

2010 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Preservation and Rehabilitation of Historic Chinese Structures



Fiddletown's restored Chinese gambling hall (left) and general store

During the years of the California Gold Rush, the town of Fiddletown had one of the largest communities of Chinese workers and miners in the state. Though buildings associated with Chinese of the gold rush era were still present at the start of the 20th century, by the end of the century, most had been lost to weathering, disrepair, or demolition. Beginning in 2001, the Fiddletown Preservation Society of Fiddletown, California, worked to raise funds to preserve two of the community's historic buildings associated with town's Chinese history. The Gambling Hall, and General Store were constructed in approximately 1850 by Chinese immigrants. The two buildings, along with the Chew Kee Herb Shop and a rammed earth residential structure nearby, constitute a significant sub-district reflecting the role Chinese immigrants played during the gold rush era, and are contributing structures to Fiddletown's designation as California Historical Landmark No. xxx and listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Gambling Hall and General Store are owned by Amador County and managed by the Fiddletown Preservation Society under a long-term lease. The Society raised funds from private donations and small grants to supplement funds received from the California Heritage Fund. The project involved stabilizing the buildings and preserving historic materials and features while potential uses for the buildings were explored. Thanks to the efforts of the Society and community of Fiddletown, these two buildings will continue to serve for years to come as tangible reminders of an important era in the history of California.

Learn more about Fiddletown's efforts to preserve its history: <http://www.fiddletown.info/>