

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

\$1.00

VOL, XVII, NO.2.

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 1978



SIKH TEMPLE YUBA CITY

Photo by John Leith Lewin

IN THIS ISSUE - "EAST INDIANS OF SUTTER COUNTY" By Balwant Singh Brar

Recollections of Assumption Lang Coats

APRIL MEETING

* * * * *

* The ANNUAL DINNER meeting of the Sutter County Historical *

* Society will be held on April 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Yuba City *

* Women's Club at the corner of Plumas and Colusa Streets. *

* The buffet dinner will be prepared by the Yuba City High *

* School Catering Club under the direction of Steve Richardson. *

* The charge will be \$4.50 a person, the public and friends of *

* the Society are invited with reservations in advance. *

* * * * *

Reservations MUST BE MADE before April 12 by sending a check to
the Sutter County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1004, Yuba City,
California 95991.

A committee will phone members, but if there are any questions
you may phone Sylvia Lamon 743-1098 or the Community Memorial
Museum 674-0461 or Randolph Schnabel 673-7566 or 673-6430.

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Vol. XVII, No. 2

April, 1978

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The NEWS BULLETIN is published quarterly by the Society at Yuba City, California 95991. The annual membership dues includes receiving the NEWS BULLETIN. JANUARY 1978 dues are payable now. Your remittance should be sent to Sutter County Historical Society, P. O. Box 1004, Yuba City, California 95991. To insure delivery of your NEWS BULLETIN please notify the Treasurer of any change of address. Dues are \$3.00 per person, \$5.00 per family.

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An index and file of all the past issues of the NEWS BULLETIN may be found in the Sutter County Library and in the Marysville City-County Library.

NOTE: THE JULY ISSUE WILL INCLUDE AN ARTICLE ON FRANK BACON "LIGHTNING BILL," A N.Y. ACTOR FROM SUTTER COUNTY BY CAROL WITHINGTON AND RECOLLECTIONS BY N. MARIE BURNS HYMAN.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Reader:

As you glance quickly through the beginning pages of the Sutter County Historical Society's NEWS BULLETIN, I hope you pause just a moment and read my contribution to this issue.

Like every historical society anywhere, we need a membership drive. We have a rather impressive figure on our membership lists. However, with the growth of this area, that list should also be growing. In addition to that, in order to operate projects that will preserve the Sutter County history, we need new thoughts and new faces constantly. May I challenge you to tell your new friends about the Historical Society, and how very important the material we are putting out today will be for our great-grandchildren, in the year 2010. Let me know their answer.

At the January meeting, a decision to spearhead the writing of Sutter County histories in the high schools as well as in Yuba College, on a single student (not a classroom) basis was initiated. It will begin in the Fall Program of 1978. Judging of the writing will be done by a committee, composed of persons not connected with the high schools or the College, or the Historical Society Board of Directors. First place prizes, consisting of cash and a one-year membership with the Society will be given for covering a specific area or subject.

With the contributions of students working toward preserving our history, there is another area which can be promoted by all of us, both young and old. The Oral History Program began in the eastern states just about 20 years ago, and has slowly worked itself westward. As I write this item to you, Yuba College is setting up their Fall, 1978 program and may offer an oral history class. It would be wise for those of us who are interested to take this class, if it is available. In any event, our knowledge of past happenings can be remembered more clearly by persons living here at the time. Recording their memories is oral history! Are YOU an interested listener? Call me, 755-0481, or the Museum, 674-0461, and let us share your thoughts on the subject. (No commitments from the phone call).

Sincerely,

INDRA NASON

REPORT OF TREASURER

On February 9 our membership was 285. Each year we acquire a few new members and lose a few.

We have 48 LIFE members and 4 HONORARY MEMBERS.

I wish to ask a favor of our yearly dues-paying members:

Will you please check the last receipt and membership card sent to you and if you are in arrears send in your check. I doubt that any of you realize what a job it is to send out those statements reminding you, and it is also quite an expense. I would appreciate your cooperation in this very much.

Sincerely,

WANDA RANKIN
Treasurer

HONORARY MEMBER

CLARENCE CURTIS COPPIN, 90, who was born in Pleasant Grove September 27, 1887, has been enrolled by the Sutter County Historical Society as an honorary member.

Mr. Coppin lived continuously in Pleasant Grove until 10 years ago, when he moved to Carmichael to live in the home of his daughter, Mrs. Loraine Baker.

He is the son of Samuel Miller Coppin (1846-1935) and Elizabeth Eleanor (Mitchell) Coppin (1854-1940) and was the seventh of eleven children born to them and brought up in Pleasant Grove. He was married on July 29, 1911, in Sacramento to Zena Blanche Murphy (1889-1968). They raised four children. Mr. Coppin has 10 grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

Always a music lover, Mr. Coppin is widely known for appearances as violinist or organist at many public programs in this part of California.

