



Press Release – 3/31/12

Punjabi American Heritage Society Unveils ‘Becoming American’

YUBA CITY, CA - On March 31, 2012, the Punjabi American Heritage Society (PAHS) was proud to unveil ‘Becoming American’, a permanent exhibit at the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County. Over 300 people, including elected officials, donors, sponsors and PAHS members gathered to tour the multimedia exhibit for the first time.

“The exhibit is a multimedia record of the challenges and success of generations of Punjabi Americans,” explained Dr. Jasbir Kang of PAHS. “It documents the hardships accompanying their arrival in California in the early twentieth century and their journey in becoming American. The story of the Punjabis, the Sikhs and the South Asians is the same as that of the Irish, the Italians and the Polish before them; it is an American story.”

Assemblymember Jim Nielsen addressed the attendees and fondly described his long friendship with Punjabi American community. He related his experiences travelling to India and agreed that the Yuba City area was truly the ‘Punjab of America.’ Assemblymember Dan Logue, who authored Sikh Appreciation Month in 2010, also congratulated PAHS on their achievements.

“The shade we enjoy today is due to the efforts of those that planted the tree long ago,” said Davinder Deol of PAHS. “This exhibit is our thanks to all those that endured and persevered so that we could be a part of the American dream.” She elaborated that the PAHS Museum Committee raised approximately \$250,000 over seven years as they imagined, developed and constructed the exhibit.

Along with Mrs. Deol, the committee members included Dr. Jasbir Kang, Sarbjit Singh Johl, Kulwant Singh Johl, Hitpal Singh Deol and Gurmeet Kaur Sidhu. “The Committee provided each donor with a commemorative book at the unveiling,” said Mrs. Deol. “Included in the book is a memorial to the late Ted Sibia. He was an inspiration to our community and the source of much of the research that was relied upon in compiling the exhibit.”

To begin the unveiling and reception program, attendees enjoyed a moving rendition of the national anthem by 16 year old Harkiren Kaur Everest. Her late grandfather Hari Singh Everest was featured in a short documentary illustrating the oral history of Punjabi Americans in the Yuba-Sutter region. Violinist and internet sensation Raginder ‘Violinder’ Momi also entertained the attendees and received a standing ovation.

Also attending the exhibit unveiling and reception were County Supervisors Jim Whiteaker, Larry Munger and Stan Cleveland, City Councilman Tej Mann, and former Yuba City Mayors Kash Gill and Rory Ramirez. Special thanks were given to Gerry Sandhu for his tireless efforts in creating www.punjabipioneers.com which serves as an international gateway to the Punjabi Community of the Yuba-Sutter region.

The PAHS Museum Committee continues to work on updating the exhibit and is soliciting contributions from the community. A coffee table book is being produced with the assistance of Lea Terhune, a former CNN News and Span magazine editor.

The ‘Becoming American’ exhibit is located at the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, CA 95993. The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Weekends, 12 noon - 4:00 pm. Admission is free.

For more information visit www.punjabipioneers.com, contact PAHS at punjabiamerican@gmail.com, Dr. Jasbir S. Kang at (530) 300 3735 or Mrs. Davinder K. Deol at (530) 218 0330. Additional event pictures are available at <https://picasaweb.google.com/107572067167412900907/BecomingAmerican>









Sikhs Allowed to Land.

The four Sikhs who arrived on the Nippon Maru the other day were permitted yesterday to land by the immigration officials. The quartet formed the most picturesque group that has been seen on the Pacific Mail dock for many a day. One of them, Bakkshlied Singh, speaks English with fluency, the others just a little. They are all fine-looking men, Bakkshlied Singh in particular being a marvel of physical beauty. He stands 6 feet 2 inches and is built in proportion. His companions—Bood Singh, Variam Singh and Se-hava Singh—are not quite so big. All of them have been soldiers and policemen in China. They were in the Royal Artillery, and the tall one with the unpronounceable name was a police sergeant in Hongkong prior to coming to this country. They hope to make their fortunes here and return to their homes in the Lahore district, which they left some twenty years ago.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 31, 2012

Becoming American - The Story of Pioneer Punjabi's and South Asians

It is my pleasure to send my good wishes on the opening of the "Becoming American" exhibit at the Sutter Community Memorial Museum in Yuba City, California.

Showcasing the story of the Punjabi American and South Asian migration to the United States is a valuable and needed resource for current and future generations. I congratulate all the individuals and families along with the Punjabi American Heritage Society of Yuba City for their dedication and hard work for the successful completion of this project.

Sincerely,


EDMUND G. BROWN JR.