

Sat Sri Akal.

FIRST
DRAFT

①

My name is B...
I am a first born
background, My grand
brothers Chanan &
They settled in the K...
& Burrard St., just...
immigrants, Japanese others Canadian (Whit) also lived
in the ^{11/23/17} blks of ^{THE GIRL TEMPLE - IN 1800} ~~second av.~~ My grand father Bawa
Singh returned to India (1923/1924) to arrange a marriage
between My father Gurdas Singh - mother Bhani Kaur.
Grandfather and my father returned to Canada, leaving
mother with ~~my~~ ^{BORN LATER} a baby son, my brother Burs Singh
~~in 1924~~. He was about 3 1/2 yrs old when Mother &
brother left India 1927 - to come to Canada on the ships
that were called Empress Canada/Japan etc. Was the
family all lived to gether at 1785 W-2nd Ave, when my
great uncles, wives joined them later. Father bought a
new home across the street 1773 W. 2nd. as the family was
expanding, ~~it~~ later we moved in 1733 W-3rd. more addition
to the family were were 1 Boy and 7 girls, finally a
son was born Jeet in 1941. A war had started in
Europe. I had finished grade ^{AT HENRY HUDSON SCHOOL} ~~and not being a~~ ^{report person}
mother wished for me to learn Punjabi (read & write)
maybe someday I would benefit from it. ~~from it~~

Sat Sri Akal.

FIRST
DRAFT

①

MON'S
NOTES

My name
I am a first
background, My
brothers Chanda
They settled in
& Burrard St, of
immigrants, Japanese others Canadian (Whit) also lived
in the ^{11/27} blks of ^{THE SIKH TEMPLE - IN 1800} ~~Second Ave~~. My grand father Bawa
Singh returned to India (1923/1924) to arrange a marriage
between My father Gurdas Singh - mother Bhanik Kaur.
Grandfather and my father returned to Canada, leaving
mother with ~~my~~ ^{BORN LATER} a baby son, my brother Bura Singh
~~in 1924~~. He was about 3 1/2 yrs old when Mother &
brother left India 1927 - to come to Canada on the ships
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family all lived to gether at 1785 W-2nd Ave, where my
great-uncles, wives joined them later. Father bought a
new home across the street 1773 W. 2nd. as the family was
expanding, ~~it~~ later we moved in 1733 W-3rd. more addition
to the family were were 1 Boy and 7 girls, finally a
son was born Jeet in 1941. A war had started in
Europe. I had finished grade ⁶ ~~at~~ ^{AT HENRY HUDSON SCHOOL} ~~not long~~ ^a ~~report~~ ^{person}
mother wished for me to learn Punjabi (read & write)
maybe someday I would benefit from it. ~~from it~~

1
Sat Sri Akal.

My name is Banto Gill (also known as Betty Gill)
I am a first born Canadian of Indian (Punjab)
background. My grandfather ^{BAWAT SINGH} and his two
brothers Chanan Singh and Nand Singh ^{TEMPLE TO CANADA} in 1904.
They settled in the Kitsutano district of 2nd Ave
& Burrard St., just south of Burrard Bridge. Most
immigrants, Japanese, others Canadian (Whit) also lived
in the ^{11/2} ¹⁷ blks of ^{THE SIKH TEMPLE - IN 1800} Second Ave. My grandfather Baw
Singh returned to India (1923/1924) to arrange a marriage
between My father Gurdas Singh - mother Bhani Kaur.
Grandfather and my father returned to Canada, leaving
mother with ~~my~~ ^{BORN LATER} a baby son, my brother Bant Singh
~~in 1924~~. He was about 3 1/2 yrs old when Mother &
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that were called Empress Canada/Japan etc. The
family all lived together at 1785 W-2nd Ave, where my
great-uncles, wives joined them later. Father bought a
new home across the street 1773 W. 2nd. as the family was
expanding, ~~it~~ later we moved in 1733 W-3rd. more addition
to the family were were 1 Boy and 7 girls, finally a
son was born Jeet in 1941. A war had started in
Europe. I had finished grade six ^{AT HENRY HUDSON SCHOOL} ~~not having a~~ reports person
mother wished for me to learn Punjabi (read & write)
maybe someday I would benefit from it. ~~from it~~

Sat Sri Akal.