His name has been added to a growing list of Sutter County natives who, upon attaining the age of 90 years, become eligible for honorary membership in the historical society.

SUTTERANA

Excursion to Hock Farm.

The little steamer, Defiance danced down Feather river to the music of her own calliope with near a hundred passengers on Sunday morning, the Stars and Stripes streaming from her flag-staff as though there was not a secessionist living. Her destination was Hock Farm, and although the grounds at that interesting place are

not yet prepared for visitors, those who went ashore spent an hour or two pleasantly enough strolling about in the vineyard and orchard, or drinking Sutter wine in the garden. The Farm will be a delightful place of resort in the coming Spring and Summer.

The old General is much annoyed by visitors, and does not show himself often, but he was seen walking through his vineyard by the excursionists. He has about 30,000 bearing vines. He made about 1,500 gallons of excellent light wine last Fall, which is sold only on the farm and in Marysville. The excursionists returned to town early in the evening, taking dinner on board the Defiance. At the last table a jolly crowd drank to the American Union, and gave it three rousing cheers, all standing and clinking glasses in a most enthusiastic manner. It is barely possible that a little wine was mingled with their patriotism. On the upper deck another party amused themselves by dancing to the music of the Calliope, which issued mysteriously from a dense cloud of vapor near them. It is understood that the Defiance will make pleasure trips quite often hereafter. The tickets for the above excursions were only fifty cents.

(Notice the influence of the approaching Civil War in the use of "secessionist and Union.")

From Marysville Appeal, February 5, 1861.

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM NOTES
Jean Gustin, Director

The Community Memorial Museum is a member of two nonprofit museum organizations, the American Association of Museums in Washington, D. C., and the American Association for State and Local History in Nashville, Tennessee.

The larger group, the A.A.M., is the organization to which all large museums of all kinds, and increasingly, many smaller museums, belong. Services provided by the A.A.M. include a bi-monthly magazine, "Museum News", covering all facets of museum operation; a monthly newsletter; professional meetings; seminars; and workshops held at the national and regional level; publications related to museum needs; and a professional information service. Membership in the A.A.M. entitles a museum to participate in the A.A.M.'s accreditation program which involves a confidential evaluation of the museum using the criteria established by distinguished museum professionals. The A.A.M. also functions as a lobbying body for museum interests in Washington, and represents international museum interests within the United States through AAM/ICOM (International Council of Museums.) A newly formed Small Museums Committee within the A.A.M. is very active. Regional Representatives feed information on the needs and interests of the small museum to their counterparts who sit on the national council of A.A.M.

The American Association of State and Local History is dedicated to advancing knowledge and appreciation of local history. It provides services to historical societies and historical museums through its monthly magazine, "History News"; through an excellent series of Technical Leaflets; Tape Cassettes; publications; and educational programs.

The two organizations, the A.A.M. and the A.A.S.L.H. compliment each other -- the A.A.M. with a stronger museum focus and the A.A.S.L.H. with its emphasis on preservation and interpretation of local history. We have in the museum found both organizations and their publications equally valuable. Through our membership in both organizations, we are made aware of the great community of interests we share, on the local, state, national level, and through AAM/ICOM, on the world level, with so many people in the endeavor to preserve and tell the storey of "those who have gone before."

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Continued from the January, 1978 Bulletin

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Stohlman
in memory of Robert Stohlman
in memory of Robert Stohlman

GLEANINGS

Marysville Appeal, February 7, 1861.

Dry Weather -- We were complaining of wet weather but a few weeks ago, but the farmers, we understand, are getting somewhat alarmed at the long dry spell, so unusual at this season, which we have just now. Unless more rain shall fall soon, the ground has not enough of moisture to supply the coming crops. And miners too complain for want of sufficient water for their purposes. It is seldom that the plains in this vicinity are dry at this time of the year, but they are so now.

Marysville Appeal, January 30, 1861.

A resolution was introduced in the State Assembly to grant a leave of absence to a judge in Tuolumne County. The judge wanted to go to the East to get married. One assemblyman objected saying that such leaves ought to be granted only for sickness. Mr. Gillette, who introduced the resolution assured the members that the judge was sick -- very sick -- love sick.

Appeal, January 26, 1861

What Are We Made Of?

If the reader of this lives another year his self conscious being will have migrated to another tenement the raw materials of which are not yet put together. A portion of that body to be is yet in form of corn, potatoes and rice. The limbs with which he will walk will be clad with flesh borrowed from the tenants of many stalls and pastures now unconscious of their doom. The very organs of speech with which he is to talk so wisely must first serve his humble brethern to bleat, to bellow and for all the varied utterances of bristled or feathered barn-yard life. A bag of phosphate lime contains a large part of what is to be his skeleton. And more than all of this the greater part of his body is nothing but water which he must look for in the reservoir, the running stream, the well and in the clouds which float over his head.

