

Open Access Digital Genealogy Resources

There are many online resources to help you research your genealogy. Below are some websites we recommend; they can be used while our library is closed to the public. Although we are working remotely at this time, we have access to certain early records kept by The Society of California Pioneers (not all are digitized) and may have information about your California ancestors; simply email us the name of any family member(s) and we will search our database on your behalf. This list of genealogy resources begins with links to four of our collections that are digitized and available online.

As always, feel free to contact us for additional research assistance.

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DIGITAL RESOURCES CREATED AND MAINTAINED BY THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS

[The Autobiographies and Reminiscences of Our Early Members](#)

[Her Side of The Story; Tales of California Pioneer Women](#)

[The Laurel Hill/Lone Mountain Cemetery Records](#)

[Lawrence & Houseworth Photographs of California and Nevada circa 1860](#)

RESOURCES TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF ARRIVAL IN CALIFORNIA, AS WELL AS EARLY BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

California Pioneer Register and Index, 1542-1848
including Inhabitants of California, 1769-1800
by Hubert Howe Bancroft
<https://archive.org/details/californiapionee00banc/page/682/mode/2up>

Argonauts of California

text and illustrations by C.W. Haskins

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002013270591&view=1up&seq=9>

or <https://archive.org/details/argonautscalifor00hask/page/n8/mode/2up>

(both sites offer an open access, searchable digital edition)

Haskins' book provides the names of the early Californians who came by ship, including those who sailed around Cape Horn and those who travelled via Panama. He includes the name of each ship, the date it docked, as well as the passenger list.

San Francisco and Sacramento City Directories

<https://sfpl.org/locations/main-library/magazines-newspapers-center/bay-area-city-directories-and-phone-books/san-0>

<https://ldsgenealogy.com/CA/Sacramento-County-City-Directories.htm>

Nearly all of the San Francisco City Directories have been digitized by the San Francisco Public Library. They can confirm if/when a person lived in the city, their address, as well as the person's occupation and the location of their business. The earliest directories provide a wealth of information about the city itself, including lists of churches, organizations, and clubs (often with a roster of officers and members). Other directories are available online; search by the name of any city or state to find them.

OTHER LIBRARIES AND ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING GENEALOGY RESOURCES

The California Genealogical Society

<https://www.californiaancestors.org/research-tools-start-here/>

This site has a wealth of information on how to search for your California ancestors, as well as links to other wonderful resources and useful research strategies and methods. Access to many of their databases is free, even for non-members.

SF Genealogy

<https://www.sfgenealogy.org>

This site has links to many helpful resources; some are specific to San Francisco while others cover state-wide topics. Cemetery records, some of which are digitized, can be accessed via their website, as well as the East Coast newspapers that often printed details about ships sailing to California. SF Genealogy also offers helpful research tips on this website.*

*(*their [California Bound](#) page is particularly pertinent to those searching for Forty-Niners; it links to information on ship arrivals, wagon train arrivals, and much more)*

The San Francisco Public Library's History Center

<https://sfpl.org/locations/main-library/sf-history-center>

This specialized portion of the library focuses on San Francisco history and is also the depository of the city's archives. Their home page features links to various databases, digitized city directories, telephone books, historic photographs, as well as instructions on how to research buildings and locate vital records. The library's [Genealogy Resources](#) features links census reports, newspaper databases, and searchable obituaries. A San Francisco Public Library card allows free access to these resources; any California resident can obtain that card [here](#).

Sutro Library (California State Library)

<https://www.library.ca.gov/collections/genealogy/toolkit/>

The Sutro Library's archives house an impressive and diverse range of records that are helpful to genealogists. Their Genealogy Toolkit highlights a variety of research resources; some of which are searchable and can be accessed remotely, including international sites that will help you search for information about ancestors from Ireland, Italy, Germany, and many other countries.

National Archives

<https://www.archives.gov/san-francisco/genealogy>

Although only a small percentage of their collection is available to the public online, their website features some open access records, as well as links to useful research tips and tools.