



Bill George

In Search of Gold Mountain
Tour of Chinese Temples and Towns of Gold Rush California
by Bill George

\$150

September 14, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Spaces limited.



Oroville Chinese Temple

In the 1850s, Chinese immigrants numbered around 50,000 in northern California. Like others from around the world, they came seeking gold but also took up other trades. The world they lived in faded from the scene, but many exciting and important vestiges remain. In one day, we will follow the path of the Chinese, meeting descendants who will help tell the story of the early Chinese pioneer.

We begin the tour at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento to see how Chinese workers contributed to building the Transcontinental Railroad over the Sierra Nevada. Traveling by motor coach, we visit the site near Old Sacramento where a Chinese merchant community flourished. We then head north to Marysville, enjoying views of the world's smallest mountain range, the Sutter Buttes, along the way.

The Marysville Chinatown is the last Chinatown of the Gold Rush era. It still has an active temple (the Bok Kai Temple), an old Chinese school building, and the Chinese American Museum of Northern California, which houses rare artifacts from the Chinese Gold Rush era.

We will meet descendants of a family that operated a store during the Gold Rush days.

We will enjoy a family-style lunch at The Chinese Garden restaurant in Yuba City, and then visit the historic Chinese Cemetery, with a brick structure to burn offerings, and we will explain Chinese burial customs of the era. We then head for Oroville and its amazing temple complex, a series of buildings and gardens that hold many cultural treasures of the era, many of which are not found anywhere else in the world. Here we will discover The Tapestry & Display Halls, which 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. Other features of the temple are:

- The Main Chapel is called Liet Sheng Kong
- The Workers Hut is a replica of a typical Chinese miners' hut from the 1860s. It was constructed using materials from a local barn built in the same period.
- The Council Room served a variety of civil and cultural needs of the Chinese worker, such as, banking, letter writing, discipline and arranging for the burial of the dead.
- 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 1860s. A fishpond has lily pads that bloom in the summer. A Chinese-pummelo grapefruit tree, which produces enormous fruit graces the corner of the courtyard.
- The Temple with assorted deities is a place of prayer for various worships, including Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.
- The Cullie Room showcases Chinese and American costumes from 1840 to 1940, which were a gift of Chinese missionaries.
- The Chan Room is a Confucian room for reverence of ancestors. Confucius taught that all human relationships depend upon maintenance of the family.
- The Fong Lee Building is the newest addition to the museum complex. 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 wall on the side.
- The Moon Temple is the Wong Fat Tong Hall of the Yellow Buddha. It has a unique moon-shaped door and is above the Council Room.

We return to the Railroad Museum in Sacramento full of memories of the great people we have met and memories of the Chinese pioneers who helped build California. The tour leader is Bill George, who led CATS' "Follow the Trek of the Chinese Railroad Workers in the Sierra" tour in September 2018. Bill is a renowned historian, film maker, journalist, and author. Bill has many stories to tell and they are priceless!

Registration Form

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\$150 per person

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ # in your group: _____ x \$150 = \$ _____

Please make check payable to C.A.T.S. Send check and registration form to CATS, P.O. Box 1266, Grass Valley, CA 95945.
For information contact Jeannie at (530) 265-2990 or email: info@catsweb.org.