



# BIENNIAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*I hope you enjoy reading our biennial report (2021-2023). The last two years have given us time to reflect and appreciate our journey from when we started in 2006. While we celebrated 15 years in 2022, we were heartened to recall all the connections we have made over the years and the friendships that have stood the test of time. We have much to be proud of and much work still to do. The team at SASI is nothing short of incredible and when we lost our long time Coordinator Sharn to other green pastures, we gained Alysha and have*



*enjoyed seeing how she so ably adjusted to the steep learning curve and fit in so wonderfully. The steady and honest support we get from our volunteer Community Advisory Committee is appreciated by all of us. The money raised for the SASI Fellowship Endowment is growing steadily and until we reach our \$1million mark, we look forward to many more Golf Tournaments, thanks to the founders Dr. Bajwa and Dr. Dhami's insatiable enthusiasm for all things golf! Thank you for your continued support and good wishes and we look forward to the next two years.*

## MISSION



*The South Asian Studies Institute (The Institute/SASI) at the University of the Fraser Valley brings together scholars and students, members of the community, and international scholars from diverse disciplines to create a nexus point for programs and activities that support our vision.*

## VISION

*The SASI initiates, directs and implements the development, strengthening and maintenance of research, South Asian Studies, and engagement linkages in collaboration with faculty, students and community. We build knowledge by undertaking research and engagement on historical and contemporary Canadian South Asian Diaspora. The SASI vision takes direction from UFV's strategic direction to be a leader of social, cultural, economic and environmentally responsible development in the Fraser Valley.*



# RESEARCH AND EXHIBITIONS



## Indian Farmer 's Protest Field Research (2020-2021)

Dr. Christine Moliner (O.P. Jindal University) and David Singh (PhD candidate, University of East Anglia and University of Copenhagen) presented findings of their fieldwork conducted during the kisan andolan (farmers' protest) in New Delhi in 2020-2021.



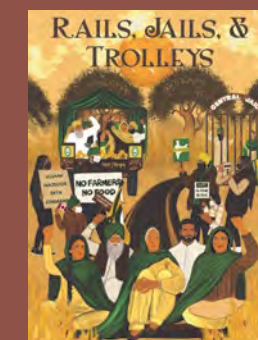
## Enough Schooling? Migration to Canada & Educational Aspirations of the Youth in Punjab

Dr. Christine Moliner (O.P. Jindal University) and Prabhjot Kaur (MA, O.P Jindal University) presented on the impacts of Punjabi migration to Canada for postsecondary schooling. Their talk questioned dominant narratives around migration as well as the social and human costs of transnational mobility especially on young girls and their families left behind.



## Where Are The Women: Love, Solace, and Courage

'Where Are The Women: Love, Solace, and Courage' re-imagines archival images and their connected stories through an inclusion of women's voices and lived experiences, providing the foundation for HERSTORY, while the narrative in the portraits continues timelessly into the next generations. The research, based on the interview of four South Asian women from the Fraser Valley who were separated from their partners for a number of years before reuniting with them in Canada, sought to interrupt that flow of time to re-inscribe the untold story into the images so that the story is complete. This research includes researching the archival images, and reimagining old family portraits- complete with the story as we learn it. The support for this project was based on a Centennial Legacy Fund grant received from the BC Historical Federation.



## "Rails, Jails & Trolleys" A Documentary on the Indian Farmers' Protest

Rails, Jails and Trolleys documents history's largest farmers' protest and the Canadian diaspora's response to it. This ground-breaking documentary captures the electric ethos of a protest that received international attention and the resounding response by Canadians to the movement. A full year in the making the film tells the story of why and how the farmers' movement ignited a nation, and youth, women, and men from all over the world. Directed by young filmmaker Ms. Henna Mann and produced by the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley.

# 2022

JANUARY 12

My Relationship with Caste is Complex

JANUARY 19

Former SASI Student Heads to TRU Law

FEBRUARY 18

SASI Authors Historical Book on the Fraser River Community Crematorium Society

MARCH 10

SASI Director Joins Shastri Panel on 'Taking Traditions Forward: Preserving and Conserving Culture and Heritage'

# 2023 Sikh Heritage Museum Exhibition Marriages & Migration: A Transnational Story of BC

On July 25th, 2023, the South Asian Studies Institute launched a new exhibition at the Sikh Heritage Museum located in the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple, Abbotsford, BC. The exhibition, titled Marriages & Migration: A Transnational Story of BC, uses evocative photos from the Del Monte collection hosted on SACDA to tell the history of transnational marriages in Abbotsford's Punjabi Sikh community.

Del Monte Studio operated in Abbotsford from 1947 to the 1990s. Many Punjabi families had their important moments and milestones captured at this studio. The photographs selected for this exhibition present a glimpse into Panjabi Sikh wedding arrangements and ceremonies from the 1960s to the 1990s and how these unions were a way to facilitate immigration to Canada and reunite families.



The opening was attended by some of the very couples featured in the exhibition! It was a beautiful way for those community members to reflect on their memories and experiences in the Gur Sikh Temple.

However, many of the couples and families in the Del Monte collection remain unidentified. One of the goals of this exhibition is to hopefully reach families and friends of those pictured, so that we may include their names.

Marriages & Migration: A Transnational Story of BC will be open until July 2024. The Sikh Heritage Museum, located at 33089 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC, is open 7 days a week from 9am-5pm.

## Komagata Maru commemorative signage and street renaming unveiling

The City of Abbotsford worked with the Khalsa Diwan Society and the South Asian Studies Institute (UFV) to honour the memory and efforts of the Komagata Maru passengers to challenge injustice as well as celebrate the Abbotsford South Asian community's efforts to aid their countrymen.



