

# Vital Records & Vital Record Substitutes – December 2020

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## Vital Records

Vital Records refer to Birth, Marriage and Death records. These records typically provide exact dates and places for these events. In general, in the United States, these records were kept on a State level beginning about 1900. However, marriage records were typically created from the time a county was created which could be much earlier than 1900.

Birth Certificates contain, Primary source information for the birth, because the information was provided by an eyewitness to the birth and the record was created at or near the time of the birth. All other information in the record is considered Secondary information. Look at all the details in this record.

Marriage Certificates contain, Primary source information for the marriage of a couple, because the information was provided by an eyewitness to the marriage and the record was created at the time of the marriage. All other information in the record is considered Secondary information.

Death Certificates contain, Primary source information for the death of an individual. The information in this document was provided by an eyewitness to the event and the record was created at or near the time of death. Remember to look at the name of the informant, this person might be related the deceased. This record should list the Undertaker, or Funeral Home and the Cemetery where this person was to be buried.

## Vital Record Substitutes

### Delayed Birth Certificates

- Contain birth date and place and names of parents

California Birth Index, 1905-1995 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

California Marriage Index, 1960-1985 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

California Death Index, 1905-1939 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

California Death Index, 1940-1997 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

Social Security Death Index (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

US World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1919 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

- Contains birth date and place

US World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 (Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org)

- Contains birth date and place

### Funeral Home Records

- Often contain as much or more information than a death certificate

California, Mortuary Records of Chinese Decedents, 1870-1933 (Ancestry.com)

Cemetery Records (Tombstones & Sexton Records)

Newspapers – Local papers may contain birth, marriage and death announcements

California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968 (Ancestry.com)

California, Chinese Arrival Case Files Index, 1884-1940 (Ancestry.com)

Naturalization & Citizenship Records

- Contain birth date, place and spouse name and children names

**State Resources on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org**

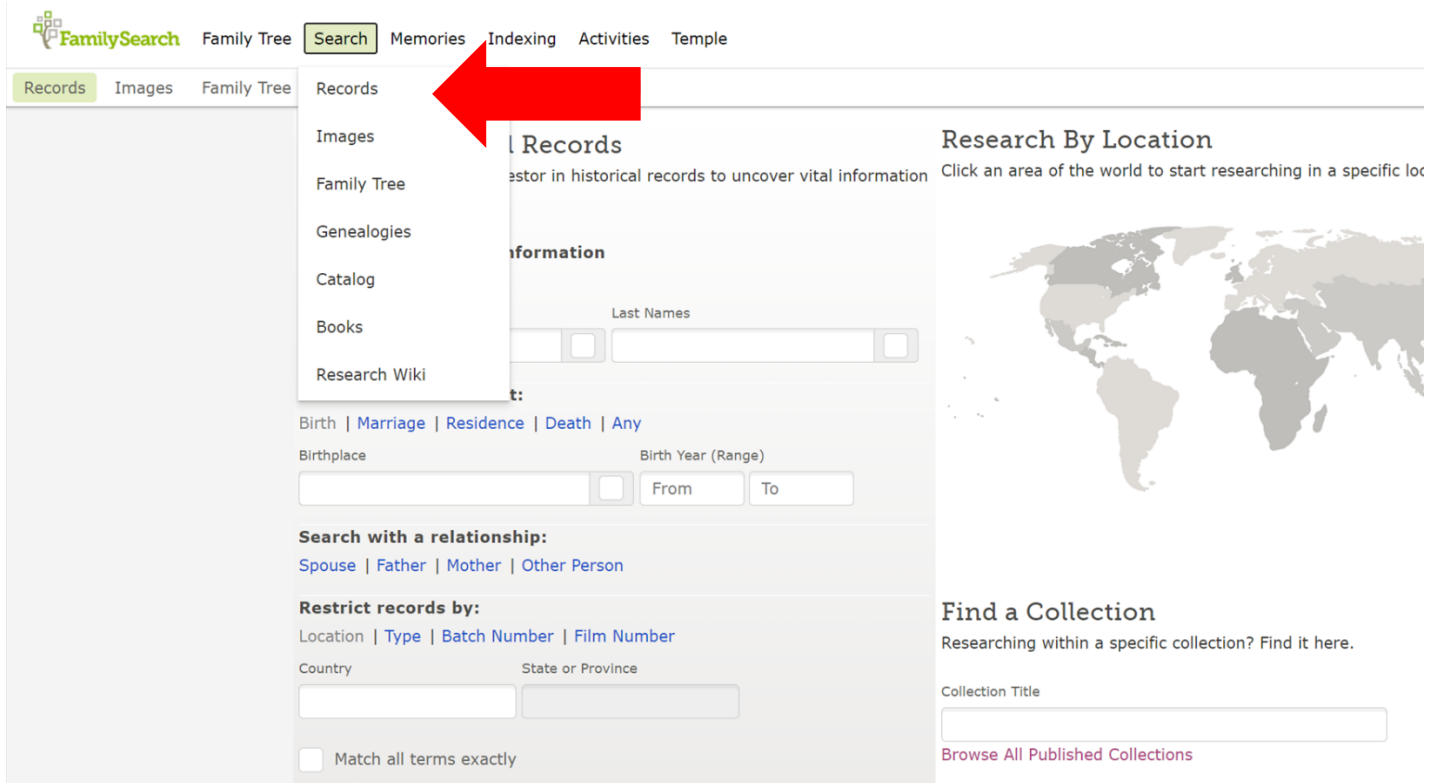
1. **Ancestry.com > Search > Card Catalog**

