

The Chinese Connection ... 在中國連接

An-Ham's arrival in Monterey in 1815 to work as a cook for the Spanish governor is the first recorded presence of a Chinese person in California. But it was not until after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 that Chinese men began to arrive in large numbers. Their arrival was part of a complex relationship between China and the United States in which Chinese men became a major source of labor for the economic development of the American West. By 1870, the Chinese made up nearly 25 percent of California's unskilled labor force, but only 10 percent of the state's total population.

In the beginning most Chinese immigrants came to California to work temporarily, but many eventually made California their home and were able to bring their families. Their presence led to the creation of communities commonly called Chinatown. These enclaves were segregated and considered an exotic curiosity by mainstream America. They had their own form of self-government organized under the leadership of merchants' guilds and district associations called "huiguan."

By 1863, Northern California boasted a Chinese community of over 10,000 who primarily worked the gold mines, but also helped with the building of the railroad, farmed, and built decorative lava border walls on farm land adjacent to Oroville.



"The United States of America and the Emperor of China cordially recognize the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects respectively, from one country to the other, for the purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents."

—Treaty with China,
proclaimed July 28, 1868

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www.cityoforoville.org

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Interested in helping this museum or other Oroville museums? Then consider becoming a Museum Docent ... Name your hours, name your day (s) or let us know what you can do to help. A great way to meet people and give back to your community. Contact us at (530) 538-2415. Thanks!

Chinese Temple & Museum Complex



Established 1863
年成立



1500 Broderick Street
Historic Downtown Area
Oroville, California 95965
(530) 538-2496



About the Chinese Temple ...

關於中國廟

"It is with great pleasure and happiness that in this new land of gold mountain a temple of much worship has been erected on the river." ... Written in the guest book of the Chinese Temple from an early visitor ...



The Oroville Chinese Temple traces its roots back to the 1860's when the Chinese community was very vibrant and active in the Oroville area. It includes three chapels for each of the major ways of life in China. In 1907 a major flood decimated the Chinese community resulting in most of the Chinese leaving Oroville. Some returned to China while others moved to Sacramento or San Francisco. The Chan Family assumed responsibility for the temple which has continued to be a house of worship.

In 1937 the temple and grounds were deeded to the City of Oroville. It was first opened to visitors at the time of the California Centennial in 1949 after diligent efforts by the Oroville Women's Community Club to begin the restoration process. The City of Oroville has continued to make improvements and maintain the museum complex.



About the Chapels ...

教堂關於四教堂

- **The Main Chapel** is called Liet Sheng Kong-Temple of the assorted deities. It is a place of prayer for various worships including Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.
- **The Chan Room** is a Confucian room for reverence of ancestors. Confucius taught that all human relationships depend upon maintenance of the family.
- **The Moon Temple** is the Wong Fat Tong Hall of the Yellow Buddha. It has a unique moon-shape door and is above the Council Room.



- **The Council Room** served a variety of civil and cultural needs of the worker, such as, banking, letter writing, discipline and arranging for the burial of the dead.

Beyond the Chapels ...

除了教堂

- **The Tapestry & Display Halls** contain priceless tapestries, parade umbrellas, an Imperial Pillar rug of the 16th century, an historical bronze urn, and a display of "Shadow Puppets" made of donkey skin. Many artifacts fill the display cases. A collection of early photographs and drawings that depict the Chinese history in Oroville are displayed.
- **The Cullie Room** showcases Chinese and American costumes from 1840 to 1940, which were a gift of Chinese Missionaries Mabel Clay and Jessie Mae Henke
- **The Workers Hut** is a replica of a typical Chinese miners' hut from the 1860's. It was constructed using materials from a local barn built in the same period.
- **The Fong Lee Building** is the newest addition to the museum complex. The building was a gift of the Chin Shew Ting Family Trust to honor Chin Kong You, Chin Wing He, and his wife Mar See You. It was built as a replica of the Fong Lee Company building which contains the original light fixtures, cabinets, cases, and artifacts from the medicinal herb and gold purchasing store. A small altar with incense bowls honoring departed family members adorns the side wall.
- **The Courtyard & Gardens:** Many of the plants within the garden are of Chinese origin, including a Tissue-bark pine tree and bamboo which can be traced back to the 1860's. A fish pond has lily pads that bloom in the summer. A Chinese-pummelo grapefruit tree which produces enormous fruit graces the corner of the courtyard.

Thank you for visiting the Chinese Temple & Museum Complex and for allowing us to share it's history with you. Please enjoy the grounds, come back, and tell others about this unique and enchanting museum ...