

# CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

## RESEARCH GUIDES

OIL IN CALIFORNIA



### [VISIT US](#)

*California History Section*

*900 N Street Room 200*

*9:30-4 Monday-Friday*

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Do you drive a gas powered car? Did you turn on a light switch this morning? You may rely on California's natural gas and oil! Research the history of California's "black gold," from the development of this industry, to oil yields, to environmental impacts via the [California History Section's](#) rich collections!

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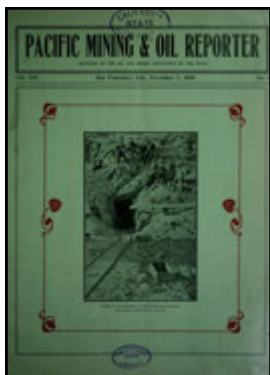
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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

## DIGITIZED RESOURCES

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

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### [Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our fragile oil industry publications. You can see them on Internet Archive!



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

**Type in Search Box:** (Oil OR Petroleum OR ( Natural Gas ) OR Fuel )  
**AND collection:**(californiastatelibrary)



### [Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a small portion of our oil and natural gas industry images and placed them in our online catalog. Check them out and remember that we have a lot more in the library.



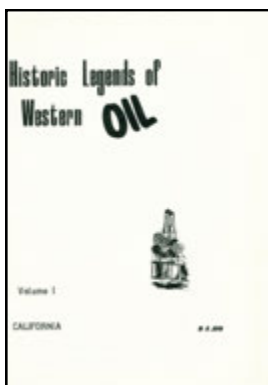
**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c-0&local\\_base=images](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c-0&local_base=images)

**Type in Search Box:** (Oil OR Petroleum OR ( Natural Gas ) OR Fuel ) NOT Painting

## GENERAL REFERENCES

Unsure about where to start? Consult a book! If you are interested in the history of California's fuel industry, these items will point you in the right direction.

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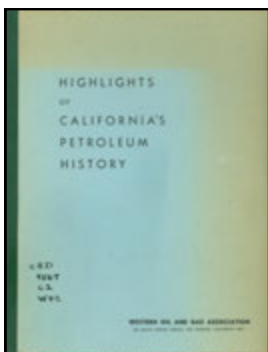


Cook, F. (1976). [Historic legends of Western oil : Volume 1, California.](#) Amarillo, Tex.: P and H.

This book provides a general overview of oil history in the West. Volume 1 focuses specifically on California.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000162824](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000162824)



Western Oil Gas Association. (1965). [Highlights of California's petroleum history.](#) Los Angeles.

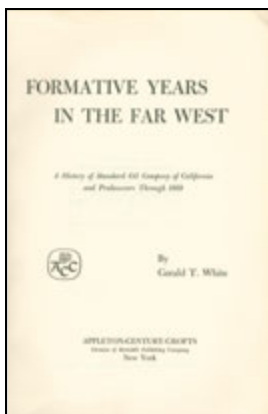
Sometimes, all you really need is a timeline of events. This book provides that for the history of oil in California from 1855-1964.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000155651](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000155651)

## GENERAL REFERENCES

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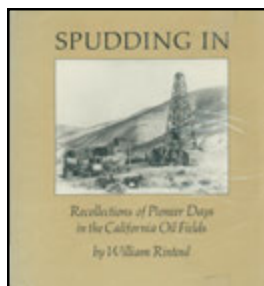


**White, G. (1962). [Formative years in the Far West; a history of Standard Oil Company of California and predecessors through 1919.](#) New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.**

Tracing the history of commercial oil production in California? This book tracks the history of the industry giant, Standard Oil Company.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000292660](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000292660)



**Rintoul, W. (1976). [Spudding in: Recollections of pioneer days in the California oil fields.](#) San Francisco: California Historical Society.**

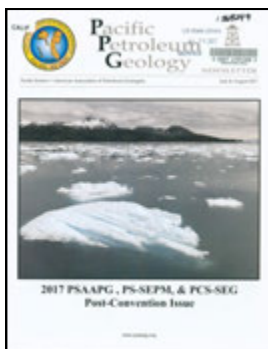
Filled with quotes from first-person accounts, this book tracks the history of the California oil industry from hand-dug wells to off-shore drilling.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000010871](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000010871)

## OIL PERIODICALS

Interested in real-time industry information, like what the crude oil yield was like in 1974? Check these trade publications for statistics, drilling trends and more.

