



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Immigrant Alexandria: Past, Present and Future
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Immigrant Alexandria: Past, Present and Future*

Title: *Vineeta Anand*

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Interviewer: *Krystyn Moon*

Audio and Video Recording: *John Reibling*

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Abstract: Vineeta Anand was born in India and has lived in Alexandria for twenty-seven years. During this interview she accounts growing up as the daughter of a military officer and her frequent moves within India. She discusses coming to the United States to attend graduate school for journalism, her subsequent job search, and her life in Philadelphia and then Alexandria. She explains how she has maintained her connection to India through Indian cooking, culture, and connection with family members, as well as staying involved in the neighborhood community of Del Ray in Alexandria.

This transcript has been edited by the transcriber and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.

Table of Contents/Index

Minute	Page	Topic
0:05	3	Introductions
1:17	3	Growing up in India
14:15	8	Family History
19:58	11	Graduate school in the United States
27:46	16	Job search after graduate school
38:06	21	Break in the interview and audio recording: start second audio recording
1:06	21	Living in Philadelphia
6:55	24	Moving to Alexandria
11:21	26	Staying connected to India
32:50	37	Vineeta, the family archivist

Introductions: 0:05	
Krystyn Moon	So it's March 14, 2015 and we're in the home of Vineeta Anand here in the City of Alexandria [Virginia] and this is part of the Immigrant Alexandria: Past, Present, and Future Oral History Project. This project is to hopefully reflect the wonderful diversity of the city of Alexandria and Vineeta has willingly stepped forward to participate in this oral history program. So we'd like to start with talking about your childhood and what it was like growing up in India and your family if you want to just start and I know you have some stuff to share.
Vineeta Anand	Well, thank you so much for doing this and thank you so much for being here today I really appreciate it. And I was absolutely astounded when you said that Indians represent the fastest growing minority immigrant group in Alexandria. Because—.
KM	For Asians, for Asians.
Vineeta Anand	Among Asians. Oh, okay.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	Well then. And, I'll tell you a little story, although I can be verbose so [laughs], I'll try to be brief.
KM	[laughs] That's okay
Growing up in India 01:17	
Vineeta Anand	My mother's father, my grandfather, was an engineer. He was a very well-known man in India. And in the early [19]60s he took my grandmother on a holiday to Europe. They travelled everywhere, but they couldn't come to the United States. And when they came back they brought me a doll from Paris and I used to steal my grandmother's Chanel Number Five [perfume.]
KM	[laughs]
Vineeta Anand	She would tell me stories, she wanted very much to come to the [United] States but it didn't happen. They went to Japan, they went to

	<p>Europe, but she didn't get to the States. So I was six years old at the time and she convinced me, at the age of six, that I was going to come to the States. It was sort of living her dream vicariously through me. From that time I knew that it was my destiny to come to the United States. I had no idea how I would do it. And my father was in the army. I was an army brat. We travelled all over the place. We didn't have much money. It just didn't seem possible and my family used to laugh because I—they would say "Oh you're the American one." And there was a joke in the family that I was actually American. But when I was born I fell into the Black Sea, so I wasn't white like an American but I was black.</p>
KM	[Laughing]
Vineeta Anand	<p>When I was in college I applied for scholarships to study journalism here at the grad [graduate school] level. I'd done my undergrad [undergraduate degree], I'd done my grad studies, I worked for four or five years in India. And my uncle in Japan, my mother's younger brother, was a very wealthy businessman. I wrote to him and he was kind enough to lend me the money for my studies and that's how I came here. But growing up in India was a very magical time. We could do whatever we liked. We were outdoors all the time. And I have two older brothers, Rahul and Sanjeev. I'm the baby of the family. I was a tomboy. I didn't have any girlfriends, I had all these males: my father, we had two orderlies or batmen or valets given by the army. All officers had them. They would iron the uniform, polish the brass, the boots, the Sam Browne Belt and make sure the officer was well dressed and well looked after. And so I hung around with boys. I used to go, unfortunately, on shikars. A shikar is a hunt.</p>
KM	Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	<p>There were a couple of wars with Pakistan, one in 1965. My brother and I used to play in the trenches built in the garden in case of air raids. Our windows were papered over in case of air raids. So it was very much a male world and I was a tomboy and we moved from one place to the other. My mother used to call me "youngest son"</p>
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	"My three boys"

KM	Her three boys.
	Yeah, and because I was a tomboy I was always falling and hurting myself and my knees used to be red. There was something called Mercurochrome, which you put on. It was an antiseptic, like Betadine.
KM [overlapping]	Yes, yes, they still have it.
Vineeta Anand	And I would start off with a small red patch but then ask for more so my grandmother would apply more. So then I'd end up with huge patches for a tiny little cut. And, uh, my mother used to call me her wounded soldier.
KM	Aw [laughs.] So you mentioned 1965, the war with Pakistan. I brought a map, it's not a fabulous map, but I brought a map. Can you sort of point to some of the places you lived growing up?
Vineeta Anand	Yes.
KM	Since you're all over the place.
Vineeta Anand	Yes. I was born in Delhi. I was born in the army base in the military hospital in Delhi and we lived there for a couple of years after I was born. Then my father got posted to Kashmir.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	To Srinagar and, it was very magical because Srinagar, Kashmir is referred to as the Switzerland of India.
KM (overlapping)	Yeah, the mountains.
Vineeta Anand	Kashmir has glacial lakes, glaciers, skiing and Srinagar's in the valley and we paddled to school in our own canoe. Our cook, Ahmed, would paddle us to school.
KM	[laughs] That's amazing.
Vineeta Anand	I grew up with animals. My father was an animal lover. And he was posted on the border of Pakistan in Kashmir.

KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And somebody shot this monkey and so he brought home the baby, little teeny tiny baby.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	So we had the baby monkey, and we had a German Shepard dog and then later we had rabbits. In the [19]60s my father decided to go into animal husbandry and we had about a 150 Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns. These are chickens. And then, in the late [19]60s he got a cow.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And then, we had dogs. So I grew up with all kinds of animals and traveled all over the country— In the army tenure in one place is anywhere from one year to three years.
KM	Yeah, classic—I mean, that’s what they do in the U.S. or foreign service.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, so I went to twelve schools, three colleges, four colleges. So we were in Kashmir and then we were in Jammu. And then the war with China broke out in October of 1962 and my father was posted to this area, the northeastern part of Kashmir, which is called Ladakh, because the Chinese invaded. [Pointing at the map] The Chinese invaded all along here, all the way from there through Assam.
KM	Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	India was a newly independent country. The army was very poorly equipped and was taken completely lying down. So a good chunk of Kashmir, more than thirty-seven thousand square kilometers was captured by the Chinese and continues to be occupied by the Chinese. And along here they retreated to a border called the McMahon Line named after Sir Henry McMahon, then the foreign secretary of British India. The McMahon Line was drawn in 1914, and is considered the official border, although China makes territorial claims on parts of Northeast India. Even now and then and they’ll dispute and say “Oh now that’s really part of China” and so forth. So, 1962 my father was