2. Add California to Title and search. Use the Keyword search if wanted.

**Card Catalog**  
Searchable listing of all record collections

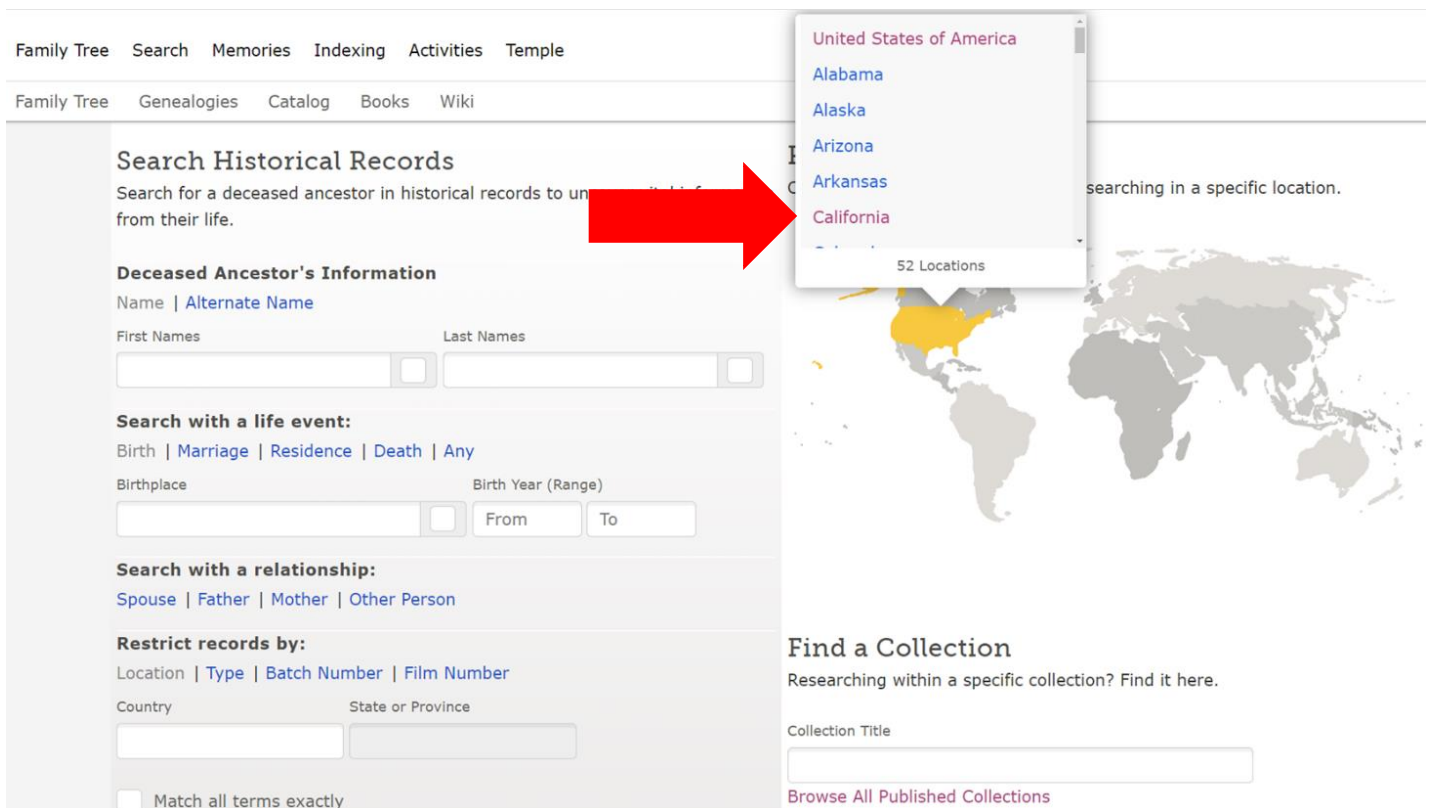
Title	Category	Records
California, U.S., County Birth, Marriage, and Death Records, 1849-1980	Birth, Marriage & Death	3,028,465
California, U.S., Voter Registrations, 1900-1968	Census & Voter Lists	70,566,826
San Diego, California, Compiled Records From San Diego Genealogical Society, 1887, 1913 -1919	Stories, Memories & Histories	12,749
California, U.S., Private Land Claim Dockets, 1852-1858	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	721
California, U.S., Index to Census Roll of Indians, 1928-1933	Census & Voter Lists	26,744
Web: Los Angeles, California, U.S., Coroner's Inquest Index, 1992-2016	Birth, Marriage & Death	101,702
California, U.S., Chinese Arrival Case Files Index, 1884-1940	Immigration & Emigration	90,734
California, U.S., Mortuary Records of Chinese Decedents, 1870-1933	Birth, Marriage & Death	28,834
Tulare County, California, U.S., Sheriff's Office and Jail Records, 1874-1963	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	236,339
Baja California Sur, Mexico, Civil Registration Deaths, 1860-1987 (in Spanish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	157,178
Baja California Sur, Mexico, Civil Registration Births, 1860-1930 (in Spanish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	33,781
Baja California Sur, Mexico, Civil Registration Marriages, 1860-1950 (in Spanish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	39,098
Baja California and Baja California Sur, Mexico, Catholic Church	Birth, Marriage & Death	271,140

