

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

CALIFORNIA FICTION



[VISIT US](#)

California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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Are you writing a paper about a famous California author? Are you curious about how California gets portrayed in fiction? Maybe you're looking for inspiration for your own novel! Whatever the case, the [California History Section's](#) rich fiction collections can help! If you have any questions about these or other resources please feel free to [contact us](#).

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

DIGITIZED RESOURCES

Can't come to the library just yet? No worries! There are a number of online resources you can explore related to California literature!



[Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including portraits of California authors. You can see them on our catalog!



URL: <https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/>

Type in Refine Box: (Authors)



[Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our more fragile resources covering California literature. You can see them on Internet Archive!

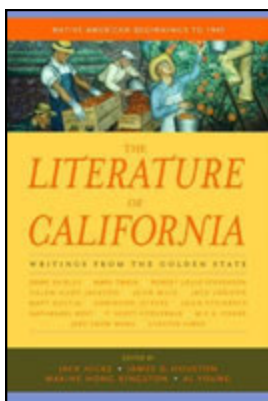


URL: <https://archive.org/>

Type in Search Box: (Literature) AND collection:(californiastatelibrary)

ANTHOLOGIES

Want to get a sense of California's many authors but don't have the time to read a full book? Try one of these anthologies! Filled with excerpts and short stories they provide a literary survey.

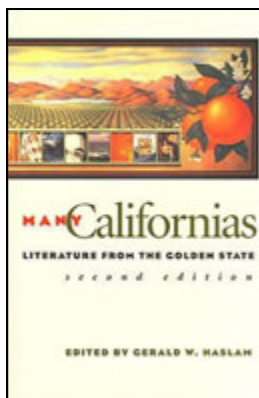


Hicks, J. (2000). [The literature of California](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.

A far-ranging, diverse and thorough anthology. In this volume you will find works by authors from prehistoric California all the way through to the 1940s.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001117543



Haslam, G. (1992). [Many Californias : Literature from the Golden State](#) (Western literature series). Reno: University of Nevada Press.

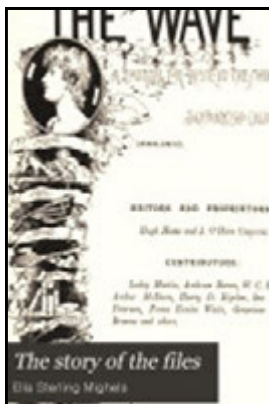
A wide ranging anthology that includes lesser-known writers as well as the more famous ones. This book takes a geographical approach to California's literature.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000584950

BIOGRAPHIES AND CRITICISM

Do you wonder why Gary Snyder writes about the environment?
Want to explore what impelled Helen Jackson to write *Ramona*?
Check out these biographies and literary critiques!

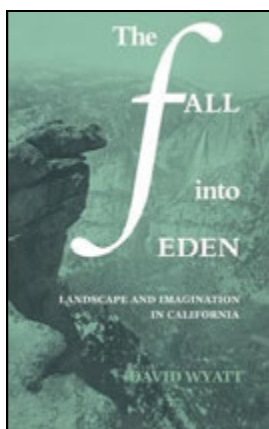


Mighels, E., & World's Columbian Exposition. (1982). [The story of the files : A review of Californian writers and literature](#). San Leandro, Calif.: Yosemite Collections.

An especially early survey and critique of California Literature. This book takes a topical approach to individuals the author often knew first-hand..



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000125089



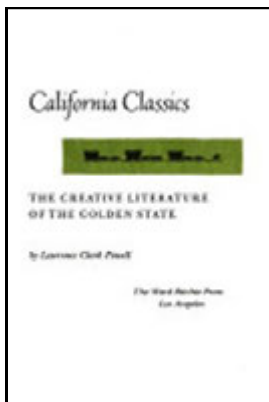
Wyatt, D. (1986). [The fall into Eden : Landscape and imagination in California](#) (Cambridge studies in American literature and culture). Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Location and environment affects California literature in myriad ways. This work, in surveying California's prominent authors, endeavors to expose its influence on their writings.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000419788

BIOGRAPHIES AND CRITICISM



Powell, L. (1982). [California classics : The creative literature of the Golden State : Essays on the books and their writers.](#) Santa Barbara: Capra Press.

A seminal survey of California authors and their lives, this frequently re-published book, covers over thirty prominent writers from Dana to Chandler.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000411483

PERIODICALS

Books and bibliographies are not the only way to learn more about California's authors. You can read also articles in magazines and journals!



California Writers' Club. (1912-). Bulletin. [Berkeley, Calif.] : The Club

Published under various titles from at least 1912, this periodical covers literary happenings first in the Bay Area and later on throughout California. It includes workshop notices, news about member publications and more!



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001370990



ZYZZYVA (1985-). San Francisco : Zyzzyva, Inc

A longstanding venue in which California authors can publish their short stories and poems, this publication boasts short stories from literary lights like Isabel Allende and William Saroyan.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000528059

SPECIALIZED COLLECTIONS

The California History Section has two sizable collections devoted to California fiction! If you are looking for an out-of-print novel about California, these would be good places to start.



Gary Strong Mystery Collection

Collected by former State Librarian, Gary Strong, this corpus of mystery and suspense stories covers both California-related and general publications from the 1970's forward, as well as a few mystery related periodicals!



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-b-0>

Type in Search Box: Gary Strong Mystery



California Fiction Collection

Want to find a book of fiction set in California? Check out our dedicated collection of fiction with titles dating from 1849 up through to the present!



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c-0>

Type in Subject Box: WCK = (CAFIC)

CATALOG GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

While many of our materials are online, even more are only in hard-copy. You can use the following resources to locate our books, articles, and manuscripts by and about California authors



[Catalog](#)

If you are looking for [images](#), [books](#) and [articles](#) on California authors, your best source is our [catalog](#).



