

Gurdev Singh Sidhu Transcription

Interview Date: January 22, 2015

KS: Uncle Ji what is your name?

GS: Gurdev Singh Sidhu

KS: What is your birthdate?

GS: 15· 11.1938

KS: 1938?

GS: yes

KS: where were you born?

GS: Baadaur in my maternal parents' house, Punjab, India.

KS: Punjab India?

GS: yes

KS: when did you come to Canada?

GS: in 1969

KS: in 1969, ok.

GS: yes

KS: what was your reason to come to Canada?

GS: as a visitor

KS: as a visitor, ok! So anyone was living here at that time know or related to you?

GS: yes, my brother in law—my sister's husband

KS: so how old were you at that time?

GS: 32 years

KS: were you doing something before coming to Canada? Any work?

GS: I was doing farming there

KS: you were doing farming in the same village where you were born or somewhere else?

GS: No, it was in a village Pakharwadh-Kishangarh, the name of the village. Badhaur was my maternal grand-parents place where I was born, but my village was Pakharwadh-Kishangarh.

KS: did you study in a school there, till which grade?

GS: yes, till grade 7

KS: and after that you started doing farming

GS: yes, I started doing farming

KS: with your father?

GS: no on my own because my father was old, so I started doing farming on my own

KS: So, did you buy your own farm or you were doing it in somebody else's farm?

GS: yes, I worked in my own farm,

KS: you bought your own farm after grade 7?

GS: No no, it was my father's property, he gave it to me as ancestral property

KS: So you were doing farming after your grade 7th. What was your age that time?

GS: I was about 15-16 years old that time.

KS: so at the age of 15-16, you were doing farming on your own and you were doing farming till you came here

GS: yes

KS: so your sister's husband invited you to come to Canada as a visitor

GS: Yes

KS: when you came to Canada, how did you like it here, what was your first impression?

GS: (laughed)...When I came here...I saw it is just like our own country! My other sister—the younger one was picking potatoes from the farm to cook it for the dinner. And there was another boy with me,

KS: ok

GS: and he said, people used to say that there is no dirt in Canada, but you see there is dirt also here (laughs)

KS: Ok

GS: yeh... there is dirt also in Canada

KS: you had heard there is no dirt in Canada, it is too clean country

GS: yeh ...that is very beautiful country. Very nice country,

KS: but you saw the dirt here

GS: yes, I thought it is like India here, as there used to be lots of dirt in India, and when there used to be storm in India, the whole village used to be full of dirt there, but there was dirt here too. Here it is yellow coloured dirt which rises like the fog here

KS: so where did you come to Canada first?

GS: We came to Abbotsford first, we landed in Vancouver.

KS: so you came to Abbotsford because your sister and brother-in-law lived here. So which farm they showed you first? That was their own farm, where was the farm?

GS: Defehr Road, near the boundary of Abbotsford

KS: can you spell it for me

Kulwant (his daughter): D-e-f-e-h-r near Aldergrove; that's name of the road where our house was

KS: ok, so you came and lived with them. They showed you their farm, potatoes and picking potatoes etc.

GS: Potatoes were only few, a small area they had a garden vegetable for home.

KS: what was the rest of the farm?

GS: rest of it was Berry—it was Raspberry. It was 10 acres,

KS: when you came as a visitor, then you went back to India or you stayed here only?

GS: Then we went to Vancouver for 2 months where they had a house

KS: ok

GS: Then after 2 months I got the stamp for Immigration Visa, when I applied for immigration, then I had made adequately full points

KS: so you applied for immigration on point system

GS: after how much time you applied?

KS: it took me only 5-6 months to become "Free" (to get immigration he meant)

KS: so you applied immediately when you came as a visitor or after sometime?

GS: Yes. They had taken \$500.00 as a bond and gave me 3 months visitor visa. If I did not get immigration within 3 months then I had to go back to India. Then Applied in Vancouver with the help of a lawyer, he prepared my papers for immigration and with all that I got immigration in about 5 months and stamped my passport.

KS: ok

GS: and they gave me work permit after 2-3 months only and after 3 months from that time, they gave me immigration and stamped my passport

KS: ok, I repeat. So you came to Canada in 1969, you got work permit in 3 months and then immigration in 2 months after that (that is total after 5 months)

GS: yes

KS: so when did you work in the mill?

