

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY



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San Francisco dates its origins to 1776, when a presidio and a mission were founded under Spanish rule. In the 1830s a trading village known as Yerba Buena was established next to San Francisco Bay under Mexican jurisdiction. After the American conquest of 1846 and subsequent gold discovery the population of San Francisco exploded, and in the following decades it became California's financial, industrial, and cultural center. Originally the county of San Francisco was much larger than the city, but after the Consolidation Act of 1856 they became synonymous. The earthquake and fire of 1906 dealt San Francisco a heavy physical blow, but it soon recovered and celebrated its renaissance with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. In succeeding decades San Francisco maintained its status as a world-class, cosmopolitan city with a lively art and music scene and an "anything-goes" reputation as a trendsetter. In recent years the region has participated in a local technological boom while remaining justly renowned for its restaurants, art museums, and breathtaking scenery. If you are looking for exciting local information resources in the [California History Section's](#) rich collections, then check out what we have for this city!

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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 San Francisco!



[Digitized Publications](#)

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



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

Type in Search Box: (San Francisco) 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 San Francisco. You can see them on Calisphere!



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

Type in Search Box: ("San Francisco")

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 San Francisco resources.



Catalog

If you are looking for San Francisco 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 7 of this research guide!



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

Type in Subject Box: (San Francisco)



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 San Francisco deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more!

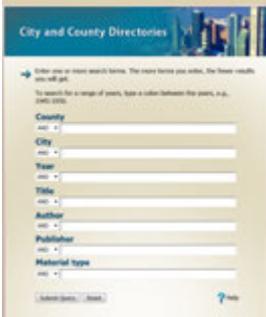


URL: http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm

Type in Search Box:

1. San Francisco

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



The screenshot shows a search interface for "City and County Directories". It includes a search bar and several dropdown menus for "County", "City", "Year", "Title", "Author", "Publisher", and "Material type". There is also an "Advanced Query" button and a "Help" icon.

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. San Francisco



The screenshot shows a search interface for "Telephone Directories". It includes a search bar and dropdown menus for "Location - White Pages", "Location - Yellow Pages", "Year", and "Material type". There is also an "Advanced Query" button and a "Help" icon.

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. San Francisco

SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

San Francisco has a long and distinguished history! Check out our resources by type and by subject to learn more about this city's complex past!

Types

[Maps](#)
[Books](#)
[County Histories](#)
[Images](#)
[Manuscripts](#)
[Newspaper Indexes](#)
[Newspapers](#)
[Periodicals](#)
[Statistics](#)

Residents

[Vitals](#)
[African Americans](#)
[Chinese Americans](#)
[German Americans](#)
[Irish Americans](#)
[Japanese Americans](#)
[Jewish Americans](#)
[Latin Americans](#)
[LGBTQ](#)
[Native Americans](#)
[Women](#)



Subjects

[Aeronautics](#)
[Agriculture](#)
[Art](#)
[Baseball](#)
[Birds](#)
[Business](#)
[Cooking](#)
[Education](#)
[Environment](#)
[Festivals](#)
[Fiction](#)
[Fire](#)
[Fish](#)
[Folklore](#)
[Geology](#)
[Horses](#)
[Land](#)
[Legal](#)
[Medicine](#)
[Migration](#)
[Mining](#)
[Music](#)
[Oil](#)
[Poetry](#)
[Politics](#)
[Shipping](#)
[Slavery](#)
[Railroads](#)
[Religion](#)
[Restaurants](#)
[Streets](#)
[Taxes](#)
[Water](#)
[Wildlife](#)
[Wine](#)
[1960s](#)

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 a variety of counties.



Subject Headings: San Francisco



Map File

Looking for a San Francisco 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: San Francisco



Photographic File

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words and not all of our pictures are online. To check the rest of the collection search our picture file card catalog.



Subject Headings: San Francisco

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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



Vertical Files

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



Subject Headings: San Francisco



Postcard Files

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



Subject Headings: San Francisco

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

[California Historical Society](#)

[San Francisco History Association](#)

[San Francisco Historical Society](#)

[San Francisco Public Library](#)

[San Francisco County Clerk](#)

[SF Genealogy](#)

[SF Heritage](#)



URLs:

- <https://californiahistoricalsociety.org/>
 - <http://sanfranciscohistory.org/>
 - <https://sfhistory.org/>
 - <https://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=0200002501>
 - <https://sfgov.org/countyclerk/services>
 - <https://sfgenealogy.org/>
 - <https://www.sfheritage.org/>
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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/>