My name is Banto Gill (also known as Betty Gill)
I am a first born Canadian of Indian (Punjabi)
background. My grandfather ^{BAWAS GILL} and his two
brothers Chanan Singh and Nand Singh ^{in 1904} ^{TEMPLE TO CANADA}
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& Burrard St., just south of Burrard Bridge. Most
immigrants, Japanese others Canadian (Whit) also lived
in the ^{11/27} ^{THE SIKH TEMPLE - IN 1800} blks of Second Ave. My grandfather Bawa
Singh returned to India (1923/1924) to arrange a marriage
between My father Gurdas Singh - mother Bhani Kaur.
Grandfather and my father returned to Canada, leaving
mother with ~~my~~ ^{BORN LATER} a baby son, my brother Bant Singh
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brother left India 1927 - to come to Canada on the ship
that were called Empress Canada/Japan etc. When the
family all lived together at 1785 W-2nd Ave, when my
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new home across the street 1773 W. 2nd. as the family was
expanding, ~~it~~ later we moved in 1733 W-3rd. more addition
to the family were were 1 Boy and 7 girls, finally a
son was born Jeet in 1941. A war had started in
Europe. I had finished grade ⁶ ^{AT HENRY HUDSON SCHOOL} ~~at~~ ^{not being a} reports person
my mother wished for me to learn Punjabi (read & write)
that maybe someday I would benefit from it. ~~from it~~

insert after I married Phangan Singh Gill
3 months after my two sisters. He had
returned after serving in the Canadian
Army. Most people of Indian descent
did not want to ~~go to~~ to serve in
the Canadian Army. as ~~they~~ they
were British subject & not Canadians.
The Phangan Singh and his friend
Kallu Singh both enlisted, because
Mr. Gill said he was a Canadian
having arrived in Canada in 1930. He
was a gunner in a tank force. But
to injury to his hand returned from
Halifax. He served from 1941-1944.
And went into trucking business in
Langley.

We met and were married in 1946.

PARAGRAPH ~~deleted~~
My husband —

Went after I married Phangan Singh. ~~3~~ 3 months after my twi sixty. We had returned after serving in the Canadian Army. Most people of Indian descent did not want ~~to~~ to serve in the Canadian Army. as ~~the~~ they were British subject & not Canadians. The Phangan Singh and in the end of the Singh. Both enlisted, because Mr. Will said he was a Canadian. Having arrived in Canada in 1930. He was a gunner in a tank army. But to trying to his hand returned from Halifax. He served from 1941-1944. Had went into trucking business in Canada. He not and was married in 1946.

(2) While in grade 6 - I was told by mother
 that I should learn Punjabi (read & write) that
 some day ~~I~~ would benefit some day. So I started
 also as I attend Henry Hudson ⁵¹³⁰. I ~~not~~ did not (2)
 participate in sports as mother decided I should learn to
 read & write Punjabi, so that maybe I would appreciate
 it some day. So, and behold it did ¹⁹⁶⁹ work later at
 the Vancouver Airport as interpreter for CPRA, Japan Airlines & Immigr.
~~various other~~ ^{positions} being fluent in Punjabi and reading, writing
 I am a thankful & respected Bhai Giani Sengh Ji &
 Auntie Pretam Kaur for teaching me, Auntie for enabling
 me to read the teaching of the Gurus.

ne mune is vami...

I was married to a wonderful man Phangar Singh Grew
 1946 - ~~who~~ ^{2 days} gave me ~~had~~ 2 children Charan (Butter)
 Vicki (Jasviri) and a son Hardover, later ~~was~~
 blessed and ~~was~~ ^{which made up} grandparents to Travis.
 All in all my journey in life has a

[illegible]

of recent players. Baker has a long, more better
all-around. Baker has a long, more better
with the family in Victoria. He is complete
my interest & is complete by himself. I
able to my report about Baker's Journal
walk of the time about 1/2 m. more study for

with the primary concern
my interest & to complete by purchase &
available to my respect about Baker's Journal

walk to the home about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. north study for

