

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



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California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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Organized in 1866, Kern County had a population of 878,744 people as of 2017. Though typically known for its oil wells, there is more to this region than just industry. Kern is also the home of one of the Southern Pacific Railroad's major engineering feats, the Tehachapi Loop, as well as a reserve for California's state tortoise. Several prominent early explorers also passed through this region as did the Butterfield Stage route and the borax mule teams. If you are looking for exciting local history resources in the [California History Section's](#) rich collections, then check out what we have for this county!

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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 Kern County!



[Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our more fragile publications. You can now see documents related to Kern County on Internet Archive!



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

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

Select Option: "Search Full Text of Books"



[Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including images related to Kern County. You can see them on Calisphere!



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

Type in Search Box: ("Kern County")

DIGITIZED RESOURCES



[California State Association of Counties](#)

Like Wikipedia but locally grown, this government website will provide basic information about Kern County.



URL: <http://www.counties.org/county-websites-profile-information>



[County Website](#)

Want to learn about what Kern County residents have to say for themselves? Check out the county government's website!



URL: <https://www.kerncounty.com/>

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 Kern County resources.



Catalog

If you are looking for Kern County materials, your best source is our [catalog](#). You can do a general search on the catalog but also be sure to check out our specialized resources on page 8 of this research guide!



URL: <https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?>

[vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&lang=en&sortby=rank](#)

Type in Subject Box: (Kern)



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, successor to the analog California Information File I. In this resource, you can find indexing to individual articles, as well as Kern County deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more!



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

Type in Search Box:

1. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



City Directories

Looking for a person? How about the history of a location? You can trace this information and more via our city directories! See what we have by checking our specialized database.



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

Type in Search Box:

1. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County



Telephone Books

Are you not finding what you need in our city directory collection? No worries, you might find it in our telephone book collection. See what we have by checking our phone book database.



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

Type in Search Box:

1. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County

SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Kern County has a long and distinguished history! Check out our resources by type and by subject to learn more about this county's complex past!

	Type	Residents
Maps	Manuscripts	Vitals
Books	Newspapers	African Americans
County Histories	Periodicals	German Americans
Images	Statistics	Irish Americans
		Latin Americans
		Native Americans
		Women
Subject		
Agriculture		Shipping
Birds		Railroads
Business		Religion
Cooking		Restaurants
Education		Taxes
Environment		Water
Festivals		Wildlife
Fiction		
Fish		
Folklore		
Geology		
Highways		
Land		
Migration		
Mining		
Music		
Oil		
Politics		

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 from all 58 counties.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern



Map File

Looking for a Kern county map? Our map file is a great place to start. We have a wide variety of maps, including Sanborn fire insurance maps. Some of our maps cover settlement patterns and even natural history.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern



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: Counties: Kern

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including individual counties. You can check them for pamphlets, certificates and even posters related to organizations, individuals, and area histories.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern



Postcard Files

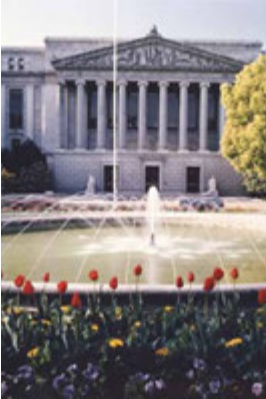
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to Kern County. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Kern County

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 Organizations

[Kern County Clerk](#)
[Kern County Historical Society](#)
[Kern County Library](#)
[Kern County Museum](#)
[Kern Valley Museum](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.kerncountyclerk.com/>
- <http://http://kernhistoricalsociety.org/>
- <http://www.kerncountylibrary.org/>
- <https://kerncountymuseum.org/>
- <http://www.kernvalleymuseum.org/>



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

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