The opening was attended by Mayor and Council, families featured in the exhibition, and many community members who came and listened to people talk about how historic of a moment it was to have the Komagata Maru passengers honoured in such a significant way:

"I was so privileged to attend yesterday's historical gathering. What a gift of cultural and historical sharing took place with such good people so involved in the events being acknowledged...This is a part of our Canadian story that our citizens need to be aware of. We cannot let such incidents happen again, but they could happen if we do not know the story," Art Turnbull, Pastor and Interfaith collaborator.

## Komagata Maru

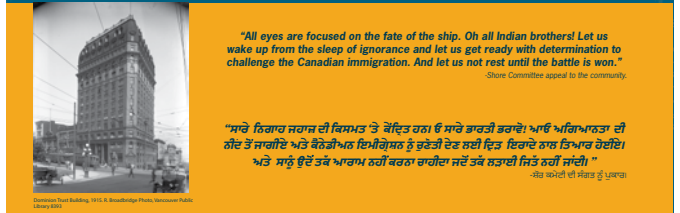
The City of Abbotsford partnered with the Khalsa Diwan Society and the South Asian Studies Institute to commemorate the Komagata Maru tragedy in two ways: by commissioning 3 commemorative plaques at the Sikh Heritage Museum and by renaming a portion of South Fraser Way to Komagata Maru Way.

### RACISM MEETS RESILIENCE

The Komagata Maru was held in Burrard Inlet from May 23 to July 23, 1914. During that time, immigration officials used force and racist legal measures to deny entry and to compel the passengers to leave. This injustice and discrimination only strengthened resolve and resistance. Those on board the ship defended themselves in the face of such an intense force. But they were convinced of their right as British subjects to enter another country in the Empire.

### ਨਸਲਵਾਦ ਲਚਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ

ਬਰਮਾਦਾ ਮਾਰੂ 23 ਮਈ ਤੋਂ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ, 1914 ਤੱਕ ਬਰਾਰਡ ਇਨਲੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਇਮੀਗਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਅਨਿਆਈ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨਕਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਨੇ ਵੀਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਉਹ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਨੇ ਵੀਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਉਹ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਨੇ ਵੀਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।



### ACTIVISM IN ABBOTSFORD

The Gur Sikh Temple National Historic Site and the Abbotsford Sikh community have always played an important social and economic role since the early 1900s. The Abbotsford connection to the plight of the Komagata Maru passengers is not well-known locally, and is an important part of the Abbotsford Sikh heritage legacy, and in the greater Canadian story. In May and June 1914, the small but mighty community in Abbotsford helped raise much needed funds for the Komagata Maru legal challenge. Money was raised for legal fees, a possible lease of the ship, and provisions for the passengers. The Gur Sikh Temple was a place for political actions and community alliance in addition to its role for spiritual fulfillment. The Gur Sikh Temple provided space for the community to discuss political and human rights, violations faced by the passengers.

### ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਗਰਮੀ

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੱਖ ਟੈਂਪਲ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਹਿਸਟਰੀਕ ਸਾਈਟ ਅਤੇ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। 1914 ਵਿੱਚ, ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੇ ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੇ ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੇ ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

5 S's Komagata Maru July 1914

<b>Shore Committee members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mohammed Akbar Sikriwal</li> <li>Hussain Rahim</li> <li>Mit Singh Pander</li> <li>Balwan Singh Khurdpur</li> <li>Bhutan Singh Kahri</li> <li>Harsaran Singh Sahri</li> <li>Rattan Singh</li> <li>Ganga Singh</li> <li>Tara Singh Kauri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bhag Singh Bikhind</li> <li>Goban Lal Pualakh</li> <li>Gurdev Singh Billo</li> <li>Rajah Singh, Barwan Kalan</li> <li>Karar Singh, Newnan Chand</li> <li>Narha Singh</li> <li>Arjan Singh</li> <li>Utman Singh Haans</li> </ul>	<b>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> <li>ਕੌਮਗਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ</li> </ul>
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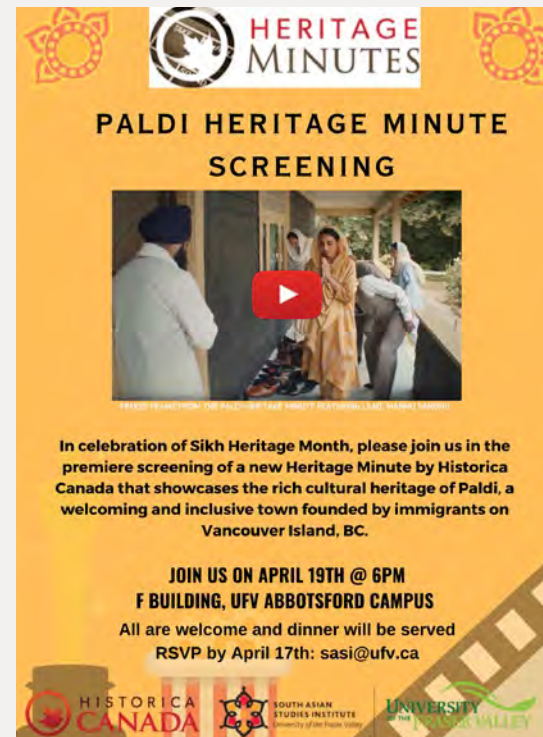
\*This list of members may not be exhaustive.