1. Run and return home passing by 7 x 90
A high school band 7-8 children high school

A high school band 7-8th grade. High school from about 1911-1912 in about 10. The

about and at the same time I have the

The club the environment ~~with~~ and the family has

someday ~~it~~ would benefit someday. So I started
 to go a elderly person Gaur Singh a respected
 grandfather to learn, ^{every day & when} missing all the activities
 of school played basketball, volleyball and
 other activities. Baba Gaur Singh moved back
 with his family in Victoria. So to complete
 my interest & to complete by parents I
 walked to my respected Aunt Babi. I would
 walk to her home about 1/2 hr. walk study for
 1 hour and return home passing by 7 & 8th
 to high school grade 7. Kaituma High school
 from that age - till I was in grade 10. For
 about ~~and~~ after Xmas / Jan. I had to leave
 to due to circumstances ~~and~~ and the family had
 was growing to 9 children. 6 sisters & 3 brothers to
 a family of 9 children. So I left school & started to
 work at a laundry across the street (next corner). Let
 me move to Queenborough in 4 yrs then by then
 I was married to a wonderful man Phangar Singh Grew
 1946 - ~~who~~ ^{so} ~~we~~ ^{soon} had 2 children Charan (Butter)
 Vicki (Jasviri) and a son Hardover, later ~~the~~
 blessed and ~~total~~ ^{much made up} grandparents to Travis.
 All in all my journey in life has a

and function prayers & celebration which we
looked forward to so we would see our friends from
other areas N.W. - Quenstoung, Fraser Valley,
helping with chow cleaning, cooking, carrying
wood in for the ladies so that they could make
lanya (food) for the congregation, because
of age for school at 5 1/2 attended Henry Hucker
school on Cornwall, & Cyprus where is still there
completed my grade six (and then on to junior
high grade 7 to 10 and then there was the
war 1941-42. Went to work, not finishing Gr. 10
at age 14. By that time the family had
bought a home on 1700 W Third not far from
the family (elder). The family was growing
by 1933-34 had 2 sisters, many other folks
tho we became a family of 7 children ^{a second} 3 Brothers ^{just born} 1941.
8 sisters. We moved many times to different ^{home} ~~places~~
this change - people moving from 2nd Ave ^{to other} ~~to other~~
to other areas.

all function prayers & celebration which we
 looked forward to so we would see our friends from
 other area N.W. - Queensborough, Fraser Valley,
 helping with chores cleaning, cooking, carrying
 wood in for the ladies so that they could make
 langa (food) for the congregation, because
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 bought a home on 1700 W Third not far from
 the family (elder). The family was growing
 by 1933-34 had 2 sons, many other folks
 the we became a family of 7 ^{children} ^{as a result} ^{just born} ¹⁹⁴¹ ^{Brooks}
 8 ~~sons~~ ^{sisters}. We moved many times to different places
 times change - people moving from 2nd area to 1st area
 to other areas.

2ND

DRAFT

~~MSK 14 E98 001~~ ~~001~~ ~~001~~

1
Sat Sri Akal.

My name is Banto Gill (Jodul) also known as Betty Gill. I am a first born Canadian of Indian (Punjab) ^{born} My grandfather came to Canada in 1904 and settled in the Kitsilano district 2nd Ave & Burnard. Most immigrants in those years did. Grandfather ^{BAWASINGH} came with his two Brothers Nand Singh & Chanan Singh. Grandfather ^{AUSTRIAN to India} returned 1923/24. Having ^{left} ~~born~~ a son my father Gurdas Singh. A marriage was arranged for father. He was married to my Mother Bhani Kaur (Mand). Grandfather returned to Canada with my father, leaving Mother behind ^{in Punjab} ~~leaving~~ ^{delivered} ~~to my~~ ^{to} brother Bant Singh. Mother with my brother and many other immigrants, travelling on the ships known as Empress — in 1927 at ~~the city of~~ ^{agreed} Vancouver in 1927 to join father. We ^{all} ~~lived~~ ^{lived} ~~at~~ ^{together} at 1785-West 2nd. as ~~our~~ ^{1 grandfathers brother & family} Gurdwara (Temple) was in the next block 1866-West 2nd. The temple was a religious, social, meeting ^{for the Punjab} people and ~~becoming~~ ^{meeting} new friends. Most all week-ends were exciting as all functions relating to our little community were held there. It was so much to look forward to. Father & Mother ^{both} ~~home~~ ^{at} on Second Ave. 1733-W-2nd as the family was ^{growing} ~~extended~~ to 4, 1 ^{Bro} brother 2 ^{Sister} sisters. But still our attachment to the temple, Father was ^{dearest} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{was} the