GS: So I went to Prince George after a month where lots of people were known to me, they were all nice people.

KS: who told you about that mill?

GS: there were some people who came to work in the farm of my brother-in-law who told me that there is a mill in Prince George where there is work, you can go there

KS: do you remember the name of the mill?

GS: yes, Northwood Company.

KS: ok

GS: so I started working in that mill. The Foreman and the Personnel officer were very nice there, both of them were ""gorey"".

KS: ok

GS: There were lumber of all sizes.... 2X4, 2X8 and 4X10 etc. different sizes and they put me on 2X8

KS: ok

GS: that 2X4 comes more, it used to come and fall more and the foreman started helping me and I made 2 loads in one hour. And there were 3 men working on that

KS: on the green chain? And you were pulling them?

GS: yes, it was coming like rain. There were 24 people each working in 2 shifts, there were total 50 people working on that

KS: so you took that work in 1970?

GS: yes in 1970 I went there to work

KS: so for how long did you work in the farm? 3 months only?

GS: I did not work in the farm for too long, did only for 20 to 30 days months, when I got the work permit, I went to the mill. There was not much pay in the farm, so I was not making much in the farm. I was making only \$1 or \$2 in the farm, there was not much pay in the farms, it 45 years ago when there was not much work in the farms. There were not many farms in this area those days. There were only 4 to 5 farms in this area. Only 5 big farms those days: Jagir Singh Bath, Mukhtiar Uggarh, Sarwan Alamwalah and another Alamwalah and 5th one was Gill Farm. There were 4-5 big farms of Caucasian people. Because there was not much earning in the farms

KS: ok. So there was not much earning in the farms so people said you should work in the mills

GS: yes. Even in the mills, the salary was not very high

KS: so what was your starting salary in the mill?

GS: I started at \$7.00 when I started my work there, actually it started at \$6.00

KS: was it per hour or per day?

GS: yes it was per hour, \$7.0 per hour.

Was it \$7.0 per hour in 1970?

GS: yes yes! It was \$6-7 per hour

Kulwant Gill (Daughter): do you think it was this much?

GS: yes yes! Because it was union

KS: are you sure it was per hour or per day?

GS: we used to get around \$7.0 per hour

KS: So how much you made per week?

GS: per week...hum...I used to get \$250.00 for two weeks including my over time. I used to do approximately 2 hours and I used to be very happy those days that a big cheque for two weeks it was. People used to say, it is a really big cheque for two weeks--\$250. There was a lot of overtime. The foreman used to give lots of work and asked to do this and that.

Kulwant: May be he is not remembering it

GS: And around 10am, when it used to be coffee break, he used to come towards me smiling and would bring a big piece of moose and coffee for me.

KS: Oh wow! Was he Indian or Gora?

GS: Gora. He was Gora. Yes! And after 2-3 months I got to know that eating moose is not good, then I started saying "no" to moose.

KS: for how long did you work in that mill? Was it a lumber mill or saw mill?

GS: I worked there till 4-5 years continuously. It was a lumber mill. There was a plainer unit also but I worked in the lumber mill only because picking lumber was easy for me. I used to pile the lumber 12 in the width and 18 high. Yes!

Sukhi Brar (SB): Uncle ji, you pay in this mill was a piece work or \$7.0 per hour, like hourly pay in that mill?

KS: repeats this question again to GS:

GS: it was hourly rate \$7.0 per hour

Kulwant: he might be mistaken and no remembering now

SB: I can check it later because I have log book of that time. Maybe including the piece work and hourly combined, he might be making \$7.0 per hour.

Kulwant: he might be forgetting. You can check it later, right!

KS: so how did you feel working there? Were you living in Prince George?

GS: we were 6 people living together in Alpine Villa in Prince George.

KS: so 6 of you had rented that house?

GS: yes we six people were living together. The road was going round and round and it reached there. It was a 3 story house and there were 3 rooms downstairs. All 6 of us used to work in the mill and then in the house we used to work together, one person used to make daal, sabzi and one person would make roti and someone person will do other things like that, we all used to work together in the house. There were 2 shifts. Some had one shift and the other had the other shift, but we used to cook Roti together. We used to give total \$100.00 for rent

KS: Ok

GS: we used to bring grocery for approximately \$30.00, as things were cheap those days

KS: in \$30.00, you used to get the grocery for 6 people and it was enough grocery?