	there and when he was at war my mother and I went to live with my grandparents and lived in Bombay at the time.
KM	And it's also called Mumbai, right?
Vineeta Anand	Now.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Yes. So Bombay got the name because it's Portuguese from bom bahia meaning "safe harbor" or "good harbor."
KM	Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	And it was given as part of a dowry of Catherine of Braganza when she married King Charles II of England. But the historical name derives from a temple to Mumbaidevi. So now it's Mumbai.
KM	Mumbai. Okay.
Vineeta Anand	We lived there for a few years and my father was influenced by the British very heavily—he grew up under British India—so he wanted my brothers to get a good British-style public schooling.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And public schooling actually means private.
KM	[Laughs] It means the opposite.
Vineeta Anand	The opposite. Yes.
KM	In America at least.
Vineeta Anand	So they went to a very tony public school—private school—called Mayo College and the gentleman who was the principal had been in the Indian Army with my father. He was a Brit who stayed on in India, Jack Gibson. And because of the war, army officers' children were given half off, a discount—they were given—.
KM	Oh, for tuition.

Vineeta Anand	For tuition, and for staying there because it was a boarding school. So that was the only way my brothers could join was because of the reduced tuition, the discount. And then after the war, which ended my father got posted to a teeny tiny town in Bihar called Ramgarh. So from mid [19]64 to mid [19]66 we were there and then he got posted back to Kashmir, to the border and by then my grandparents had decided that two years in Bombay didn't suit my grandmother. They moved back to Delhi which is where they had moved after partition.
KM	Okay. And were they from Lahore?
Vineeta Anand	No. My father's family was from Lahore. My mother's family was from Sindh, from Karachi.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And so they moved back to Delhi and my mother and I lived with them for a year while my father was in Kashmir. And then we moved to Punjab, to Jalandhar, and then to Simla, in the mountains, and at the end of 1972, when I graduated from high school, my father retired from the army because they had very young retirement ages—forty-eight.
KM	Really?
Vineeta Anand	Yes.
Vineeta Anand	I went to college in Chandigarh. And then I went to college, for graduate studies in Bombay.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And I did my Master's in Business Management in Bombay. I worked for four years, and then I came to the States as a graduate student in journalism.
KM	Okay. I'm glad I had the map. [Laughs] That was helpful.
Family History 14:15	
Vineeta Anand	And my grandparents, on my mother's side—my great grandfather's

	<p>father, was a milkman. They were very ordinary people. And my grandfather was one of seven brothers and they were all self-made. The eldest saved money to educate his younger brother and then the younger brother had to educate the next in line and so forth. So my grandfather studied in Edinburgh in Scotland</p>
KM	<p>Oh.</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>He studied engineering at the University of Edinburgh. And then when he came back, he got married, and he was doing well, he paid for his younger brother to go and study at the University of Edinburgh.</p>
KM	<p>Oh, okay.</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>And, so that's on my mother's side. On my father's side, my great grandfather, my paternal great grandfather, was the prime minister of a small state. And you know there was all these principalities and states—the gentleman, the Raja or whoever, when he died he had no children and his younger brother, did not like my great grandfather and he gave him twenty four hours to move out.</p>
KM	<p>Oh.</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>So, that was—.</p>
KM	<p>Out of the state?</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>Out of the state, out of the state.</p>
KM	<p>Oh, wow.</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>So they just moved. And my grandfather was—my paternal grandfather was a professor of English literature, Behari Lal Anand in Lahore.</p>
KM	<p>Okay.</p>
Vineeta Anand	<p>He had a friend who took a bet with him and said “I bet you if somebody wrote a letter to you and addressed it to Professor Behari Lal Anand Lahore, it would reach you” even without a mailing address.</p>

KM	[Laughs] Really?
Vineeta Anand	And it did.
KM	And it did, oh.
Vineeta Anand	It did.
KM	So he actually fulfilled the bet—.
Vineeta Anand	Yes. No, no, he said “No, it won’t” and his friend said “I bet you, it would.” My grandfather was skeptical but his friend said “I guarantee you it will,” and it reached him.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	He was a very remarkable man, very well educated. He spoke—he was fluent in English, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu and he was a wonderful teacher and his students gave him this farewell address—I’ll just read a little bit—.
KM	Sure.
Vineeta Anand	Because it’s quite long. “Sir, it is with gloomy faces and heavy hearts that we have assembled here on the eve of your retirement to bid you farewell. Your retirement will create a gap in the life of this institution which it appears hard to fill up.” And so it goes on and then it says “We shall always cherish you in our hearts and pray for your welfare. You have to your credit some twenty odd years of loyal, disinterested, and distinguished service to this great institution and we wish you the best of luck in the years of your well-earned and richly-deserved rest. May it please God to bless you with a long and prosperous life.”
KM	Right. So with partition your family ended up coming into India—into Delhi.
Vineeta Anand	Into Delhi, yes.
Vineeta Anand	The Hindus fled to India and the Muslims fled to Pakistan at partition. Even though they had a lot of Muslim friends and they lived happily

	together for centuries, partition was a terrible time. People were slaughtering each other and doing horrible things, so my family fled, both my mother's side and my father's side. My father was already in the Indian army, so he was in what is today Afghanistan. He was posted there when partition took place. So then when he stayed with the British-Indian army, and then after partition it became the Indian army.
KM	Right. Has any of your family members been able to go back either Kurachi or Lahore since partition?
Vineeta Anand	My mother's younger brother—youngest brother went there once on work in the [19]70s.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	But that's the only time. I would have liked to go just to see all the places that my parents talked about.
KM	Right, the stories.
Vineeta Anand	Yes, yes. I can tell you the addresses, the institutions. There was a very famous Lawrence Garden where my father and his brother used to go to hang out with young women. It would be interesting someday to go but nobody's been.
KM	Well in Pakistan right now there's so much tumult.
Vineeta Anand	There is. Yeah.
KM	Internally.
Vineeta Anand	Yes. It seems a very unsafe place to visit. It's not on my bucket list.
Graduate school in the United States 19:58	
KM	[laughs] So, you mentioned you left India to come to go to graduate school in journalism. Do you want to talk a little about that process? You got a student visa or—.
Vineeta Anand	Yes, yes. So I came to this country on September 1, 1982. I went to

	Syracuse University. I was there for a—.
KM	[Overlapping] Oh, huh. Very cold
Vineeta Anand	Very cold. And my family said “how will you manage?” Because I was always cold.
KM	Oh really?
Vineeta Anand	In India I would wear sweaters when everybody else was “Oh, it’s warm, it’s warm.” I hated the fan. I would feel cold all the time. But it’s interesting how the body adjusts and so I was in snow and I was fine. Now my nephews and nieces and cousins’ children and grandchildren, nobody has a desire to come to the states. Or Britain, or Canada, or Australia. But my generation, we wanted to get out.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	You wanted to be part of the world at large because there was Woodstock, there were the hippies, there were the Beatles, the Rolling Stones. There was 1968, Kent State.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	My brother had a friend who was at Woodstock and I actually wanted to touch him because he was at Woodstock
KM	[Laughs] Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	So and Joan Baez, of course, [and] the Frank Sinatra song, “New York, New York, if you can make it here you can make it anywhere.”
KM	Right. It’s so funny you bring up some of those sorts of inspirational figures of the late 1960s because a lot of them also turned to India.
Vineeta Anand	Exactly.
KM	For inspiration too.
Vineeta Anand	Exactly.

