen, however, I could hear voices coming from the living room. Rajindi went to the living room door and summoned his mother who came into the kitchen all smiles. She greeted me in her broken English which was not too difficult to understand and patted me on the head. This I soon learned was the show of affection for children and young people.

She asked me about my mother and father, how many brothers and sisters I had and then because of shyness on both our parts, as we were about to leave, she reached into a kitchen cabinet and drew out a box of chocolates. Smiling broadly she pressed the box of chocolates into my hands. "No, no" I exclaimed, "I can't take this". "Yes", she replied, "you take, you take". Rajindi who had been standing next to me during this brief meeting said, "Take it, she wants you to have it".

I must have been quite red faced when I left the Mayo family home, but also very touched by the warm hospitality of this kind woman.

Back in the car, my husband to be, explained it was the custom of the East Indian people to give sweets to someone visiting their home for the first time. It was my first experience of the warm and wonderful ways of showing affection by these people who would one day be my family too.

When I asked about the chatter coming from the other room where Mrs Mayo had been sitting prior to our arrival, he explained it was the East Indian women of the village who came every afternoon to visit and take tea with this friendly woman who so enjoyed having friends over. I would soon learn that the Mayo family home was and always had been a gathering place and even those who came to Paldi to attend a service at the Sikh Temple would stop in for a brief visit before returning to their own homes.

That same day I was taken over to the old machine shop, the only building still operating on the old mill site. In 1948, the old mill generator still provided the electricity in the village homes. I learned from the men working there that the power was shut off at 11 p.m. when the man on night shift went home. It was turned on again when the men of the day shift arrived next morning.

Shortly after my first visit the village was serviced with all power when BC Power ran lines into each home.

Fortunately for me, my first few visits to Paldi were at a time when the board sidewalks were still in use. It was great fun running along these boardwalks, raised six or eight inches above the muddy ground, listening to the hollow sounds my shoes made.

The houses were all small and built of cheap clapboards. There seemed to be no organized layout but rather several clusters of houses joined together by the boardwalks and although they now enjoyed full electrical service the only telephones were in the company office and one in Mayo Singh's house.

The old Japanese school near the playing field of the present public school served as a gathering place. The Christian Sunday School teachers used it Sunday mornings and my husband, who was sixteen at the time, operated a makeshift movie theatre Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

It was common practice in the 40's for groups or organizations to hold regular film nights. I remember even in the 50's attending movies on a Sunday, in the old Canadian Legion Hall in Duncan.

But the Paldi theatre was definitely unique. Rajindi and his friends, with the help of Leo Bennard the shop mechanic, chose the films from a National Film Board catalogue, then drove into Duncan twice a week to pick up the films from the bus depot.

A makeshift projection room had been constructed about five feet above the main floor and it was from here that Rajindi and his helpers showed the films. The hall boasted backless wooden benches and a wood stove fashioned from an old barrel.

Adults paid 25 cents and children only 10 cents to attend the twice weekly shows. I distinctly remember one white woman who lived across the road from the show hall demanding her 25 cents back because she had already seen that picture.

On one of the benches at the back of the room Rajindi's younger brother Gindi, set out boxes of chocolate bars, packages of salted peanuts and bottles of pop he brought from the company store. The residents of Paldi had a real movie theatre, concession stand and all.

Mayo Singh was one of the first persons in the Cowichan valley to possess a TV set. Soon Mayo's T.V. replaced the bi-weekly movies in the old hall. Almost every evening and Saturday afternoon, the youngsters of Paldi gathered on the living room floor in front of his TV.

Rajindi and I were married in April 1953. Four years later March 23, 1957, we moved into our present home overlooking the village of Paldi. Both Mayo Singh and his wife had died.

For the next 25 years Paldi ran with the voices of children of many nationalities. As the immigration laws were relaxed the men from the East Indian bunkhouse were able to send for their wives and children. More houses were built to replace some beyond repair and telephones were installed.

Through the late 50's and the 60's, Paldi enjoyed a baby boom. The mill was gone and R/R logging had been replaced by trucking. The men continued to work for Mayo Lumber Co., in the mill at Summit and in the logging camps first on the hills behind the Summit mill then farther west in the Robertson River Camp.

Although all the women were friendly with each other the East Indian women kept to their own culture visiting in one *another's* another's homes or on weekends gathering at the Sikh Temple and cookhouse. In 1960 there were three Chinese Families in Paldi, the Low's, the Yip's and the Loo's, eight Japanese, four whites and ten East Indians.