GS: in \$30.00, the cart used to be full of grocery!

KS: Ok

GS: One bottle of alcohol, of 5 star was \$4.00 and the bear case was around \$1.5 (laughs...). None of us was drinking alcohol or beer, but we used to bring it friends who used to visit us McKenzie and Prince George, as they used to visit us and we used to bring this for them for their hospitality. As some singers groups used to come in McKenzie and they would bring them to us in our house.

KS: Oh ok! Which singers?

GS: for example Mohamad Siddique and Ranjit Kaur came once. The Akhara groups!

KS: Oh Ok!

GS: one person used to make Rotis. And once there was one person who used to make good rotis, soft-soft fulkas, all used to make good meat and vegetable dishes, and both of us ended up doing more work in the kitchen, Jinder and me. So one day I told him (jokingly –laughs) that you make the rots thick and leave them half cooked and don't make good rotis (we were doing fun only) because other guys are liking your rots a lot and they are eating and eating! (He was joking). And we used to cook sag with broccoli and pig meat added to that and we used to cook a big pot of meat. And with that we used to make Corn Rotis and we all used to eat together.

KS: so \$30.00 grocery was for a week?

GS: yes about \$30-35.00 per week, that's it

KS: so when did you get married, and your wife.....?

GS: Marriage....ummm...I was around 25 years of age, in the month of Maghar (lunar calendar month)

KS: when you came to Canada, did you have your wife? Were you married?

GS: Yes, I had my wife and 3 daughters at that time

KS: so you left them in India?

GS: yes I left them in India

KS: So you came alone as a visitor

GS: Yes I came alone, and my son was born after 3 months when I came here.

KS: so why did not they come with you—your family?

GS: They did not come with me because I wanted to come first and see what kind of country is Canada, I should see first.

KS: ok

GS: when I came here and saw that it is like India only, there was a thick forest... especially in Prince George area there was too thick forest---too much forest...and I hit my forehead (symbolically saying) that why did I come here, after seeing so thick forest. Why did I come here, instead my country was better than this

KS: so you did not like it there?

GS: because I felt very lonely to see the bushes and the forest in Prince George area

KS: you felt lonely because you did not see people

GS: yes, I felt alone as there were not many people here, even there were not many Indian people here. Here (in Abbotsford he meant), there was a small Gurdwara, our old gurdwara, where there used to be maximum 30 people combining Mission, Aldergrove and Abbotsford. That used to be the maximum gathering on the weekend.

KS: yes, the Heritage One?

GS: yes, there were only few people. But after 10-15 years, it became full of people. Then people started coming and coming every year. Now there is no limit. Now you can't even make out, who came and who missed coming to the Gurdwara. Who is Bagga and who is Partala (just an idiomatic saying), now it seems like the whole India has come here.

And when I went back to India in the beginning and stayed there for 3 months, I was thinking if I should stay back in India or should I come back to Canada because my family was back there? I went back to India after one year.

KS: ok, you went back after a year and you were thinking where to live –India or Canada

GS: Yes I stayed back for 3 months and I had taken leave for 3 months and then they sent me telegram after 2 months because I was a good worker. Everyone used to like me. I worked really well wherever they had put me, and the Foreman, Manager and the Superintendent, all used to like me a lot. All three were “gorey”, and all loved me a lot

KS: was it a gora owned mill?

GS: yes it was Gora owned mill and all of them were very nice people. But workers were all Indians

KS: Oh ok, the workers were Indians and owners were “gorey”

GS: yes, there were most “gorey” supervisors, except for 3-4 rest were all gorey foreman. And there was a separate shift running for India workers. As you know there were two sides of the mill. Number 1 and 2. Number one was where good quality lumber was coming and No. 2 was where second quality lumber was coming. But they had put me on number 1

KS: where there were more ““gorey””?

GS: yes there were more ““gorey”” in that number 1. And in number 2, there were more Indian people. Only 2-3 “gorey” were there in that mill. There was one tally man who used to find it too hard and he used to come to me and there was one server man who also used to come to talk to me and he used to say, “Those people are just talking a lot. They are not doing work seriously, go and tell them to work!” But I said, “You only tell them to work, why should I tell them.” He said, “They are un-necessarily laughing and not doing work properly.” When they (India workers) used to eat apple, they used to bite the whole apple and the spit while biting used to go to their face (“gore’s face).

