

In the subject of my journal assignment I originally decided as did many others, to interview students who are recent immigrants to Canada. I chose two students with two very different stories. The first is a grade twelve female student originally from Viet Nam who will graduate with honours and has won a prestigious \$20,000 Pac-Rim Scholarship. The second is a grade twelve male student also originally from Viet Nam but who is having great difficulty with the academic and the social side of school. Both students have experienced more in their short lives than most of us born and raised in Canada will ever have to deal with. However, I decided not to use either of them as the subject of my journal and have instead chosen to interview my father.

I know always, as I'm sure most people do, taken my father for granted. Obviously I love him and respect him, but I never thought about how and why he came to live in Canada other than in passing. Over the years Dad would make references

that much

to his life in India, but he never went into any real details and I never really asked. ^{Land} ^{many of the men he came to} ~~and~~ ^{has} ^{begin} to talk more about his childhood in India and about his life when he first came to Canada. Dad's stories are incredible and I've often talked about recording them. ^{many of the men he came to} Canada with have died. perhaps this is why he has.

The journal assignment has provided the catalyst for doing this.

1. LEFT INDIA

2 SINGAPORE

3 VANCOUVER

4 1930's - Kamloop's

5 1939 - WW II -

6 1940's Post-War - MARRIAS

7. 1950's RACE

8. 1970's

9 1990's

RENT WHITE
TRUCKING
LUMBER
HARVEST

BORN IN INDIA - SEVENTH CHILD RECORDS
WEREN'T KEPT THAT ACCURATELY BUT
DAD THINKS HE WAS BORN IN 1916. HIS
FATHER DIED 2 MONTHS BEFORE DAD WAS BORN
SO HE WAS SPOILED BY HIS FAMILY - HIS
MOTHER BREAST-FED HIM UNTIL HE WAS
5 YEARS OLD! THIS MADE IT EVEN MORE
INCREDIBLE WHEN AT THE AGE OF 10 HE
LEFT THE VILLAGE AND ACCOMPANIED BY HIS
SECOND BROTHER TRAVELLED TO CALCUTTA ON
THE FIRST LEG OF HIS JOURNEY TO
CANADA. DAD WAS CHOSEN TO EMIGRATE
BECAUSE HE WAS THE "RIGHT AGE" TO MEET
THE IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS - THAT IS, HE
TRAVELLED AS THE SON OF A MAN ALREADY
LIVING IN CANADA WHO HAD RETURNED TO
INDIA TEN YEARS PREVIOUSLY - THE YEAR MY
FATHER WAS BORN.

TO LISTEN TO HIS STORIES, IT'S DIFFICULT TO
REMINISCE YOURSELF THAT HE WAS ONLY A
CHILD - HE SPENT FOUR YEARS IN SINGAPORE,
LEARNING TO SPEAK A LITTLE MALAY, CANTON
AND ENGLISH FROM THE OTHER CHILDREN HE
PLAYED WITH. THE ROUTE HE FOLLOWED WAS
ONE COUNTLESS OTHER MEN ALSO COVERED ON THEIR
JOURNEY FROM INDIA TO VANCOUVER. WHEREVER
SIKH TRAVELLERS WENT, THEY FOUND FOOD
AND SHELTER AT A SIKH TEMPLE AND
OFTEN WERE GUARDED THERE BY SIKH POLICE
OFFICERS.

B 1916 1930 * Woods in Ocean Falls Woods
42¢ / hr As (compared to 10¢)
hr in Vancouver

ONE OF DAD'S STORIES ~~WAS ABOUT~~ INVOLVES
A FIGHT ON A FREIGHTER TRAVELLING
FROM SINGAPORE TO HONG KONG. THE
CHINESE CREW WOULD NOT LET HIM COOK
HIS DINNER AS FOR HE WAS ENTITLED TO A PART OF HIS FARE
DAD - ABOUT 14 YEARS OLD - "BRASSED" A
POKER FROM THE STOVE AND SWUNG IT
AT THEM UNTIL THE CHIEF OFFICER CAME
BY AND MADE THEM LET ME COOK".

MARCH 1 1930 WAS THE DAY DAD
ARRIVED IN VANCOUVER ON BOARD THE
EMPEROR OF RUSSIA. HIS FARE, INCLUDING
MEALS, FROM HONG KONG TO VANCOUVER WAS
\$9.00. DAD LIVED IN A SAWMILL TOWN
PAID ON VANCOUVER ISLANDS FOR TWO YEARS.
AND HE WAS THEN SENT TO KAMLOOZ TO
WORK AS A FARM HAND IN THE SUMMER
OF 1932. LATER THAT YEAR HE MOVED
TO OCEAN FALLS AND LIVED ABOUT HIS
AGE TO GAIN EMPLOYMENT IN THE
LOCAL MILL. * ANOTHER ONE OF HIS MANY
STORIES AGAIN INVOLVED STANDING UP FOR WHAT
WAS RIGHT - THE FOREMAN AT THE MILL
EXPECTED TO RECEIVE "GIFTS" - WHEN DAD
REFUSED TO PAY, THE FOREMAN DOUBLE-CROSSED
DAD'S WORKLOAD - MAKING HIM DO THE
THING NORMALLY DONE BY TWO MEN.
HE REFUSINGLY DAD QUIT HIS JOB AND
RETURNED TO VANCOUVER, BRINGING WITH

24
HIM THE BIBLES AND THE FUNDS THAT
HAD BELONGED TO THE NOW DEPARTED
FALLS SIKH TEMPLE. AT THE AGE OF
18, DAD HAD BEEN THE VICE-PRESIDENT/TREASURER
OF THE TEMPLE.