## 1. FamilySearch.org > Search > Records



The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org website. The top navigation bar includes links for Family Tree, Search, Memories, Indexing, Activities, and Temple. The 'Search' link is highlighted. Below the navigation bar, the 'Records' link is highlighted in the left sidebar. A red arrow points to the 'Records' link in the top navigation bar. The main content area displays the 'Search Historical Records' form, which includes fields for Last Names, Birthplace, Birth Year (Range), and Search with a relationship (Spouse, Father, Mother, Other Person). The 'Restrict records by' section includes fields for Location, Type, Batch Number, and Film Number. The 'Research By Location' section features a world map and a 'Find a Collection' section with a 'Collection Title' field and a 'Browse All Published Collections' link.

## 2. Click on the State



The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org website with the 'Search Historical Records' form. A red arrow points to the 'United States of America' dropdown menu, which is open and displays a list of states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, and California. The dropdown menu also indicates '52 Locations'. The main content area displays the 'Search Historical Records' form, which includes fields for Last Names, Birthplace, Birth Year (Range), and Search with a relationship (Spouse, Father, Mother, Other Person). The 'Restrict records by' section includes fields for Location, Type, Batch Number, and Film Number. The 'Research By Location' section features a world map and a 'Find a Collection' section with a 'Collection Title' field and a 'Browse All Published Collections' link.

### 3. Search Indexed Collections

**California** Welcome to our California research page. We've brought together tools to help you with your research in California.

