

Harbimble Banga

Interviewer- Ok this is Rishi Singh and I'll be interviewing Bimbh, for the Canadian Sikh Heritage project. And Bimbh will be sharing his family history, and the trajectory of his family 'til date. Bimbh, hi could you tell me about your family and your self?

Bimbh- well from what I know my grandfather and my father's history, when they arrived in Canada, my grandfather he come in 1906. and lived out here in Abbotsford, New Westminister, Vancouver island, and I don't know any more of where he lived or really resided other than what I heard from my dad and other people that lived here. But, my dad come here in 1920, at the year, at the age of fourteen. And, my dad he worked with grandfather, his brother, and the younger brother. I know in Coombs, on Vancouver island, and I'm, other places like Paldi, on Vancouver island I know that they then come over to mainland, to New Westminister Mohawk Lumber Company, or my dad as I remember as a baby he was working in a Mohawk Lumber Company. My dad and his brother Pritam Singh, lived on 1 piece of property about 4 acres, both houses were there, and my grandfather and my other uncle, my mother and the three children, two sisters and brother, three sisters and a brother. In 1938, come, went back to India to stay, and we stayed with my father with the help of my aunt, my uncle's wife, my aunt. Got a long quite well, with my cousins and as parents. Anyhow, they, from there we got to come out to abbotsford quite often and this was Sunder Singh and Harry Singh, Harry Singh had two broth-, two boys which appealed to us as boys to roam around with. We got along quite well with them. And come out to the church services at the heritage, the old sikh temple, as often as we were out here. We spent most easter holidays and summer holidays out here, they Sunder Singh's boys, Harry Singh's boys would pick us up from Queensborough and we be the weekend or week or two months here and we work on Sunder Singh's farm or Harry Singh's farm. We enjoyed it out here in the country and went to church every Sunday, as well when there was a service there and enjoyed the close knit family of the Sikh people, here in Abbotsford. They're not like they are today, they, they're very close knit, there were only a few families that lived in abbotsford and chilliwack, mission and we all got together at this one church. This was the closest gurudwara for this area and we, everybody knew everybody. And, my dad right from living in Queensborough, in New Westminister well he, he was at the church gurudwara doing the cooking and the service there for all the years I can remember as a child. And, when we moved to abbotsford in 51-52, 52 we rented Harry Singh's farm. He gave us two year lease and we bought his cows and some of the equipment and we milked cows, started a dairy business. And, as soon as the lease was up they wouldn't renew, the kids wouldn't re-lease it because Harry Singh passed away, in the meantime and we, my friend Ken Neil from mission, Canadian Cannery, talking to him and he says "I got some acreage over there and I'll build a barn for you and your cows and you can keep dairy and so we dairy-ied there for 54-57, 58 and at that time we always come the church every Sunday and this church here in abbotsford, the Gur Sikh Temple. And, in enjoyed the company of the people and them days, that come here and they're all just like family. And, very close knit and we enjoyed it very much.

Interviewer- and, could you tell me about your family's as well as you, you went and got married and how this gur sikh temple played role in your family occasions. So Bimbh,

you knew thaiya ji and thaiee played an important role for the abbotsford community. So what are your memories regarding thaiya ji and thaiee ji?

Bimbh- I, we as a, my brother Ajit and myself, we respect thaiya and thaiee, to know, just like parents. And they preached that just like their own kids, children that I learned most of my farming from thaiya and his way of farming, running the machinery, planting, spraying, I know why sprayed the potatoes, out there cutting grass, cutting peas and we enjoyed that life. That is very crucial to our higher up coming, our learning and respecting what thaiya and thaiee did for the church and abbotsford. they donate lumber, time, money to make sure the church was, temple was kept in good state.

Interviewer- you also mentioned about the lumber, was your family involved in the building of the gurudwara?

Bimbh- my grandfather, in know he worked for Thretheway lumber company in the end of Mill Lake Road. And, from what I gather, from some of my father saying that he, they carried lumber after their work shifts to, to the church site and helped put the church up, beginning of the church up, so that everybody had a place to come that lived in this community, mission community, chilliwack, as far as Langley community because transportation wasn't that, that swift in those days.

Interviewer- what's the name of your grandfather?

Bimbh- my grandfather's name is Takhur Singh Banga. And are, I hope this historical site, now that it is a historical site, that it'll give a little bit insight to all the people not just some or the east-indian people but all the people of Canada or whoever comes onto the history of it. And in depth look at what the site really means to everybody here in abbotsford and whoever, and whoever grew up with in that environment of that temple.

Interviewer- thank you, thank you very much. Karen you want to ask anything? Thank you