KS: why were they doing that?

GS: just while eating because they used to bite hard and they did not know how to eat decently.

KS: Oh, they were not doing it intentionally, but it used to happen accidentally when they used to eat apples and bit it hard. So "gorey" did not like that?

GS: yes, it was not intentionally but it used to happen when they would eat roughly by biting it hard. And "gorey" used to turn their face away because they did not like it. So the conditions were like that, and some men were like that which I have seen it myself

And when I went again to India and tried it again, actually I went 4 times to India in 5 years and then on 5th time I filled papers for my wife that now she would not stay back there. And I winded up everything there and said, now we are not going to stay back there, and we are going to move to Canada. At that time I had approximately \$40,000 saving. Which I never sent back to India and invested anything there and nor here in Canada. So I bought a house on Pandora Avenue in Abbotsford, where there is a new hospital now in Abbotsford

KS: on Pandora? Ok.

I bought a house there. Actually one gora and Gori got divorced and they said, we will sell it for \$60,000. The house was built very beautifully, from downstairs and upstairs. And there was school at the backside of the house. And I thought that is a very good idea that my daughters (all three daughter, Melo, Jassi and Pappi had three daughters at that time, 5, 12 and 13 years) can go to school by opening the back gate of the house. So they used to go to school and I used to go to work.

KS: so when did you leave the work at Prince George mill and when did you come back to Abbotsford?

GS: I came back after 5 years after working outside in Prince George, and after coming back I started working in Gill Farm.

KS: was Gill Farm or Mill?

GS: Farm. There were 300-400 people working in that farm. He was also paying me good. He paid me almost the same as much I was getting in the mill, rather he paid me more than the mill. He paid me good salary.

KS: so when you brought your family, at that time you were working in the Gill Farm.

GS: Yes, we all got together here and I thought why to take them to Prince George, and I bought the house and the car, and I said, I would not go to India now, and now we will all live together. And I used to dress up nicely always, I used to wear dress shoes even then (Rakabee) as I do now, I used to get down from my car in the farm, and used to drive their pick-up in the farm. There were 200 people working in the farm at that time and I used to put all the men on work,

as I knew how to get work from people as I did it in the mill also and also in India I was supervising work, and I knew how to supervise the workers, and I knew it from the very beginning, and even in the mill, people knew that I had experience of work. And when I came here, he asked me what monthly salary I want and he would give me that much.

KS: so why did you quit work from the mill?

GS: Because he started paying me the same salary here as I was getting in the mill.

Ks: did you find mill work difficult?

GS: no, I did not find it hard but I just thought why to take the kids to Prince George, and I got the same salary here, then why to go there?

KS: was that a union mill or non-union?

GS: Northwood Company is a very big company, lots of men work there. Even if I go there now, they love still love me the same, they are so nice people

KS: ok ok! Because it was far from Abbotsford, that's why you quitted from there

GS: yes yes.

KS: do you remember, when did you quit from there –which year?

GS: hum...(thinking)...just count 5 years from 1970---you may say in 1975

KS: so left the mill in 1975 and started working in Gill Farm. So what were you doing in the farm?

GS: I was a supervisor and assign work to the workers. For 4 months, it used to be hard work, because there used to about 200 people working; they had lots of cabins, approximately 150 people used to live in the cabins. There were 4 big farms in this area: Jagjit Singh Bath, Sarwan Singh Alamwala, Sher Braich and Gill Farm.

KS: yes

GS: after that, there was no limit. First people bought 5 acres of farm, sold the berry and bought 10 acres, and then they bought 20 acres and 25 acres...there was no limit. That's how people grew their work from then, and there was no limit to grow their work and there was no limit for people to earn money. But I am happy...I am happy because all my diseases I got lots of diseases...I got heart surgery done...they had put 5 arteries.

KS: So when got all these diseases, when you were working in the farm?

GS: no, it happened in 1990

KS: so they happened later on, and you worked in the farm only after that

GS: yes in 1990. Yes I worked in the farm for 15-16 years. Then I retired at 65, then they said...Then I did some home building and selling also. That also gave me good money. I used to make good money in buying and selling the houses.

