

Nash Gill and His father Inder Gill

Nash's father Inder Gill came to Canada in December 1930. His father (17 year old) came here with his cousins Darbara (13 years old) Singh and Joginder Singh Shergill (13 years old) that lives in Montreal. And the reason they came to Canada was that when they were doing farming back in India there was a very little cultivation and very little irrigation and they were not economically well so they decided to go to some foreign countries. First, they thought to go to Singapore, Malaysia or East Asia but their Uncle Naranjan Singh Gill who were already migrated to Canada, sent five sponsorship permits for them. Inder gill was born in Village Dhudike. At the age of 17, he decided to go to Canada, he with his cousins first travelled by horse cart to Ludhiana where they took train to Calcutta. They paid fare of 14 rupees each.

After reaching Calcutta, they took the ship (steam ship) of the Jardine Company of Hong Kong to reach Hong Kong, the fare was 44 Rupees. And then travelling from Hong Kong to Victoria, Vancouver by the way of steam ship and it was the steam ship of Canadian pacific company and it was called the empress of Japan and fare for that was \$90US. And travelling from Calcutta to Hong Kong took about 17-18 days and from Hong Kong to Vancouver around 2.5 Months approximately. His father Inder Gill left the country on the day of Diwali and also left Dhudike Village in the early morning hours around 4 A.M. Nash remembered that his father brought some cloths and some foods that he carried during travelling. He also carried metal trunk in which some clothes and some food for making rotis. Nash's father bought that trunk from Moga for 3 rupees. He also mentioned that his father stayed few days in the Gurdwara of Hong Kong when they missed their ship to Canada.

His father, Inder Gill was entered in Vancouver Harbour, Canada on December 12, 1930 at 6 P.M. His father remembered that the tallest building that time was in downtown was marine building. After they came here, they stayed for 2-3 days in Gurdwara in downtown. Then, they moved to Vancouver Island and after that they worked in a mill during 1931's. Because of depression that time, there were fewer

jobs available. So, they decide to go to Kamloops to pick tomatoes and harvesting tomatoes. His father made \$54 CAD. However, they returned to Vancouver Island, where he got a job at Great central lake sawmill and he was paid 10 cents per hour. He only worked four days per week and 6 hours each day. He sent money back to India for his family. He also got married at the age of 17 before he came to India .and his wife and parents were still in India. When he sent his first salary in Canada he sent some part of it to India and he suggested his grandfather to buy a horse. So then in next year in July of 1932 he started working for the kapoor Lumber Company which was a sawmill owned by Babul Singh Kapoor, he was also in east Indian and his mill was in Sooke Lake and Sooke Lake is close to Victoria. And he started working there and lived in the bunk house of the saw mill premises and they worked 6 days a week and got paid 15 cents per hour. Nash Gill recalled that his father didn't get any chance to go back to India for almost 15 years from his arrival in Canada. Just, they were working and making money and sending money back to India. And then they kept on working, and then what happened is Second World War started and then from 1939 to 1945 until the Second World War ended there was no ships that were on the seas. So basically, Mr. Inder didn't go back to India since 1947 so he stayed here for a period of 17 years. However, after that war what happened is the restriction with respect to immigration to Canada. The person with East Indian origin and Chinese origin were allowed to bring their family to Canada. Around 1950, there were only 150 people can immigrate to Canada from India.

Nash was born back in India in May 1948. He was born in his father village Dhudike. After his dad prepared his and his mother immigration documents they all travelled to Canada. They all travelled by steam ship via Honolulu, Hawaii and we were to dock in San Francisco from where we travelled on the great Northern train to enter Canada in White Rock. Nash recalled that his father told him that he bought western dress for his mother to give her more appeal to Canadian culture. When his mother landed here, she was wearing a dress, a coat and high heels and so from there where we went to reside in Mission. And that's in the Fraser valley, and he was at that time no longer employed in the saw mill

but he started a trucking business and delivering fuel, wood and sawdust, wooden sawdust to the Fraser valley. It was the time that Nash's sister were also born and they were born in Mission, the oldest one is well Malkiet kaur and she's married now, she's Malkiet Kaur Brar. He recalled that his father's Inder Gill had a number of wood and sawdust trucks and he would pick up the raw material from the saw Mill owned by Albert McMahan who was a prominent business man in Mission. And, there was also, Mayo Singh who had a sawmill in Paldi and Mayo Singh had also employed many East Indian workers at the Mayo lumber company in Paldi located near Duncan. Mayo also constructed Sikh Gurdwara in Paldi and that Gurdwara is still standing. Nash recalled that his father Inder Gill bought his first car in 1954. Because he was in a trucking business he had to order a new truck and so he ordered it from the general Motors that were located in Oshawa, Ontario. And he again bought a 1954 Pontiac and it was colour candy apple red.

Nash also shared his vision regarding Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara that the effort to promote this Gurdwara for a national historic site commenced a few years back. He added that Gurdwara is newly renovated and look very beautiful. Now, it's promoted as a place to, for tourists and visitors who come to the Abbotsford area to go and have a tour of it and also somebody to explain to the tourists and visitors as to some of the philosophical principles of Sikhism and you know things along those lines.