KM	So it's a two way street, right? Particularly the Beatles when they went. Their first trip to India and then they started incorporating—.
Vineeta Anand	Now they travelled in India without even being recognized.
KM	Oh really? Okay. See, I didn't know that. That's great.
Vineeta Anand	Well, because it was you know, the backwater. One of their teachers who taught them the sitar lived outside of Simla.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	My friends and I were strolling on the Mall one day, and one of my friends I said "You know that guy he looks so much like Paul McCartney."
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	And then later on we were so upset when we discovered it was Paul McCartney!
KM	Right, right. Because people didn't know them the way they were known in the U.S.
Vineeta Anand	When I came to the U.S. in 1982, I had had done college, graduate work, and then I worked for four years and I did a degree in business but I realized that I was too much of a free spirit and the corporate culture was stifling.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	I was not meant for that. And my boyfriend at the time was a journalist and I got interested in writing and opportunities arose for me to do freelancing for some magazines in Bombay so I did a lot of that. I thought "This is fun. I could do this." And I wanted to go and study journalism so I came here.
KM	Okay.

Vineeta Anand	The process was very difficult. Foreign exchange wasn't easily available, so the twenty-five dollar application fee which is now probably a few hundred dollars was hard to come by. You had to get permission from the Reserve Bank of India.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Some of the schools waived it and I said if I get in and come there I'll give it then, and then some of them didn't, and so I had to make arrangements, you know to get twenty-five dollars [laughs.]
KM	So you had to apply for graduate school first and then have that documentation, right? Is that how it works?
Vineeta Anand	Yes. So first you had to do certain tests. You had to do it for graduate studies, a GRE, and TOEFL, Test of English as a Foreign Language, and then depending on your test scores, then you took your transcripts from your school and college and any writing samples that I had. And I had to send them and apply to four schools. I got into all four. And I took Syracuse because my friend's sisters had joined Syracuse the previous year and I would have a connection and my boyfriend at the time came to the states to do his MBA [Master of Business Administration] at Thunderbird in University of Arizona and he carried my applications.
KM	Oh, really. Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	Because they would not have made it in time.
KM	Oh, yeah, yeah.
Vineeta Anand	Big, bulky applications, postage was very expensive, I was hitting the deadlines, so he delivered them by hand to his sister who then mailed them and she trudged in the snow to the admissions office in Syracuse and followed up on the applications, hand delivered them. And so I went to Syracuse.
KM	Is mail good— Is mail service good in India? Cause' I know some of my friends, for example, their family would go to the airport with packages to send home because it was more certain that if they found a friend at the airport to carry their stuff back and forth would be better

	than the post.
Vineeta Anand	Well, if it was a letter it was fine. It was safe. But if you put something inside it was likely to get stolen. But in the early [19]80s when I came to the states and I would send everything. I sent a ten dollar bill to my dad for his birthday one year saying “Have a drink on me.”
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And it reached him.
KM	Right. Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And another time it didn’t.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	I sent a silver dollar coin when my niece was born in the mail and it reached my brother but then there were other things that didn’t.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So, things have changed now but mail to India and from India takes a long time, two, three weeks. Even now it’s very bad.
KM	I was just curious.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah.
KM	Cause’ I know today people talk about the problems they have with mail, in fact I’ve had problems with international mail, getting things.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah international.
KM	Or, more to the point, not getting things.
Vineeta Anand	I’ve lost packages to Britain so—.
KM	I’ve lost a package from Northern Ireland earlier this year.
Vineeta Anand	So it’s not just to India. It’s international.

Job search after graduate school 27:46	
KM	In general, yeah. Ah, okay, so you've talked about coming for graduate school and after you finished graduate school, what did you do after that?
Vineeta Anand	So, after graduate school, because I had ready worked in India and because I was very ambitious, I had my resume ready. I came to the U.S. on September 1, 1982. By Thanksgiving I already had my resume ready.
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	For Thanksgiving a friend and I went to New York to spend a Thanksgiving weekend in New York. My mother had a cousin there and we wanted to see the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So I started interviewing at magazines and newspapers. But, the problem was, this was the [19]80s, when being an immigrant, being an Indian trying to break into journalism was very difficult.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	I would get all kinds of really absurd statements thrown at me. I went to Business Week. Now, you know I was very aggressive, so I would line up interviews but then everything would fall apart. Then, so at BusinessWeek, the gentleman who was the head of correspondents, said "Oh yes, we have an Indian here." And I said "Oh great!" And I said "So who is he or she?" And he said, "Oh he's the chauffeur to the Editor in Chief."
KM	Oh. Oh.
Vineeta Anand	And another time, I was asked. "How do we know you can write in English?"
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	And I would just laugh because it was so absurd.

KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And people would say to me “You speak English very well.” And I would say “You know what, you speak English very well too!”
KM	[Laughs] Right, right because—I mean not just immigrants but particularly Asian immigrants, there’s that what we call perpetual foreigner myth that “Oh, where are you from? Where are you really from?” or “Oh you speak English so well.” And it is—.
Vineeta Anand	Well, you know at that time it was very difficult for me to understand. Now I have a very much better understanding that growing up in India or growing up in Thailand or in Cambodia or these places, we look to the West. Because everything was happening in the West. The pop culture, music, developments, science. And America is a very large country. It’s not just a country, it’s a continent. So people growing up here had no interest in what was happening outside. No need to know about India. I was accosted by people who would say “Do you still have the snake charmers and people walking on fire?”
KM	Right, cause American pop culture.
Vineeta Anand	When I was in Syracuse as a grad student, I stayed in a dorm for a semester. It was called the International Living Center. It was a small dorm. There were no more than four people from any one country. But, it was very noisy and I couldn’t study. I mean I was a grad student and it was mostly undergrads. So I went to off campus housing to live in a house with four other American students. And I was shocked because I came from Bombay which was a very cosmopolitan city, twelve million people at the time. It was like New York. There were people from everywhere. It was very sophisticated. You got food, culture, music from everywhere. And in Syracuse, this roommate of mine who came from a teeny tiny little town— I wouldn’t even call it a town, a village maybe, two houses.
KM	A [street] light.
Vineeta Anand	Yes. No light.
KM	Oh, no light.