<b>MARCH 24</b> SASI's 'Where Are The Women' Collects Stories of Punjabi Women in the Valley	<b>MARCH 24</b> SASI Partnership Event Offers Financial Education Workshop to International Students	<b>MAY 4</b> SASI Partners with Surrey Art Gallery to Present 'Rajesh Vora: Everyday Monuments'	<b>MAY 4</b> SASI Launches the South Asian Canadian Legacy Project	<b>JUNE 16</b> Caste and the High School Experience in British Columbia	<b>AUGUST 12</b> Film Launch: "Rails, Jails & Trolleys" A Documentary on the Indian Farmers' Protest	<b>SEPTEMBER 9</b> "Sold-Out" screening of Rails, Jails, & Trolleys – A documentary film on history's largest Farmer's Protest Movement	<b>SEPTEMBER 16</b> Casteless Me – Shauna Singh Baldwin
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# ENGAGEMENT

## Paldi Heritage Minute Screening

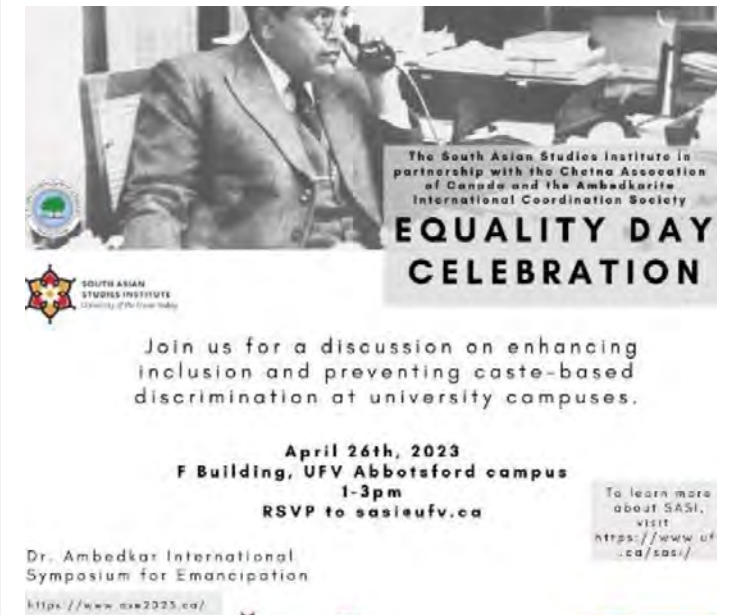
To celebrate Sikh Heritage Month (2023), Historica Canada released a new Heritage Minute about the historic mill town of Paldi, BC. It is the first Heritage Minute to highlight a South Asian Canadian story as well as the first to be released in Punjabi. On April 19th, the day of the launch, SASI hosted a premiere screening of the Paldi Heritage Minute with many members of the cast and crew present.



Dr. Bains moderated a Q&A with directors Anaïsa Visser and Hayley Gray, and actors Mannu Sandhu and Tarun Keram who played Bishan Kaur and Mayo Singh, respectively. The discussion touched on the significance of telling this story through the lens of Bishan Kaur, wife of Paldi founder Mayo Singh, and of highlighting the women of different backgrounds who made up Paldi.

## Equality Day Celebration

On April 26th, the SASI was honoured to observe and celebrate Equality Day as part of the 2023 Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and Equality Day Vancouver. This was the 20th year for the week-long International Dalit Conference held in Vancouver since 2003.



In May 2023, people collected at a forum for academics and community leaders to reflect on the progress that has been made as well as the challenges that still lie ahead in the fight against caste-based discrimination in Canada. The Equality Day event at SASI provided an opportunity to discuss casteism on university campuses, both how it manifests in this setting and what can be done at the institutions to create change. Many shared difficult personal stories that illustrated caste-based discrimination students face at universities in BC and at UFV.

SEPTEMBER 21

Sikh Heritage Museum  
Virtual Tour

SEPTEMBER 22

SASI Director Featured in  
NFB Film 'Unarchived'

SEPTEMBER 23

Help Preserve Our History:  
The South Asian Canadian  
Digital Archive

OCTOBER 17

SASI's 15th Anniversary  
Celebration marks another  
milestone of achievements

### Dr. Ambedkar Emancipation Day at UFV

On Oct 14, in commemoration of Emancipation Day – the day that Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar embraced Buddhism, the SASI and CHETNA organized a discussion on the annihilation of caste. On Oct 14, in commemoration of Emancipation Day – the day that Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar embraced Buddhism, the SASI and CHETNA organized a discussion on the annihilation of caste.

The event at UFV created space for commemoration, dialogue, future plans, and outcomes towards the elimination of caste discrimination while developing anti-casteist societies in BC.

### Building Solidarity: Anti-Casteism at UFV

On September 19th, the SASI and UFV Library hosted a welcome back to campus event for students in the Library Rotunda that focused on creating an anti-caste UFV campus.

Artist Raghavendra K.V. Rao donated a painting of Dr. Ambedkar to UFV Library where it will serve as a reminder of our commitment to anti-caste work. Jai Birdi of CHETNA presented a collection of Dr. Ambedkar's books that hold the speeches and writings as a donation by the Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Ontario to the UFV Library so that Dr. Ambedkar's message would be passed on to future students.

Anita Lal of the Poetic Justice Foundation spoke about her extensive commitment to work as an advocate towards the elimination of caste oppression in our communities and as an anti-caste activist.

And finally, Balkar Singh, recited poetry readings of fighting caste oppression which he donated to the Library to attach to the painting which will be hung in the library.

We look forward to working with everyone in our UFV community on our anti-caste commitments.

### The 4th annual Community Golf Day

The 4th annual Community Golf Day to raise funds for the South Asian Research Fellowship Program was held at Ledgeview Golf Course in Abbotsford. A hundred players and many sponsors supported the tournament and \$62,000 was raised for research on current and pressing issues that face our communities.



The SASI is always grateful to Dr. Bajwa and Dr. Dhama for their continued support and as founders of the tournament that has seen such great success and much engagement with the community

### Becoming Human: Using Literature to Legitimize Identity

On November 17th, the SASI hosted Dhan Prize finalists for 'Becoming Human: Using Literature to Legitimize Identity.' In a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Satwinder Bains and Dhan Prize founder Barj Dhan, Deepti Babuta, Baljijit, and Jameel Ahmad Paul discussed how literature and education empower women and give voice to oppressed groups. The Dhan Prize for Punjabi Literature celebrates the rich culture and transnational heritage of Punjabi literature and language in the two Punjabi scripts, Gurmukhi and Shahmukhi.