and his ^{(likely) gardening} ~~clay~~ tending to the landscaping of the temple. And Mother and other ladies ~~the~~ did the cooking ~~the~~ ^{in the} language. We the children in the area looked forward ~~to~~ ~~at~~ this helping in the kitchen bringing wood for the stove & polishing windows, cleaning the rooms / inside of the temple. If there was an Akand Path. we the children would sleep over ^{at temple} with our Moms ^{in the room} ~~and~~ ^{where we} entertain by stories of India and their families.

~~24~~ Time passes & it's time for school. at 5 1/2 yrs I was enrolled at Henry Hudson School with many other children. We made friends with ^{other} people who also ~~was~~ were immigrants Japanese & White children. ~~skin~~ ^{color} was never a issue ~~then~~. We were children in every sense. In my schooling at Henry Hudson. I ~~exceeded~~ ^{was a few months} into grade 2 soon after. But I did not participate in sports etc. My mother suggested that I being the eldest girl should learn Punjabi, ^{if I would come in hard} ~~that~~ ^{read & write}. So I started to go to respected ^{(my} ~~my~~ Baba Gian Singh who taught me from beginning ^{so} that ^{was} ^{able} ^{to} read & write; ^{also the basic script of papers} continuing this after school, then Baba Ji moved to Victoria to live with his relatives. By that time there were many ladies (aunts) who mother said would help me ^{so} continue my learning, so I would walk from 3rd /

Remember

- just 1 last train ride

- living 2 mother while pregnant

- persuaded Bachman to help
buy property to get out of
mother's house

- dressed-up at track - best
dressed kids in neighborhood

- "the gun that never returned"

- "Keeping ~~my~~ ear to the ground
about real estate"

- "families ^{that} stuck together can
sometimes fight but still
feel the same way"

Auntie (Putam Kaur) who lived many ^{1/2} miles away on Sixth & Albert (a long walk) ^{1/2} miles
knew up from where Babi had. She helped me
to read the service in Punjabi and Mother's
words always reminds me. (It would come in handy)
Which did, ^{in later time I worked in a shop at the airport + in a shop of goods}
had started and most of Japanese were interested to
the interior. My schooling took me to Ritselans High
school, where ^{was in} grade ten, but I was
needed at home because of financial reason, so I
was taken out of school (age 14) to go to work in a Laundry.
The family ^{that} time consisted of 1 Boy and myself &
^{more} sisters in 1941 - Mother & Father had a boy.
So it was suggested by neighbor that maybe we
should ^{go to} N.W. - Queensboro - to raise the large
family, having a cow - ~~ch~~ church etc. City born children
did not relish the idea of drinking milk from a
cow, being used to the milkman bring milk to
our homes. So we stuck it out ~~but~~ for 4 years ^{the family}
~~and came back to Van.~~ Myself and my two younger
sisters married in 1946 - ^{at} Queensborough, Mother
& Father moved to 5 - East Third Ave * ^{with the young children} married
Phangan Singh Gill ^{INVENT HISTORICAL} having 3 children Charan (Buttor
Vick - and a son Hardar. who were ^{born} raised in
Pictmund - where my husband and I moved to
We had Pictmund

LATEST VERSION
APR 28 108

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Publisher Waiver:

PERSONAL BIO DATA: Banto (Betty) K. Gill

BIRTH NAME:	Banto Kaur
PLACE of BIRTH:	Vancouver, BC,
YEAR of BIRTH	1928
NUMBER of CHILDREN	3
NUMBER of SISTERS	7
NUMBER of BROTHERS	3

MOTHER: Bhani Kaur Johal
Birth Name: Bhan Kaur
Birth Village: Longodeva, District of Ferozpur
Immigrated to Canada: 1927
Resident of: Vancouver, BC
Deceased: 1994

