



An American Tour: 18



California's Volcano

This one's right in my own backyard, and I've never been there! Volcano is an unincorporated community in Amador County, California. The town sits at 2,200 feet above sea level and the current population is approximately 85. It is located just north of Pine Grove. The town is registered as California Historical Landmark #29. "Volcano has got to be one of the Mother Lode's most picturesque towns. The town is named for its setting in a bowl-shaped valley which early miners thought was caused by a volcano. The town dates back to the late 1850's and was originally nicknamed "Crater City". It is said that in 1849, one miner took out 8 thousand dollars worth of gold in a few days! Another got 28 pounds in a single pocket. In 1851, a post office was established and by April 1852 there were 300 houses, and by 1853 there were 11 stores, 6 hotels, 3 bakeries, and 3 saloons. In 1858, two mills with 8-stamps and six arrastres were in operation. Hydraulic operations began in 1855 and by 1867 most of the mining operations were idle. Since Volcano is not located on highway 49, it has escaped much of the commercialization that we see on 49, with many of its buildings dating back to the 1850's. Volcano is a must see!" [<http://www.ghosttownexplorers.org/california/volcano/volcano.htm>]

Although small, Volcano is a town of many "firsts": 1854 First debating society in California; 1854 First circulating library in California; 1855 First private schools in California; 1855 First private law school in California; 1856 First legal hanging in Amador County; 1860 First astronomical observatory in California; 1978 First solar still in California; 1854 First theater group in California. [<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