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-a-0>

Type in Subject Box: (Authors OR Fiction)

Limit: By place or specific author



[California Information File II](#)

Sometimes the catalog doesn't provide as much detail as you might like. This is why we created the California Information File II. In this resource, you can find catalog records on individual articles, pamphlets and more.



URL: http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm

Type in Subject Box: Authors OR Fiction

For a narrower search: Add a place or specific author to your keyword search

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

California-born (or focused) authors not only have diverse origins, they cover a myriad of different topics. While these catalog links barely scrape their work, they are a good starting point.



Resources by Type:

[Images](#)

[Manuscripts](#)

[Periodicals](#)

Fiction by Subject:

[Agriculture](#)

[Business](#)

[Education](#)

[Environment](#)

[Folklore](#)

[Government](#)

[Horse Racing](#)

[Mining](#)

[Railroads](#)

[Sixties](#)

[Transportation](#)

[Water](#)

[Wine](#)

People:

[African Americans](#)

[Chinese Americans](#)

[Japanese Americans](#)

[Latin Americans](#)

[Native Americans](#)

WORKS BY SPECIFIC AUTHORS IN OUR CATALOG

Sometimes an author writes such an extraordinary book, he or she attains lasting fame. The following catalog links highlight the works of California literary luminaries like Twain and Sinclair.



[Atherton, Gertrude](#)
[Austin, Mary](#)
[Braverman, Kate](#)
[Brautigan, Richard](#)
[Bukowski, Charles](#)
[Cain, James](#)
[Chandler, Raymond](#)
[Clemens, Samuel](#)
[Dana, Richard](#)
[Didion, Joan](#)
[Duncan, Robert](#)
[Everson, William](#)
[Ferlinghetti, Lawrence](#)

[Ginsberg, Allen](#)
[Dashiell, Hammett](#)
[Harte, Bret](#)
[Haslam, Gerald](#)
[Houston, James](#)
[Huxley, Aldous](#)
[Jackson, Helen](#)
[Jeffers, Robinson](#)
[Kerouac, Jack](#)
[Lewis, Oscar](#)
[Lummis, Charles](#)
[MacDonald, Ross](#)
[McWilliams, Carey](#)
[Mailer, Norman](#)
[Miller, Henry](#)
[Miller, Joaquin](#)
[Milosz, Czeslaw](#)
[Norris, Frank](#)

[Powell, Lawrence](#)
[Rexroth, Kenneth](#)
[Rodriguez, Richard](#)
[Royce, Josiah](#)
[Sanchez, Thomas](#)
[Saroyan, William](#)
[Schulberg, Budd](#)
[Sinclair, Upton](#)
[Snyder, Gary](#)
[Stegner, Wallace](#)
[Steinbeck, John](#)

[Sterling, George](#)
[Stevenson, Robert](#)
[Waugh, Evelyn](#)
[Webb, Charles](#)
[West, Nathanael](#)
[White, Stewart](#)
[Wolfe, Tom](#)

COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Are you interested in fiction about a specific place in California?
Check out these literary gems, as sorted by county! For even
more California fiction, please search our catalog directly.



[Alameda](#)
[Amador](#)
[Butte](#)
[Calaveras](#)
[Contra Costa](#)
[El Dorado](#)
[Fresno](#)
[Humboldt](#)
[Kern](#)
[Kings](#)
[Los Angeles](#)
[Madera](#)

[Marin](#)
[Mariposa](#)
[Mendocino](#)
[Monterey](#)
[Napa](#)
[Nevada](#)
[Orange](#)
[Placer](#)
[Riverside](#)
[Sacramento](#)
[San Diego](#)
[San Francisco](#)
[San Joaquin](#)

[San Luis Obispo](#)
[San Mateo](#)
[Santa Barbara](#)
[Santa Clara](#)
[Santa Cruz](#)
[Sonoma](#)
[Trinity](#)
[Tulare](#)
[Yuba](#)

ON-SITE RESEARCH RESOURCES

Our collection predates computers and so do some of our access points! If you are in the library, be sure to check the following analog files for leads on more resources.



California Information File

In the library? Check the California Information File before you do anything else! This file indexes over 130 years of California articles, books, and manuscript collections related to California fiction.



Subject Headings:

1. Individual names
2. Literature



Photographic File

Sometimes a picture is worth a 1000 words and not all of our pictures are online. To check the rest of the collection search our picture file card catalog.



Subject Headings:

1. Portraits: Individual names

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about any information related to California fiction in the following files



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including fiction. You can check them for information on organizations, book signings, pamphlets and more.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians.



Postcard Files

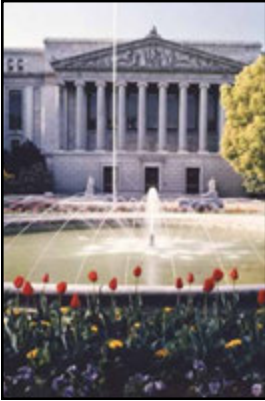
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images of famous California authors or locations popularized in their books. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians

OTHER PLACES TO LOOK

Of course the California History Section doesn't have everything, so we suggest that in addition to looking at our collections, you contact the following organizations



Other California State Library Sections

[Government Publications Section](#)

[Witkin Law Library](#)

[Sutro Library](#)

[General Information](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.library.ca.gov/gps/index.html>
 - http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/law_coll.html
 - http://www.library.ca.gov/about/sutro_main.html
 - http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/general_coll.html
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This guide is also available online at:
<http://www.library.ca.gov/calhist/researchguides.html>