WHEN DAD REMAINED TO VANCOUVER HE
WORKED IN LUMBER MILLS AND EVENTUALLY
BOUGHT HIS OWN WOOD TRUCK AND WENT
INTO BUSINESS WITH HIS COUSINS. IN 1941
DAD WAS ONE OF ONLY A HANDFUL OF
EAST-INDIANS TO JOIN THE CANADIAN ARMY.
BUT NEVER SAW ACTIVE DUTY. HE WAS
INJURED IN TRAINING AND IN 1943 WAS
DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMY. HIS TRUCKING
BUSINESS GREW, BUT PROBLEMS BETWEEN
HIS COUSINS CAUSED DAD TO LEAVE THE
BUSINESS AND START OVER ON HIS OWN
IN LANGLY IN 1946. THERE WERE
SO MANY "GOLDS" IN THE LUMBER BUSINESS
THAT DAD BECAME KNOWN AS "BIG GOLD" -
HE WAS 5'10" AND APPROXIMATELY
230 POUNDS. HIS SIZE WAS NOT THE
ONLY REASON FOR HIS NICK NAME. DAD
WAS OFTEN THE ONE ASKED TO RESOLVE
DIFFERENCES IN THE EAST-INDIAN COMMUNITY.
HE MARRIED MY MOM IN 1946 AND
I WAS BORN IN 1947. THIS WAS THE
SAME YEAR THAT DAD BECAME INVOLVED
WITH - RACE HORSES. HORSES BECAME
HIS PASSION -

DAD'S SECOND "NICK-NAME" CAME ABOUT
IN THE 1950'S. WHILE RACING IN
VICTORIA, DAD WAS APPROACHED BY A
NATIVE INDIAN WHO COULD NOT BUT LIKED
AS NATIVES WERE NOT ALLOWED TO BUY
ALCOHOL AT THAT TIME, THE MAN
SAID TO DAD - TELL HIM I'M NOT
NATIVE THAT I'M EAST INDIAN, THAT
I'M YOUR COUSIN. DAD IS STILL
CALLED "COUSIN GILL" BY RACETRACKERS
MY FATHER IS NOW IN HIS
70'S AND IS STILL INVOLVED WITH
HIS HORSES. HE GETS UP EVERY DAY
AT 4:30 AM TO FEED AND TRAIN
HIS HORSES AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF
SHOWING DOWN.

WHEN I LOOK BACK AT HIS
LIFE, I Marvel AT HIS SENSE OF
ADVENTURE AND COURAGE. HOW MANY OF
US WOULD LEAVE OUR FAMILY AND
HOME AT THE AGE OF 10 AND TRAVEL
HALF WAY ACROSS THE WORLD TO
START A NEW LIFE?

MY FATHER SAYS HE ALWAYS
REMEMBERS WHAT HIS BROTHER SAID
TO HIM WHEN HE LEFT SINGAPORE -
"NEVER LIE, NEVER CHEAT AND ALWAYS
PROTECT YOUR GOOD NAME". HE WOULD
LIKE MANY PRESENT DAY IMMIGRANTS
MY FATHER CAME TO CANADA TO FIND A

PICKED UP ENGLISH IN
SINGAPORE, PAZI

SUMMARY:

(SUKHDOV)

1. BORN - 1916 - RAM THAKUR, MAHARAJA, THAKUR
SINGH, ^{DUMRA} SINGH, ^{SINGH} MAHARAJA, P.S.
- ONLY EMIGRATE AS SON OF - 10 YRS
OLD -
- CAME AS SON OF HIS COUSIN -
WHO HAD RETURNED TO CANADA IN 1916
FOR VISIT.
- FATHER DIED
2. PUNJAB - (1926) CALCUTTA BY TRAIN
10 YRS OLD - DUMRA S WENT AS PENANG
SINGAPORE - SEA PORT
SIKH TEMPLE IN AMY CITY - MEANS
PLACE TO STAY
3. PENANG - TO MALAYSIA - ALOSTAR
KIDDA (STATE) - COUSIN - POLICE
INSPECTOR. TRAIN TO SINGAPORE
1930 FREIGHTER → HONG KONG -
CPR BOAT
JAPAN
4. 1930 MARCH 1 - VAN. EMPRESS OF RUSSIA
890 HK → VAN
5. MET BY KIDOR SINGH - COUSIN SON (CAME -
6. TO VAN ISLAND PAZI MAHARAJA
- TOO YOUNG TO WORK SINGH
TOOK CARE OF COMPANY TOWN.
- BOUGHT HIM A 22 RIFLE

