

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORY



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California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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Formed in 1850, Contra Costa County boasted a population of 1,049,025 people as of 2010. In addition to having several historic preservation organizations, Contra Costa is also home to several historic coal mines, early land grants, nature preserves and more! 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 Contra Costa County!



[Digitized Publications](#)

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



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

Type in Search Box: (Contra Costa) 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 Contra Costa County. You can see them on Calisphere!



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

Type in Search Box: ("Contra Costa County")

DIGITIZED RESOURCES



[California State Association of Counties](#)

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



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



[County Website](#)

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



URL: <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/>

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 Contra Costa County resources.



Catalog

If you are looking for Contra Costa 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: (Contra Costa)



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 Contra Costa County deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more!



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

Type in Search Box:

1. Contra Costa
2. Name of a city in Contra Costa County

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



The screenshot shows a search interface for "City and County Directories". It includes a header with the title and a background image of city buildings. Below the header, there is a search instruction: "Enter one or more search terms. The more terms you enter, the fewer results you will get." and a tip: "To search for a range of years, type a colon between the years, e.g., 1940-1950." The search form contains several input fields: "County", "City", "Year", "Title", "Author", "Publisher", and "Material type". Each field has a small "GO" button next to it. At the bottom of the form, there is a "Submit 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. Contra Costa
2. Name of a city in Contra Costa County



The screenshot shows a search interface for "Telephone Directories". It includes a header with the title and a background image of a telephone keypad. Below the header, there is a search instruction: "Type in the city or county. If you get too many results, add the year to your search." and a tip: "To search for a date range, type a colon between the first and last years, e.g., 1940-1950." The search form contains several input fields: "Location-White Pages", "Location-Yellow Pages", "Year", and "Material type". Each field has a small "GO" button next to it. At the bottom of the form, there is a "Submit 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. Contra Costa
2. Name of a city in Contra Costa County

SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Contra Costa County has a long and distinguished history! Check out our resources by type and by subject to learn more about this

Type

[Maps](#)

[Books](#)

[County Histories](#)

[Images](#)

[Manuscripts](#)

[Newspapers](#)

[Periodicals](#)

[Statistics](#)

Residents

[Vitals](#)

[African Americans](#)

[Chinese Americans](#)

[Italian Americans](#)

[Japanese Americans](#)

[Latin Americans](#)

[Native Americans](#)

[Portuguese Americans](#)

[Women](#)

Subject

[Agriculture](#)

[Business](#)

[Education](#)

[Environment](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Fish](#)

[Geology](#)

[Highways](#)

[Land](#)

[Legal](#)

[Migration](#)

[Mining](#)

[Music](#)

[Oil](#)

[Poetry](#)

[Politics](#)



[Shipping](#)

[Slavery](#)

[Railroads](#)

[Restaurants](#)

[Taxes](#)

[Water](#)

[1960's](#)

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: Contra Costa



Map File

Looking for a Contra Costa 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: Contra Costa



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: Contra Costa

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about Contra Costa 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: Check with librarians



Postcard Files

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to Contra Costa County.

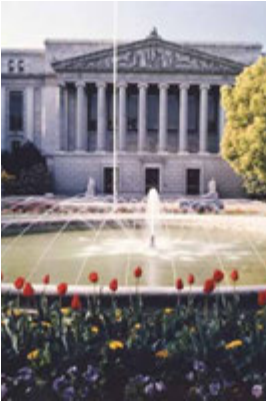
Most are not online.



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/government-publications/>
 - <http://www.library.ca.gov/law/>
 - <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/>
 - <https://www.library.ca.gov/services>
-



Other Organizations

[California State Archives](#)

[California State Parks](#)

[Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder](#)

[Contra Costa County Historical Society](#)

[Contra Costa County Library](#)

[East Contra Costa County Historical](#)

[Society](#)

[East Bay Regional Park District](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
 - <https://www.parks.ca.gov/>
 - <https://www.cocohistory.org/>
 - <https://ccclib.org/>
 - <http://www.eastcontracostahistory.org/>
 - <http://www.ebparks.org/default.htm>
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Hours: 9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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