FATHER: Gurdas Singh
Birth Name: Gurdas Singh
Birth Village: Jundiala, District of Jullundur
Immigrated to Canada: 1924
Deceased: 1957

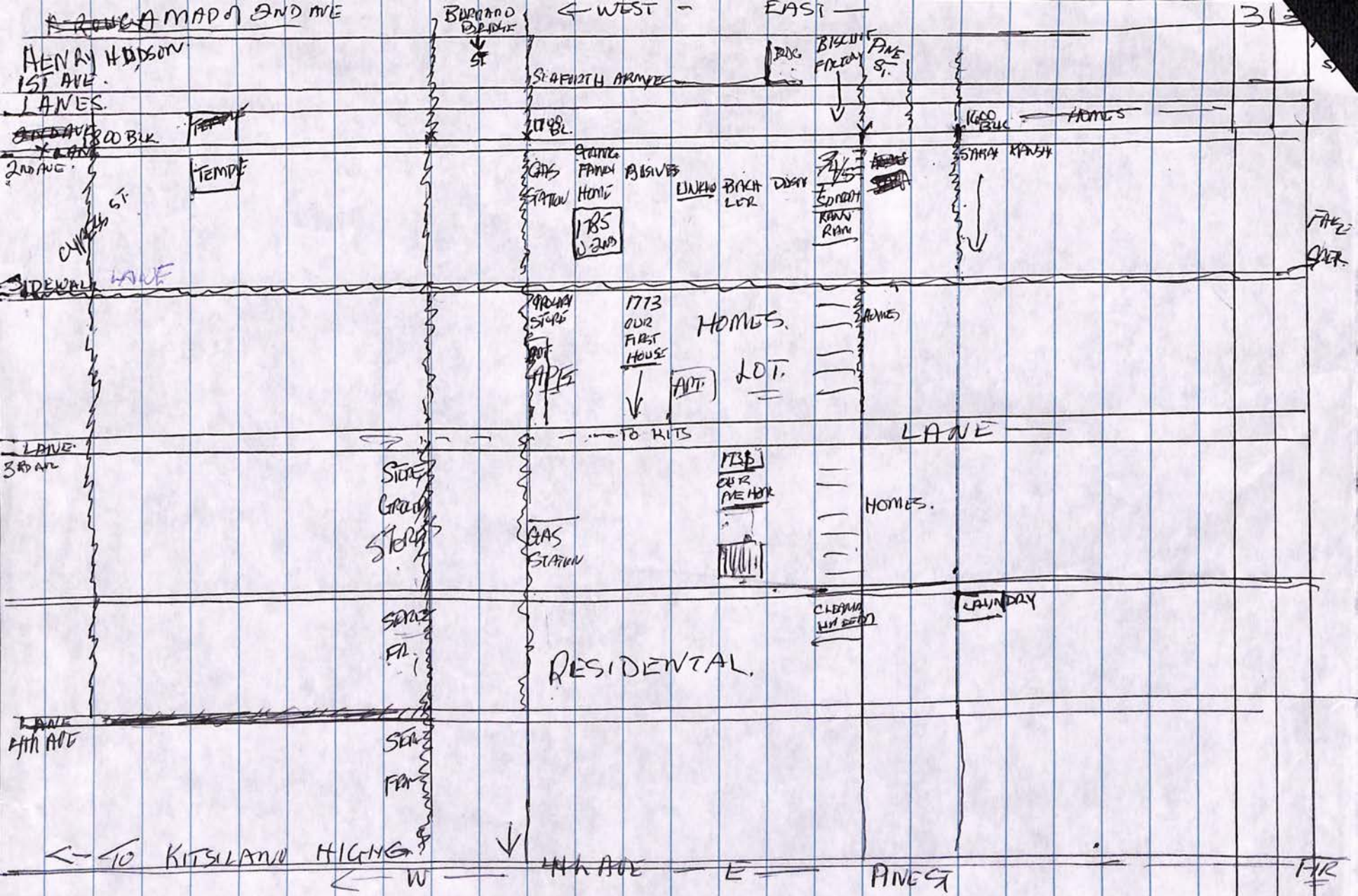
Sat Siri-Akal

My name is Banto Gill (nee Johal), also known as Betty Gill born August 26, 1928. In our extended Indian (Punjabi-Sikh) family, I am the first-born Canadian.

