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## New Paldi museum celebrates Punjabi Sikh history

Michael John Lo

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1 / 2 Above: Sikh community members in the Cowichan Valley gather for the opening of the Paldi Historical Museum. VIA OFFICE OF MP ALISTAIR MacGREGOR



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The first museum on Vancouver Island dedicated to Punjabi Sikh history is now open.

The Paldi Historical Museum, which recently opened in one of the rooms of the Paldi Sikh Temple located west of Duncan at 23 Paldi Rd., explores the history of Paldi, an historic migrant mill town founded in 1916. The town's story was the subject of the latest [Heritage Minute production](#).

"At that time frame, when racism was so rampant, it was a safe haven for a lot of people," said Satwinder Bains, an associate professor and director of South Asian studies at the University of Fraser Valley.

Japanese, Chinese, Punjabis and Europeans all worked and lived together in Paldi, initially called Mayo Siding after Mayo Singh, the town's primary founder.

Singh, along with about 35 other shareholders, established a successful company mill town despite two devastating fires early in the settlement's history. By 1927, Paldi's population had grown to 1,500, of which about 150 were single working men, according to

