



The Banga Family

Thakar Singh Banga was born 1877. He arrived alone in Canada in 1907 as one of the earliest immigrants. His son Nand Singh was born in 1906 just before his father left India. In 1920, when he was only 14 years old, Nand Singh came to Canada to join his father. Two of his uncles, Pritam Singh and Hardit Singh, accompanied him at that time. Nand Singh married Dhan Kaur in 1926 and their first child, a baby girl named Bhagwan Kaur, was born in 1929. She was followed by Ajit Singh in 1932, Harmbimble (Bimbh) Singh in 1933, Isher Kaur in 1935, Harbimble Kaur in 1936, and Mahinder Singh in 1937.

Dhan Kaur left Canada for India in 1938 with her three daughters and one son to raise her children with her extended family for six years. This was a common phenomenon in the Indian community in BC at that time because there were so few families present to give support to young mothers.

Photos clockwise from the left

Nand Singh, Dhan Kaur and Bhagwan Kaur

Dhan Kaur and Nand Singh were married in 1926. They had six children in the next 11 years. This is their first formal family portrait with their first daughter Bhagwan Kaur. It was taken in 1931. Dhan Kaur and Nand Singh have adapted their clothing to the western style as well as to the cold climate. Dhan Kaur maintains her modesty by covering her hair with a scarf in the traditional Sikh manner.

Hardit Singh Banga

This passport photo of Thakar Singh's son, Hardit Singh Banga was taken in Vancouver for his return back to India when Hardit Singh was approximately 24 years old. Hardit returned to India with his father Thakar Singh, where he worked as a farmer in his ancestral village.

Dhan Kaur

This photo of Dhan Kaur was taken in 1938 just before she left for India with her children, not to return until 1944. The photo is taken in a formal studio, perhaps to leave for her husband and sons, who were staying behind. She is wearing western clothes, which are quite different from her Indian attire. Sikh women at that time were expected to wear western clothes when they went out in order to show that they were assimilating into Canadian society. It was hard for them to bare their legs, based on the modest upbringing of young women in India.

Malkiet, Harbimble and Ajit

These three mischevious Banga boys are: cousin Malkiet Singh, Harbimble Singh, born in 1933, and Ajit Singh, born in 1932. The turban design and style that the boys are wearing copies the Rajasthan Maharaja turban design, which was very much in vogue at that time in India. Bimbh's grandfather Thakur Singh, his father and uncle, his mother, his three sisters and two brothers, along with his uncle Pritam Singh's three sisters and two brothers all lived together in two houses. These were constructed very close to each other on about 4 acres of land.