Quoted from Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Appeal, December 2, 1860.

A mason was laying a brick sidewalk on D street the other day. A rustic came along walking on and disarranging the bricks before they were mortared in. "Hey, get off those bricks," yelled the mason. Said the rustic, "Get them off the sidewalk if you don't want them walked on."

Appeal, January 27, 1861.

A merchant in South Carolina wrote to his broker friend in New York, "Send me fifty barrels of flour, George. George replied, "Eat your cotton, Harry, you damned rebel."

R E C O L L E C T I O N S

MEMORIES OF
ASSUMPTION LANG COATS

My earliest memories of family were from stories told me by my grandmother, Honora Glenn Burns. Her parents, Patrick and Mary Glenn, had a family of nine children, all born in Ireland. It was in the year 1848 that they decided to send the two eldest to America. A sister of Patrick's, Katherine Cunningham, lived in Illinois and this was to be their destination.

In 1849, when the parents failed to receive any news of their arrival, Patrick and Mary and the remaining seven children, set out for America to search for Michael and Mary. Their efforts were fruitless. Perhaps the vessel foundered at sea, or perhaps they died of cholera on the way, as so many immigrants did at this time.

The family went on to Illinois to visit Katherine Cunningham. From there they continued their journey west. Patrick's health failed and the family settled at Council Bluffs, Iowa, because there was a monastery nearby and Mary wanted to be sure that a priest would be available. Patrick died at Council Bluffs and Mary continued her trip to California. She, with five of her children, Bernard, Joseph, John, Bridget and Honora (my grandmother) joined a wagon train that was going west by way of the Oregon Trail. There were tales of Indian attacks and the unsuccessful efforts to save the life of a scalped man, but the Glenn family escaped injury.

Their destination was Colusa County where their first home was on the Jenny Reynolds Ranch. Mrs. Reynolds was a family friend in Ireland and the children called her Aunt Jenny.

Honora married Peter Burns in St. Joseph's Church at Marysville in February, 1863. Peter Burns came from Ireland in the 1850's crossing the plains on horseback. He settled on 1800 acres of land lying north of Colusa along the east side of the Sacramento River.

There were five children born of this union on the ranch near Colusa. My mother, Rose Ann, was the eldest. She had three brothers, Bernard, Peter, Joseph and one sister, Mary Regina.

My mother Rose Ann Burns married William Henry Lang in 1885 in "Our Lady of Lourdes" Catholic Church in Colusa.

My father's family had immigrated to New York State from England where his grandfather was editor of the "Tradesmans News" in London, England. My father, William Henry Lang, had ridden across the plains on horseback, settling in Colusa County.

I was born May 18, 1888 on the Burns Ranch in Colusa County where my mother was born.

When it came time for me to go to school, I was sent to Colusa to live with my grandmother, Honora Burns and attend the convent school there.

Later, Grandmother Burns sold the ranch and my father and mother moved to the Colusa plains west of the town of Colusa. After a year or two my father took us to Little Valley in the Coast Range Mountains. Then my father rented the Epperson Ranch in neighboring Bear Valley and we lived in the old Epperson home for the next few years.

My Grandmother Burns purchased the Smith Ranch and home on East Butte Road in 1907 and my parents came there to live.



ASSUMPTION LANG COATS
AGE 20 YEARS
NOVEMBER 1908

WEST BUTTE SCHOOL
1910 - 1911

Back Row: J.B. Lang, Laurence Lang, Sidney Harris, Arther Sullinger, Harvey Putman, Francis Lang, Clarence Putman.

Middle Row: Nate Lang, George Gage, Alexis Lang, Jim Putman, Peery Gage, Albert Krull.

First Row: Gertrude Krull, Grace Mullett, Lorene Griffith, Patricia Lang, Elois Best, and Assumption Lang, Teacher



By this time I had been away from home for a year attending Miss Wilkins private school in Marysville where I received a credential to teach school.

Although letting me go to school was a sacrifice for my mother, she encouraged me to get my teaching credential and not to heed my father's admonition that "you are needed at home to help your mother."

It was in the fall of 1907 that I accepted my first teaching position at the Jefferson School at Antelope Valley in Colusa County near Mountain House.

The next year I returned to Sutter County to teach at the Union School on East Butte Road. I had to give this up at the end of the year as I was needed at home to help my mother. When I taught again it was a year later at West Butte School on West Butte Road. The first year there my Grandmother Burns and I rented rooms at the Fick House, which is still standing. The next year I stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. August Hoke. The Hokes were both deaf and communicated in sign language. Their two daughters, Lovell and Pearl, were very adept with this method, and I learned slowly to talk with my fingers. There was also a blackboard in their living room where messages could be written to them.