## Learning Courses

We have 9 learning courses to help you do your family history research in California



United States Research: Pacific States  
Region - California

 8:28United States Research: Pacific States  
Region

 1:40:01

The Pacific Coast  
and the Southwest

## The Pacific Coast and the Southwest

 4:07

[See all California courses in Learning Center](#)

FamilySearch Wiki

[View Wiki for California](#)

## Indexed Historical Records

Search collections of records for documents about your ancestors. You can filter which collections you would like to search within.

**i** Enter your ancestor's information and select "Search" below

### Deceased Ancestor's Information

Name | Alternate Name

First Names

Last Names

**Search with a life event:**

[Birth](#) | [Marriage](#) | [Residence](#) | [Death](#) | [Any](#)

Birthplace

Birth Year (Range)

### Search with a relationship:

Spouse | Father | Mother | Other Person

**Restrict records by:**

Location | Type | Batch Number | Film Number

Country

State or Province

United States

California

☐ Match all terms exactly

Search

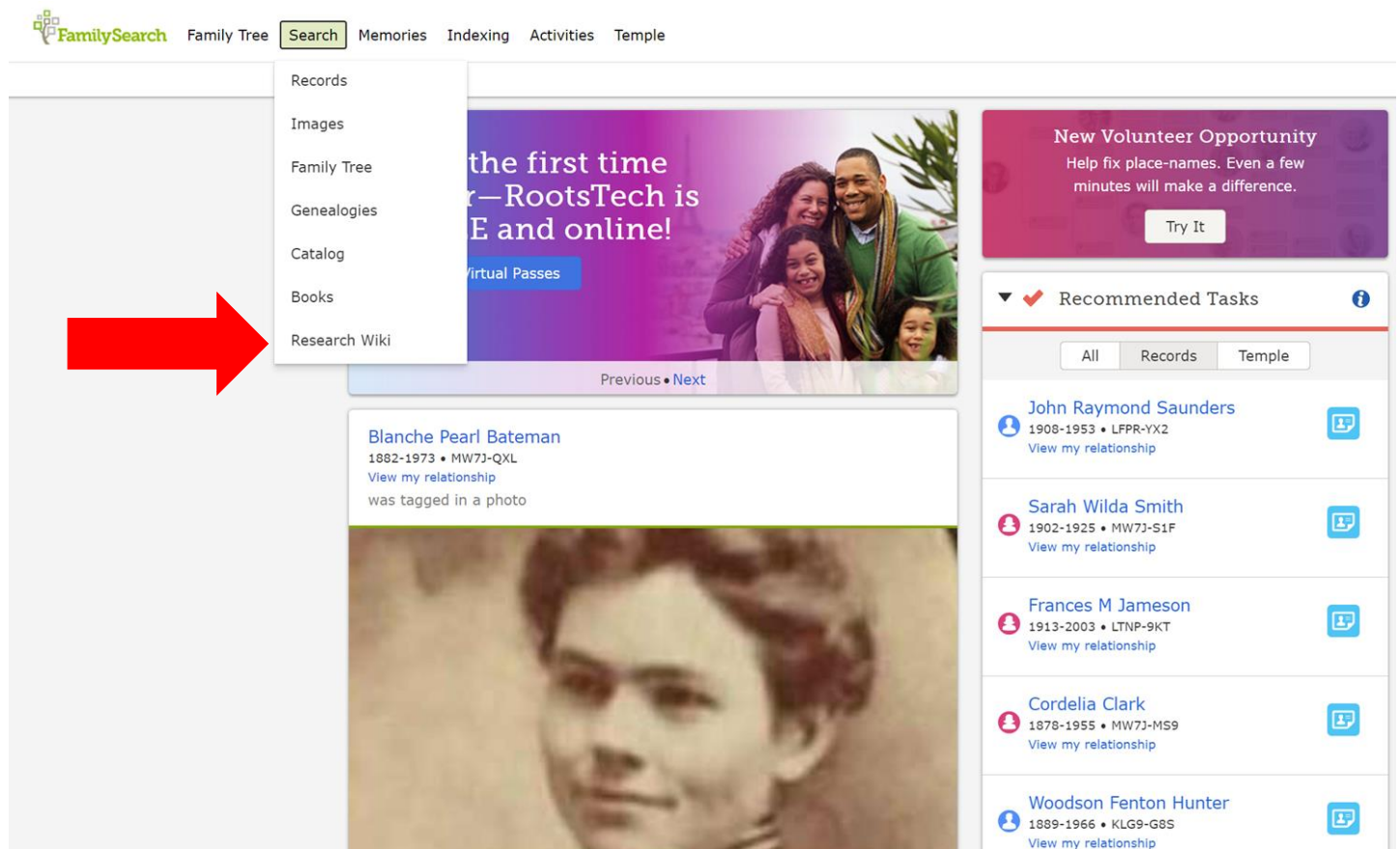
Reset

	Title	Records	Last Updated
	California Birth Index, 1905-1995	24,589,475	Mar 1, 2012
	California Births and Christenings, 1812-1988	197,645	Oct 15, 2020
	 California Cemetery Transcriptions, 1850-1960	105,227	Dec 9, 2016
	 California County Naturalizations, 1831-1985	509,157	Dec 2, 2020
	 California Death Index, 1905-1939	2,086,638	Jun 5, 2015
	California Death Index, 1940-1997	9,366,541	Mar 7, 2012
	 California Deaths and Burials, 1776-2000	594,261	Feb 3, 2020
	California Divorce Index, 1966-1984	3,518,807	Mar 7, 2012
	California Great Registers, 1850-1920	3,310,884	Oct 31, 2016
	 California Immigration Registers of Japanese, Filipinos, and Hawaiians at San Francisco, 1928-1942	6,994	Nov 13, 2015
	California Marriage Index, 1960-1985	4,879,211	Dec 6, 2011
	California Marriages, 1850-1945	538,941	Feb 1, 2020
	California State Census, 1852	188,578	Oct 28, 2011
	 California, Airplane Passenger Lists from Honolulu, Hawaii, 1947-1948	29,995	Mar 19, 2020
	 California, Chinese Partnerships and Departures from San Francisco, 1893-1943	54,617	Nov 8, 2016
	 California, Church Records, 1864-1985	1,941	Jun 18, 2019
	 California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994	6,541,664	Dec 14, 2020
	 California, County Marriages, 1850-1952	1,986,899	Nov 14, 2019