My grandfather, Bawa Singh, came to Canada in 1904 with his two brothers, Nand Singh and Chanan Singh and settled in the Kitsilano district on 2nd Avenue and Burrard Street. This was at the south end of the Burrard Street Bridge. Most Indian immigrants settled here because it was close to the Immigration Office located near the waterfront at Burrard and Granville Streets.

We were told that my paternal grandfather Bawa Singh, and his two brothers, Chandan Singh and Nand Singh originally left India sometime in the late 1890's for Australia, which is where their father, Briam Singh (my paternal great-grandfather) had settled. In the early 1900's, people from India were not allowed to immigrate to Canada, and therefore immigrated to Australia. Unknown, however, is why or how they came to Canada as ships only docked in the American Port of San Francisco, California. How they may have then travelled to Vancouver is also not known.

My grandfather returned to India to arrange a marriage for his seventeen year old son (my father, Gurdas Singh). My father married my mother, Bhani Kaur (nee Mand). After the marriage, my father and grandfather returned to Canada, in either 1923/1924. My mother was left in India as Indian women were not legally able to join their families in Canada at that time. She was finally able to emigrate in September 1927. She and my older brother Bunt Singh, who was three and a half years old, joined my father in Canada. When I was born in 1928 I became the newest addition to the extended family (my Grandfather, his brothers and their families, and my father, mother and brother) living at 1785 West 2nd Avenue. As the immediate family continued to grow, we moved to our own first home at 1773 West 2nd Avenue.



Our paternal Grandmother, Malan Kaur arrived from India, bringing our cousin Rampal with her. We all lived in the home together until Grandmother returned to India. Grandfather remained in Canada.

Over time, the family expanded to 7 daughters and one son. In 1941, a second son was born and the family moved again, buying a home at 1733 West 3rd Avenue.

Our *Gurdwara* was in the next block at 1866 West 2nd Avenue. It was not only a place of worship (Sikhism), but also served as a social meeting centre of the Indian community. Other new Indian immigrants arrived slowly, some young men and some with families. We couldn't wait to meet on the weekends – it was so exciting and wonderful to see other members of the Indian community. Below is a map of the area where we lived.

INSERTMAP

When services were held at the *Gurdwara*, my father assumed the duty of landscaping. All work was done by volunteers, some of the other men helped cook lentils and other curried vegetarian dishes. My mother and the other ladies made the *rotis* (*chapattis*) and did the dishes. As children, we also participated by bringing in wood for the stove, cleaning, polishing, sweeping, and other chores. Sometimes, even though we only lived a block away, the ladies would sleep over at the *Gurdwara* in a big room, on mattresses, heated by a wood stove. Whenever children were allowed to sleep over, we considered it an honour. We were fascinated by the stories about how they travelled to Canada, the homes and people they left behind, the latest news/gossip, who was moving to Vancouver Island etc. I remember being very curious about how these women had left India and come to Canada to start a new life. How had they managed to cook for themselves on the ship? I couldn't believe that they had been brave enough to travel six weeks across the Pacific Ocean. The ladies didn't go into details about any of this, they were too busy trying to adjust to life in Canada. They were more concerned about tomorrow's menu.

SCAN IN A BETTER PICTURE ABOVE

THIS IS THE ONLY ONE I COULD FIND ON THE INTERNET BUT PERHAPS AUNTY BANTO HAS AN ORIGINAL THAT CAN BE SCANNED IN? Sorry, cannot find another picture, please use the one you have

The above photo shows the *Gurdwara* on West 2nd Avenue after it was raised to accommodate a ground floor which became our dining hall, storage for groceries, etc. Wooden tables with wooden benches were put around the perimeter of the hall to sit on. Volunteers, both young and old, would serve *langar* from buckets of steel. If there was a *Jhor-Mela* (a big celebration) there would always be a line-up to get in while others ate. The used dishes were gathered up and taken through the walk-way across to the kitchen area and were washed by both men and women. My mother always insisted on washing the large pots (by hand of course). The picture of Guru Nanak Dev Ji at the very top of this *gurdwara* was donated by the prominent Kapoor family. This picture is now on display at the Sikh Temple on Ross Street in South Vancouver.