### Unarchived screening

The South Asian Canadian Digital Archive (SACDA) at the South Asian Studies Institute (SASI) hosted students and faculty from the the Department of Information Studies at UFV on November 7, 2023. The SACDA team was excited to host the students, Assistant Professor Karen Sharkey, and the Department Coordinator, Michelle Elliott, at the SASI offices in the K Building.

The visit began with an introductory welcome by Dr. Satwinder Bains, the Director of SASI, followed by a screening of the recently released documentary, Unarchived, produced by the National Film Board. SACDA and Dr. Satwinder Bains were featured in the award-winning documentary.

An engaging discussion followed, centered around the questions raised by the film on topics of community archives, ownership, copyrights, and repatriation. The SACDA team shared an overview of the archive, digital preservation workflows and processes, and the challenges encountered in building a community-centered archival praxis.

The students had the opportunity to look at various archival collections and materials that SACDA team is currently working on.

# 2023

#### OCTOBER 17

Tourism Abbotsford partners with SASI – Rails, Jails and Trolleys film showed again at UFV!

#### OCTOBER 17

EHSAAS Readers and Writers Festival -2022

#### OCTOBER 18

Meeting to promote cooperation between the Institute of Indian Studies and the South Asian Studies Institute

#### NOVEMBER 24

LANGAR, the centuries old tradition of serving humanity and serving community meals.

#### DECEMBER 1

WE ARE HOCKEY – Travels to Brampton, Ontario

#### JANUARY 3

Scholars and practitioners meet to discuss Youth, Crime Prevention and Sports

#### JANUARY 3

Voices from a Smouldering Underground – Panel & Dialogue

#### JANUARY 16

O.P. Jindal Global University officials visit SASI

## SACDA STORIES

It is a quiet January morning in Paldi, a small lumber mill town on Vancouver Island in BC. Amidst ruins of the mill town, coniferous trees, and wild grasses, a small gravel road leads to a two-storey wooden building, the Paldi Gurdwara. It was built in 1919 and is one of the oldest gurdwaras in Canada.

In a room at the far back of the building on the ground floor, the walls of the office are filled with framed photographs, postcards, hand-drawn maps, and newspaper clippings. It is a room where history is very much alive—as a witness to time and people, lives shared, and those who thrived here. The rusty nails scattered around the walls, ripped pieces of duct tape pasted on the corners of the frames, the fading handwritten names in Punjabi and Urdu on the back of the postcards, the uneven cuttings of newspapers—all tell a story. The story of Paldi. The story of early South Asians on the Pacific coast of Canada.

Almost a century after the Paldi Gurdwara was built, the South Asian Canadian Digital Archive (SACDA) was formed in 2020 to document the 120+ years of history and heritage of the South Asian diaspora in Canada. Over the past three years, the SACDA team has worked on developing 60 unique multilingual archival collections. These collections speak to the histories, cultures, and key contributions of South Asian communities in Canada that range from immigration and social histories, arts and culture, and labour activism to built environment histories.

As we reflect on our work at this juncture and the kind of archival praxis for which we strive and envision building to foster knowledge equity and diversity, we keep coming back to the questions of what we archive and how we archive.

### SACDA is made possible by this incredibly talented team:

#### Current:

Dr. Satwinder Bains	Director, Jan 2020 - present
Thamilini Jothilingam	Digital Asset Archivist, Nov 2021 - present
Alisa Sohi	Ass. Digital Asset Arch., Aug 2022 - present
Faria Firoz	Graphic Designer Sept, 2023 - present
Rashneet	Co-op Student Sept, 2023 - present
Pratham	Research Assistant Jan, 2023 - present
Arnav Mehta	Ass. Web Developer, Sept 2022 - present
Kiara Dabreo	Research Assistant, Sept 2023 - present
Annshul Kashyap	Work-Study Student, Sept 2023 - present

#### Past:

Aishmitta	Volunteer, Sept - Oct 2023
Ansh Seth	Research Assistant, Jan - Apr 2022
Amreen Kaur	Research Student Intern, Jul - Aug 2022
Arshdeep Sandhu	Asst. Web Developer, Jan 2021 - Dec 2022
Balraj Singh	Research Assistant, Sept 2022 - present
Benjamin Arends	Work-Study Student, February - March 2021
Dharani Persaud	Graduate Research Asst, May - August 2023
Gurkiran Aulakh	Research Student Intern, May - August 2022
Gauri Sethi	Research Assistant, Sept 2023- Dec 2023
Jahnvi	Research Assistant, Dec 2021 - Apr 2022
Jesse Kaufman	Marketing Consultant, Sept 2021 - Apr 2022
Dr. Kusum Soni	Translator, June - July 2023
Kamal Sidhu	Coordinator, Oct 2020 - Oct 2022
Madhavee Inamdar	Project Manager, Jun 2022 - July 2021
Magnus Berg	Digital Asset Archivist, Sept 2020 - Sept 2021
Manveer Singh Chatha	Research Assistant, Sept - Dec 2022
Meg McGinnis	Practicum Student, Feb - Mar 2022
Mitali Bharwaj	Research Assistant, Jan - Aug 2023
Pat Garland	Practicum Student, Feb - Mar 2023
Prabhpreet Singh Gill	Research Student Intern, May - Aug 2022
Prati Kapoor	Research Assistant, Nov 2023 - present
Ravjeet Dyal	Research Assistant, Jun - Dec 2022
Raaynaa Madaan	Research Assistant, June 2022 - Dec 2022
Sadhvi Suri	Asst. Web Developer, Sept 2020 - Jan 2022
Shivam Vashisht	Research Assistant, Jan - Dec 2022
Tania Teixeira	Cataloguing Tech., Sept 2021 - Feb 2022
Tim Ubels	Digi. and Cataloguing Tech. May - Aug 2021
Varshaa Kashyap	Research Assistant, Dec 2021 - Apr 2022