	 California, Fresno and Napa Counties, Obituaries, 1974-1997	65,850	May 6, 2020
	 California, Geographical and Name Index of Californians who served in WWI, 1914-1918	27,306	May 12, 2020
	 California, Honor Roll of Californians who served in WWI 1914-1918	9,256	Jul 31, 2020

The Indexed collections will show up in a list below the search button. The camera images mean that that you can look at the digital images.

## Genealogical Research Wiki for All Countries and States

### 1. FamilySearch. org > Search > Research Wiki



The screenshot shows the FamilySearch website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: FamilySearch, Family Tree, Search, Memories, Indexing, Activities, and Temple. Below the navigation bar, a dropdown menu is open for the 'Search' link, showing options: Records, Images, Family Tree, Genealogies, Catalog, Books, and Research Wiki. A large red arrow points to the 'Research Wiki' option. The main content area features a banner for 'the first time' with a family photo and text '—RootsTech is E and online!'. Below the banner, there is a profile for 'Blanche Pearl Bateman' (1882-1973 • MW7J-QXL) with a photo and a 'View my relationship' link. To the right, there is a 'New Volunteer Opportunity' section and a 'Recommended Tasks' section with a list of tasks including 'John Raymond Saunders', 'Sarah Wilda Smith', 'Frances M Jameson', 'Cordelia Clark', and 'Woodson Fenton Hunter'.

### 2. Choose a State or Country



The screenshot shows the 'FamilySearch Research Wiki' page. The title is 'FamilySearch Research Wiki' with the subtitle 'A Genealogy Resource Guide' and '93,082 articles'. Below the title, there is a search bar and a 'Find Search Tips' link. A red arrow points to the 'California' dropdown menu, which is open and shows a list of categories: 'California, United States Genealogy', 'California Trail', 'Category:California Indian Reservations', 'Category:California Indian Rancherias', 'California Archives and Libraries', 'California Census', 'California Church Records', 'California Land and Property', 'California Military Records', and 'California Vital Records'. The page also features a world map with labels for 'North America', 'Europe', 'Asia', and 'Africa'. A 'Jump-start your research' box on the right side of the map provides guidance on finding the best databases for select locations.



