

Nizar Fakirani

Ugandan Asian Oral History Project: Political Environment

Nizar Fakirani: “My family comes from Uganda. We were all born in Uganda, my dad was born in Uganda and we had a good life in Uganda. We were not extremely wealthy but we were well to do. We were able to afford more than the necessities of life. We all went to good schools. We had free public schools until high school and then after high school you had to pay for your education. So most of the kids, and my family also, we all got education. The life was good generally, we went to school, we had friends. All our families, extended families, were nearby in the same town where we grew up or not too far away. The education system was very good. The system was linked to the Cambridge University O-Levels so you had to sit for those exams coming from London.

We always thought of ourselves as Ugandans, not any different from the native Ugandans but we were treated differently because as a visible minority, there was certain restrictions, especially on businesses. Asians were not allowed to engage in certain business activities that were reserved for blacks. On the whole, we got along, we had no problems with the local people and there was hardly any incident of racial strife. It was only at the rare occasion where politicians would use the race card for their own personal advantage, but other than that, as far as the local people were concerned, we used to get along very well. We treated them nicely, they treated us with the same respect, so there was no indication at all that there was ever going to be a problem of the nature that did occur under Idi Amin.”