Vineeta Anand	No light. Between Rochester and Buffalo. And she said one time that before she came to Syracuse—and Syracuse was a big city for her—she had never met a Jew or a Black. And my jaw just dropped. And I thought “How do I tell her that she’s now met a Jew, a Black, and a Hindu?”
KM	[Laughs] Right.
Vineeta Anand	It was mind-boggling.
KM	Right. How small town people can be in America.
Vineeta Anand	Right—.
KM	Because it is so big.
Vineeta Anand	And it shattered all my preconceived notions of America.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And, so I thought “If the rest of the country is like Syracuse, I don’t want to live here. I’m going back.”
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Because my idea of America was that of people who were liberal, who were progressive—.
KM	Cosmopolitan.
Vineeta Anand	Cosmopolitan. And Syracuse was everything but. So when I went to New York to interview for jobs I met all these stereotypes. One place the guy said—it was at American Banker, the editor was a wonderful man, Bill Zimmerman. He didn’t know any Indians except for this one guy who had committed securities fraud and was wanted. And he said “Have you heard of this guy? He’s a thief!” And I thought “You know, there’s so many Indians. No, I haven’t heard of him.”
KM	Not this one. [laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Not this one. But he gave me a break. And he said “I don’t have an

	opening for an entry level position. I'm looking for somebody very senior. But you know, if you've got a week, why don't you come and hang out here and maybe you can do a story or so." So I said fine. And he gave me, it was called a Portabubble [one of the first portable computers.] It was a computer that was about this big.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	A portable, a computer, like a big briefcase.
KM	A heavy briefcase, probably. In the [19]80s.
Vineeta Anand	So he gave that to me and I went to a conference and I came back and wrote a story about it and he liked that and then he said "Why don't you stay on another week." So I stayed on another week. I did some more stories and at the end of the fortnight he said "I'm sorry. I did say I don't have an opening for an entry level position." And I networked with people from Syracuse before I graduated. I asked one of my professors for names of graduates from the magazine newspaper program in New York. And so I met them and then somebody introduced me to somebody and— So this one woman who is a very good friend of mine now. I've known her since [19]84. I didn't have a place to stay. I had twenty-two dollars in my pocket. I'd outrun the welcome I'd been given with friends because I couldn't find a job. It was very difficult There were long lines of [people for] unemployment and I didn't have a visa.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	I was on a student visa. I didn't have a green card. Nobody would touch me—.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Without a green card. So I had two impediments. One, they couldn't understand that I could write in English. And second, I didn't have a green card. So it was end of story. Interviews would go well. I would do the test, the written test, the typing test, the stores, the copyediting, and then that was it. So, this woman, Monica, an absolutely wonderful person, took me in. She said "You can come and stay with me." So I shared her studio apartment. And she got me a job as a copyeditor at a

	law firm on the graveyard shift at night.
KM	Okay. [Laughs] That's rough.
Vineeta Anand	I would go to work at six or seven p.m. and work at night. So she slept in the bed at night and I came and slept in the bed during the day.
KM	Yep.
Vineeta Anand	Then one day I got a call from this woman saying "Hello. My name is JoAnne Park and I'm the editor of the Philadelphia Business Journal." And I said "Hello." And she said "I'm looking for a banking reporter and Bill Zimmerman gave me your name. Are you still looking for a job?"
KM	Oh, great.
Vineeta Anand	And I said "Yes!" And she said "Would you be interested in coming to Philadelphia?" I had no idea where Philadelphia was.
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	If it was Nebraska I would have gone.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Because I was in New York every Sunday in my friend's apartment. I would circle all the jobs in the New York Times. Monday my applications would go out, my phone calls would be made and I would find for every job there were two-hundred, three-hundred applicants. And I don't know how it worked, but they would say "Sorry, that job's filled." Two days after you advertise it, the job is filled? I don't understand that. And I didn't. But I was applying to Florida, where there used to be a publication called Editor and Publisher. All these things are gone now, but I was—every single job I could apply for. I'm sure I applied for jobs in North Dakota.
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Now, mind you, I had the advantage that I'd studied geography of North America when I was in school. So I knew where Syracuse was.

	I knew about the St. Lawrence Seaway. I knew that Philadelphia had been historically important but I didn't know, you know, that it was just a short ride on the train from New York. So I took the train. She said "Come down for a test." I went down there.
Break in the interview 38:06	
Living in Philadelphia 01:06 Second Recording	
KM	So we're on a train to Philadelphia. [laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And I was considerably thinner then and—because I didn't have much money and I was borrowing money from this very dear friend of mine. I was very careful. And at the American Banker, that newspaper where I worked for two weeks, they had doughnuts at breakfast, so I would have a jelly doughnut and no lunch. And when I went back to my friend's apartment I would get a frozen entree or something.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	It wasn't—there was no proper kitchen or anything so she had coffee in the fridge and, if you were lucky, a carton of milk. And that was it [laughs].
KM	[Laughs] Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	So, I went to Philadelphia on the train for the one week trial. Now, the problem was that I had been used to working at night and sleeping in the day. And so— and JoAnne was very nice and they put me up at a hotel and the next morning— and I went to the newspaper, it was called the Philadelphia Business Journal— met everybody and in the evening I went to the hotel. And I couldn't sleep.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Because I was used to being awake at night and I was used to drinking six, seven cups of coffee to keep awake and now I had to sleep.
KM	Right.

Vineeta Anand	And then there was some construction work going on in the hotel and they started jackhammering early in the morning. I don't know, maybe at five or six a.m. at some ridiculously early hour.
KM	Right like—Oh, okay, that's really early.
Vineeta Anand	Or it seemed like that to me. And I finally fell asleep at seven a.m. So at ten a.m. the phone rings in the room and then—it's Joanne. "Are you okay?! You aren't here at work." And I'm like "Oh my god I've blown it."
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	The one opportunity I had for a job and I'd blown it. So I went there and I said "I'm really sorry but there was this jackhammering going on and I had trouble sleeping." So she moved me to another hotel, a very nice, fancy hotel, and she told me "You can eat! You know, enjoy yourself." So that night I had lobster, I had a drink. The bill was thirty-five dollars and I thought "Oh my god, she's going to say "I can't hire this woman because she has such expensive tastes."
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Anyway, I did the one week test and I went back to New York. And then for two weeks I didn't hear from her and I assumed she was interviewing other people and after a fortnight she called me up and it was a Thursday, and she said "So can you start on Monday?" And I was like "Okay but I don't have a place to stay" and she said "Well one of the typesetters"—you know back then there was typesetting.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	"There's an apartment empty near where she lives so maybe you could take that." So I said "Okay." So on Friday I took the train down from New York to Philadelphia.
KM	With all your things? Did you bring—.
Vineeta Anand	No, no, no, no. I didn't have very any much back then anyway. I'd come to the country with two suitcases. And so I took the train down just to see the apartment and it was a dump. It was a studio, which was