Paul Hundal Family Fonds

During our visit to the Paldi Gurdwara last year, Mayo Singh's grandson Robin told us stories of the people of Paldi while carefully removing frames from the walls, pausing at photos and examining faces. We sat on the floor in front of a flatbed scanner digitizing the photographs. The granthi's four-year-old daughter circled around the scanner, curious about the entire process, and telling us the story of Mayo Singh in an animated voice. The granthi brought us sliced bananas and apples sprinkled with black pepper and insisted we eat them before continuing with work. In that room, our approach was manifest: a community archive and archival praxis and process that centers people, in their homes, in their places of worship, on the floors, sharing food, memories, and histories. Like Paldi, SACDA is also a place for everyone.

We place the community in the center, as opposed to having records in the center. We employ tools and processes that are open and collaborative with open source software. We build multilingual knowledge infrastructures and a dynamic descriptive framework with locally-maintained thesaurus and authorities. We strive to build knowledge infrastructures that reflect the plurality of our diverse knowledge systems.

We build multilingual collections, and we take an innovative and collaborative approach to metadata creation. We facilitate spaces where the community is present and engaged throughout the archival processing—from knowledge creation to sharing. At SACDA, community members actively contribute to the naming of the collection and files, metadata creation, classification, and writing family histories. The community is not outside of history but very much within and co-collaborating in writing it and building it—in our own voices, the way we want to be described and documented, in our own words.

We welcome all to join this collective archival journey! Contact us at [sacda@ufv.ca](mailto:sacda@ufv.ca).



## Partnerships

We built following institutional partnerships to work collaboratively to develop archival collections, educational resources, and sharing skills and resources to further the documentation of the history and heritage of the South Asian Canadian communities:

B. C. Forest Discovery Centre  
B. C. Labour Heritage Centre  
Burnaby Village Museum  
Chilliwack Museum & Archives  
City of Coquitlam Archives  
City of Delta Archives  
City of Surrey Archives  
Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives  
Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University  
Kaatza Station Museum & Archives  
Kabir Centre for Arts & Culture  
Paldi Historical Museum  
Sikh Heritage Museum  
Simon Fraser University Library  
Tamil Cultural Society of B. C.  
The Reach Gallery Museum  
The Royal BC Museum  
University of British Columbia  
University of the Fraser Valley, Department of Information Studies  
University of the Fraser Valley Library  
University of Toronto Scarborough Library  
Vancouver Maritime Museum  
Waterloo University Library & Archives  
White Rock Museum and Archives  
Yucho Chow Community Archive

## Recognition and Engagement

### Best DH Dataset!

Digital Humanities Awards:  
Highlighting Resources in  
Digital Humanities

The South Asian Canadian Digital Archive (SACDA) won the 2nd Runner Up at the Digital Humanities (DH) Awards 2022 under the Best DH Dataset category.

The Digital Humanities Awards are a set of open annual awards run as a DH awareness-raising activity. Since 2012, awardees have been annually nominated and voted for entirely by the public. These awards are intended to help put interesting DH resources in the spotlight and engage DH users (and the general public) in the work of the community.

The nominations procedure is overseen by an international nominations committee. In 2022, 26 projects from all across the world were nominated under the Best DH Dataset category, and it was an honor to share our work with a global audience.



### SACDA Website

The recent Google Analytics statistics as of December 31, 2023 are:



87 countries



1,292 cities



146,951 views



16,550 users



382,925 event counts

To learn more please click [here](#)

supported by:



## Contributors

We are immensely grateful for the following individuals and families who have shared their family and immigration stories and histories with us:

Baltej Singh Dhillon  
Charan Gill  
Chindow Sidhu  
Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill  
Dr. Kanwal Singh Neel  
Dr. Norman Buchignani & Dr. Doreen Indra  
Dr. Palaniswami Rathnaswami  
Dr. Paul Fontaine  
Dr. Sarah Beaulieu  
Greg Nesteroff  
Hardial Aujila  
Harinder Jit Sunga  
Jeavan Deol  
Joan Mayo  
Judge Gurmail Singh Gill  
Kamaljit Sidhu  
Kelly Sangara  
Nirmal Gill  
Paul Hundal  
Ram Sundaram  
Raymond Atwal  
Rob & Rubeena Sidhu  
Robin Mayo  
Rosamund Norbury  
Subbu Govindarajapuram  
Sylvia Mahal  
Vimal Bodalia

## STUDENT SUCCESS



### SASI Research Assistant meets personal goals

Ansh worked at SASI as Research and Cataloging Assistant during his 3rd year at UFV Business program in 2022. He currently serves on the South Asian Community Advisory Committee (SACAC) as a community representative. He has been hired by KPMG as an accountant with a near perfect GPA.

He was responsible for describing and classifying archival records at the item level in accordance with standard Rules for Archival Description (RAD), Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM) and SACDA's internal thesaurus. The content included but was not limited to wedding photography, graduation pictures, portraits and much more. The SASI is lucky to have students like Ansh who are passionate about community and continue to stay involved with the Institute.



### Former SASI Student Achieved Success as Enactus Member

Ravjeet Dyal, a former Research and Cataloging Assistant at the SASI, has been a member of Enactus since January 2023. Ravjeet is also the Project Manager of the Fraser Valley AgroConnect project. She joined the organization to help address issues that are currently affecting our local communities. She also hopes to empower and inspire others to follow the actions of Enactus UFV to continue to make a positive change in the world.



### Faria Firoz is involved in the digitization of the Chandra Bodalia fonds

Faria Firoz is the graphic designer and research assistant at the South Asian Studies Institute and SACDA. In her current role, she is involved in the digitization of the Chandra Bodalia fonds.

