

April 03, 2019

## Celebrate Sikh Heritage Month by visiting the new Pocket Gallery display

**VICTORIA, BC**– Nearly one million people came to Canada from the Punjab region in the twentieth century. But who were these individuals, and what were their experiences like?

A new (and free) Pocket Gallery display at the Royal BC Museum, *Haq and History*, offers visitors the chance to hear stories from and about these immigrants and see rare objects that chronicle their lives, including details about work, home life and keeping cultural traditions alive in BC.

Through videos, panel text and artifacts, visitors to *Haq and History* will learn about Punjabi immigrants working in sawmills in the 1920s; hear about travel from Punjab to Canada in the 1950s; learn some of the challenges of sourcing Indian food in Vancouver in the 1960s; and eavesdrop on memories of life in the now-abandoned town of Paldi in the 1940s.

*Haq and History* is the latest collaboration of the Royal BC Museum and the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley. In 2015 the two organizations, with strong and consistent community input, began a project to explore Punjabi Canadian community voices in British Columbia, from the first arrivals to the present day.

**The Pocket Gallery occupies a corner “pocket” of the museum’s ground floor** Clifford Carl Hall and is easily accessible, for free, to all visitors during opening hours (10:00 am to 5:00 pm, seven days a week).

The Pocket Gallery was originally envisioned, in early 2016, to cast a bright light on the amazing array of Royal BC Museum collections, research and conservation work that visitors rarely get to see.

You can see images of the current Pocket Gallery display at <https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/exhibitions/pocket-gallery>.

The Pocket Gallery is supported by Helijet.

### Quotations:

**“We are grateful to the many Punjabi** communities and families who shared their stories with us in two rounds of province-wide consultations. Their experiences are a significant part of BC history, and the Royal BC Museum is eager to share them, through this bilingual display, with all British **Columbians.”**

- Prof. Jack Lohman, CEO of the Royal BC Museum.



“We are so happy to be a part of a historic moment for Punjabi Canadians who get to see their stories showcased within our provincial museum. This evocative and proud past is presented with such care and compassion on so many levels, that we have no doubt the exhibit will create a lasting impression on anyone that comes in contact with it.”

- Satwinder Bains, Director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley.

**“As chair of the Punjabi Legacy Project Advisory Committee, I would like to thank the Royal BC Museum and UFV, SASI for their commitment and energy they have devoted to this very important project. I, also, appreciate all the families that came forward to share their stories and experiences. This is a beginning step of acknowledging our collective history in BC. It is a wonderful first step in documenting the history of Punjabis in BC from the community’s perspective.”**

- Dr. Balbir Gurm, Chair, Punjabi Canadian Legacy Project.

#### **About the Royal BC Museum**

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

- 30 -

#### **Media contact:**

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries  
250-387-5051

[news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

 @RoyalBCMuseum  [royalbcmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/royalbcmuseum)  [RoyalBCMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalBCMuseum)