

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICANS



[VISIT US](#)

California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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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!

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'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!



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-a-0&local_base=images

Type in Subject Box: (Indian* OR Native American*) AND California



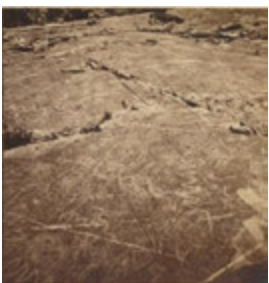
[Digitized Publications](#)

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/>

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/>

SEMINAL WORKS

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.



Heizer, R. (1978). [California](#) (Handbook of North American Indians ; v.8). Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000127424



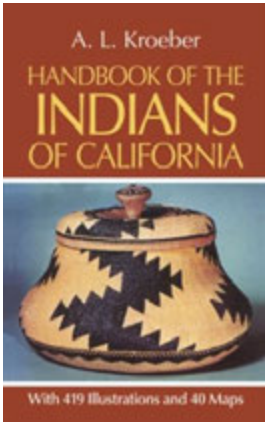
Heizer, R., & Whipple, M. (1971). [The California Indians : A source book](#) (2d ed., rev. and enl. ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000441447

SEMINAL WORKS

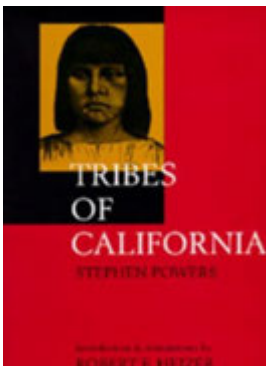


Kroeber, A. (1953). [Handbook of the Indians of California](#). Berkeley, Calif.: California Book Company.

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000311452



Powers, S. (1976). [Tribes of California](#) (Contributions to North American ethnology ; v. 3). Berkeley: University of California Press.

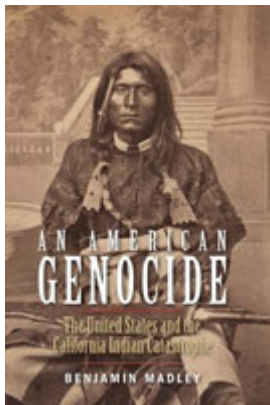
First written in the 1870's this eyewitness survey of California native cultures and tribal groups is still consulted by anthropologists and historians today.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000011077

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

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

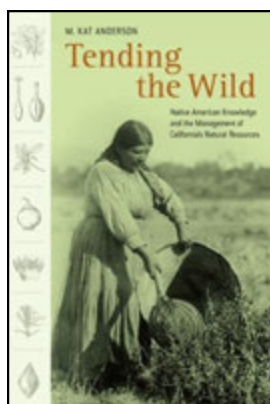


Madley, B. (2016). [An American genocide : The United States and the California Indian catastrophe, 1846-1873](#) (Lamar series in western history).

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001572372



Anderson, K. (2005). [Tending the wild : Native American knowledge and the management of California's natural resources](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001250354

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Sometimes what you really need is a guide to where you can locate various primary sources. That is where a good bibliography comes in!



Vane, S., Bean, L., & California Indian Library Collections. (1990). [California Indians, primary resources : A guide to manuscripts, artifacts, documents, serials, music, and illustrations](#) (Rev. ed., Ballena Press anthropological papers. no. 36). Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press.

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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000542905

PERIODICALS

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!



[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.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000146787



[The Acorn](#) (1973-2015). Novato: Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin

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.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001374571

NATIVE AMERICAN VITAL STATISTICS

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

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



[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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D00095552

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

Type in Search Box: WPU = (California Indian Library Collection*)



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

Type in Subject Box: Sherman Institute
Riverside Calif

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

Type in Subject Box: wti = (american history culture research) AND wsu = (indians california)



[Bureau of Indian Affairs Records](#)

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



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001412415



[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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001246870

SPECIALIZED ARCHIVAL RESOURCES



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

Type in Subject Box: wti = (Indian Wars of the West army life) AND wsu = (indians wars)



[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: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001412364



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

Type in Search Box: wti = (Western Americana) AND wsu = (indians california)

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 California Indians



[Catalog](#)

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



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

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

Limit: By place or specific tribe



[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

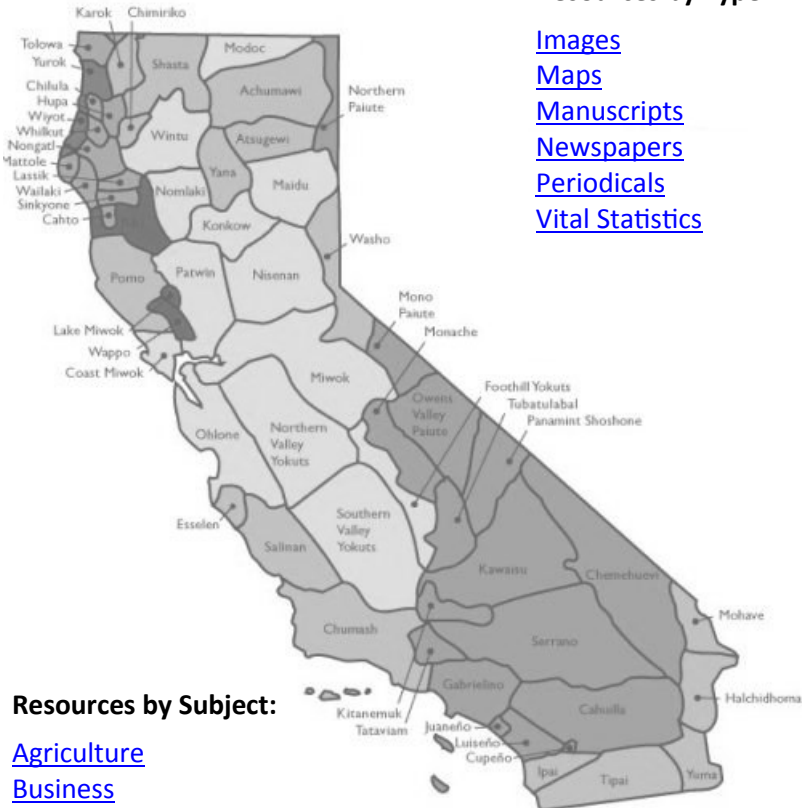
For a narrower search: Add a place or specific tribe to your keyword search

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

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.

Resources by Type:

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



Resources by Subject:

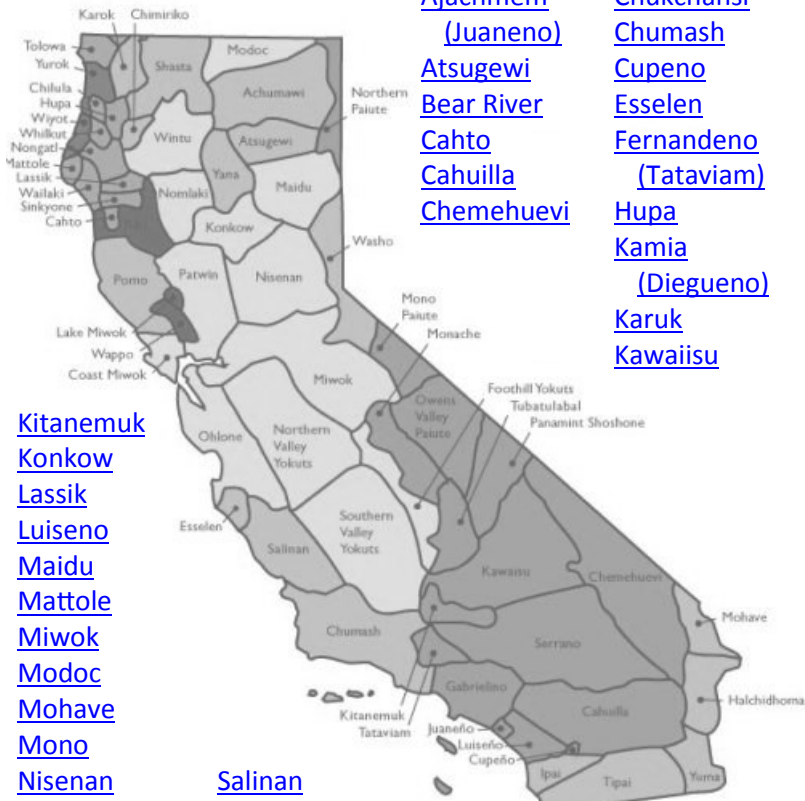
[Agriculture](#)
[Business](#)
[Education](#)
[Environment](#)
[Gold Rush](#)
[Politics](#)
[Sixties Protests](#)
[Slavery](#)
[Traditions and Beliefs](#)
[Water](#)

Language Resources:

[General](#)
[Athapaskan](#)
[Algonquian](#)
[Hokan](#)
[Penutian](#)
[Uto-Aztec](#)
[Yukian](#)

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.