	probably about half the size of this room and the fridge was from the [19]40s and it would freeze everything: eggs, lettuce. I mean icicles, literally frozen. There was no draining board for the sink. It was a dump. But I took it.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And so—.
KM	Was it fairly cheap?
Vineeta Anand	Not really. You have to remember my first job I made \$11,500 a year. And so my weekly paycheck was after tax something like \$150.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	I was probably paying I imagine like \$200 a month. So it was more than a paycheck. And it was difficult. And I can tell you that I do not want to relive those early years.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	I didn't know a soul. I was all alone. No Indians. I didn't drive.
KM	Right. No Indians in sort of downtown Philadelphia?
Vineeta Anand	No Indians in downtown Philadelphia.
KM	But sort of out in the suburbs?
Vineeta Anand	Maybe the suburbs.
KM	Or maybe at Penn [University of Pennsylvania]?
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, but I had no way of knowing them.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And I was very lonely. I was miserable. So on Sundays I would read the paper. And then one day—and I lived on what was called Two Street. It was a heavily poor Irish section.

KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	But it was a very tight knit ethnic community. Irish one block, or this one section, then the Cambodians and the Laotians, and the Poles and the Vietnamese, and so on. If you've ever seen that movie Rocky.
KM	Oh yeah.
Vineeta Anand	There's a big farmer's market.
KM	Right, right. Oh, I've walked through that, yeah.
Vineeta Anand	Okay. So I live not far from there. And, the mafia— there were shootings. Somebody was shot behind the ears at a restaurant in the Italian section. So I thought "If only my mother knew"—.
KM	Right [laughs] where I live, yeah.
Moving to Alexandria 06:55	
Vineeta Anand	But then I met a few people and then at the art museum they used to have folk dancing on Tuesday evenings and I met this guy, so we went out. And I told him that I didn't want to continue living in Philadelphia. I wanted to move to Washington [D.C.]. Because I had come to Washington on work a few times, to interview people and my mother has two cousins in the area, both in Maryland, but I visited them. And I thought "I saw women in saris in downtown Washington!"
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	The World Bank—I had a cousin who worked there. I went there to visit him and it felt like I was in India because there were so many people from the South Asian subcontinent and it seemed so much more cosmopolitan. So, I wanted to move here. And then my boyfriend at the time lost his job. He had just graduated from Drexel University and had been working for a bank in Wilmington. The bank got acquired. He lost his job. So, we started looking for jobs for him from Princeton to Washington. He got an interview at a firm in Alexandria and he ended up in Alexandria. And I was sticker shocked because everything was so expensive.

KM	Oh, really?
Vineeta Anand	Oh my goodness, in Philadelphia you could buy a big house for \$200,000.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	In Bryn Mawr, no less.
KM	So what year is this? Like 1990 or?
Vineeta Anand	No, this is uh, the summer of [19]88.
KM	Oh, summer of [19]88. Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	Or spring of [19]88. So, he couldn't, he said, afford to live here on his own and so we decided to buy a house together. We thought we were going to get married which didn't happen. And buying a house together was a bad move. But we bought a house, on South Gordon Street in Alexandria in the West End. Tiny house, tiny house. And, then the relationship fell apart. I moved out. I used to work in Bethesda at time for this newsletter group that I told you about. I would take a bus from Duke Street to the King Street Metro. I'd take the Metro—I would take the Yellow Line to the Red Line to Bethesda, then the rest of the commute. And one day I took a cab—I'm not sure why or what the situation was— and he brought me through from Duke Street, Callahan Drive, Russell Road, and I thought "I love this neighborhood. What is it?"
KM	Oh so you had never been on this side of town?
Vineeta Anand	No. I had not. I'd been to Old Town.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	But I was familiar with the West End and Landmark [neighborhoods] more and then Little River Turnpike and Annandale, but I didn't know this existed. So when my boyfriend and I were breaking up and he bought out my share of the house, I started looking for a house here in this neighborhood. And so in May or June of 1991 I bought my first house on East Braddock Road. It was a joint, a twin home, or a semi-

	detached home. And I loved it. I love this neighborhood.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And I have been here since.
KM	So when you moved to Del Ray, were you still commuting to Bethesda or—
Vineeta Anand	No, no, no. I couldn't survive that commute. I was there for less than a year. And then I got a real job with a newspaper at the National Press building in Washington—.
KM	Downtown.
Vineeta Anand	Downtown.
KM	So you said you've been here since [19]91, [19]92—.
Vineeta Anand	Since '91.
Staying connected to India 11:21	
KM	And- so one of the big questions that we've been asking people is once they come, how do they settle in Alexandria and make it your home? How do you also stay connected with Alexandria but also your heritage and your family and friends back in India in terms—and I know food is a big part of it, so I was hoping you would talk a little bit, or maybe a lot about your connection with food and, um, your passion for it.
Vineeta Anand	Well, in the early years when I came to the States as a student, I didn't know how to cook Indian food. In India I didn't do much Indian cooking at all because my mother cooked. My aunts cooked. My grandmother was incredible cook. And there were always cooks. There were servants who did the cooking. So, what I learned was Cordon Bleu. But when I came to the States I wanted to eat Indian food.
KM	Right.

Vineeta Anand	And so I would call up my parents and say “I want to make” whatever. “How do I make it?”
KM	[Laughs] Right.
Vineeta Anand	So my father would write recipes and send me recipes. My father was a good cook. His kind of cooking was somebody had to prep for him. Chop the vegetables, put the spices here, chop the meat, have the dishes, everything ready, and then he’d put it all together.
KM	[Laughs] Right. The officer, right?
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, yeah.
KM	He needs it staged and then he’s ready to go. Have somebody else do that.
Vineeta Anand	Right. But he was wonderful. He would send me recipes. My mom would send me recipes. Then, on trips to India I would collect recipes. I still do.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Because I came [to the U.S.] on a student visa I had to convert that to a green card. The woman who hired me at the Philadelphia Business Journal, JoAnne Park, left a month later.
KM	Oh, okay.
Vineeta Anand	And then the new editor came, he was— I don’t know whether he was a racist, a misogynist, or both. He didn’t like me. He told me “I’m not going to sponsor you for a green card at the end of your, after your practical training”—as a foreign student, you were allowed one year practical training in your profession. At the end of the year he told me “I’m not going to sponsor you.” So, I called JoAnne Park and I said “I’m looking for a job” and she said “Come and meet me.” I went and met her at the place she was at. It wasn’t a great place, but she was very sweet. She hired me. She knew I was a good writer and they agreed to the legal sponsorship. So, they gave me \$1,000 towards my legal fees, which was great because my legal fees cost \$5,000 or more. And the rest they agreed to deduct from my paycheck \$25 dollars at a

