

Australian Indian Historical Society Inc.

Who Are We

We are a group interested in researching, preserving and publicising Australian Indian History with the aim of reducing racism in the community. The Australian Indian Historical Society Inc. is a non-profit organisation that was formed on the 31st March 2012.

The AIHS was formed by the following four Sikh Gurudwaras in Victoria;

Sikh Community of Western Victoria Inc., Tarneit;
Sri Guru Singh Sabah - The Sikh Cultural Society
of Victoria Inc., Craigieburn; Sri Guru Nanak
Satsang Sabha, Blackburn; Sri Guru Granth Sahib
Inc. Keysborough.

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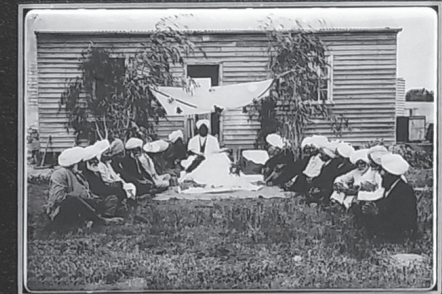
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SIVA SINGH MEMORIAL



SIVA SINGH - FARMER - HAWKER

THE FIRST CONFIRMED READING OF AN AKHAND PATH
TOOK PLACE ON THE 16th DECEMBER 1920
AT SIVA SINGH'S FARM AT BENALLA

SIVA SINGH WAS STRUCK OFF THE ELECTORAL ROLL IN 1915
HE APPEALED TO THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA
AND WAS REINSTATED ON THE ROLL IN 1925

ੴ ਸਿਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

AUSTRALIAN INDIAN HISTORICAL SOC. INC.
(PHOTO: JOHN HOWSHIP)

12-2p.m
23 November 2019
LAKE FORESHORE
NEAR BENALLA LIBRARY
Fawckner Drive Benalla Vic.

UNVEILING

Siva Singh

Siva Singh born ca.1871 Gujrat, Punjab, India. He was the son of Gunda Singh and died aged 84, on the 8th January 1955, at the Lemnos Convalescent Home, Benalla. Siva. On the 11th January 1955 his remains were cremated at Fawkner Cemetery, Victoria, where his ashes were scattered.

Siva acted as a Priest for his community and the first reading of an Akhand Path (a Sikh religious ceremony) in Australia took place on his farm at Benalla. The Akhand Path was read for Herman Singh, by his son Isar Singh on the 16 December 1920, from a gilt edged Morocco Bound, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh Holy Book), which had been brought to Australia for the Ceremony, it is believed to be the first Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji imported into Australia. Siva Singh's property is the site of the first "Darbar Shahib" (Guru's Court).

The Akhand Path for Herman Singh a Hawker, was read in the December however he died at the Wangaratta Hospital on the 13 January 1920 and was cremated at Wangaratta on the 14 January. The reading in December 1920 coincided with the time that the Hawkers renewed their Hawker's Licences. About 30 Sikhs including Herman's brother, Gooram Singh attended the Ceremony. They were mainly hawkers, businessmen and farmers who came from Melbourne, Albury, Wodonga, Chiltern and towns on the Yarrawonga Railway line. £31/10/9 (\$63.00) was collected and sent to India.

Siva arrived in Victoria in 1897 and obtained his first hawker's license in 1898. By 1915 Siva owned a total of 422 acres including a farm of 320 acres in the Shire of Benalla.

Siva was recorded on the electoral roll in 1912. However in 1915, after being eligible to vote in three Federal Elections the Divisional Returning Officer, Mr Darlison, struck Siva Singh's name off the Commonwealth Electoral Roll, because he claimed that Siva was not eligible to vote as his name had not been registered on the roll before 1902, as required by section 4 of the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902. Siva appealed the decision in the High Court of Australia in August 1915 but lost the appeal in September. His name did not appear on the Electoral Roll again until 1925.



Siva Singh with his horse and wagon, Glenrowan, Vic.

Acknowledgements

Mayor & Councillors, Benalla City Council; Don Firth, John Hanlon, Benalla Historical Society Inc.; Gail Brown, Executive Assistant to the CEO.

Memorial Granite Rock:

Donated and transported by Jeff Pyle, Glenrowan Quarry; Ian Gilfoyle, Glenrowan Quarry, helped to select the Rock.

Placement of Memorial Rock:

Henry Pastuszka, Landscaper, Bobcat, Benalla. He donated his services free of charge.

Memorial Bronze – Ceramic Plaque:

Signs by Knight, TJ & TJ Knight Pty Ltd, Wodonga, Vic.

Installation of Memorial:

Dean Steegstra, Parks Coordinator Benalla Rural City Council; Peter French, Gardener; Tim Morgan, Broken River Sign Company.

Organisation Committee:

Manmohan Singh Shergill, Dr. Santokh Singh Aujla, Jaswinder Sidhu, Len Kenna and Crystal Jordan.

Photograph on Plaque and Brochure

Cover: William John Howship 1920.