KS: so you did Real Estate

No, not real Estate. It was building the houses and sometimes buying the houses and selling them and sometime selling the land also. Even 10 thousands, 15 thousands were enough for me.

KS: ok

GS: but now I don't do it. Sometimes I feel I should do something it, but I do it sometimes when sometimes when I see something cheap and sell it, and sell something occasionally but I am not doing it regularly now. Otherwise I am just sitting and enjoying life. All my three daughters and the son have good jobs and good businesses. Kulwant works here at UFV, the middle one is teaching in Maple Ridge, she is a high school teacher and her husband is a book-keeper, both of them have good work, Another daughter, Gurcharan...both her sons have become doctors, and she was working here in community services. Now I have told her not to work anymore because you have really worked hard for so long, her husband builds and sells the house and he also makes good money in the houses.

KS: I wanted to ask you, when you were working in the mill, what was your lifestyle, what was the life at that time, because you were living alone?

GS: my life was really good

KS: was it good?

GS: Life was really good. I used to run very fast that no one compete with me. I was very thin and people used to call me "Skinny" and everyone used to say, wherever he works, he makes a good load of wood that I used to work very fast and bring good output. Otherwise who would keep me for work? When I went back to the mill to see the Personnel officer after 3 years when I returned from India, he said, "Anytime you join" and he gave me free taxi service to go to the mill. And he had put me back to the same work what I was doing earlier in that mill.

KS: ok. When you bought the house, how you were going to work? Did you have a car?

GS: yes I had a car here.

KS: ok, so how many hours was your work shift?

GS: Oh no, when I was working in the mill, that time I did not have my car.

KS: So how did you go to work there? Did anyone buy a car?

That time we all used to go in one car. There were two cars in our group. Two boys were from Ludhiana District and the foreman was also very good person. Those two boys were Daljit and Kuljit, both were double M.A., their English was high. And there was a foreman was Grewal, and there was a Fauji Gurbax and another man was Jinder, (I can show you their pictures as I have it with me), He has a long beard, his grand-father was Baba Dharam Singh (Their pictures are here), he was also with us---we were 5 people in Prince George

KS: so one person bought the car and all of you used to go in one car

GS: yes in one car. Whenever I had to come to Abbotsford, Jinder used to drive the car and in 8 hours he would bring us from Prince George to Abbotsford. And then we used to go to sleep after reaching at Defehr road.

KS: so from where you used to bring your grocery?

GS: There was a store in Prince George. We used to bring it in the car or in the taxi.

KS: and you were talking about singers? They used to come from India?

GS: yes they used to come from India. They were from the village side of Grewal in India, and Grewal had a duplex house, so they used to stay in his house. And sometimes we used to rent a building for them, where they used to sing.

KS: so they used to come to give entertainment here?

GS: People used to come and sing and listen for singing for 2-3 hours because it was a lonely city. McKenzie was full of bushes and forest, Prince George was still better.

KS: so was the life after working in the mill? One thing was that you people used to listen to the singers, what else? Were you going to watch movies or going for outing etc.?

GS: yeh, that was it or we used to come this side (Abbotsofrd), on the weekend there were 2 days off or on any other day off, we used to go and travel different places to we used to travel to Abbotsford.

KS: so which places you went to travel?

GS: we went to Vancouver, Victoria and some nearby places, and we came to Abbotsford. In the beginning, we never used to like it there as it was too lonely. Even here, in Abbotsford, there were not many houses, there were not many Indian houses even here. There was nothing here.

KS: so you liked Vancouver and Victoria because there were more people and activity?

GS: yes we liked Vancouver and Victoria. Here in Abbotsford was also boring. There was only one store called, Super Vilalge Store on South Fraser Way that was the only store. All these big stores which you see today are very recent, like Bay and other big stores in the mall. Everywhere there was a forest here.

KS: yes. So were you people celebrating some festivals, your Indian festivals or any get together or any parties?

GS: Not much. Our party was to make Deg (Indian sweet) when there was any special day. We had one master from Moga and there was one Bhai Bant, and we all used to get together on special days

KS: like Diwali and Guru's days

GS: Yes on Diwali or on Guru's days, we used to make Deg and do path of Japuji Sahib, and sometimes someone used to do Sukhmani Sahib Paath—which is one hour

KS: in the house only?