The East Indian bunkhouse, the only bunkhouse still in use, housed an average of ten men. But it was the mixed bag of children that gave Paldi its unique reputation. The one room school was enlarged to two classrooms and a gymnasium and a second teacher was engaged. Mrs. Bea Coulter, principal, drove each day from Lake Cowichan and Mrs. Lillian Cole lived with her family in Paldi.

These were the fun days for me and my family. With about 35 children of all nationalities, there was always something to do.

Paldi has always enjoyed more snow than the towns closer to the east coast of the island, and although this was a new experience for the children from India everyone enjoyed making snowmen, snowhouses, sledging, and even ice skating on the frozen swamps. As Paldi lies in a little hollow, the children were still skating long after other communities had thawed.

As a mother of five, I never worried where my children were. This one big happy family looked after each other's children. My *other's* children enjoyed the unique childhood of one day eating Chinese food, another Japanese, other times East Indian and when all else failed plain old white folks food.

When the snow was gone they invented games like bicycle tag, where if you got caught you exchanged bikes with the one who tagged you.

Talking with some of the young people who grew up in Paldi, I was reminded of the feeling of confidence I enjoyed knowing my children were in a safe environment and being looked after by an entire community.

Pugie and Jupoo, two brothers, as the oldest, kept the younger ones out of mischief. "Sometimes", recalled one, "we spent a whole day gathering sword ferns and stripping off all the leaves to form arrows. All this and the mock battle was over in 10 minutes".

"During the summer". recalled another, "we gathered sacks of fir cones to sell for 50 cents a sack to the Government Forest Nursery. We picked blackberries, raided cherry trees and built rafts on the swamps". There was great rivalry between the boys to see who would catch a big trout that had been spotted in the creek.

The interest in fishing continued year round. The older boys ran herd over the younger ones as they hiked along the R/R tracks to a small lake they named Blue Waters.

Other times, not always using the best judgement, they invented a game whereby they would slide down the bank to the Paldi Creek then crawl through the culvert to the other side of the road.

As for the girls they were tolerated by the boys in most of their activities, again they looked after each other, but playing with dolls, playing house and playing school ranked higher with the girls.

Paldi's Jor Malla, July 1st at the Sikh Temple, was looked forward to by both boys and girls, as they ran in and out of the cookhouse several times a day, wolfing down fresh hot roti and curried vegetables. The meal was not complete for these youngsters until they had enjoyed a mug of sweet Indian tea. According to my references, one of the Japanese girls holds the record for eating eleven roti's at one sitting. *rotis*

Later in the evenings teams were formed between the two rows of houses for a softball game until it was too dark to see.

Sports Day at the Paldi school was another special event as the children performed for the parents then teamed up with an adult for a thread and needle relay. My daughter Sherri remembers the year she teamed with Mrs. Yano, a dressmaker, who could thread a needle faster than the others, but her brother Davinder teamed with me and I could run faster than Mrs. Yano. He and I won!

During the lazy summer evenings the adults came out for walks. The women and smaller children keeping to the roads while the men from the cookhouse with all the boys in tow walked through the woods along the rough road to the dam. It's amazing what young adults remember of their childhood, but these lazy walks to the dam and back in the evenings made a solid impression on more than one young mind.

The mountain behind Paldi, where "Grandpa Mayo" had logged, was viewed by them as "our own private mountain". Like the popular TV show the Waltons, the Paldi kids had their own mountain. When weather permitted, there were hikes up the mountain and as they grew, races to see who could reach the old bridge first then the first one back to the village. My oldest son Darcy usually organized these mountain treks and the younger ones hung around for hours waiting for Darcy to pick the teams. The cousins from Vancouver, grandsons of Mayo's older brother Ganea, looked forward to summer holidays in Paldi. Their roots continue to run deep and Paldi is where it all began.

Of course there was the swimming pool. In 1960 my husband hired the Blue Lagoon people to build a 50' pool behind our house. From that time on, all the boys in Paldi hung around my kitchen door every day of summer waiting for me to complete my household chores to supervise them at the pool. Seldom did any

the girls come, as a result my only daughter Sherri brags she grew up with 22 brothers. Some Chinese, some Japanese, some East Indian and a few whites.

Without a doubt, these were the happiest days of their childhood and for me, never to be forgotten.

Now in the 1990's everything has changed. Not one of these other families remains in Paldi. All have purchased their own homes in nearby towns. Of course, their children have grown, most are married and have children of their own. However when two or three of us get together, the memories come flooding back and the happy stories are told over and over again.

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