### 3. State Resource Page

#### California, United States Genealogy

United States → California

Guide to **California ancestry, family history, and genealogy** birth records, marriage records, death records, census records, family history, and military records.

*This article is about the U.S. state. For other uses, see [California \(disambiguation\)](#).*

#### California Information [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

California became the thirty-first state admitted to the Union in September 9, 1850. California was created from part of unorganized territory called Mexican Cession (Mexico ceded the land to the U. S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago in 1848) and is located in the southwest region of the United States.<sup>[1]</sup> Sacramento is the capital and there are 58 counties in California.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### Getting Started [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

##### Getting Started with California Research [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

Links to articles on getting started with California research.

- Guided Research
- Step-by-Step California Research, 1905-Present
- Step-by-Step California Research, 1850-1905
- How Find Birth Records
- How to Find Marriage Records
- How to Find Death Records
- Research Strategies

California Online  
Genealogy Records

Ask the  
Community

#### California Clickable Map [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

Many genealogy records are kept on the county level in the United States. Click on a county below to go to the county page.



The Blue Button will take you to a table of online genealogical collections for this state. These collections may be at FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com or other archives and websites.

#### Counties [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

- |                |               |             |                   |                 |            |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| • Alameda      | • Glenn       | • Marin     | • Placer          | • San Mateo     | • Sutter   |
| • Alpine       | • Humboldt    | • Mariposa  | • Plumas          | • Santa Barbara | • Tehama   |
| • Amador       | • Imperial    | • Mendocino | • Riverside       | • Santa Clara   | • Trinity  |
| • Butte        | • Inyo        | • Merced    | • Sacramento      | • Santa Cruz    | • Tulare   |
| • Calaveras    | • Kern        | • Modoc     | • San Benito      | • Shasta        | • Tuolumne |
| • Colusa       | • Kings       | • Mono      | • San Bernardino  | • Sierra        | • Ventura  |
| • Contra Costa | • Lake        |             | • San Diego       | • Siskiyou      | • Yolo     |
| • Del Norte    | • Lassen      |             | • San Francisco   | • Solano        | • Yuba     |
| • El Dorado    | • Los Angeles |             | • San Joaquin     | • Sonoma        |            |
| • Fresno       | • Madera      | • Orange    | • San Luis Obispo | • Stanislaus    |            |

Clicking on the county name will direct you to a page specific to the county. This page will give the years that records are available for this county. It will also mention any record loss.

#### Beginner Resources

##### California Research Tools [\[edit\]](#) [\[edit source\]](#)

Links to articles and websites that assist in California research.

- Boundary Changes for California Counties<sup>#</sup>
- California Archives and Libraries
- CAGenWeb<sup>#</sup>
- Geographical Names Information System<sup>#</sup> - U.S. gazetteer of places, cemeteries and post offices in California.

Learn about the different records that can help in your genealogical research

#### California Wiki Topics



##### Beginning Research

- Guided Research
- Research Strategies
- Record Finder

##### Record Types

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Adoption                  | • Land & Property              |
| • Bible Records             | • Military Records             |
| • Cemeteries                | • Naturalization & Citizenship |
| • Census                    | • Newspapers                   |
| • Church Records            | • Obituaries                   |
| • Colonial Records          | • Online Records               |
| • Correctional Institutions | • Orphans and Orphanages       |
| • Court Records             | • Periodicals                  |
| • Directories               | • Probate Records              |
| • Emigration & Immigration  | • Taxation                     |
|                             | • Vital Records                |
|                             | • Voter Records                |

##### California Background

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| • Biography  | • Migration           |
| • Gazetteers | • For Further Reading |
| • History    |                       |
| • Maps       |                       |

##### Cultural Groups

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| • African Americans  | • Cultural Groups  |
| • Indigenous Peoples | • Swedish American |

##### Local Research Resources

- |                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Archives & Libraries | • Societies                           |
|                        | • Family History Centers <sup>#</sup> |

##### Moderator

The FamilySearch moderator for California is Jamie Mayhew