GS: yes in the home only, we used to sit and cover our heads that was how we used to pass our time

KS: Which Gurdwara was near to you?

GS: there was no Gurdwara there, now there is one which was made later, it was made when we were still there, (talking about Prince George). Abbotsford had a Gurdwara.

KS: so where you used to go to Gurdwara when you wanted to go?

GS: There was one small one made in a house, a little one made by Midhas and then they made a big one, it was not that small house, it was a big house though, so we used to meet there.

KS: ok

GS: and now there are numerous people there, lots of people live there now in Prince George

KS: when did you take your citizenship?

GS: I did not take citizenship. I did not need it.

KS: You haven't taken citizenship till now?

GS: No, no

KS: so you are still permanent resident?

GS: yes permanent Resident

KS: why you did not take citizenship?

G: (laughs)... just because I have my property in India.

KS: you have land and property still in India?

GS: yes I still have property in India. But I don't get anything from that. Yes, I have one Murabba farm –which is equal to 25 Kille (acres)

KS: which village?

GS: in Pakharwadh –Kishangarh. It is like that someone will put two tube-wells, someone will do something or the other on that property. 2-3 lakhs will be spent on that and 1-2 lakhs on other things. Earlier I used to go every year there, and used to spend all the money there. Now my wife goes alone.

KS: I have one more question: how was your relationship with other ethnicities living around you at that time?

GS: very good, very-very good, there are no words to explain, and God has blessing on me. I don't speak without saying "Hanji" to anyone. I really love everyone so much. People also love me a lot.

KS: other ethnicities, may be "gorey", Chinese or Japanese and all people

GS: Yes, with everyone, we all love each other, I say "hello" to everyone, everyone loves me and I love everyone. That's the biggest thing of all. I pray that God keep the love and good harmony in all people.

KS: How was the atmosphere around you, wherever you have lived?

GS: yes, where ever I have lived, you can create an atmosphere as you want, as people say, "milk the cow as you want", wherever I have lived, I have never got a bad name. That was my policy, wherever you live, live nicely,

KS: so you had good community relations wherever you lived

GS: yes, Very good. And even today I pray to God, that I should not be saying anything bad to anyone, that God gives good heart and good mind to everyone. And God has given us a lot, He has not kept HIS hand small giving us so much, He has given us a lot, houses, property, land in India and money, I have everything now.

KS: did you ever buy your own farm?

GS: no I never bought my own farm. I had told my son to buy one, maybe 5 acres. But my son wants to buy one with horses

KS: so you always worked on someone else's farm for 15-16 years, right?

GS: yes, I worked in his farm (he meant Gill farm)

KS: Ok, thank you Uncle ji, we have talked lots of things and this all we wanted to ask

GS: was it good or bad?

KS: if you have any other story while working in the mill, then you may please share it with us, for example, sometimes we have some special memories of that time, please tell us

GS: I have forgotten my memories now as it is long time now

KS: if you know one or two, please tell us, some story of that time?

GS: (Laughs and giggles).... When I went back there, there was a man, who used to make bed for me, Gurmel... when I came back 4th times after 3 months...as I went to India for 3 times and used to come back and it was when 4th time when I went back after 3 months... and they said, you can work as much as you want... all the friends had gone at different places, the foreman died who was my friend, and the personnel officer also got changed there.... And the new one who came in his place told me that that I feel for you, that you go to Sally—a place near Prince George

KS: Sally?

GS: it is place near Prince George, about 7-8 miles from Prince George. He told me to go there. I told him that my children will be coming here now. And he told me that you would not get work in your previous mill now,

KS: He meant, that there was no work there now?

GS: no no, work was there, but he said, where you were working earlier, you would not get it now, I am telling you the story now...

KS: yes yes! Tell me the story...

GS: and I asked him, why would not I get the work there? I haven't done any bad work there. And then he was frustrated and asked me, "Is it your dad's mill?" And I said, "no, it is not my dad's mill, it is a company mill, it is not even yours and not mine" that's what I said to him and I told him, if I go there, then I will get the work there. And he told me to go to some other place. And I took the taxi from there

KS: why was he saying that to you?