I met my husband Arthur Coats at an "institute" for teachers held by Hobart Heiken, Sutter County Superintendent of Schools, at the old two-story Yuba City Grammar School (torn down) in 1930. Hazel Chism (Chase) introduced me to Art. She was the 6th grade teacher in Yuba City, and we had met at institute the year before.

The next day we were all attending institute in Chico. Hazel and I were sitting in the auditorium when Art arrived. In spite of the fact that there were many empty seats, he said, "If you would move over, I'd sit down." After much laughter he sat down beside me and from then on he was my constant companion. Our marriage took place April 9, 1913, at the parish house in Woodland. Father Walroth officiated. He was a beloved family priest from the Colusa days. He had given me my name Assumption on my baptism day.

My Grandmother Burns and I had driven to Woodland by horse and buggy the day before.

Our honeymoon was spent in San Francisco where we went by train, the old Northern Electric.

We returned to live with Grandmother Burns on Plumas Street in Yuba City. We arranged to rent an apartment from Mr. and Mrs. Peck on B Street, but we had to wait for Frank and Margaret Bremer to move so we stayed in the Leon Bunce home on B Street for awhile. My two oldest children, Arthur William and Jane Claire, were born while we lived in the Peck house. It was in 1917 that we bought our home at 244 Fairman Street, which has remained my home. During the next ten years my four younger children, Wilson, Robert, Wallace, and Lauren, were born.

My husband was elected District Attorney in 1914 at the age of 26 and served 16 years when he decided not to run. For a short time he was in private practice with Bill Rich, Alvin Weis, and Francis Carlin. In 1932, he was elected Judge of the Superior Court of Sutter County and served for thirty years until retirement.

I enjoyed the part of campaigning that took me to the various districts of the County, meeting people and making many friends. Elections were difficult, for ours was a small community and often Art's opponents were also close personal friends. This imposed a strain on friendship when mutual friends had to choose the candidate of their choice. It was always good to have the elections over.

Our life centered about our rather large family, but we belonged to a dancing club that still meets, and I was one of the original members of 10:30 ten, a book club. Seven of the other original nine were Mary Coats Kelly, Estelle Urbans, Edwina Robbins, Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Freeland, Edna Delamere and Lorraine McKeehan.

Learning to drive an automobile in 1920 was a happy experience and a useful one for fifty years.

I seldom was involved in controversial county affairs, but when the Supervisors planned to take the cupola off the courthouse, my friend Elsie Walton and I and others rallied public opinion in favor of keeping the cupola and it stands atop the courthouse today -- a reminder of our success.

There was not much traffic on Fairman and Yolo Streets and the many children of the neighborhood played baseball and other games in the street. "Downtown" Yuba City was a fairly complete shopping district then. If you walked north on Second Street from A Street or the west side of the street, the courthouse, the hall of records and Winship's law firm are the same. Between B and Fairman, Mr. Cosby had his pharmacy. The I.O.O.F. Hall is the same. The Odd Fellows used to meet upstairs. The downstairs was

used by various businesses at various times and at one time it housed the county library. Next was Mr. Ulmer's bakery, Lloyd Hewitt's office and Price's Candy Store. Over the bakery, there were professional offices. Bremers Hardware, the Independent Farmer's Office, the Sutter County Title Company, and Ted Chellis's Barber Shop came next. There was a pharmacy on the corner of B and Bridge, which was operated at different times by Gus Kirk and by Tom Haldeman. Going west on Bridge, we passed Hannegan's grocery store, Carpenter's cigar store and the Bank of Italy.

In the next block was the Sutter Hotel, Earl Huffmaster and Harry Thomas' garage, a barber shop, and the post office at the corner of Bridge and Yolo.

On the east side of Second Street going north from C were some homes, Mr. McLaughlin's law office, which is now a real estate office on Shasta Street, the Horticultural Commissioner's office and the County Library. The Masonic Hall is the same. The Tire Repair Shop was a theater. Then came Red Dowell's garage, a blacksmith shop and Hugh Moncur's Sheet Metal Shop. Behind the sheet metal shop, Art and his friends maintained a tennis court.

I cannot possibly tell all of my memories of Yuba City, but it was a busy community and we were very much a part of it.

