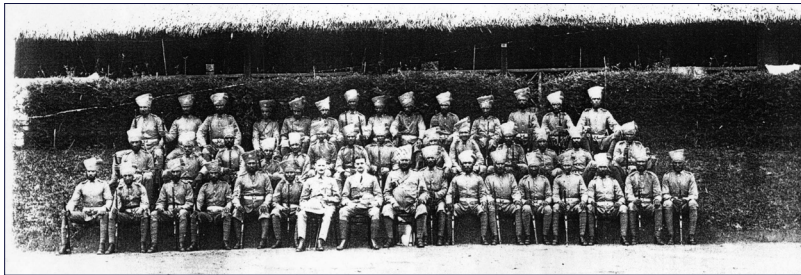


Backgrounder

Early Immigration of South Asian Canadians

Timeline adapted from southasiancanadianheritage.ca/history-of-south-asians-in-canada/

■ 1897 *South Asian migration to Canada*



Source: <http://komagatarajourney.ca/node/9110>

South Asian troops stationed in Hong Kong and the Malay States visit BC after celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in London. These troops told others about immigrants settling in Canada. South Asians began to come to Canada after that.

■ 1903 *First South Asian men arrive in BC*



Source: University of Washington, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In 1903, five South Asian men from India arrive in Vancouver and five in Victoria. 30 more South Asian men immigrated to Canada between 1903-1904. Almost all of them were Sikhs.

Backgrounder: Early Immigration of South Asian Canadians

■ 1904-1905 *South Asian immigration increases*

By 1905, there were over 100 South Asians in Vancouver. Most were Sikhs.

■ 1907 *South Asians denied the right to vote*

In April 1907 the right to vote was taken away and South Asians were denied the right to vote in municipal elections in Vancouver. South Asians were also denied the right to vote in federal or provincial elections.

■ 1907 *Anti-Asian Riots in Vancouver*



Source: University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC_36_017

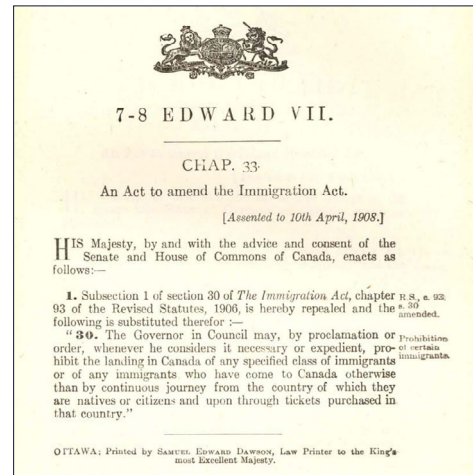
In August 1907, racist protestors stormed through Vancouver's Chinese and Japanese communities. They were protesting Asian immigration. Many White workers believed that Asian people were taking their jobs. They held signs that read, "Keep Canada White." The protest turned into a riot. Crowds of people carrying sticks, knives and other weapons smashed storefront windows costing Asian businesses thousands of dollars.



■ 1908 Canadian government restricts immigration

Canadian government passed the “continuous journey” regulation. People that did not travel non-stop from their country of origin were not allowed into Canada. This directly affected many South Asians because there were no ships sailing directly from India to Canada.

The government also imposed a \$200 tax on all Asian immigrants arriving in Canada. This made it difficult for wives and family members of South Asians to come to Canada, as this was a lot of money.



Source: www.pier21.ca

■ 1908 First Sikh gurdwara in North America



Source: www.komagatamarujourney.ca

With the support of the Khalsa Diwan Society, the first Sikh gurdwara (place of worship) in North America was built at 1866-West 2nd Avenue, Vancouver, BC.

■ 1909 The Guru Nanak Mining and Trust

The Guru Nanak Mining and Trust forms. This company bought and developed agricultural land for South Asians. In BC's Fraser Valley, South Asians worked on farms, in construction, in mills, and for a brick-making company.

Backgrounder: Early Immigration of South Asian Canadians

■ 1911 **Request to change immigration regulations**

A group of South Asian men living in BC went to Ottawa. They asked the government to change the strict immigration regulations to allow their wives and children entry into Canada.

■ 1912 **First South Asian baby born in Canada**



Source: www.canadiansikhheritage.ca

On August 28th, Hardial Singh Atwal was the first Sikh born in Canada to Granthi Balwant Singh and Kartar Kaur.

■ 1914 **Komagata Maru**



Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Komagata_Maru_4.jpg

The Komagata Maru sailed into Vancouver harbour in May 1914 carrying 376 South Asian passengers. The government refused permission for passengers to leave the ship because of the “continuous journey” law. The ship was forcibly removed from BC waters in July—two months after arriving.



■ 1923 **South Asians at work in BC**

South Asians owned many businesses in BC in the early 1920s. By 1924, most South Asians living in BC worked in lumber mills.



Source: Mayo Singh Family fonds: 2020_06_07_035,SACDA, UFV

■ **Time Shuffle**

For a fun way to learn more about early South Asian Canadian history, play the Saffron Threads Time Shuffle game.

Available at: openschool.bc.ca/saffronthreads/learn/ts-game.html