7. Kamloops - (1932) WORKED ON A FARM FOR SUMMER.
(TRAIN) WORE TURBAN

8 OCEAN FALLS - 1932 - WORKED IN MILL
(LIED ABOUT AGE TO WORK)
- WORKED 2 YRS

H2 d /
H3 d /
H4 d /
H5 d /
H6 d /
H7 d /
H8 d /
H9 d /
H10 d /
H11 d /
H12 d /
H13 d /
H14 d /
H15 d /
H16 d /
H17 d /
H18 d /
H19 d /
H20 d /
H21 d /
H22 d /
H23 d /
H24 d /
H25 d /
H26 d /
H27 d /
H28 d /
H29 d /
H30 d /
H31 d /
H32 d /
H33 d /
H34 d /
H35 d /
H36 d /
H37 d /
H38 d /
H39 d /
H40 d /
H41 d /
H42 d /
H43 d /
H44 d /
H45 d /
H46 d /
H47 d /
H48 d /
H49 d /
H50 d /
H51 d /
H52 d /
H53 d /
H54 d /
H55 d /
H56 d /
H57 d /
H58 d /
H59 d /
H60 d /
H61 d /
H62 d /
H63 d /
H64 d /
H65 d /
H66 d /
H67 d /
H68 d /
H69 d /
H70 d /
H71 d /
H72 d /
H73 d /
H74 d /
H75 d /
H76 d /
H77 d /
H78 d /
H79 d /
H80 d /
H81 d /
H82 d /
H83 d /
H84 d /
H85 d /
H86 d /
H87 d /
H88 d /
H89 d /
H90 d /
H91 d /
H92 d /
H93 d /
H94 d /
H95 d /
H96 d /
H97 d /
H98 d /
H99 d /
H100 d /

- OCEAN FALLS - JAPANESE (CHINESE) E1

- BANK HOUSES / SINGLE FAMILIES

- E1 CHURCH - 30 - ALL BUT 3 FIRED - DAD + 2 OTHERS

" GRAFT - FOREMAN - PAY OFF BUT DAD WOULDNT
HUNT. BACK - DR GILCREST - SO FOREMAN

INCREASED WORK LOAD

TO TRY TO BREAK

HIM - BEFORE 2 YRS

- PLAYED SOCCER TEAM - * NOW DAD
- DAD QUIT VS. SAW MILL TEAM
PAPER MILL TEAM

9 WENT LEFT OCEAN FALLS - BROUGHT ALL
FUNDS & BIBLES, GAVE TO VANCOUVER
TEMPLE 1934 - CAME BACK TO
VANCOUVER

- FIELD HOCKEY TEAM - SEARCHED INSTANTS OF
RETURNING TO PADI

- WORKED IN ALBERTA LUMBER MILL JR 6TH AVE

- MET. VANCE LASHAM, SADAKA SINGH, SOHAM

10 1934 - BOUGHT WOODS TRUCK.
1939 - 2 YRS IN JAIL

11. 1941 - TRIED TO JOIN CANADIAN
ARMY -

- E1 NO VOTING RIGHTS -
DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT
DAD - ENLISTED - BASIC
TRAINING VERNON - HALIFAX ADVANCE
ED TRAINING ANTI-AIRCRAFT -

HURT HANDS - BLOOD POISON - 30
DAYS IN HOSPITAL - UNIT LEFT

TWO OVERSEAS -
- GOING BY SHIP - ON

PASSPORT - DOCTOR KNOW LOWERS
FROM TORONTO - SENT BACK TO

VANCOUVER - EXHIBITION PARK - JAPANESE
INTERNO.

- DAD - TARZAN KINGSMAN HOUSE

- UNIT SHIPPED TO PORT ALBERTA -

- DAD - SENT TO SHALINGWASSY

HOSPITAL TO HAVE FINISH CIRCLES -

UNIT SHIPPED TO ALBERTA ISLANDS

- SEND ME OVERSEAS OR DISCHARGE

ME - DISCHARGED 1943 - SIGNED ARMED

PENSION RIGHTS

"BIG BILL"

12 1943 - TRUCKING BUSINESS

- PUT EVERYTHING IN SUTARI'S NAME -
PROBLEMS - LEFT + MOVED OUT
TO LANIGLET

1946 - MARRIED MOM

1947 - - FIRST HORSE BLAMNACHINI

1948 - RICHMOND - SOLD TRUCKING BUSINESS

TAKA SINGH +

UNCLE KARNAL - \$1500 FOR
RACE HORSE

- BUILT 2 STALLS ON

BOUGHT HORSES

PRESIDENT OF SIKH TEMPLE - 3 DIFFERENT
TIMES

COUSIN GILL - 1950'S SANDOWN RACE TRACK

NATIVE INDIANS COULDN'T BUY LIQUOR

NEVER LIE, NEVER LIE - NAME IS MUD