GS: because he wanted that I should go to Sally and I would not get work in the same mill

KS: ok

GS: I took the taxi from there and went to the location where I used to work. When I went there, the superintendent was there, who was my past superintendent (boss), and he said, "long time Sidhu, where were you for so long?" And I told him, "Yes it is long time, I am a family man, and I could not come back early and I started playing with my kids." And I started laughing with him. And he asked, "So you started playing with kids? And what do you want now?" And I said to him that now I want to work. And he asked, "Do you have shoes?" And I said, my shoes are home...the same home where Gurmail lived as I told you earlier. And he said, "Ok you bring your shoes and go in the same taxi and I will pay for your taxi fare for going and bring your shoes." And he put me back to work again, at the same place where I used to work earlier, same work and same location. Everyone was surprised.

KS: that you got the work again, because your relation was good.

Yes. When I got the work 3rd time, I had already told them, that I am going to work only for 1.5 month. I told the personnel also and to other people that I am going to work for 1.5 months only. And he asked me, "That's it?" and I said, "Yes". And after 1.5 months I left from there

KS: so left that place on good terms

GS: yes

KS: and you told them that your family is coming now and you want to live in Abbotsford now.

GS: yes

KS: so that foreman was White or Apna?

GS: Gora. Superintendent was also gora. But I could understand their language as much I needed

KS: yes, I wanted to ask, if you had any language problem understanding them?

GS: No I could understand as much it was needed, as I knew what he was saying. I was actually speaking good English there, when I was working there. But when I came back here in Gill farm, where 400 Punjabi people were working there, and there were 200 people who used to pick berry, and he asked me (Gill) how will you manage so many people? I was wearing my dress shoes and I had put different number of people on different jobs, and by the evening, I got 10 trucks of berry gone, and got free by 4 pm. They asked me, "so you are so hard?" and I said, "I am not hard" and I had the same dress shoes (he was very proud of his dress sense and dress shoes)

SB: Uncle ji, wherever you worked in the mills, was it Union?

GS: Union people give me \$300.00

SB: I mean the mills where you worked, first of all for example Northwood Company, was it Union

GS: yes it was Union

SB: were all other mills also Union

GS: yes all were Union. I worked in some other mills too. One was in Langley and one was in Pit-meadow. I worked for some time. No body refused to give me work, but I left it myself because I thought I will work in the farm as my own wish.

KS: you did not tell us when you came to work in Langley mill

GS: Langley one got burnet. I came after 8-10 years...

KS: No I ask you again...You came from India... you worked in the farm for about 5 months, then you went to Prince George Mill and worked in Northwood Company where you worked for about 5 years. So when you came to work in Langley mill?

GS: I came after that—after 5 years

KS: after 5 years?

GS: yes, I worked for about 2 months in Langley Mil land it got burnt down

KS: ok, what was the name of that mill?

GS: I don't remember the name, but it was union mill too.

KS: Did not you go to India after 5 years to get your family?

GS: No my family came after 4 years (asking his daughter Kulwant...when you people came?)

Kulwant: I think in 1976

KS: so the family came after 6 years

GS: yes yes

KS: so you worked in the Langley mill before your family came?

GS: no after, when my kids had come here

KS: and you bought a house in Abbotsford. And you told me another mill in Pit-meadow? You work in Pit-meadow too?

GS: I worked there for about 6 months. That was a very heavy mill, the lumber was very broad, and big ones and the beam was there, but that mill also got closed,

KS: Ok, what was the name of the mill?

GS: I don't remember, I had the cards of all the mills but now I don't remember, I had all the Union cards of all the mills where I worked, but now they are misplaced, I could not find them

KS: it is ok. Did you work in any other mill after that too?

GS: no I did not

KS: after that you worked in the farm only?

GS: yes in the farm only

KS: Any more questions Sukhi?

SB: Salary questions in the farm

KS: Uncle ji, how much salary you were getting in the farm? Was it hourly?

GS: I was getting monthly salary

KS: how much approximately?

GS: approximately \$1500-1600 per month, yes...is that right? (He was checking with his daughter Kulwant as she was moving her head negative)

Kulwant: it was not that much in the beginning...they were giving you 1500-1600 after 1998, earlier it used to be less

GS: they were giving me good salary

Kulwant: no

GS: they were giving me whatever I was supposed to get –Hisab sir di

KS: from which year?