	time, a \$100 at a time, and the process was cumbersome. I'm an educated person and the lawyers would rip me off.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So I feel for all those poor immigrants who are uneducated, who don't speak English, who didn't have the advantages I had and immigration lawyers are at the bottom of the heap as far as lawyers go because they take advantage of the poorest, most disadvantaged people. But, anyway, it was done and those first five years were very sad because both my brothers got married. I missed their weddings. My cousin got married. So all the marriages my generation—my cousin and my brothers—I missed!
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And then my grandmother died and I was very close to her. Twenty days before I could go home on what was called parole—.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Because I didn't have the green card in hand, but it was on the way. I had done the interview. And you know, I was terrified. My lawyer said "Don't say or do anything that might irritate these people because they control your destiny." I write [the number] seven the European way, with a line through it, a dash through it, and whatever the date was, [19]87, so I wrote [19]87. He said "You know, I find it so irritating when people write a seven the European style." And I thought "Oh god, he's going to not give me the green card."
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	I was terrified.
KM	Over a seven right?
Vineeta Anand	Fortunately that didn't happen and I got the parole and I went to India. And all the ceremonies after my grandmother's death had taken place, but my mother organized a prayer ceremony that I could attend where I could meet all the family, the extended family, the uncles, the aunts, the relatives. And then I couldn't go home for another five years

	because I was switching jobs, I was here, I had broken up. You know, there was circumstances. But since the [19]90s, the early '90s, I've tried to go home every year. There have been a few years where I didn't go. One year I went to New Zealand—my ex-husband and I went for our honeymoon to New Zealand. One year I went to France, so I didn't go to India. But, for the most part every year I go home.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And so that enables me to stay in touch with my culture, with my family, to see my nieces and nephews and—well my nephews in London, so I would stop in London on the way back to India. And the food! Washington doesn't have Indian restaurants of the scale of New York or London.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	A couple of restaurants are okay, but the best Indian food you will get is in somebody's home.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And so I learned to cook and I like entertaining, so I'd have friends over, neighbors over—.
KM	You had us over. [Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Indian food. I gave a cooking class in the neighborhood recently. My recipe was in the Washington Post. One day I hope to write a cookbook.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	But that's how I stayed in touch with the cooking and the food. And as far as the culture, when I moved to Alexandria—to this neighborhood—I think I was the first Indian in this neighborhood.
KM	I wouldn't be surprised.
Vineeta Anand	I never saw another Indian, or even a South Asian, face.

KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Anywhere. At the Metro, in the grocery stores, nowhere. But, I wanted to be a part of the community, so I was on the Rosemont Citizens Association Board, shortly after I moved into the neighborhood for a few years. I'm helping to create Monarch [Butterfly] Way Stations at the library. I have a Monarch garden. I give away hundreds of seedlings to people every year. I post on the [neighborhood] list serve.
KM	Right, lots of different list serves for different neighborhoods.
Vineeta Anand	Yes, I'm on all of them. I'm not so interested in other things so much as making this neighborhood more beautiful, making this a better place for people to live. So I'm involved politically. I'm a Democrat. And I volunteered for—we had a delegate, David Englin, who lived in the neighborhood. I volunteered for him. I volunteered for some of the other Democrats. So I am very politically involved. It's part of my work. Because I was a financial journalist for twenty-three years and journalism, as you know, has unfortunately gone the way of steel mills or textile mills.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	In this country it's a profession that's dying in its traditional form. It's metamorphosing into multi-media, the internet, blogging, iPhones, but not traditional journalism. So I do—I was a financial writer and reporter for many years so now I do financial research.
KM	Oh great.
Vineeta Anand	At the AFL-CIO. But, the thing I like about this neighborhood is now there are Indians in the neighborhood and recently, a couple of weeks ago, I had water in the basement and it was a very harrowing experience and—
KM	It was on the [neighborhood email] list serve so I knew about it. [Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Yes, you knew I was asking for plumbers. And so many people—the best thing about this neighborhood, I have to say, is it truly feels like a neighborhood. People are open-hearted and will respond. You say—

	I've actually known somebody who said "I need to borrow a Nikon camera" and somebody lent it.
KM	Yeah. No, I've seen all sorts of things like that—.
Vineeta Anand	Somebody wanted to borrow Vitamix [food blender], you know which costs \$600—I wasn't going to lend mine, but somebody did.
KM	[Laughs] Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	But I've lent other things and other people have lent things. And so people responded with plumbers and recommendations. And so the plumber came, fixed everything and I was just feeling really good. I made myself a cup of chai. And there had been a discussion on the list serve some months earlier about chai and how you make it and here—it drives me a little crazy when people say "chai tea" or "chai whatever."
KM	Chai latte.
Vineeta Anand	Chai latte. You know, chai is chai! It's chai in Chinese, it's cha in Russian, it's chai in all of Asia. Its tea for god's sakes. Let's call it what it is. So you know I'm having a cup of chai. I'm feeling good. So I sent recipe for chai on the list serve and I got such wonderful emails from people saying "Thank you" and I met an Indian in the neighborhood because of that email.
KM	Oh, that's interesting.
Vineeta Anand	She said her parents immigrated to the States. She was born and brought up here. But through her parents she knows about Indian food and so I've invited her over for chai someday and hope to meet her. So, this neighborhood has evolved and now there are young couples. There are Indians married to Americans or Indian couples living. You can see the Indian names on the list serve. And Del Ray used to be a no man's land. There were drugs and crime.
KM	Right. It was run-down.
Vineeta Anand	It was run-down and dilapidated and now I'm appealing my tax assessment because—.

KM	[Overlapping] [laughs] I saw that on the list serve too.
Vineeta Anand	I might have to move out of my house. You know I've lived in the neighborhood for twenty-five years. It breaks my heart to think that I might have to move out if I can't afford it.
KM	Right, cause they've increased it so much.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, and it's ridiculous. But, so, this is Alexandria and it has become a very prestigious city to live in. I was very fortunate that in the 1990s, at a dinner party I met some people, and one of the people I met at the dinner party in the early 1990s was a woman who was from my high school.
KM	Oh really?
Vineeta Anand	Her mother used to be my Hindi teacher.
KM	Here in Alexandria?
Vineeta Anand	Yes. No, not in Alexandria, in the Washington D.C. area. And she was five years younger than me but she used to hang around with her mother after school. And so I saw her and we became friends and then another woman who's her age and who went to our high school also lives in Northern Virginia, in Sterling, so the three of us meet. One of my friends is divorced but now she's in relationship. The other one is married and her child was that in high school when I first met them and now she's in med [medical] school.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So we get together. We get our, you know my Indian-ness—every now and then we get together for an Indian meal, or my friend's husband is an IT [Information Technology] guy at the Department of Education but on weekends he plays the tabla.
KM	Now what's a tabla?
Vineeta Anand	The tabla is the Indian drums. It's a set of two drums. You sit down cross-legged and you play.