COURTESY OF
MR. AND MRS. ROBERT T. COATS

THE EAST INDIANS IN SUTTER COUNTY
By Balwant Singh Brar

Before I start writing about my countrymen who came to Canada and to the west coast of the United States I want to clear one point. Had Columbus known where he was on that October day in 1492, it might have been possible to use the unmodified term "Indian" without confusion or objection; but here in the western hemisphere that word has long since been preempted for our native Americans. Searching for a substitute word, an older generation here on the west coast and possibly elsewhere, applied the term "Hindu" to all of the people from India; but this is not a particularly felicitous improvement.

Properly "Hindu" refers only to those who adhere to the religion of that name. And while it is true that the great majority of the population of India are Hindus, it happens that they are a small fraction of those who have migrated from India to Canada and the United States. In the literature of the people from India, by writers from Indian background the term East Indians is the one most frequently encountered.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century India was ruled by the British with the exception of the Punjab province which was ruled by Maha Raja Ranjit Singh. He was Sikh by faith, but his ministers were from all faiths -- Sikhs, Hindus and Mohammedans. His army was very well trained and disciplined. The British respected him and had friendly relations with him, but they wanted to bring the Punjab under British rule.

Maha Raja Ranjit Singh died in 1839, and after his death his generals and chieftans fought amongst themselves in a contest to take his place. The British took part in these internal fights, taking advantage of the turmoil, and were able to conquer the Punjab with little resistance. The chieftans and radical leaders were eliminated and the Punjab province became a part of British India.

The people of the Punjab were hard-working peasants and well-to-do compared with the residents of other parts of India. Most of them were bearded and be-turbaned Sikhs. A freedom movement developed in the province causing the British-Indian government to consider the Punjab to be an ulcer.

As a means of stopping the unrest, the government gave minor government jobs to the educated and allowed others to go to Canada and the United States. This explains why many of these first immigrants were overwhelmingly of the Sikh faith and from the Punjab where they had been acquainted or related.

In Canada these East Indians found work in the lumber industry and in California they worked around Stockton as farm laborers. During the years 1906 to 1910 the Western Pacific and the Northern Electric railroads were being constructed and a large number of these immigrants came down from Canada to Sutter and Yuba counties to work on these roadbeds. After the railroads were completed they turned to orchard and farmwork.

East Indians were attracted to California from Canada and directly from the Punjab by several conditions. The climate was



SIKH TEMPLE STOCKTON, First To Build A Big Temple In California.
Used By Sutter People Until One Built In Yuba City In 1970



PUNA SINGH FAMILY, In Front Of SIKH TEMPLE STOCKTON.
First Family To Come To This Area In 1924.
PUNA SINGH, NAN^oKAUR, KIR PAL, SOHAN, PAL
Picture Taken 1928



THAKARAR SINGH JOHL
(Tuly Singh Johl)

Born April 18, 1878
Died February 13, 1978

A few weeks before his 100th birthday the last of the "old timers" died suddenly after seeing his son, Gubzar Singh Johl M.D., of Yuba City California. He had visited with all his children recently and remained active and a driver of his car until the last. (see story on page 19)



SIKH TEMPLE YUBA CITY, FEBRUARY 26, 1978
 During a ceremonial reading of the complete Holy Scripture
 GURA GRANTH SAHIB continuously night and day for 48 hours.
 NOTE: Musicians at left, Priests and Readers near Alter.





SIKH TEMPLE YUBA CITY, ALTAR GARANTHI (PRIESTS)
left to right JAGJIWAN SINGH, BALRAJ SINGH, JAGDEV SINGH



CAFETERIA OF SIKH TEMPLE YUBA CITY
Kept Open For Extra Listeners And Eating
During Long Gatherings. Feb. 26, 1978

