

[Narrative of Helen and Herb Doman]

Harjinder (Helen) Kaur and Harbans (Herb) Singh Doman

Harjinder (Helen) Kaur Lashman was born at the King's Daughters Hospital in Duncan in the late 1930's. Her father Lashman Singh Parbat first came to Canada in the year 1907 from the village of Karnala. Lashman Singh lived and worked in Vancouver for a few years before moving to Vancouver Island for more work in the lumber mills. In 1924, Lashman Singh returned to India and married Maha Kaur. Maha Kaur arrived in Canada in 1929 and joined her husband Lashman Singh in the small community of Paki.

The Lashman family moved to Duncan in 1948 where Helen attended high school. She was not able to complete her post-secondary education because there was no university or college on the island at the time. She recalls that during the time, there were very few Indo-Canadians in her school. As such there also used to be discrimination sometimes when kids in the high schools wouldn't talk to them or called them "Hindoes." Helen also remembers a time when her sister tried to get a job at a local store but was refused because she was Indo-Canadian. After high school, Helen obtained a job at the Duncan Municipality. She really enjoyed it there and got along with everyone.

Harbans (Herb) Singh Doman was also born at the King's Daughters Hospital in Duncan on April 8, 1932. His father, Atar Doman Singh arrived in Canada in 1910 with a vision of establishing a successful lumber company on Vancouver Island. However he passed away when Herb was at the young age of 12 years old. From there, Herb quit school and started delivering newspapers and selling magazine subscriptions. When he was 16, he bought a truck and started to deliver sawlogs to earn money. When the demand from his customers grew, Herb along with his brothers, founded the Doman Lumber Company in 1953.

Herb and Helen Doman were wedded in 1955. Their families had known each other for a long time and were close friends. While growing up, they had both lived in Paki and in Duncan. Herb's family lived on one side of Lashman Avenue in Duncan and Helen's family on the other. An interesting fact that Helen explains is how their surnames changed from the Indian ones to their father's first names. She explains that while the fathers were working in the mills, there were no names in Paki. The mother would be taken in a taxi to the hospital in Duncan and since they did not know much English, when asked "what is your name" they would reply "Lashman Singh" or "Doman Singh." So the names were written down as baby Lashman and baby Doman. Hence, the father's name became the family name.

In 1955, Herb incorporated his lumber company to "Doman's Lumber and Transport Ltd." Herb and Helen had four children: daughters Dania, Sherry, Veredra, and son, Jaspreet (Rick). Helen explains how Herb was always busy traveling to places such as China, Japan, and India because of his business and involvement in the Social Credit party of B.C. Therefore, Helen would stay home and take care of the children. Helen also started to occupy herself by becoming more involved in community events and later began volunteering at the Duncan Hospital. She recalls

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