

# Punjabi American Festival

Sun., May 28 • Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds / 11am - Sunset

## In Honor of Bhagat Singh Thind (1892-1967)

Bhagat Singh Thind (1892-1967) was born in Punjab and came to America in 1913. A year later, he was paying his way through the University of California at Berkeley by working in an Oregon lumber mill during summer vacations. When America entered World War I, he joined the U.S. Army. He was honorably discharged on 16th of December, 1918 and in 1920 applied for U.S. citizenship from the state of Oregon. Since several applicants from India had thus far been granted U.S. citizenship, he too was approved by the district court. However a naturalization examiner appealed this court's decision, and the rest is history.

Feb 10, 1923: Justice Sutherland rules "Hindus" are "aliens ineligible to citizenship" in United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind (261 US 204).

What is less well-known is that Bhagat Singh Thind remained in

the U.S., completed his Ph.D., and delivered lectures in metaphysics all across the nation. Basing his lessons on Sikh philosophy, he enriched his teaching with references to the scriptures of several religions and the work of Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau. He campaigned actively for the independence of India from the British Empire, and helped Indian students in any way he could. In 1931, he married Vivian Davies and they had a son, David, to whom several of his 15 books are dedicated.

"You must never be limited by external authority, whether it be vested in a church, man, or book. It is your right to question, challenge, and investigate."

Ironically, Dr. Thind applied for and received U.S. citizenship through the state of New York within a few years of being turned down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

David Thind (right), son of Bhagat Singh Thind will be an honored guest at the Punjabi American Festival on May 28.



Bhagat Singh Thind was one of the first Sikhs to serve in the U.S. Army in WWI



David Thind, son of Bhagat Singh Thind.