After *Gurdwara* functions on Sundays, we attended a Sunday school on West 2nd Avenue, where a Punjabi Christian, Kanshi Ram, held afternoon service for children from around the neighbourhood. We sang Christian songs and at Christmas, we held, directed and participated in plays. While my elder brother would play the role of "Good King Wenceslas", most of us held smaller parts. We thoroughly enjoyed these Sunday afternoons and singing songs in English. I think it was an afternoon for our parents to recuperate after the *Gurdwara* services. Kanshi Ram was the only other Indian person who wrote and spoke English, so he wrote our notes to the teachers when we were absent, signing our parent's names.

At the age of 5 ½ to 6, I was enrolled at Henry Hudson School at Cypress and Cornwall. I was moved into Grade 2 within a month. After completing Grade 6, I moved onto Grade 7 at Kitsilano High School.

Mother suggested that since I did not participate in school sports such as volleyball or baseball, etc., I should learn to read and write Punjabi. A fellow by the name of Baba Gian Singh lived next to the *Gurdwara* where most of the bachelors lived. Everyday after school, I would go to learn to read and write Punjabi from him. Then Baba Gian Singh moved to Victoria to live with his nephews. Mother said I should

continue to learn because some day, it would come in handy and I'd appreciate it – which I did! A respected Auntie Pritam Kaur, known as *Bhabi Ji* lived about a mile and a half away near West 6th Avenue and Alberta Street. I walked there every second day after school to continue learning Punjabi. Auntie Ji helped me with reading and writing, and also with Book 1 and Book 2 of our religious scriptures known as the Panj Granthi.

There were two sisters Jagdish and Sarjit Kapoor who also attended Kitsilano High. They both eventually became doctors and built a hospital in their mother's village in India. Their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor Singh were very prominent in the community. The three of us, along with my brother Bunt, were the only four Punjabis attending Kitsilano High School at the time. In Grade 10, due to family circumstances, I had to leave school. The Kapoor family begged my parents to allow me to continue my education, offering to pay my fees, but my Mother was too proud to accept their help. At the age of fourteen, I started working at Peerless Laundry on West 3rd Avenue.

In 1941, our family had expanded to one boy and seven girls. Then my second brother, Jeet, was born. There was a large celebration with all the relatives in attendance for a son being born after 7 daughters. We continued to live in the same house until after the birth, in 1943, of my youngest sister, Dee.

It was suggested by some members of the community that we should move to Queensborough as there was now a *Gurdwara* there and others had moved there as well. Due to the large size of our family, buying a farm seemed to make sense. We children however, couldn't imagine drinking milk straight from cows and eating curried chicken by killing our own chickens. But the big move was onto 2 acres at 325 Ewen Avenue in Queensborough, complete with a cow and two chickens. Volunteers were needed to milk the cow, and my sister Paula would volunteer when Mother wasn't home and Paula would be very upset that no one else would help her. This house is still there today.

My mother, Bhani Kaur, known as Mama Bhani or "Ma" had eleven children – three boys and eight girls. She stayed at home, raised her children while doing *sewa* at the *Gurdwara* often, and regularly. My memories of Mama include her utter devotion to the *Gurdwara*; she was the only one who could get the huge pots clean enough! Another memory is her love of digestive cookies; Mama always took packages of cookies with her on her trips to India!

Mama and Papa were a very unique couple, every Friday night; they would go to the movies. Papa would drive the wood truck and off they would go! They had a "date night" long before it became a trendy thing for married couples to do. That wood dump truck was also the vehicle Papa would use to take all of us, and our neighbours to Stanley Park for picnics. He would put wooden benches in the back, and in we would go, picking up others on the way.

| Papa passed away in 1957 Mama was left to raise the five children still living at home. The most unusual thing she did was the transfer of our father's property in India into her name. In those days, women did not obtain ownership of land. My father was the only son. My mother traveled to India, and with the proper papers and with the help of the elders in my father's village, she had the property transferred into twelve shares, one for her and one for each of her eleven children. She brought more stories about our family history back to us in Canada along with gold jewelry and saris for the girls and gold chains and rings for the boys. We were all excited to receive these items as part of our heritage.