Additionally, she has worked on the exhibition design for both the Del Monte exhibit and the Komagata Maru permanent exhibit.

Faria holds a BFA from the University of Fraser Valley and is currently pursuing her Master's of Fine Arts degree at Emily Carr University of Art & Design. Her research interests explore migration, the South Asian diaspora, displacement, and equity, with a focus on examining identity and cultural hybridization.

**MARCH 7**

TRAVELLING EXHIBIT – Haq and History

**MARCH 21**

February 22 is Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada

**APRIL 17**

Rails, Jails, and Trolleys – film festival acceptance and screening

**APRIL 20**

Visit to Alberta Yields Results!

# GRANTS AND FUNDING

## The SASI received a number of grants reflecting the breadth and depth of the work being undertaken

### City of Abbotsford - \$10,000



The City of Abbotsford provided \$10,000 for research related to the role of Abbotsford in support of the legal challenge that the passengers of the Komagata Maru faced in June 1914. The City unveiled permanent exhibits at the Gur Sikh Temple on July 22 and announced the double naming of a portion of South Fraser Way as Komagata Maru Way to commemorate the spirit of activism in 1914.

### BC Arts Council Project Assistance grant



The BC Arts Council's Project Assistance: Museums and Indigenous Cultural Centres grant supports the development and creation of artistic or cultural history programming. With this funding, the SASI was able to hire graphic designer Faria Firoz for the Sikh Heritage Museum exhibition 'Marriages & Migration: A Transnational Story of BC.'

### Canada Youth Works Sept 2023 - March 31 2024



### CHANDRA BODALIA FONDS

The Government of Canada's Young Canada Works program provides funding to employers to create jobs for students and internships for graduates. These programs help youth acquire skills in the heritage, arts and cultural sector. The SASI received funding for a Research and Digitization Assistant, Faria Firoz, to work on the digitization of the Chandra Bodalia fond for SACDA.

### ICOI

**Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants**

**Collectivités Inclusives pour les ImmigrantEs Âgés**



The Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants (ICOI) partnership is a 7-year multidisciplinary, multi-sector, multi-province project that aims to build sustainable connections to generate knowledge about social isolation and connectedness among older immigrants, support multidirectional knowledge exchange, and improve older immigrants' lives. The (ICOI) partnership brings together 48 academic and 38 community partners in 9 cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec.

#### APRIL 21

SACDA wins 2nd Runner Up in the Digital Humanities Awards 2022

#### APRIL 24

Celebrating Student Success at the National Level!

#### APRIL 27

Welcome to our new SASI Coordinator, Alysha Mahil!

#### APRIL 27

Paldi Heritage Minute – First of its Kind!

# AWARDS

## 2023 Shortlist for the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming

The "South Asian Canadian Legacy Project (SACLProject)" raised awareness and knowledge of the valuable contributions of South Asian Canadians to British Columbia's diverse cultures, history, heritage, economy, and society. The project was grounded in comprehensive new research and community engagement and includes a variety of resources and activities, including a digital archive, traveling exhibits and educational resources.

Canada's National History Society is pleased to announce that this year's shortlist for the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming included the SACLProject. The Award managers said it represents remarkable and inspiring initiatives that encourage public engagement in Canadian history.

The award will honour two recipients, one French and one English, for innovation in community programming. Organizations receive a cash prize of \$2,500 and a trip for two to Ottawa to receive their award.

### Discover the stories of South Asian Canadians who helped build BC.



#### Explore the South Asian Canadian Digital Archive

View newly uncovered archival images and exhibits that tell the stories of early South Asian migration to Canada.

[VIEW THE ARCHIVE](#)



#### Share new learning resources with a K-12 teacher

Detailed activity plans and resources ensure that teachers can share our stories with the next generation.

[VIEW THE RESOURCES](#)



#### Read the South Asian Canadian Social History Book

Learn about historical and contemporary migration, identity, and politics of the South Asian Canadian diaspora in BC.

[READ THE EBOOK](#)



#### Visit historic sites of significance in BC

Visit 15 historic sites of significance to the South Asian Canadian community in British Columbia.

[VIEW THE MAP](#)



#### Discover labour heritage research

Uncover the game-changing history of BC labour movements in the South Asian Canadian community.

[VIEW THE RESEARCH](#)



#### Plan a trip to the Travelling Exhibit

Discover materials and artefacts that explore the experiences, celebrations, and activism in our communities.

[FIND THE EXHIBIT](#)

APRIL 27

Equality Day Observation and Celebration at SASI

APRIL 27

Engagement Event on the Future of a South Asian Canadian Museum in BC

MAY 7

Haq and History Travels to Port Moody

OCTOBER 3

SASI Research Awards



# RAILS, JAILS and TROLLEYS

Rails, Jails, and Trolleys, a groundbreaking documentary directed by local filmmaker Henna Mann and produced by the South Asian Studies Institute, was featured and recognized by many national and international film festivals. The film presents the history and present-day events on the decline of agriculture in India. The film analyzes responses to three agricultural bills passed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2020. The response to these bills became the 'largest farmer's protest in human history.'



Rails, Jails and Trolleys documents history's largest farmers' protest and the Canadian diaspora's response to it. This ground-breaking documentary captures the electric ethos of a protest that received international attention and the resounding response by Canadians to the movement. A full year in the making the film tells the story of why and how the farmers' movement ignited a nation, and youth, women, and men from all over the world.

"The need to research and document the Canadian response to the movement that gained international attention was critically important for SASI. We were present as history was being made and documenting it for posterity was vitally important for us in the here and now and for future generations" commented Dr. Satwinder Kaur Bains, Director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley.