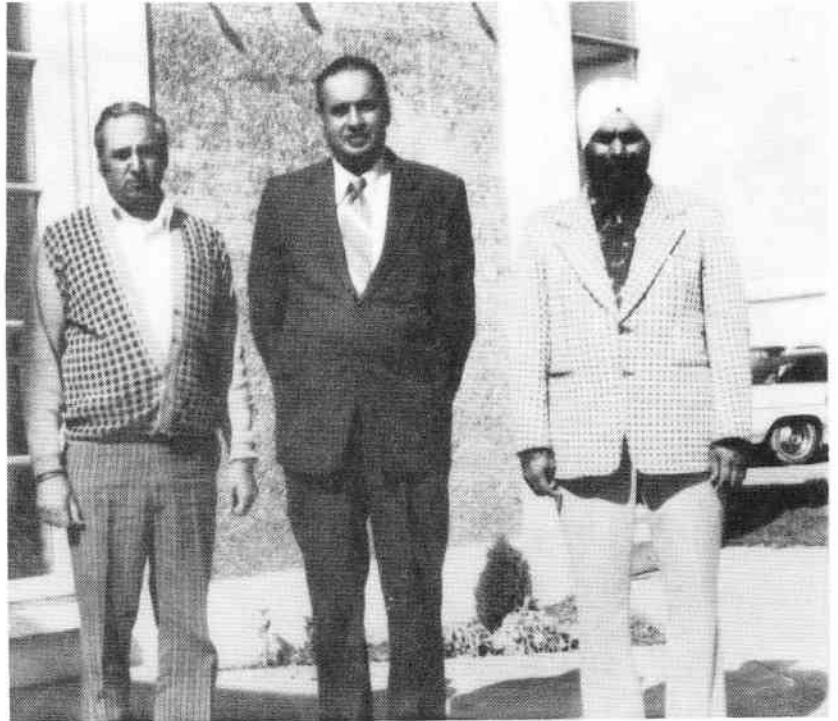
PARMJIT KAUR GILL BRAR
WIFE OF BALWANT SINGH BRAR

First East Indian Woman to come into
California directly from India after
World War II

She Is Wearing A Sari Dress,
Jan. 1950



Women in Yuba County Showing Punjabi Suits and Sari Dress In 1954.
Girls Are Wearing Regular American School Dresses.



SIKH TEMPLE DIRECTORS

left to right MENGHA SINGH
 GULZAR BAINS
 NACH HATAR SINGH



BALWANT SINGH BRAR
The Author

FIRST EAST INDIAN ON JURY DUTY
 IN SUTTER COUNTY
 Feb. 26, 1978

Photographs by John Leith Lewin

agreeable, the wages were good and friends and relatives were already here.

California East Indians built the first Sikh Temple in Stockton and named it the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple. It was registered in 1912. These workers had built a small temple with their meager earnings. But most of them had to sit outside and listen to the readings of their Holy Scripture called Guru Granth Sahib. After the temple was built they wanted to hoist a religious flag which signifies purity, unity and love; but Stockton residents would not allow them to fly any flag because India was under the British and therefore had no flag. In 1912 a young man named Teja Singh, who had a Master's degree from Harvard, came to Stockton. The directors of the temple told him the story of the flag. He went to City Hall and explained the significance of the flag and secured permission to fly it.

These East Indians of the Stockton district built a larger temple on the same location but they had begun to move to other parts of the State. Some went to the El Centro area and others came to Sutter County where they purchased vineyards or worked in orchards and on farms. The common meeting place was the Sikh Temple at Stockton, where they gathered five or six times a year on holy occasions or birthdays of their Gurus.

The directors of the temple called a special meeting to organize a political party to help India to gain freedom from British rule. This party was called Hindustan Gadar Party. Translated into English it was the East Indian Revolutionary Organization.

The members used to write revolutionary songs in the Punjabi language.

The party established a headquarters at 5 Wood Street in San Francisco where with a printing press and Punjabi type they published the "Gadar Ki Goon" (Voice of Revolution). They sent this monthly paper all over the world by mail until 1914. But copies had to be smuggled into India where they were distributed to the armed forces.

When World War I began in 1914, the Hindustan Gadar Party decided that the time had come to strike. Party leaders traveled in the Pacific coast states and Canada explaining the revolutionary plan to their fellow countrymen. East Indians started returning to India in small groups trying not to make the government officials suspicious of the movement. On reaching India they began their underground work, but the officials became aware of the movement. Many of the American and Canadian immigrants were arrested. Some were hanged and others given life imprisonment.

The Hindustan Gadar Party did not succeed in freeing India from British rule, but it did not fail either. It lit a fire which the British could not control. One East Indian wrote: "Gusa say jal utha jo kanhi nau Jawan Ka Del-shola ye fer kisi say Bhojia na jai ga." The English translation reads, "When a young man's heart catches fire for freedom, this fire shall never be controlled."

After the war the British-Indian government allowed students to come to America for higher education. A large fraction of these first students were of the Sikh faith from the Punjab.

Nearly all had received some formal education, some with high school diplomas and some with even university degrees. A large number of these students chose to come to California. Most of them came intending to return home when their education had been completed, but many of them began devising ways that would enable them to stay on indefinitely. They were going to school with a deliberate slowness with the objective to remain in the good graces of the Immigration Service. Fortunately for most of these young men, the enforcement of the immigration laws was not too stringent, and they became a part of the East Indian population in the United States -- mostly on the Pacific coast.

These students had witnessed the freedom movement at home under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi; so they were eligible members of the Hindustan Gadar Party. Some of the old-timers were hesitant to give leadership to these young men fearing that they might betray the cause of freedom; but the fear was not justified.

In 191²³~~12~~ a number of these students took advantage of a trade school opened at Detroit by the Ford Motor Company. After overcoming objections to their beards, turbans, and iron bracelets, they learned a useful trade and made good wages with which to pay their school expenses.