KM	Right, so you put it in your lap, right? Is one bigger than the other right?
Vineeta Anand	Yeah. You put them—you have rests for them, like that. You rest them on a pillow. The Beatles made Indian music popular, so Ravi Shankar played the sitar, and Alla Rakha played tabla. So my friend's husband gives a lot of performances and he's very plugged into the music scene. So Zakir Hussain, for example, who's a very well-known tabla player and Alla Rakha's son is going to giving a performance in Lisner Auditorium [in Washington, D.C.] on Tuesday so my friend's husband would say "anybody want to go for this performance?" So we do things like that. We hang out together. And my mother's cousin is a great cook so when I'm hankering for a particular Indian food I'll go and say you know "can I come over?" and she'll make me a meal and then my mother's other cousin—he's married to an Austrian-American—so I make Indian food and then take it to them.
KM	Has some of your family come and visited you here in Alexandria?
Vineeta Anand	Yes!
KM	Like your mom, has she come to stay?
Vineeta Anand	Yes, so when I was at Gordon, South Gordan Street, my mom came for the first time in 1990. And then she came again in [19]92 when I was at East Braddock. And then my father came with my mother in [19]99 but he was for the last eleven years of his life he was very sick, and he only came that one time and he was already in poor condition.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And we didn't go out much. I took them a few places but not very much because he had difficulty walking.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And then in 2009, when I was married, my mother came again and now she's eighty-eight years old and doesn't travel.
KM	Right.

Vineeta Anand	So she's not coming again. But I go to India every year.
KM	To see her.
Vineeta Anand	Yes.
KM	Now, for them coming here and seeing you here, what was that like for them? Or did they sort of find it—I mean, cause' its—this is different than India right?
Vineeta Anand	It's very different. So, my mother when she came in '90 and '92 was very independent. I would go to work at the National Press Building and she would—I showed her the Metro—she would take the train into town. We would meet for lunch. And then she would go to the museums and come and sit in the library at the Press Club. And then I would meet her when work got over and we would take the Metro back home. Sometimes we would go out for dinner in town but she was lonely because—I have to tell you this—being an immigrant is very difficult.
KM	Yes.
Vineeta Anand	You leave behind your family, your friends, your culture, and I'm very assimilated.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	And I was, even when I came here I thought, very Americanized.
KM	Right. Everybody told you that you were American.
Vineeta Anand	But it was still a shock. And the loneliness is something I was not prepared for. And if I had to do it all over again, I don't know that I would have done it. Or I would have come with my family. I wouldn't have come alone. But, this is who I am and this where I've been now. I've lived here more than half my life. I am an American-Indian.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Not to be confused with the Native Americans. [Laughs]

KM	Right. Indigenous people. [Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	Not the Indigenous people, right. Although that happened to me in Philadelphia. I have to tell you this story. When I was a journalist I used to go out for business events and I used to write about the Philadelphia lawyers. There were lots of law firms in Philadelphia. So one of my sources took me to the Philadelphia Bar Association, or the Pennsylvania Bar Association annual shindig and he was introducing me to people and people would remark on my accent.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	“Where are you from?” So I said “Guess.” “Oh, I don’t know.” I said “I’ll give you a hint.” So I said “I’m Indian.” And he looked at me and he said “Oh, you’re Mayan!”
KM	[Laughs] What?
Vineeta Anand	I said “No, no, no. The real Indian.” “Oh, you’re a Cherokee!”
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	[Laughs] And I had to say “No, no, no. Indians come from India. You know, India? Christopher Columbus was looking for India, remember that?”
KM	And he missed it.
Vineeta Anand	And he missed it. But I had situations like that. It would happen so many times it was hilarious. And a lot of people would mistake me to be Latina.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So I learned “No habla Español. No comprendo.”
KM	[Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	But, things are very different now. There are lots—there are hundreds of journalists who are Indians. You can see them on TV, hear them on NPR [National Public Radio], PBS [Public Broadcasting Station], in

	the newspapers, on the editorial board of the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post. It's very different now.
KM	Right. Well and also the Indian-American community has its own periodicals too, right? There's like India West—.
Vineeta Anand	India Abroad.
KM	And Samar I think is a magazine now that was around for a while.
Vineeta Anand	I don't know. There are so many of them.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Lots of them. Buts mostly there were ads.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	Ads for grocery stores, ads for saris, and matrimonials.
KM	I was going to say "and dating."
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, yeah.
KM	Those are my favorite personally. Those are—it was very popular in Atlanta. In all the restaurants they would have them out front and so you would find the marriage testimonials in there. And again, it would be fascinating. It would be also sort of regional, sort of local dialects, so say "Tamil-speaking," right? And also class, right?
Vineeta Anand	Right.
KM	Is something that would come up in them too?
Vineeta Anand	Right. Right. That was in the eighties and nineties of course. Now everything is gone the way of the internet.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	So, but I think Alexandria is a wonderful place, particularly the neighborhood, to bring up a family. You can walk on Mount Vernon

	Avenue and there are ice cream places, pizza parlors, yoga, salons—
KM	Consignment, which I'm a big fan of.
Vineeta Anand	Farmer's Market. You can buy dog and cat food there, [to pet] yes Bela? You can go to restaurants. It's a wonderful place. It really is.
KM	Now, is there anything else you wanted to add? Cause' I think we have some—well we have great footage so—anything else you wanted to add to this interview, any sort of parting thoughts or things that come to mind?
Vineeta, the family archivist 32:50	
Vineeta Anand	Well, one thing I want to say is that I am the archivist in my family and it's sort of ironic because I don't have any children, but because I've been very interested in genealogy and my family history. I have a lot of things that people have given me. I have a treasure trove of letters, of photographs, and I started the family tree. It was my goal to get it going on a website by the year 2000, but I couldn't set up a website. I gave it to my cousin's daughter and her computer crashed, she lost all the data and then none of the younger children were interested. And now my nieces and nephews are in their twenties and cousins' children are in their twenties and thirties and people are saying "Tell us, tell us." So I recently started the family tree as a private blog.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And it has been an amazing experience because it's connecting me with my family in a way that I never imagined. On the internet I have found references to my great-grandfather, to my grandfather. I found books written by my grand-uncle. He was an economist. My grandfather, my mother's father, got the Order of the British Empire, same as what the Beatles got, mind you. And I found the Gazette in which he was awarded—mentioned, whatever year it was, on the internet, H. P. Mathrani, Order of the British Empire. They had all these citations. And it is quite remarkable that I can be thousands of miles away from my family and yet be connected to them through the internet and on Facebook all my cousins and uncles and aunts, and nephews and nieces, their photographs. My sister-in-law posts photos