Vancouver Independent MovieMaker Awards – Semi-Finalist

New York International Women Festival – Semi-Finalist

Feedback Female Film Festival – Winner Best Feature Film

OCTOBER 26

Paldi Historical Museum Opening

OCTOBER 26

Exhibition Opening & Komagata Maru Commemoration

OCTOBER 26

Dr. Christine Moliner, Visiting Scholar from O.P. Jindal University

OCTOBER 26

4th Annual Bajwa Dhami Building Bridges Community Golf Day – A Great Success!

OCTOBER 31

Building Solidarity: Anti-Casteism at UFV

OCTOBER 31

Dr. Ambedkar Emancipation Day at UFV

OCTOBER 31

SASI moves to Building K!

NOVEMBER 17

SASI hosts 'Becoming Human: Using Literature to Legitimize Identity' (Dhahan Prize event)

## THE TEAM



**Dr. Gary Fehr**  
Associate Vice-President, Research  
and Graduate Studies



**Dr. Satwinder Bains**  
Director



**Dr. Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra**  
Coordinator



**Dr. Kusum Soni**  
Coordinator



**Alysha Mahil**  
Coordinator



**Thamilini Jothilingam**  
Digital Asset Archivist



**Antoinetta Holierhoek**  
Bookkeeper

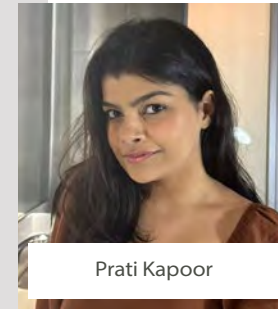


**Alisa Sohi**  
Assistant Digital Archivist

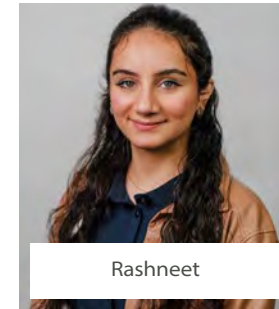


**Faria Firoz**  
Graphic Designer

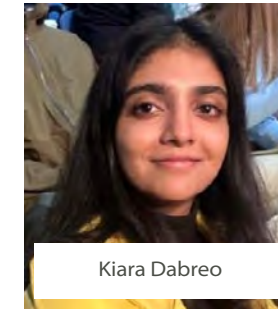
## RESEARCH STUDENTS



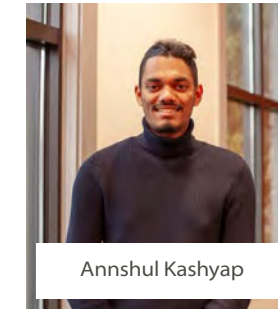