It is estimated that during the 1920's as many as 5,000 East Indians, both Sikhs and Hindus, entered the United States without benefit of the usual formalities. They came in across the Mexican border after following a variety of pathways to reach northern Mexico and into California where nearly all had friends or relatives.

Both Sikh and Hindu students were assisted by the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, which society purchased a large rooming house in Berkeley where these students could reside free of rent while attending the University of California.

Many of the early immigrants had sought United States citizenship, and by 1923 about one hundred had secured their papers. Bhagat Singh Thind was rejected in one State but was granted citizenship in another State. The government officials of the State where he had been rejected contested the action of the second State and took the case to the Supreme Court of the United States. The case hinged on the question of Thind's race. As he had been taught in India, he claimed to be of the Aryan race and therefore eligible for citizenship. But Justice Sutherland decided this delicate problem of ethnology when he ruled, "That when an East Indian is walking on the street he does not look like a white man." This ruling stopped further granting of citizenship and even caused some papers already granted to be canceled. The ruling also stopped East Indian immigrants from coming to the U.S.A. the "melting pot of the world," and delighted the British government of India.

In 1923 there were only six or seven East Indian families in the United States. One was in Utah, two in San Francisco and one each at Fair Oaks, Stockton and Loomis. These families came before the passage of the Alien Land Law and the Thind decision.

Puna Singh, who was farming in Utah, sold his property and moved his family to Sutter County. On November 1, 1924, they

settled on Township Road where they operated a dairy farm. This was the first East Indian family to come to Sutter County.

Of the "old-timers" only one now (1977) remains in Sutter County. He is Thakar Singh Johl, affectionately known as Tuly Singh Johl. He came down from Canada in 1906 to work on the railroads. He lives on Onstott Road, is 99 years of age, and still drives an automobile.

Mr. Johl went back to India in 1914 as a member of the group who were to distribute revolutionary songs to the armed forces. He missed his ship in San Francisco and had to wait to go on the next ship. When these East Indian patriots reached home they went about their duties. The Secret Service of the British-Indian government seized some of the songs and the members of the group were arrested. Some of them were hanged and others imprisoned for life. Mr. Johl was placed under house arrest and obliged to report to the police three times a day. After World War I he made his way back to California by way of Mexico in 1923.

Today Mr. Johl's immediate family members exceed 100. He has given Sutter County its first East Indian medical doctor. This is his son Gup²zar Singh Johl, M.D., who finished his medical education at Los Angeles in 1957 and served his internship at Oakland. He did further graduate study at the Dupont Eye Clinic in Los Angeles, specializing in ophthalmology. Then he went to India for further training and experience at the Gandhi Eye Hospital, where he performed around 100 eye operations. In 1961 he received his certificate in ophthalmology and opened his office for practice in July, 1961 at 2042 Live Oak Blvd.

On February 11, 1913 Kartar Singh purchased property in Sutter County and he was probably the first East Indian to do so. During the next ten years the records show several other purchases: Santa Singh, 1917; Fatah Singh and Nagina, 1918; Pal Singh, 1918; Battan Singh, 1918; Amer Singh and Nunshi Singh, 1920.

The Alien Land Law prevented further purchase unless the alien had married a citizen in whose name some purchases were made.

When the second World War began nearly all of the East Indian student, including those who had finished their education, were of military age and were required to register for the draft; and most of them were placed in class I-A subject to be called first.

In February, 1941, an East Indian college graduate named Balwant Singh Sidhu was residing and working in Sutter County; but he had registered with the draft board in Berkeley where he was inducted. He was the first alien East Indian in the entire United States to be drafted into the armed forces. Later in 1942 and 1943 many others were drafted. No East Indian refused to serve in the armed forces of the United States even though every one of us was against the British rule in India.

A very few of those who were drafted became citizens of the United States by reason of their military service during the second World War. It was not until the passage of the Luce-Celler Bill of 1946, under the administration of President Harry S. Truman, that the privilege of naturalization became available

without any conditions. By that time many of the "old-timers" had reached such an age that they found it difficult to undertake the studies necessary to gain citizenship. Nevertheless, a surprisingly large number of these men qualified. The naturalization service allowed these old-timers over 65 to take the examination through an interpreter in their own language, and the questions were made pertinent but simple. As a result of this generous consideration the late President Harry S. Truman is held in very high esteem by the East Indians.

After World War II several changes or reforms were brought about among the East Indian community on the Pacific coast. Balwant Singh Sidhu, a resident of Sutter County, was the first clean-shaven Sikh elected to the office of secretary of the Khalsa Diwan Society.

