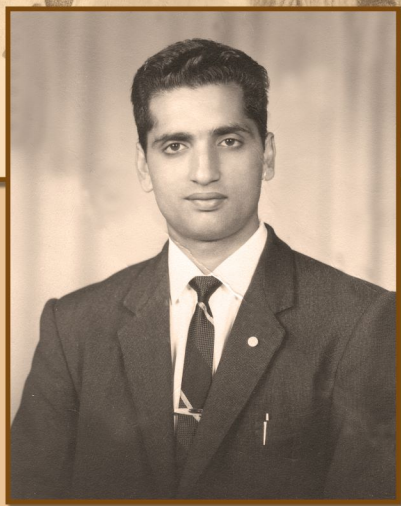
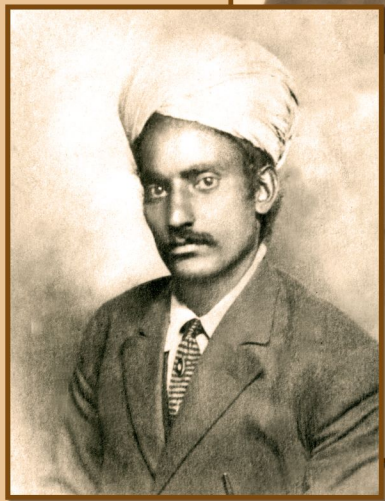


Gurtej Singh

The Deo Family

Asa Singh Deo was one of the earliest Indian pioneers to arrive in Vancouver in 1908, at the age of 18 years old. He lived and worked at a saw mill in the area for a few years before moving to California to practice farming.

Although he had left his entire family behind in India, Asa Singh Deo supported them financially from America. However, he passed away suddenly in 1934 when he was only 44 years. His family was told by US officials that only a blood relative would be allowed to come to settle his finances and deal with his extensive property. Because Asa Singh's son, Pritam Singh was in the Indian army, he was unable to go to the United States. As a result, Asa Singh's assets in the US were taken over by some of his friends in the community.

Almost three decades later, in 1963, Asa Singh's grandson and Pritam Singh's son, Sohan Singh Deo came to Canada with his wife, Naseeb Kaur Deo and their six-month old daughter, Amarjit Kaur.

Sohan Singh Deo's wife, Naseeb Kaur had been born in Canada, but she was raised in India since she was six months old. Her father had taken his family to live in India and returned by himself to Canada to earn a living.

Support for young mothers and children was easily available in India, while Canada was mostly a bachelor society for Indian men. So it was not uncommon at that time to have family living in India while men financially supported them from Canada. Naseeb Kaur returned to Canada for the first time with her husband and baby daughter in 1963.

Photos clockwise from far left.

This is a portrait taken in the United States in 1927 of Asa Singh Deo, the first pioneer from the Deo family to arrive in Canada. He was born on January 18, 1890, in the village of Kharoudi, in Hoshiarpur district. Initially he lived in Canada, but soon after he moved to the US to settle in Imperial Valley, California.

Asa Singh bought land in the US and became a cotton grower, employing many Indian men who lived and worked there. A lot of Indian men had settled in that area because they said it reminded them of home, both in terms of the plains and the weather. It was also a rich agricultural area which allowed them to remain true to their agrarian roots.

A family photo of Pritam Singh Deo with his wife Udham Kaur Deo and their eight year old son, Sohan Singh Deo.

This two photo shows Asa Singh Deo's son, Pritam wearing his army attire. His 28 years of military service in the Indian Army took Pritam to places such as Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, and England. The image of Pritam Singh Deo on the right was taken in 1943.

This portrait of Sohan Singh Deo was taken April 3, 1965 at the Yucho Chow Studio in Vancouver, BC. Sohan Singh Deo had come to Canada in 1963, with his wife, Naseeb Kaur Deo, and their daughter Amarjit Kaur Deo, who was six months old at the time.