**Prati Kapoor**



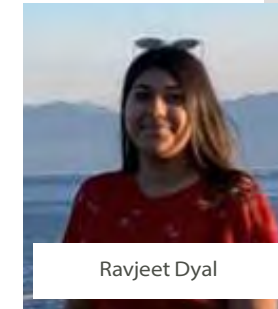
**Rashneet**



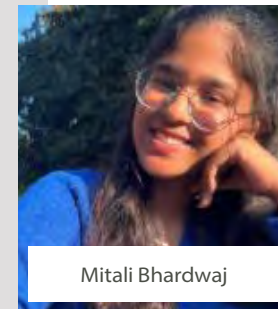
**Kiara Dabreo**



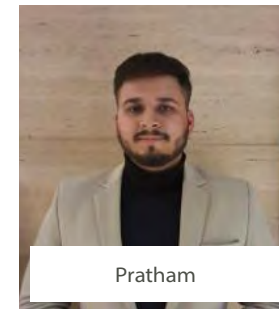
**Anshul Kashyap**



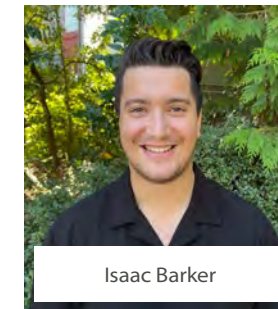
**Ravjeet Dyal**



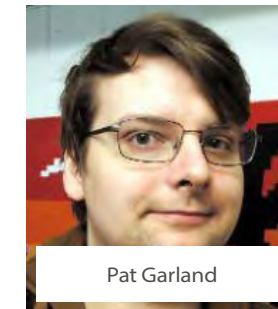
**Mitali Bhardwaj**



**Pratham**



**Isaac Barker**



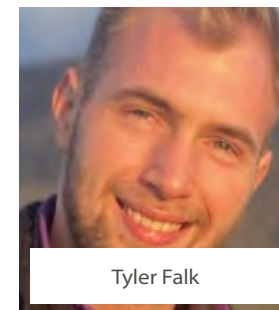
**Pat Garland**



**Arshdeep Sandhu**



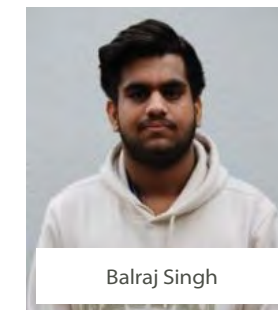
**Shivam Vashist**



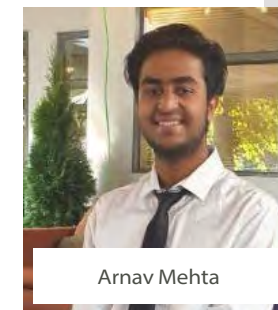
**Tyler Falk**



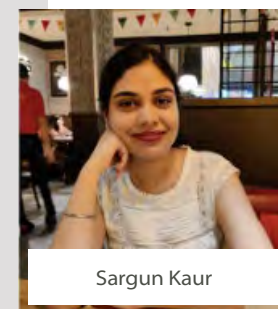
**Manveer Singh Chatha**



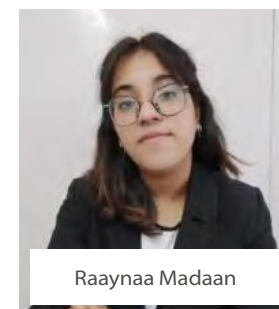
**Balraj Singh**



**Arnav Mehta**



**Sargun Kaur**



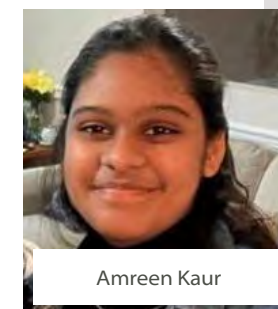
**Raaynaa Madaan**



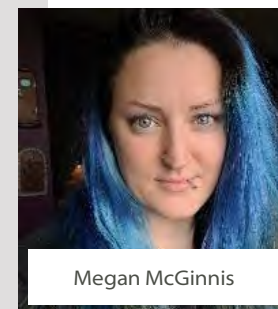
**Gurkiran Aulakh**



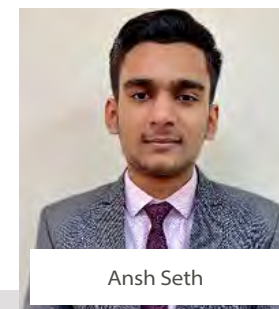
**Prabhpreet Singh Gill**



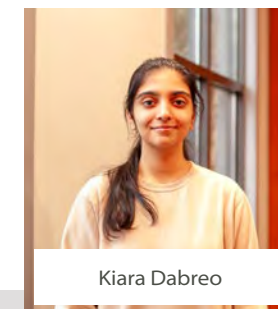
**Amreen Kaur**



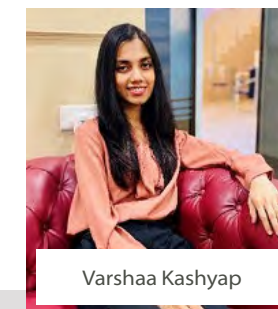
**Megan McGinnis**



**Ansh Seth**



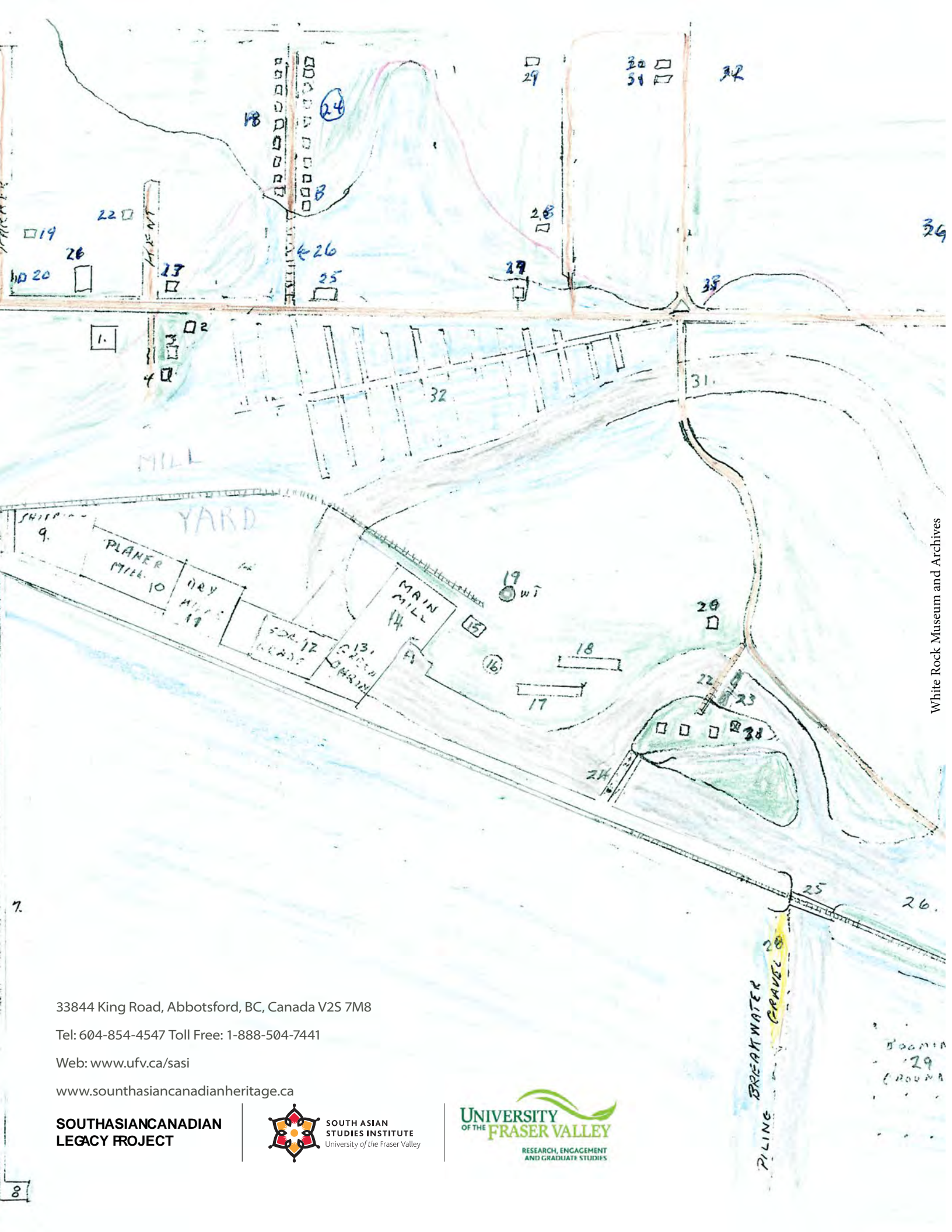
**Kiara Dabreo**



**Varshaa Kashyap**



**Jahnvi Chawla**



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[www.southasiancanadianheritage.ca](http://www.southasiancanadianheritage.ca)

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