Kulwant: 1976 to 1998. I think papa when you got retired, which year?

KS: you got retired when you were 65 years old?

GS: I got retired at 64, still 2 years were left

KS: in the farm, you got minimum wages or more?

GS: yes, I got almost the same as I got earlier, I was getting good

KS: Ok. Thank You uncle ji, you have told has nice things, thank you so much!

Audi- 2 starts here:

Kulwant: Those days he could get work in more mill here, as there were more mills here too, (she is talking about Abbotsford area), but dad said, I can't work in the mill now because his breathing problem started, so he said that he will work in the farm only,

....a gap in the conversation as Kulwant thought she can't speak for her dad...

Kusum: Yeh yeh –you can answer for him, it is okay

Kulwant: we were very disappointed because he was making good money in the mill plus benefits and he was working in the farm when we came

KS: So Kulwant you tell me, why your dad left the work in the mill and came here?

Kulwant: We all came in 1976, my mom and we were 4 kids, and we were really young kids, because it was hard for us to live alone there. So when my dad brought us here, he started working in the mill in Langley and then in the mill towards Maple Ridge –Pit-Meadow, and my dad already had Asthma due to cedar dust, that's why he said, I am getting too much breathing problem, I will work in the farm only and let's all work in the farm only

KS: so because of Asthma, he preferred to quit the mill work and all started working in the farm. And you were telling me Uncle Ji that there was something A side and B side, so there was more cedar dust on B side?

GS: yes, on No. 2, there was more Cedar dust on No. 2 because they were cutting more cedar on that side, the red thing which is cedar.

So you were doing on that side?

GS: No I was working on the other side where there was white cedar. But, when I used to go to the other side, immediately I used to get breathing problem

Kulwant: The Cedar used to bother my dad

Audio 3 starts here:

KS: The people who came earlier, their next generation were really good. The people say that they used to work 16 hours/day, so when did they get time to spend with their children and teach them values?

Kulwant: those days everyone, used to work so hard like this only

KS: Uncle Ji, I wasn't to ask one more question

GS: yes, please ask

KS: Uncle Ji, you used to work a lot, long hours

Kulwant: 15 hours

KS: And your wife also worked when she came?

GS: yes

KS: so who used to take care of your kids?

GS: Our children were well behaved (They had good education) and our kids were very nice, and we knew our kids and kids knew about us, and we used to tell our kids that you all have to focus on studies, we will work and you people focus only on studies

KS: and your kids used to listen to you?

GS: Absolutely! They still listen to me

KS: how many hours you worked in the mill?

GS: Whatever hours I worked, but my attention was in my kids that they should study and get some higher education, if my kids will be educated then my life is going to be easy. Now I am so much enjoying my life as I have told you that all my kids are well educated and settled, that I don't have to worry about anything and I am at peace

KS: yes

GS: all my kids are doing well, they are all working and doing well

KS: Did you come to Canada from India that your kids will get good education and their life will be good?

GS: yes yes, that was it. I went to India 3 times and all the three times I came back thinking this only. Then I thought I must bring them here and I must settle them here, because they would not study in India, people will not let them study. Those days, the time was not that advance that kids should study. Some people used to make comments, "this girl goes to school, is she is studying, why her hair are combed this way, if she is studying why she looks like this" people were raising fingers on my kids because they were studying. Then I thought I would not let it happen, and I want to educate my kids

KS: When did you get time to teach the values to your kids when both of you were working so many hours?

GS: The kids were always around us

Kulwant: we used to go with them to the farm too

GS: all the time kids used to be with us after school they used to come to use and talk to us

Kulwant: after school, we also used to go with them to the farm and help our parents to do their work

KS: so you taught them good values, so according to you, the education had a value in your eyes

GS: yes. And that's what my father taught me. When he was going to die, my son was 6 years old and he told me, here is your son (he gave my son's hand to me) that you must educate your son and all the kids and give them all the education, and it should not be like animals that he should be roaming around here and there without education, and he said, educate your kids and put them on a good path,

KS: ok

GS: and with God's grace, all of them got into good path. And now, their kids (his grandchildren) are now got much bigger degrees

KS: yes, so you gave them good values towards getting education

GS: yes yes!

KS: Thank you

Kulwant: Ok, That's good!