

GURDEV SINGH DHALIWAL

Interviewer- ok, first tell us your full name

GURDEV-full name Gurdev Singh Dhaliwal

Interviewer- And where were you born?

GURDEV- Where was it?

GURMAL- Where were you born?

GURDEV- India

GURMAL- pind?

Interviewer- the pind?

GURDEV- Patishakma

GURMAL- District?

GURDEV- Burnala

Interviewer- and your parents' names?

GURDEV- Jaginder Singh

GURMAL- Dhaliwal

GURDEV-and mother Sham Kaur

GURMAL- Dhaliwal

GURDEV- Dhaliwal

Interviewer- Can you talk about your, you know, parents, siblings, your background in India?

GURMAL- What life was like when you lived in India

GURDEV- How was it?

GURMAL- In India

GURDEV- yeah well

Interviewer- Like your childhood

GURDEV- Oh well, I went to school when I was a child. I went to school and helped my dad with farming.

Interviewer- How many siblings did you have?

GURDEV- Servant?

Interviewer- Siblings. Like brothers and sisters.

GURMAL- Brother and Sister

GURDEV- A single brother and single sister

GURMAL- one brother

GURDEV- yup

Interviewer- what was the date when you came to Canada?

GURDEV- It was July '52. 11 July '52. I arrive in Canada July the 11th, 1952.

Interviewer- How was the journey?

GURDEV-huh?

GURMAL- How did you come here?

GURDEV- Well I flew from India to Hong Kong then took a pager line ship.

Interviewer- How long did that take?

GURDEV- It takes about 26 day to come-to get to San Francisco. Then took the train from San Francisco and came up to White Rock in Canada.

GURMAL- How were you on the plane? Where you fine?

GURDEV- Oh yeah

Interviewer- Did you know anyone on the plane, or boat or the train? Did you come with anyone?

GURDEV- no,no. We were together , we came together from India. East Indians. Bunch of each other but we don't know anybody.

GURMAL- What was the name of the plane?

GURDEV- The name of the plane...I don't remember it's been a while.

GURMAL- That's ok

Interviewer- Why did you come to Canada?

GURDEV- I loved to come to Canada. My Uncle Paul brought me over here. Yeah, he liked to get me over here soon as possible 'cause we, I was a wrestler in India- a small, you know, young wrestler my age. So he want to put me wrestler in Canada too. He was wrestling over here and same time. He want to send me to United State for wrestling.

Interviewer- Oh ok. And what was it like to leave India? Bubba? What was it like to leave India?

GURDEV- Live in India?

Interviewer- No

GURMAL- Did you like it?

Interviewer- No, no leave. Remember we were talking. Like what happened when you were leaving?

GURMAL- Like, when, like your mom must have been crying or dad was...

GURDEV- Oh dad and mom. When I left, she was, you know, feeling really badly

Interviewer- yeah

GURDEV- She asked me, "Promise me..."

GURMAL- How did you feel?

GURDEV- "...When you get your citizenship, you come back right away" So I did it. Those days finally after five years you get citizenship. Now you wait three years. But soon as I get the citizenship then I go back.

Interviewer- yeah

GURDEV- yeah

Interviewer- how did you feel when you arrived in Vancouver- or White Rock?

GURDEV- He, my uncle Paul, he knows me. He went to India, I know him pretty good. I was pretty happy to see him. He arrived, you know, and brought me home from there. Pretty happy, pretty happy. He

could tell I was pretty happy.

GURMAL- the railway station.

Interviewer- yeah

GURMAL- Vancouver.

GURDEV- No, White Rock. That's where he picked me up. The first station was in White Rock.

Interviewer- Oh ok. And like, where was the first place you lived?

GURDEV- Mission, right here.

Interviewer- Ok

GURDEV- Mission, BC...

Interviewer- In a house with?

GURDEV- with Uncle Paul, yeah.

Interviewer- Oh ok. And what kind of work did you start doing?

GURDEV- Well actually, mostly, mostly, I go truck, go truck all the time. The first place, when I started, we took- we had contract with one lumber – pick wood, you know. But that wasn't very long and stopped and we started driving truck all my age.

Interviewer- And what kind of things would you do?

GURDEV- Well, we haul lumber. Lumber across the border. Go the United States, go all over. Then I quit _____ field limited and worked for some other company. So have from here paper, big rolls of paper. haul paper to the United States all over. Even go up to Houston, all over the United States. And I bring the produce back. That's all.

Interviewer- Did you like it?