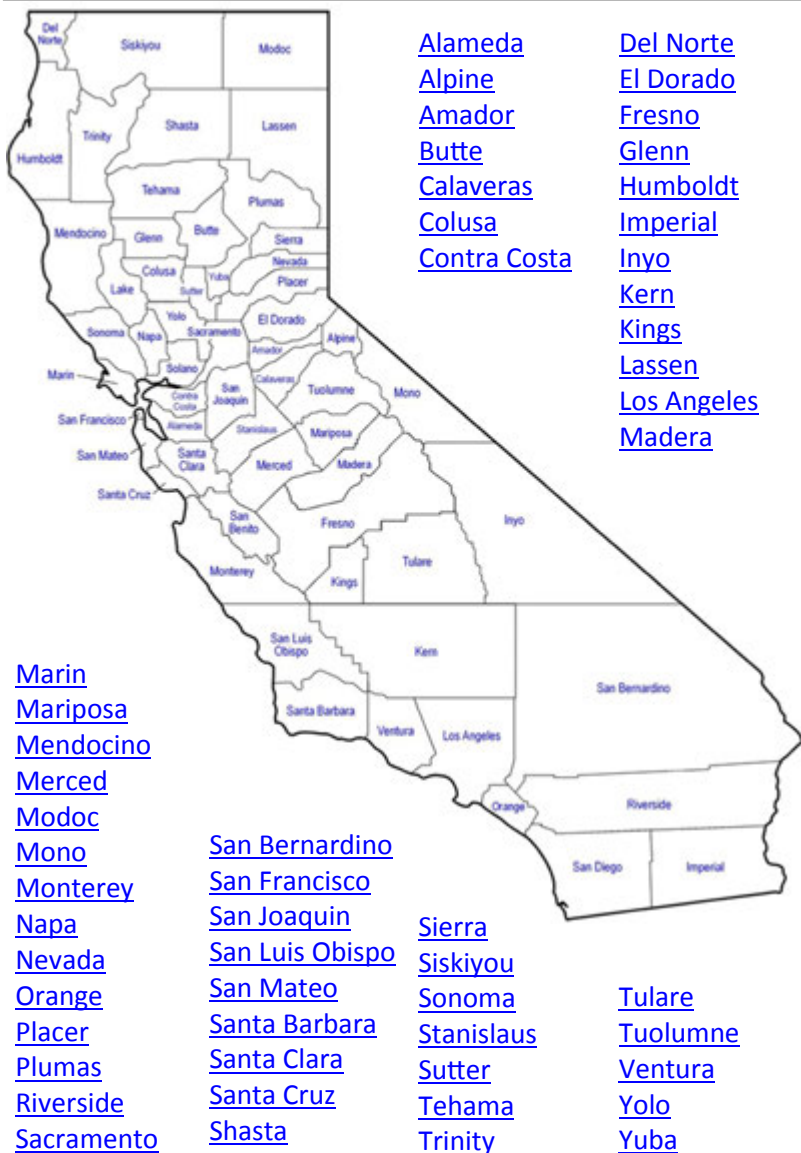


The map shows the geographical distribution of various Native California tribes. Labels include Karok, Chimiriko, Modoc, Achumawi, Northern Paiute, Tolowa, Yurok, Shasta, Wintu, Atsugewi, Chilula, Hupa, Wiyot, Whilkut, Nongat, Mattole, Lassik, Wailaki, Sinkiyone, Cahto, Yana, Maidu, Konkow, Washo, Patwin, Nisenan, Mono Paiute, Monache, Lake Miwok, Wappo, Coast Miwok, Miwok, Owens Valley Paiute, Foothill Yokuts, Tabatulabal, Panamint Shoshone, Ohlone, Northern Valley Yokuts, Southern Valley Yokuts, Esselen, Salinan, Kawanisu, Chemehuevi, Chumash, Serrano, Mohave, Kitanemuk, Tataviam, Gabrielino, Juaneño, Luiseno, Cupeno, Ipai, Tapai, Yuma, and Halchidhoma.

<p>Kitanemuk</p> <p>Konkow</p> <p>Lassik</p> <p>Luiseno</p> <p>Maidu</p> <p>Mattole</p> <p>Miwok</p> <p>Modoc</p> <p>Mohave</p> <p>Mono</p> <p>Nisenan</p> <p>Nomlaki</p> <p>Nongatl</p> <p>Ohlone</p> <p>Paiute</p> <p>Patwin</p> <p>Pomo</p> <p>Quechan</p> <p>(Yuma)</p>	<p>Salinan</p> <p>Serrano</p> <p>Shasta</p> <p>Shoshone</p> <p>Sinkiyone</p> <p>Tachi</p> <p>Tolowa</p> <p>Tongva</p> <p>(Gabrieleno)</p>
<p>Achumawi</p> <p>Ajachmem</p> <p>(Juaneno)</p> <p>Atsugewi</p> <p>Bear River</p> <p>Cahto</p> <p>Cahuilla</p> <p>Chemehuevi</p>	<p>Chilula</p> <p>Chukchansi</p> <p>Chumash</p> <p>Cupeno</p> <p>Esselen</p> <p>Fernandeno</p> <p>(Tataviam)</p> <p>Hupa</p> <p>Kamia</p> <p>(Diegueno)</p> <p>Karuk</p> <p>Kawaisu</p>
<p>Tsnungwe</p> <p>Chimariko</p> <p>Tubatulabal</p> <p>Wailaki</p> <p>Wappo</p> <p>Washoe</p> <p>Whilkut</p>	<p>Wintu</p> <p>Wiyot</p> <p>Yana (Yahi)</p> <p>Yokuts</p> <p>Yuki</p> <p>Yurok</p>

COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

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

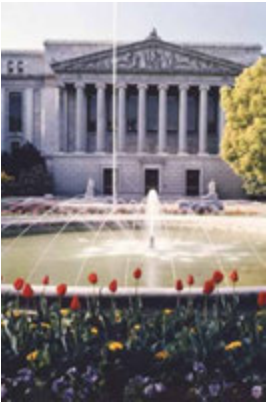
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images of Native Americans. Most are not online.



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/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



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/>



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