RESEARCH GUIDES
CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICANS
Are you researching your Native American ancestors? Are you doing a class project on one of California’s tribes? Are you a member of a California tribe who wants to learn more about your history? Explore the role that California’s native peoples have played in our past in via California History Section’s rich collections!

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!
Can’t come to the library just yet? No worries! There are a number of online resources you can explore related to California’s native peoples!

**Digitized Images**

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including images related to California’s first residents. You can see them on our catalog!

- **Type in Search Box:** (Indian* OR Native American*) AND California
- **Limit to:** Picture Catalog

**Digitized Publications**

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

- **URL:** [https://archive.org/](https://archive.org/)
- **Type in Search Box:** (Indian* OR (“Native American”)) AND collection:
  (californiastatelibrary)

**Digitized Audio**

Do you want to listen to a Native American story in its original language? This resource has digitized the tapes from the California Indian Library Collection and others

- **URL:** [http://cla.berkeley.edu/](http://cla.berkeley.edu/)
Unsure about where to start? Consult a book! These classic texts written by anthropologists and journalists alike are still referred to by scholars in Native American studies today.


Published as part of a larger survey of the native peoples of North American, this collection of essays details the cultures and histories of California’s many tribes.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
**Search by:** Title and/or author


A topical, rather than tribally based survey, this work draws on the scholarship of many prominent anthropologists to document general trends in the beliefs and lifestyles of California Indians.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
**Search by:** Title and/or author

Another early look at native Californian culture, this anthropological survey covers the lifestyle and beliefs of various tribal groupings in California using data from early field-work as well as older eyewitness accounts.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author


First written in the 1870’s this eyewitness survey of California native cultures and tribal groups is still consulted by anthropologists and historians today.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author
Modern Scholarship

Scholarship like many things, changes over time. For a current understanding of Native American history you might consult these books.


This thorough work meticulously documents known instances of white violence towards California natives between 1846 and 1873. As such it’s useful both as a guide to early documentation and as a history of this especially fraught period of California history.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author


This book’s careful documentation of ongoing Native Californian land management practices when combined with its references to historically documented instances of the same, provides a clear picture both of change and continuity in California Indian cultures.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author
Sometimes what you really need is a guide to where you can locate various primary sources. That is where a good bibliography comes in!


This exhaustive survey of California repositories lists the holdings of each archive and museum related to Native American research. For a serious researcher looking for the locations of primary sources, this is an excellent starting point.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author
Books and bibliographies are not the only way to learn more about California’s Native Americans. You can read also articles in magazines and journals!

**Periodicals**

**News from Native California** (1987-). Berkeley: Heyday Books

One of the main modern publications by and for California Native Americans, this magazine contains both news about current events and documentation on California Indian history.


A newsletter out of Marin County, this periodical highlights how one group not only preserves but educates the public about tribal culture, specifically Miwok culture.
Researching your Native American ancestors? Vital statistics are always a good place to start! Using these resources you can find your ancestor’s age, occupation, tribal affiliation and more.

**Special Censuses**

Conducted between 1900 and 1928, these special censuses record, at a minimum, the number of individuals within each tribe. The later 1928 census goes into further detail, including extensive personal information.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

**Type in Search Box:** (Indians of North America California Census)

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**Dawes Rolls**

One of the definitive resources for researching Native Americans from the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole tribes, this resource is in the State Library’s Government Documents Collection.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

**Search by:** Title
Specialized Archival Resources

In addition to specialized censuses there are many other archival resources that focus specifically on Native American history. Here are some of the most useful collections at the State Library.

California Indian Library Collection

Are you looking for an old anthropology article or a recording of a traditional song? Check out this collection put together by UC Berkeley, and housed at the State Library! Specialized research guides for these items are available in the library and many of the language recordings are also available online.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title

Sherman Institute Records

Did your Native American ancestor attend an off-reservation boarding school for their education? They might have gone to the Sherman Institute. You can use our collection of yearbooks, registers and newsletters to find out more about their life there.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title
Specialized Archival Resources

American History and culture research studies by the National Park Service

A set of reports on archaeology projects conducted between the 1930’s and 1980’s, this record set contains records of more than 50 Native American heritage site excavations on National Park land.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title

Bureau of Indian Affairs Records

This document set is of particular interest to anyone researching early treaties between California tribes and the government.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title

Constance DuBois Papers

An individual who worked primarily with Native Americans in Southern California, this microfilmed collection contains Constance DuBois’ research notes and manuscript drafts.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title
Merriam Hart Papers

A microfilmed collection of research notes compiled by renowned anthropologist, Merriam Hart, this collection contains field notes, newspaper clippings and more.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title

Indian Wars of the West and frontier army life, 1862-1898

This resource provides first-hand accounts of wars with Native Americans throughout the west including several related to conflicts in California.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title

Western Americana: Frontier History of the Trans-Mississippi West

This set of primary source documents contains many accounts of encounters between newcomers and California’s native population as well as other encounters throughout the west.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
While many of our materials are online, even more are only in hard-copy. You can use the following resources to learn about our books, articles, and manuscripts on California Indians.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for images, books and articles on California Indians, your best source is our catalog.

*URL:* https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?
vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&lang=en&sortby=rank

*Type in Search Box:* ( ( Indian* ) OR ( Native American* ) )

*Limit:* By place or specific tribe

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**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:* Indian* OR Native Americans

*For a narrower search:* Add a place or specific tribe to your keyword search
California Native Americans contribute in a myriad of ways to this state. While these catalog links barely scrape the surface of this history and the materials on it, they are a good starting point.

**Language Resources:**
- **General**
- **Athapascan**
- **Algonquian**
- **Hokan**
- **Penutian**
- **Uto-Aztecan**
- **Yukian**

**Subject-Specific Resources in Our Catalog**

**Type**
- Maps
- Books
- Images
- Manuscripts
- Newspapers
- Periodicals
- Statistics

**Subject**
- Agriculture
- Art
- Birds
- Business
- Cooking
- Education
- Environment
- Festivals
- Fiction
- Fish
- Geology
- Highways
- Land
- Legislature
- Migration
- Mining
- Music
- Poetry
- Politics
- Shipping
- Railroads
- Religion
- Vitals
- Water
- Wildlife
- Women
GROUP-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Researching a tribe? You can get started by using these links to explore resources on various California people groups. For a specific band, please search the catalog directly.
Researching Native American history in a specific region? While these catalog links don’t list all that the California History Section has, they are a good starting point.
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 Indians.

Subject Headings:
1. Indians (Multiple subheadings)
2. Indians (By location)
3. Indians (By tribe)

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.

Subject Headings:
1. Indians (Includes individuals by name)
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 Native Americans in the following files.

Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including Native Americans. You can check them for information on organizations, tribes, event pamphlets and more.

Subject Headings: Check with librarians.

Postcard Files

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images of Native Americans. 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/government-publications/
- http://www.library.ca.gov/law/
- http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/
- https://www.library.ca.gov/services

Other Government Agencies

California State Archives
California State Parks
Native American Heritage Commission
U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs
Local and tribal California libraries or archives

URLs:
- http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/
- https://www.parks.ca.gov/
- http://nahc.ca.gov/
- https://www.bia.gov/
California State Library
California History Section

California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
Sacramento CA 95814

Phone: (916) 654-0176
E-mail: cshist@library.ca.gov
Hours: 9:30-4 Monday-Friday

This guide is also available online at:
http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/