GURDEV- Oh yeah. I love it. Going across the border, everything.

Interviewer- What type of—How did your lifestyle change from India to Canada? What kind of things did you need to change?

GURDEV- First place, over in India I wear turban- like those people (points to his friends in the room) mustache and beard. I shaved it off.

Interviewer- Oh ok.

GURDEV- Yeah, first I did it over there. Even when I came to San Francisco he saw my passport. In the passport I had a turban, beard on. He said, "That's not your passport. You're clean shaven. Over here you have a turban on." So I told him, I said, those days they were nice people, you know, he was a nice guy. He, I said, "I have a haircut. That's why I'm here this way." He said, "Ok. Go"

Interviewer- Oh ok. Anything else?

GURDEV- No. I was really happy over here.

Interviewer- That's good. Have you traveled back to India?

GURDEV- Yeah, many times.

Interviewer- When was the first time?

GURDEV- '57.

Interviewer- And why?

GURDEV- 1958 the first, I arrived at the Delhi airport.

Interviewer- And after that, when?

GURDEV- I stayed there about a year and a half. I had a tractor, we were farming. But, I got together the application for my sister, Pooha Deepo and Cheema. Then, their application came out and I had to come with them, to come back with them again over here. After that, I had to go there so, I went Air Canada. I took the, I won the, won trip free. Going in-out, free. Nothing. I had enough mileage on, they give me ticket.

GURMAL- They used to put miles on cards.

Interviewer- Oh yeah?

GURDEV- When I was going to India. I went five times every year so I had enough mileage that they give

me free trip.

Interviewer- Oh wow

GURDEV- Yup, Air Canada. I won

Interviewer- And...

GURMAL- Are you going to ask him about Partition?

Interviewer- Yeah, we are after. What areas of Canada have you lived in?

GURDEV- Live in?

Interviewer- Yeah

GURDEV- Most I live in Mission. Then we bought the logging truck and we went up North. Like Houston—Smithers. You take number 16 highway, you take 16 highway and go to Smithers. I stayed there two years with logging trucks. Then I come back, stay Mission, that's it.

Interviewer- Ok.

GURDEV- Then we bought some farm in the United States.

Interviewer- Oh ok

GURDEV- Yeah, we. We sold the farm. We financed the guy and the guy look after us three years. After, he went broke. So, we had to take the farm back again. So I, they sent me over there. I stayed there two years farming there. Then we sold the farm again. Come back over here

GURMAL- It was our farm

Interviewer- yeah

GURDEV- Yeah y our grandfather, he came with us.

Interviewer- oh ok. Did you face any discrimination here?

GURDEV- No, not me.

Interviewer- None?

GURDEV- None. 'Cause you know, Mission was a very small town, you know.

Interviewer- Yeah

GURDEV- And Uncle Paul, he had very good respect over here. All East Indian. Grewal, he was the mayor, twice in Mission city. East Indian. So, we were only six, seven families but even white people vote him. We had good respect over here. No, no hate at all.

Interview- Oh ok. What kind of social life did you have?

GURDEV- Well, social life. Driving truck. Come over in the evening. Enjoy with friends. I had a lot of friends so that's it. We, in evening, we have a drink. Six days a week I was in my truck alone and I needed to check, clean everything, so on. That's it and Monday morning have to go to work again.

Interviewer- Oh ok and how much family did you have here? Just Bubba Paul?

GURDEV- That's all

Interviewer- Oh ok and

GURDEV- I had a cousin but not a close cousin.

GURMAL- After, he brought your grandma

Interviewer- uh huh

GURMAL- and then the rest of his family

Interviewer- Oh ok, and did you visit the Abbotsford Gurdwara?

GURDEV- Many times, many times. Those days when you came there was only one gurdwara on this side, you know. So we go there every weekend.

Interviewer- Oh ok

GURDEV- Then they build new one over there, I went there many times.

Interviewer- And um, what kind of things did you do there at the gurdwara?

GURDEV- Just like...

GURMAL- Listen the prayer

GURDEV- Usually over here, you know, Giani Kirthan. You sit down, you listen the Kirthan, then

something to eat, then come home. That's all.

Interviewer- What's the major difference between when you came to Canada and now in society?

GURDEV- Well those days, Canada wasn't a little bit high like now. It wasn't like that either, you know.

So, but now the Canada economy-wise, everything-wise went up. There roads wasn't that many in those day. There was no freeway when I came here, no freeway. See, now they put the freeway in so everything's all good now. That's it.