Research Guides
Fiction in California

Visit Us
California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday
Are you writing a paper about a famous California author? Are you curious about how California gets portrayed in fiction? Maybe you’re looking for inspiration for your own novel! Whatever the case, the California History Section’s rich fiction collections can help! If you have any questions about these or other resources please feel free to contact us.

Digitized Resources .......................................................... 3

Reference Works:
  Anthologies ................................................................. 4
  Biographies and Criticism ............................................... 5
  Periodicals ......................................................................... 7
  Specialized Collections ................................................... 8

Search:
  Catalog General Research Tips ....................................... 9
  Subject-Specific Resources in our Catalog .......................... 10
  Works by Specific Authors in Our Catalog .......................... 11
  County-Specific Resources in our Catalog .......................... 12
  On-site Research Resources ............................................... 13
  Other On-site Resources .................................................. 14
  Other Places to Look .......................................................... 15

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 California literature!

Digitized Images

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including portraits of California authors. You can see them on our catalog!

URL: https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/
Type in Refine Box: (Authors)

Digitized Publications

A few years ago we digitized some of our more fragile resources covering California literature. You can see them on Internet Archive!

URL: https://archive.org/
Type in Search Box: (Literature) AND collection:(californiastatelib)
ANTHOLOGIES

Want to get a sense of California’s many authors but don’t have the time to read a full book? Try one of these anthologies! Filled with excerpts and short stories they provide a literary survey.


A far-ranging, diverse and thorough anthology. In this volume you will find works by authors from prehistoric California all the way through to the 1940s.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author


A wide ranging anthology that includes lesser-known writers as well as the more famous ones. This book takes a geographical approach to California’s literature.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author
Do you wonder why Gary Snyder writes about the environment? Want to explore what impelled Helen Jackson to write *Ramona*? Check out these biographies and literary critiques!


An especially early survey and critique of California Literature. This book takes a topical approach to individuals the author often knew first-hand.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author

---


Location and environment affects California literature in myriad ways. This work, in surveying California’s prominent authors, endeavors to expose its influence on their writings.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author

A seminal survey of California authors and their lives, this frequently re-published book, covers over thirty prominent writers from Dana to Chandler.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title and/or author
Books and bibliographies are not the only way to learn more about California’s authors. You can read also articles in magazines and journals!

**California Writers' Club.** (1912-). Bulletin. [Berkeley, Calif.]: The Club

Published under various titles from at least 1912, this periodical covers literary happenings first in the Bay Area and later on throughout California. It includes workshop notices, news about member publications and more!

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

**Search by:** Title

---

**ZYZZYVA** (1985-). San Francisco : Zyzzyva, Inc

A longstanding venue in which California authors can publish their short stories and poems, this publication boasts short stories from literary lights like Isabel Allende and William Saroyan.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

**Search by:** Title
Specialized Collections

The California History Section has two sizable collections devoted to California fiction! If you are looking for an out-of-print novel about California, these would be good places to start.

Gary Strong Mystery Collection

Collected by former State Librarian, Gary Strong, this corpus of mystery and suspense stories covers both California-related and general publications from the 1970’s forward, as well as a few mystery related periodicals!

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title

California Fiction Collection

Want to find a book of fiction set in California? Check out our dedicated collection of fiction with titles dating from 1849 up through to the present!

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank

Search by: Title
Catalog General Research Tips

While many of our materials are online, even more are only in hard-copy. You can use the following resources to locate our books, articles, and manuscripts by and about California authors.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for images, books and articles on California authors, your best source is our catalog.

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

**Type in Search Box:** (Authors OR Fiction)

**Limit:** By place or specific author

---

**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. In this resource, you can find catalog records on individual articles, pamphlets and more.

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

**Type in Subject Box:** Authors OR Fiction

**For a narrower search:** Add a place or specific author to your keyword search.
California-born (or focused) authors not only have diverse origins, they cover a myriad of different topics. While these catalog links barely scrape their work, they are a good starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Vitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>African Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscripts</td>
<td>Chinese Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>German Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italian Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Railroads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1960’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject: Aeronautics, Agriculture, Art, Baseball, Business, Cooking, Education, Environment, Festivals, Folklore, Geology, Highways, Legislature, Migration, Mining, Music, Oil, Politics, Shipping, Slavery.
Works by Specific Authors in Our Catalog

Sometimes an author writes such an extraordinary book, he or she attains lasting fame. The following catalog links highlight the works of California literary luminaries like Twain and Sinclair.

Atherton, Gertrude
Austin, Mary
Braverman, Kate
Brautigan, Richard
Bukowski, Charles
Cain, James
Chandler, Raymond
Clemens, Samuel
Dana, Richard
Didion, Joan
Duncan, Robert
Everson, William
Ferlinghetti, Lawrence

Ginsberg, Allen
Dashiel, Hammett
Harte, Bret
Haslam, Gerald
Houston, James
Huxley, Aldous
Jackson, Helen
Jeffers, Robinson
Kerouac, Jack
Lewis, Oscar
Lummis, Charles
MacDonald, Ross
McWilliams, Carey
Mailer, Norman
Miller, Henry
Miller, Joaquin
Milosz, Czeslaw
Norris, Frank

Powell, Lawrence
Rexroth, Kenneth
Rodriguez, Richard
Royce, Josiah
Sanchez, Thomas
Saroyan, William
Schulberg, Budd
Sinclair, Upton
Snyder, Gary
Stegner, Wallace
Steinbeck, John

Sterling, George
Stevenson, Robert
Waugh, Evelyn
Webb, Charles
West, Nathanael
White, Stewart
Wolfe, Tom
Are you interested in fiction about a specific place in California? Check out these literary gems, as sorted by county! For even more California fiction, please search our catalog directly.

Mendocino
Monterey
Napa
Orange
Placer
Riverside
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
Santa Barbara

Alameda
Calaveras
Contra Costa
El Dorado
Fresno
Kern
Kings
Los Angeles
Madera
Marin
Mariposa

Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Sonoma
Trinity
Tulare
Yuba
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 related to California fiction.

Subject Headings:
1. Individual names
2. Literature

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:
1. Portraits: Individual names
**Vertical Files**

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including fiction. You can check them for information on organizations, book signings, pamphlets and more.

*Subject Headings: Check with librarians.*

---

**Postcard Files**

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images of famous California authors or locations popularized in their books. Most are not online.

*Subject Headings: Check with librarians*
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/
- http://www.library.ca.gov/services
This guide is also available online at:
http://www.library.ca.gov/calhist/researchguides.html