

# CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

## RESEARCH GUIDES

SELECTED GENEALOGY RESOURCES



### [VISIT US](#)

*California History Room  
900 N Street Room 200  
9:30-4 Monday-Friday*

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Do you love family history? Do you have California ancestors? Come see us! We have a premier collection of California history and genealogy materials. The following items are just a few of the resources we have for genealogists in the [California History Section](#). If you have any questions on these resources or our other items, please feel free to [contact us](#).

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

## ONLINE RESEARCH

Can't come to the library just yet? Trying to do genealogy research on your California ancestors? A number of our resources are available to remote researchers in alternative formats.

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### [Remote Access](#)

If you're curious about which of our indexes you can access remotely, this guide will give you detailed information about which major indexes are available on microfilm or microfiche or were digitized and how to access them.



**URL:** <http://www.library.ca.gov/Content/pdf/californiaHistory/IndexResearch.pdf>



### [Digitized Images](#)

Looking for family portraits? Check our images! We have digitized a small portion of our photograph collection for your viewing and research.



**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 Subject Box:** Family member name

## ONLINE RESEARCH

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### [Minorities Research](#)

If you're researching an ancestor from a historically marginalized groups; in addition to the sources mentioned, these guides will point you to specific resources for your African American, Native American and even female ancestors. 



**URL:** <http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>

**Check under:**

1. Genealogy guides
- 



### [Ancestors by County](#)

Do you have roots in a specific California county or city? Our location-based guides give detailed information about a selected California counties.



**URL:** <http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>

**Check under:**

1. Location Specific Guides
- 



### [Subscription Databases](#)

Are you trying to get on Ancestry or HeritageQuest? Come into the library? We offer free access to these databases through our WiFi.



**URL:** <http://www.library.ca.gov/services/online-resources/>

**Check under:**

1. Genealogy and History
-

## REMOTE RESEARCH SERVICES

We work hard to facilitate access to materials that have not yet been digitized. Two of our main options are inter-library loan and our copying services.

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### Inter-Library Loan

Many of our materials are available to remote researchers via inter-library loan.

If you have any questions about this process please [contact us](#).



**URL:** <https://askstatelibrary.libraryresearch.info/ref100.aspx?key=Ref>



### Copying Services

Would you like a copy of one of our items? Our basic copying services include photocopies and low-resolution scans of many items. If you have any questions about this process please see our website and [contact us](#).



**URL:** <https://askstatelibrary.libraryresearch.info/ref100.aspx?key=Ref>

## GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

Doing genealogy research on your California ancestors? You can use these access points to find specific indexes, collections and even manuscripts related to your ancestors!



### [Catalog](#)

If you're looking for information on general California genealogy, whether how-to's, indexes or periodicals, your best source is our [catalog](#).



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

#### **Type in Subject Box:**

1. Genealogy OR Indexes OR Births OR Registers
2. Desired last name

**Limit:** By desired material type or location



### [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, a continuation of the analog California Information File. In this resource, you can find references to periodical articles on genealogy 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:**

1. Genealogy OR Indexes OR Births OR Registers
2. Desired last name

## GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

Curious about where your ancestor lived? Check these resources to learn not only where someone lived but their occupation too!

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### [City Directories](#)

An invaluable resource for anyone researching California history from 1850 forward, city directories will help you pinpoint who lived where, what they did and if they owned their own home. You can see what cities and dates we have by using our online databases.



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

**Type in Search Box:** Name of city your ancestor lived in

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### [Telephone Directories](#)

Can't find you ancestor in the city directories? Check our telephone book collection. Dating from 1900 onwards, you can learn residence information from this resource. You can see what cities and dates we have by using our online databases.



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

**Type in Search Box:** Name of city your ancestor lived in

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## ON-SITE RESEARCH RESOURCES

Are you looking for an image of your early California ancestors?  
How about a periodical article about them? Then check out  
these resources!



### California Information File

Check the California Information File indexes to search over 130 years of California articles, books, and manuscript collections which may include information on your ancestors. If you can't come to the library, check our [remote access guide](#) for more options.



#### Subject Headings:

1. Name



### Images

Looking for an image of one of your California ancestors? Check our image collection. We have portraits of both prominent and obscure Californians from the state's inception forward.



#### Subject headings for paper file:

1. Portrait: Name

#### Online continuation of file:

- **URL:** [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-e-0&local\\_base=images](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-e-0&local_base=images)
- **Type is search box:** Individual name



### Manuscripts

Looking for an ancestral letter? How about a deed? Check our manuscript collections! We have been collecting the papers of Californians since the library began in 1850.



**URL:** <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/institutions/California+State+Library::California+History+Room>

**Type in Search Box:** Keyword search by name or topic

## FEATURED INDEXES & VITAL RECORDS

Want to find almost forgotten references to specific events and people? Check out these hidden but helpful access points.



### **Biographical Card File**

Was your ancestor a California artist, author, official or other local notable? Check this file for vital statistics and sometimes short biographies.



**Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 34-39](#)
3. Ancestry.com (See [Remote Access Guide](#))



### **Biographical Information File**

Want more information about a notable Californian? Check our biographical files, these include newspaper clippings, letters and sometimes even short biographies about various Californians.



**Access:**

1. In-house paper file

**Search for available resources:**

- California Information File: By Name
- [California Information File II: By Name](#)



### **Mortuary Records, 1849-1900**

Do you need records on individuals who died in Sacramento County? Check this set of mortuary records for further information.



**Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 1-13](#)

## FEATURED INDEXES & VITAL RECORDS

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### **Naturalization Records**

Looking for an immigrant who settled in Northern California? Check this index to the Northern District Court naturalization records!



**Access:**

1. In-House use
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 2407 \(165 reels\)](#)



### **Native Daughters of the Golden West Pioneer Roster**

Looking for an early California settler? Check out this multi-volume set of vital records collected and preserved by the Native Daughter's of the Golden West.



**Access:**

1. In-House use: [Microfilm 278](#)



### **Pioneer Card File**

Do you have an ancestor who arrived in California prior to 1860? Check this file for basic vital statistics supplied by the pioneers themselves or their descendants!



**Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 40-49](#)
3. Ancestry.com (See [Remote Access Guide](#))

## FEATURED INDEXES & VITAL RECORDS

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### **San Francisco Death Index, 1848-1863**

Looking for early deaths in San Francisco? Check this file! You can find recorded deaths from the Gold Rush era in this resource.



#### **Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 29-34](#)



### **[San Francisco Newspapers Index](#)**

Did your ancestors live in San Francisco between 1904 and 1949? Check this resource for articles likely to include mentions of your family. If you can't come to the library to use the file, check our [remote access guide](#) for more options.



#### **Subject Headings:**

1. Name



### **[San Francisco Chronicle Index](#)**

A continuation of the San Francisco Newspapers Index, this index covers articles published by the Chronicle through 1980. While best for Bay Area residents, this record also provides information on other Californians. If you can't come to the library to use the file, check our [remote access guide](#) for more options.



#### **Subject Headings:**

1. Name

## FEATURED INDEXES & VITAL RECORDS

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### **Vital Statistics Index, 1900-1951**

Looking for Sacramento county births and deaths after 1900? This index will point you to the information you need.



**Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 14-23](#)



### **Voter Registrations, 1867 & 1872**

If you want further information on a man residing in Sacramento county in the 1860's and '70's, this record set might shed light on his life and political affiliation.



**Access:**

1. In-House paper file
2. Interlibrary Loan: [Microfilm 734 reels 23-29](#)

## GOVERNMENT VITAL RECORDS

Do the genealogy databases overwhelm you? Search the original documents! We have a variety of basic government vital statistics here at the library. For information on how to use the censuses, check our specialized [state census](#) and [federal census guides](#).



U.S. Census			
Year	Print Index	Soundex	Special schedules
<a href="#">1850</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>
<a href="#">1860</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>
<a href="#">1870</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>
<a href="#">1880</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
1890	Original destroyed in fire		
<a href="#">1900</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No
<a href="#">1910</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No
<a href="#">1920</a>	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No
<a href="#">1930</a>	No	No	No



State Vital Record Indexes	
California	Nevada
<a href="#">Marriage Index</a> (1949-1986)	<a href="#">Marriage Index</a> (1968-2003)
<a href="#">Divorce Index</a> (1966-1984)	<a href="#">Divorce Index</a> (1968-2004)
<a href="#">Great Registers of Voters</a> (1866-1898 & 1900-1944)	
<a href="#">Death Index</a> (1905-1995)	
<a href="#">State Census</a> (1852)	

## IMMIGRATION & EMIGRATION RECORDS

Most people's ancestors come from somewhere! Research your family's arrival in California using our emigration and immigration resources. You can also consult our specialized [immigration research guide](#).

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### Ship and Border Records

Did your ancestors come to California by ship or cross the U.S.-Mexican border to get here? They might be listed in one of the following federal and local record sets.



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

**Type in Subject Box:**

1. ( Ship\* lists ) OR ( Immigration naturalization archives )
- 



### Naturalization Records

Did your immigrant ancestors apply for naturalization in California? They might be listed in our indexes and records from federal and local courts.



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

**Type in Subject Box:**

1. Naturalization AND ( records OR indexes )
- 



### Overland Travel Records

Did your family cross the United States to California via wagon train or railroad? These records might be able to help you.



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

**Type in Search Box:**

( WSU = ( overland OR railroad\* ) OR WRD = ( wagon ) ) AND ( WSU = ( passenger lists ) OR WTI = ( lists ) OR WSU = ( registers ) )

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
COUNTY HISTORIES

Filled with information about California residents of the past, these publications for both the [entire state](#) and for individual counties provide biographies and more!

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
DAR PUBLICATIONS

Our Daughters of the American Revolution materials, in addition to holding a number of [statewide resources](#), cover counties in depth. For more information, consult the DAR publications index on top of the reference shelves.

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
LAND AND LEGAL RECORDS

In addition to our collections of indexes, our archives contain a number of legal documents and land records that genealogists can use to find information about their relatives! These hyperlinks list our holdings by county.

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
MISCELLANEOUS INDEXES

In addition to collecting published documents, the library has a number of publications by local groups and individuals that offer genealogical information at the [state](#) and county level.

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
NEWSPAPERS

Looking for an obituary? Check our newspaper collection! We have newspapers for every county in California. Some are even [indexed!](#)

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COLLECTIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS  
SCHOOL RECORDS

Need school records? Our collection of school yearbooks and periodicals might be able to help. While we don't have records from every California school. We just might have one from a school your ancestor attended.

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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/government-publications/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/law/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/services>



### **Government Agencies**

[California State Archives](#)  
[Center for Health Statistics and Informatics](#)

County Registrars and Recordors



- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHSI/Pages/Program-Landing1.aspx>

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CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

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Hours: 9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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