On April 13, 1946, permission was received from the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee of Amrit Sar, Punjab, India, the religious center of all the Sikhs, to install chairs in the Divine (congregation) hall where men and women could come with or without shoes, with hat or turban or bareheaded. Those who did not wish to sit in chairs were allowed to sit on the floor. This was the first time that chairs were installed in a temple. These changes were accomplished with the help of progressive students of whom I shall name only a few: Balwant Singh Sidhu; Dr. Harkish Singh Dhesi, deceased; Bishan Singh Rai, deceased; Bhagat Singh Thiara; and Nika Singh Gill who is at present serving as secretary of the El Centro Sikh Temple.

The Sikhs of Imperial Valley collected donations of money

throughout the Pacific states and Canada and purchased a former Buddhist center which they converted into the second Sikh temple in California. This temple was called officially the Imperial Valley Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple El Centro. Chairs were installed in this temple also.

In 1947 Swarn Singh Takir became an American citizen. He was foreman over a farm of 6000 acres near Stockton. With the help of his employer, the H. P. Gavin Company, he went to India and brought back his family. Then in 1949 Balwant Singh Sidhu, the veteran of World War II, brought his family to Sutter County. Slowly but steadily more families came to America. By 1959 Sutter County had the largest number of East Indian families of the comparable districts of the United States.

These families had to travel to Stockton to celebrate the birthdays of the Gurus. The travel was very difficult for the mothers and children. The East Indians of Sutter County held meetings to discuss the possibility of erecting a Sikh temple in the district around Yuba City. The main problems were land and money. Many Sikhs had purchased peach and prune orchards, and their future financial position was uncertain; but these investments paid off well. In 1967 it was definitely decided to erect a Sikh Temple.

Two brothers, Bakhtawar Singh and Udam Singh Purewal donated three acres of land on Tierra Buena Road for the temple and a sum of money. Many other East Indians who were well to do financially contributed large sums of money. As a matter of fact every person from India irrespective of his religion contributed to this temple.

In 1969 on the day of celebration of the birthday of Guru Nanak the building was started and was completed in 1970. The first "Akhand Path" continuous reading of the Holy Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) was completed on December 20, 1970. That was the happiest occasion for all of the East Indians of Sutter County as well as for all of the Sikhs all over the world.

Hari Singh Everret, who received his master's degree from Stanford University, was the first East Indian to be appointed to the position of teacher by the Sutter County School District in 1961. He also received a certificate to teach at Yuba College where he now teaches three days a week.

In March, 1972, Malkit Singh Johl, son of Dr. Gulzar Singh Johl, was the first East Indian accepted by Sutter County Sheriff's Department as a deputy. And on July 18, 1972, Rupindrapaul Singh Brar was the first East Indian throughout the United States to receive the highest Boy Scout award (Eagle Scout) which award he received from Troop 17 at the Methodist Church in Yuba City. His older brother Rajrishipaul Singh Brar was the first East Indian accepted at the Sacramento Police Academy on September 29, 1975, and graduated December 12, 1975. He also earned the B.S.C. degree in criminal justice at the State University, Sacramento, and is now a member of the Sacramento Police Force.

The member readers would, no doubt, be interested in the history and nature of the Sikh religion, but there is not space here to give an appropriate account. The Sikh credo has many items common to or similar to those of other religions. Some of these items are creation of man, prayer, spiritual leaders, one God and

continuous vicarious authority descending through the succession of Gurus.

Certain items of other religions which are repudiated by Sikhs include divinity of the Gurus and prophecy. The Gurus are credited only with vicarious wisdom.

In view of the present interest in the equal rights amendment, it will be of further interest to note the position and status of women in the Sikh religion and culture. This status is defined in the credo and dogma:

" Woman was created simultaneously with man and has from the beginning been considered equal to man.

Woman is pure, good and beautiful. She is the temple of God. She is the wisdom that moderates.

The tears of a woman call down the fire of hell on those who make the tears flow.

Evil to him who laughs at a woman's suffering. "

THE AUTHOR

The author was born on December 24, 1908, in Paddi Jagir, Punjab, India. After attending Sikh schools for 10 years, including High School, he came to San Francisco as a student in 1922. In 1923 he enrolled in the Ford Motor Trade School in Michigan. After two years there he returned to California to further his education at the University of California, Berkeley. For a few years he worked on ranches and later graduated from the University of Michigan in 1932 in Electrical Engineering. It being "Depression" time he could not find a job so returned to Sutter County where he worked on farms.

In 1941 Mr. Brar was drafted as the first East Indian draftee in the United States Army, early in World War II. He served in the Coast Artillery in Alaska until discharged in 1944. He returned to Sutter County where he purchased a ranch. In 1948 he married Parmjit Kaur Gill Brar the first East Indian woman to come to California directly from India after World War II.

Mr. Brar, to some known as "Sid", has another "first" to his credit since he was the first East Indian to serve on jury duty in Sutter County.