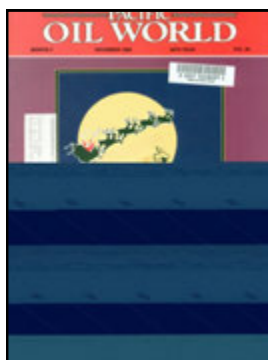


**American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Pacific Section. (1947-).** [Pacific Petroleum Geologist Newsletter.](#)

Dating back to the late '40's, this magazine by and for petroleum geologists indexes various scholarly publications, and provides a space for personal updates and short articles about the industry.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000151412](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000151412)

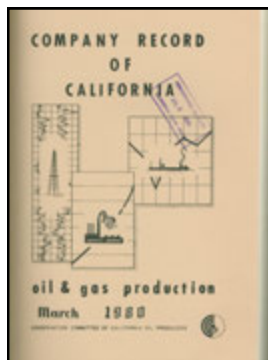


**Petroleum Publishers, inc. (1944-)** [Pacific Oil World.](#)

This publication provides information about the various oil wells dug or re-opened in California as well as real-time updates on possible oil industry legislation or regulation.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000513982](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000513982)



**Conservation Committee of California Oil Producers. (1956-).** [Company record of California oil & gas production.](#)

Dating back to the '50's under various titles this publication lists oil and gas production as tracked by the Conservation Committee of California Oil Producers, using detailed charts.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000148020](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000148020)

## OIL MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

In addition to books and periodicals there are many archival resources that focus on California's fossil fuels industry history. Here are some relevant collections at the State Library.

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**Gillett, J., et. al. (1880). [James Norris Gillett Collection, 1880-1971.](#)**

A lawyer who handled oil leases and later a lobbyist for the oil industry, the Gillett collection contains extensive information about the early California oil industry.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D000551967](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000551967)

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**Shaffrath, M., et. al. (1903). [Max Shaffrath Coalinga correspondence, 1903-1930.](#)**

The Max Shaffrath collection is primarily a collection of family letters. However, many of them deal with the petroleum business in Fresno County, of which Shaffrath was a part.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D001443692](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001443692)

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**[Bolsa Oil Lease documents, 1941-1999.](#)  
(1941).**

A collection of oil leases for Bolsa Chica Beach; this collection contains documentation for the years 1941-1999.



**URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl\\_term=SYS%3D001464735](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001464735)

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## 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 learn about our books, articles, and manuscripts on oil and petroleum.

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### Catalog

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



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

**Type in Subject Box:** Oil OR Petroleum OR ( Natural Gas ) OR Fuel

**Limit:** By desired material type

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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 information about individual petroleum articles and more!



**URL:** [http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext\\_html/QueryCalinfo.htm](http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm)

**Type in Subject Box:** Oil OR Petroleum OR Natural Gas OR Fuel

**For a narrower search:** Add a place to your keyword search

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## SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

California's fossil fuel industry has had far-ranging effects, not only on transportation but on politics, agriculture and more! Explore our subject specific resources via these catalog links!



### Type

- [Images](#)
- [Manuscripts](#)
- [Maps](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Periodicals](#)
- [Statistics](#)

### Subject

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Fiction](#)
- [Geology](#)
- [Mining](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Railroads](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Water](#)
- [Wildlife](#)

### People

- [Vital Statistics](#)
- [Italian Americans](#)
- [Latin Americans](#)

## COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Curious about fossil fuel production or effects in a specific county? While these catalog links don't list all of what the California History Section has, they are a good start.



## 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 oil industry articles, books, and manuscript collections.



#### Subject Headings:

1. Petroleum (various subdivisions)
2. Land: Oil
3. Gas: Natural



### Picture 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 photographic card catalog.



#### Subject Headings:

1. Petroleum (various subdivisions)



### Map Files

Our map files contain a number of maps referring to oil drilling location images. Most are not online but a large number are listed in our card file.



#### Subject Headings:

1. Check by location

## OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about any oil industry information contained in the following files

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### Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including oil, gas and related industries. You can check them for information on oil companies and general industry information.



**Subject Headings:** Check with librarians.

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### Postcard Files

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of oil drilling images. Most are not online.



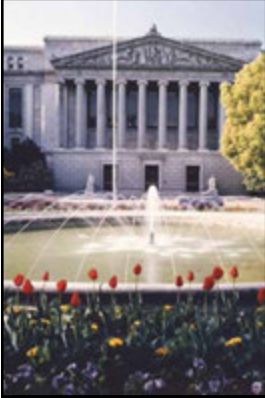
**Subject Headings:** Check with librarians

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## 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

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### Other California State Library Sections

[Government Publications Section](#)

[Witkin Law Library](#)

[Sutro Library](#)

[General Information](#)



- <http://www.library.ca.gov/gps/index.html>
- [http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/law\\_coll.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/law_coll.html)
- [http://www.library.ca.gov/about/sutro\\_main.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/about/sutro_main.html)
- [http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/general\\_coll.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/general_coll.html)



### Government Agencies

[California State Archives](#)

[California Department of Conservation](#)

[California State Lands Commission](#)

[US Bureau of Land Management](#)

[US Geological Survey](#)

[US Department of the Interior](#)



- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
- <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/>
- <http://slc.ca.gov/>
- <https://www.blm.gov/>
- <https://www.usgs.gov/>
- <https://www.doi.gov/>

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*California History Section*  
900 N Street Room 200  
Sacramento CA 95814

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

This guide is also available online at:  
<http://www.library.ca.gov/calhist/researchguides.html>