	of my mother, so it's a wonderful way of staying in touch. It's not the same though.
KM	No.
Vineeta Anand	So I do go to India every year and I go for a month.
KM	Right. But it's also this great resource that's almost like an in-between, between not being there and being there, that new multimedia and also research and put together your family history and then sharing it too. So doing both of those things is doing something very twenty-first century as an historian who—yeah I remember by the '90s being able to do online research but now this, the possibility of creating blogs and things like that is very twenty-first century.
Vineeta Anand	So I usually have my laptop and my scanner on the dining table. When I'm entertaining it's gone but otherwise it's set up there and now people are sending me photos from the early days. I have photos of my grandparents taken maybe—so they got married in 1907 so the photos must be from 1909, 1910, 1911. And cousins are sharing photos and anecdotes and stories. It's just wonderful.
KM	Great. All right. I think we're good John. Lots of good stuff, huh?
John Reibling	Yep.
KM	Perfect!
Vineeta Anand	Thank you.
KM	Is that—I hope you enjoyed doing that.
Vineeta Anand	Yes, yes, I just wish my throat had cooperated. I don't know what it is. I want to show you a couple of things—
KM (overlapping)	It's a lot of talking, that's what it is. [Laughs]
Vineeta Anand	My show and tell.
KM	Okay.

Vineeta Anand	So my grand aunt gave me this handkerchief in the early twentieth century.
KM	I know this type of work.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah.
KM	My grandmother used to do this. It's like the pulling of the string.
Vineeta Anand	It's tatting. And she also gave me a dance card. So they would go to dances and they would have a dance card. First dance with so-and-so, second dance with so-and-so, third dance, and they would actually have that and because my aunt and my grand aunt—they wore saris—they would wear brooches and they would have their handkerchief. You know it was pretty. You would have it there or you held it in your hand. And I have some old Indian coins which I collected here.
KM	Of course.
Vineeta Anand	At coin dealers. Um, very interesting. It tells you what they are. So Indian Mewar— So this is from the Kingdom of Mewar, 1928. One sixteenth of a rupee. So before the decimal system, sixteen paisas made an anna, sixteen annas made a rupee, and then it became decimals, so that is not even an anna. And then this is East India Company, 1853, a paise. So six paise made an anna.
KM	Oh, so the company made this coin, yes? Which is sort of this quasi-state.
Vineeta Anand	Exactly.
KM	Or organization, right?
Vineeta Anand	So the East India Company said it was a trading company.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	But really it was a wing off the British Empire.
KM	Right.

Vineeta Anand	And I won't get into history here, because it can be quite difficult, even after all these centuries there are very strong passions on both sides.
KM	Right.
Vineeta Anand	But this is an East India Company quarter anna.
KM	[To John] I don't know if that helps you.
John	No.
KM	[Laughs] Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And then I also like—so these are dimes.
KM	Are they zinc dimes?
Vineeta Anand	These are very old. And I also have some Indian heads [U.S. coins]
KM	Yeah, these—these might be silver.
Vineeta Anand	And of course you can get—you can get the wheat [pennies.] And I have the Kennedy half dollars.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	And recently in auction I bought a—.
KM	Does this go in here? [putting coin away]
Vineeta Anand	Yeah. I bought an 1806 gold coin.
KM	Oh, that's really cool.
Vineeta Anand	Do you want to see them?
KM	Sure!
Vineeta Anand	Yeah.

KM	Sure, yeah. I've seen—I actually was part of a dig and we pulled out—or my colleague pulled out an 1810 coin.
Vineeta Anand	Oh really?
KM	Yeah, which was really awesome. It's always great in archaeology.
Vineeta Anand	I used to collect coins for a while. So these are—these are from the Kingdom of Gwalior, and I had—.
KM	So where's—do you know where Gwalior is?
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, I can show you.
KM	Hold on. Be right back.
Vineeta Anand	So I had—.
KM	Map, though.
Vineeta Anand	It would be somewhere here. [gestures on map]
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	So I had gold earrings made, gold and onyx. And I also have earrings with the Indian head.
KM	As well?
Vineeta Anand	Um-hmm.
KM	And so you found those here in the U.S?
Vineeta Anand	These coins at coin collectors, yeah. Yeah, they have exhibitions and sales and flea markets and things like that.
KM	Right. Stamp collectors too. It's sort of the same.
Vineeta Anand	Oh sorry, this is the wrong thing.

KM	So, oh. Look at these.
Vineeta Anand	So one is an 1851 one dollar Liberty head and the other is a 1909 two dollars and fifty cent Indian head.
KM	This is the 1909?
Vineeta Anand	1909, two dollars and fifty cents.
KM	Look how tiny this is.
Vineeta Anand	Indian head.
KM	Wow.
Vineeta Anand	Yeah, that's very tiny.
KM	Very cool. Do you still collect?
Vineeta Anand	Well, just a little bit. I have the "Walking Liberty," the one ounce [coin.] I have the—when gold was cheaper I would collect, so I have the maple leaf from Canada. The Chinese had a panda, the yuan. They have a panda.
KM	The panda one.
Vineeta Anand	This is very cool.
KM	So those are—.
Vineeta Anand	These are just rupees, just brand new, some from my trips. That's a ten rupee note. That's a twenty rupee note.
KM	Is there a hologram on it?
Vineeta Anand	Ah, the one rupee note which has been replaced by a coin.
KM	So there's a—.
Vineeta Anand	A watermark?

KM	A watermark but I'm trying to figure out—It almost looks like Cerberus, like a three-headed dog, but it might be a tiger?
Vineeta Anand	No, no, no, no. That's the Ashoka Chakra.
KM	What is that?
Vineeta Anand	It's the Indian symbol. It appears in the center of the Indian flag.
KM	Yeah.
Vineeta Anand	It's actually four lion heads.
KM	Oh, it's lion heads. Okay. That's what it is. Okay.
Vineeta Anand	Ashoka was a very famous Indian king and he sent his brother and sister as missionaries to Sri Lanka and further east to spread Buddhism. He conquered Kalinga and when he battled Kalinga and he saw how much death and suffering he inflicted upon the people of that state, he became a pacifist. He became a Buddhist. And so his brother and sister went to bring Buddhism to Sri Lanka and then from there to Southeast Asia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, China.
KM	Okay.
Vineeta Anand	And that's a two rupee note. And these are some ten rupees. Um, and you can see they are different.
KM	You like his quotes.
Vineeta Anand	I do, I do. I think Mahatma Gandhi was very cool.
KM	On the list serve, she always, as her byline at the bottom, the little quote from Gandhi.
Vineeta Anand	Or Buddha.
KM	Or Buddha, yes. That's great.
KM	That's great.

John	All right.
Vineeta Anand	Well thank you so much.
KM	Thank you.
Vineeta Anand	I hope it was worthwhile.
KM	Oh, definitely. Definitely.