

[Narrative of Piara Singh Dhillon]

Saw Mill Worker Stories

Piara Singh Dhillon Narrative

Interview Date: January 14th, 2015

Piara Singh Dhillon was born on 13th July, 1948, in Village Buttar located in District. Moga (then it was District. Ferozpur), Punjab, India. He immigrated to Canada on May 23rd, 1969 when he was 21 years old. He immigrated to Canada based on the quota system when his aunt (father's sister) sponsored him. Then the quota system was based on the education of a person in India, and whoever got the letter through that quota would be guaranteed immigration. Mr. Dhillon's aunt could sponsor him that time under family sponsorship. Prior to coming to Canada, Mr. Dhillon did four years of farming.

Mr. Dhillon decided to immigrate to Canada because he had a desire to see Canada and hopefully earn some income and savings. In 1974 he was married and stayed in India for four months and then brought his wife back with him. When someone used to apply for a visa for their spouse, it used to take very little time to get the letter. Thus, when his wife arrived to join him, they soon started a family and then things started working out here smoothly for him. He lived with his shua (father's sister) until his wife joined him in Canada. Moe Gill (current Abbotsford City Councillor) was his shua's son, so his first cousin. It was through them that he was sponsored to come to Canada. By 1980, things were running smoothly for Mr. Dhillon and thus he would not return to India for fifteen years when he returned after marriage. But in his heart, he did not like to stay here permanently and always longed to go back. When he did go back to India in 1981 and he saw the living conditions there, he made up his mind to settle in Canada indefinitely.

In 1969, Mr. Dhillon worked in a mill called the Prince Rupert Forest Products located in Prince Rupert. Mr. Dhillon only worked at the mill for a year after which he joined the Ham and Cedar Mill otherwise called the SC Forest Products located in Maple Ridge. He received the job in the mill by simply filling an application. They would need young energetic people and so they would hire anyone whom they thought fit the bill. Mr. Dhillon started his first job on the green chain and then after two years he started getting other jobs. Mr. Dhillon explained that on the green chain the pieces would come through the machine of various sizes, for example, 4X2, 4X4, 4X6, and 4X8. These pieces were sized and they were unloaded and someone was needed to pick them up.

All different nationalities of people worked with Mr. Dhillon in the mill in Prince Rupert. There were Indians, people of European origin, Chinese and all different nationalities. There was no difference in behavior among any nationality. They all lived together in a cook house as most of them were single men and no one had brought their families to Canada. All 25 to 30 people would

IDENTIFIER

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