

Names of early South Asian workers at Fraser Mills revealed

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2 / 5 A South Asian worker at Fraser Mills. | Coquitlam Archives C4-S01-SS3-F01-MH.2011.3.21

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The log book caught their eye.

In 2022, when published its [online exhibit](#) about Fraser Mills — once the largest sawmill in the British Commonwealth — staff at the (SACDA) at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) zoned in

on the accident log book.

Their aim? To highlight the Sikh workers employed by the Canadian Western Lumber Company in the early 1900s, many of whom also lived with their families and recreated at Fraser Mills — a site close the New Westminster border that became its own municipality in 1913 and, in 1971, joined Coquitlam.

The sawmill lasted three years until it was bought in 1903, and again in 1910 when it boomed under workers of largely French-Canadian, Chinese, Japanese and South Asian descent.

Last year, SACDA partnered with Coquitlam Archives to study the names recorded from 1912 to 1923 and to raise awareness about the South Asian population that sustained injury at Fraser Mills; because they couldn't vote, the pioneers' names are likely not captured elsewhere.

For its latest virtual show, titled *Fraser Mills Logbook Illuminates South Asian Millworkers*, Coquitlam Archives described how it processed about three metres of textual records to bring attention to the diversity at the sawmill.

Here are the South Asian names entered:

- 1909–10 = Ganda Singh, Ala Singh, Hardial Singh and Kala Singh
- 1911 = Jagat Singh, Attar Singh and Kishan Sing
- 1912 = Narian Singh
- 1913 = Giva Singh
- 1914 = Indor Singh, Mitt Singh, Labh Singh, Dalip Singh, Bakhtawa Singh, Kahn Singh, Omr Singh and Bishan Singh
- 1915 = Bhagwan Singh, Ojagar Singh and Bishan Singh
- 1916 = Bugga Singh, Ram Singh, Dona Ram, Nahal Singh, Dohla Singh and Eser Singh
- 1917 = Bhagwan Singh, Argin Singh, Najaram Singh, Rajah Singh, Bishan Singh, Dulcie Ram, Moichi Baba, Jamel Singh and Santa Singh
- 1918 = Indar Singh, Jawala Singh, Sunda Singh, Jene Singh, Nawab Khan, Bugga Singh, Bhagwan Singh, Indar Singh and Tarka Singh
- 1919 = Rajah Singh and Esor Singh
- 1920 = Nand Singh, Bram Singh, Sher Khan, Dilip Singh, Partab Singh and Ram Singh
- 1921 = Labh Singh, Chanda Singh, Tara Singh, Bhag Ram, Hamir Singh, Rud Singh and Harnam Singh
- 1922 = Argent Singh, Gokel Singh, Narun Singh, Laru Singh, Bugga Singh, Laru Singh and Nand Singh
- 1923 = Santa Singh, Eser Singh, M. Baba, Gokel Singh and Eser Singh

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