In 1946, my two sisters Paula and Bachan were married in Queensborough. Three months later, I married Phangan Singh Gill – a businessman owning a trucking company and living in Langley. We were married after he returned from serving in the Canadian Army.

There were only two Indians to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces.. Most people of Indian descent did not want to serve in the Canadian Army because they were still British Subjects and not Canadian citizens. My husband, Phangan, however always insisted he was a Canadian having come to Canada in 1930. He served as a gunner from 1941 to 1944. He did not serve overseas as he was injured and sent home from Halifax before his unit was sent to Europe.

My husband had met an elderly Sikh man named Thakar Singh who owned thoroughbred racehorses. Thakar Singh was unwell and asked my husband to buy his horses and send the money to his family in India. That was his introduction to horse racing, we moved to Richmond in 1947. While we had found a four acre parcel of land on Alexandra Road, we could not purchase it. The reason was that the owner had a clause in the title to the property stating that it could not be sold to Asians. To get around this, we had our friend, Naranjan Singh Grewal register the property in his company name and we moved to Alexandra Road.

The Alexandra Road acreage had a barn with living quarters attached and a gate to take the horses to the barn area of the Lansdowne Racetrack. In 1951, we moved to Lansdowne Road, directly across the street from the racetrack and bought four more acres there. We sold this in 1954 to Mr. Jack Diamond who owned the Lansdowne Race Track. We then purchased the house and two acres next door. Eventually we built a new barn to stable the horses during the winter. We lived here until 1975, when we sold the property to the City of Richmond, to permit them to build a road through to the Lansdowne Shopping Centre. Mr. Diamond consequently sold the race track to Woodward's who in turn, sold it to the shopping centre developer. Mr. Diamond then moved racing to Exhibition Park at the PNE grounds on Hastings Street, and he eventually sold it to the government. Racing is still held today at Exhibition Park, which is now called Hastings Race Course.

We enjoyed racing and raising racehorses until my husband's death in 1994.

We were blessed with three children, two daughters (Charan and Vicky) and a son (Hardave). When my son was in elementary school (1960-1967), I started working at a dry cleaning plant for the morning shift. I also worked at Vancouver International Airport (YVR) as an interpreter/ground hostess for various airlines that were bringing new Indian immigrants to Canada. I'd finish my shift at the cleaners, then call Canadian Airlines for the estimated time of arrival from Hong Kong flights and then head off to the airport. I performed various duties such as meeting arrivals, sending people to various queues, and interpreting Punjabi as most passengers required this service. After the airport, I would come home to cook and clean and then head off to the race track for my third job! Even today, almost forty years' later, I often meet people who say, "I remember you, you helped me when I arrived at the airport"!

Our elder daughter, Charan (Buttons) retired from teaching after 35 years. She was a Counselor at Steveston High School and spent 4 years working in the Professional Development Division of the B.C. Teacher's Federation. In 2007, she took a three-month teaching job in China.

Vicky, our second daughter, worked in International business in the BioMedical and Business Management training fields and travelling and working extensively in Europe. She returned to Canada in 1999 and joined the company my son founded, where she continues to work as the senior manager.

Vicky's son, Travis, works at Post Time Technologies as a Supervisor. Travis has inherited his Grandpa's love of racing as he owns shares in two horses running in Kentucky.

My son, Hardave, has worked in the racing industry in a variety of capacities. He took over the video and photo finish operations at Hastings Park in the 1980's and eventually formed his own company, Post Time Productions, and later founded Post Time Technologies (www.posttimetech.com). He is currently expanding his racing technology business through his newest company, Bettor Solutions,

I am very proud of all of the accomplishments of my children and grandson.

I am retired and still living in Richmond (Steveston). I am proud to be a Canadian with Punjabi/Sikh roots, fortunate to have grown up as part of a large happy family, and a wonderful community.

I am forever grateful and thankful that my grandfather and his two brothers were brave enough to venture from the Punjab into the unknown to find their father who had immigrated to Australia. As fate and good fortune would have it, they ended up in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

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From 1904 to 2007, in the span of 103 years, six generations of proud Canadians!