

THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE IN VISALIA

A SECRET TUNNEL?

VISALIA CHINATOWN

THE CHINESE COMMUNITY FLOURISHED IN THIS AREA FROM THE LATTER 1800S TO THE 1960S. THE FIRST KNOWN CHINESE RESIDENT IN VISALIA WAS KNOWN TO BE HERE AS EARLY AS DECEMBER 1859. VISALIA CHINATOWN DATES FROM THE EARLY 1890S. ORIGINALLY ENCOURAGED TO COME TO CALIFORNIA AS LABORERS DURING THE GOLD RUSH ERA AND THE BUILDING OF THE RAILROADS, THE CHINESE REMAINED IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY DESPITE ACTIVE RACISM BY THEIR OCCIDENTAL NEIGHBORS. MOST OF THE BUILDINGS ERECTED BY THE CHINESE IN THIS VICINITY WERE DEMOLISHED IN 1963, LEAVING THIS ONE BLOCK AS THE SOLE REMINDER OF A ONCE THRIVING COMMUNITY.

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DEDICATED OCTOBER 11, 1997

HISTORICAL MARKER IN OLD CHINATOWN

The Chinese first came to Visalia in the mid 1800's. From their businesses in downtown to their agriculture impact, their influence is significant. Are you interested in learning about their history in Visalia?

Here are a few places to visit to learn more about the Chinese community in Visalia.

Visalia's downtown was home to many Chinese who came to the Central Valley to work during the gold rush and to help build the railway. For Visalia that was about 1859. Visalia's Chinatown was located near the center of town just a block from Main Street. Remnants of its storied underground tunnels are hinted at by the openings along the exterior walls.

CHINESE CULTURAL CENTER

Located on the west side of Visalia, this beautiful facility gives visitors the opportunity to explore their collection of Chinese relics and antiques as well as their traditional garden patio.

500 S Akers St, Visalia

Open Monday through Friday 9:00-12:00.

MOONEY GROVE MUSEUM

The museum offers revolving exhibits on the contributions to the community by the many cultures, including the Chinese, that settled in the area. Historic buildings were moved to the site to demonstrate how early settlers lived and worked.

27000 S Mooney Blvd, Visalia

The museum is closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

THE DOUBLE LL RESTAURANT

Remaining buildings that were once Chinatown are now restaurants, including the Double LL Steak House. During Construction, tunnels were discovered that in pre-depression era days led to gambling rooms and opium dens. The artifacts discovered are on display inside for guests to enjoy.

401 E Center Ave, Visalia, CA
(559) 627-1126

INTERESTED IN DISCOVERING MORE? CONTACT OUR OFFICE.