RESEARCH GUIDES

GERMAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA

VISIT US
California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday
Are you researching your German American ancestry? Are you curious about the German contribution to California’s farming, cinematic or business history? Maybe you’re writing a paper on the role of the Turn Verein in a specific California city. Regardless of your interests, you can explore the extensive history of German Americans in California via the California History Section’s rich collections.

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**ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!**
**Digitized Resources**

Can’t come to the library just yet? There are a number of online resources you can explore related to California’s German Americans.

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**Digitized Images**

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including images related to California’s German Americans. You can see them on Calisphere!

URL: https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/
Type in Subject Box: (German OR Germans OR Prussian* OR (Turn Verein))

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**Digitized Publications**

A few years ago we digitized some of our more fragile resources on California’s German Americans. You can see them on Internet Archive!

URL: https://archive.org/
Type in Search Box: (German OR Germans OR Prussian* OR (Turn Verein))
AND collection:(californiastatelibrary)
&sin=TXT
Select Option: “Search full text of books”
Books

Unsure about where to start? Consult a book! These works provide overviews of German American history in California and the wider west.


In addition to offering an excellent historical overview, this bibliography lists early German travel accounts of California complete with short descriptions of where the traveler visited and what he wrote about.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
**SEARCH:** 990006092240205115

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Though early, this exhaustively researched work provides a good overview of pre-Gold Rush German emigration to and settlement in California.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
### Books


This approachable volume provides an overview of the German American impact in one California city, San Diego, between 1850 and 1983.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&search=990004384640205115

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This book looks at the enormous cultural contribution German exiles made to American culture, particularly Los Angeles culture, in the 1930’s and 1940’s.

**URL:** https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&search=990012810150205115
MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

Want real-time accounts of California history? At our library, you can read newspapers and periodicals documenting California history from a German American point of view.

Der Blumenbaum
Spanning 30+ years of scholarship and events, this journal from Sacramento’s premiere German genealogical society tracks both club activities and German history.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
SEARCH: 99001478900205115

California Staats-Zeitung
A long-running Los Angeles based publication, this newspaper covers German American history from 1923-1971, with a particular focus on the people and community events in the Los Angeles area.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
SEARCH: 990012640760205115

California Journal
Covering 1919-1940 this newspaper would be useful to researchers studying the events, activities and opinions, of early 20th century German Americans in San Francisco.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
SEARCH: 990010020610205115
Manuscripts

In addition to periodicals, we have manuscript collections that focus specifically on German American history. Here are some selected collections at the State Library.

Volle Family Collection, 1838-1978.
Incorporating family history materials from over 100 years, this collection documents one German American family’s settlement in the Sacramento Valley along with details about their descendants' lives.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
SEARCH: 990005851900205115

German Letters, 1852-1888.
Written by a wide variety of people over a 30 year period in the 1800’s, these letters written in high and low German document the thoughts and experiences of German American gold miners and their families.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL
SEARCH: 990005611970205115
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 books, articles, and manuscripts on German Americans.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for images, books and articles on German Americans, 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: (German OR Germans OR Prussian* OR ( Turn Verein ) )

Limit: By place

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**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 Search Box: (German OR Germans OR Prussian* OR ( Turn Verein ) )

For a narrower search: Add a place to your keyword search
**City Directories**

Looking for a person? You can trace this information 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. Location

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**Telephone Books**

Are you not finding what you need in our city directory collection? 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. Location
California’s German Americans contribute in a myriad of ways to this state. While these catalog links barely scrape the surface of this history, they provide a good overview.
Researching German American history in a specific region? While these catalog links don’t list all that the California History Section has, they are a good starting point.

Alameda
Amador
Butte
Del Norte
El Dorado
Fresno
Los Angeles
Marin
Napa
Nevada

Orange
Placer
Sacramento
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
Santa Clara
Sonoma
Tuolumne
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 related to individuals active in California.

Subject Headings:
- Germans in California
- Individuals by Name

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.

Subject Headings:
- Portraits: Individuals by Name
- Germans in California
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/
- http://www.library.ca.gov/services

Other Government Agencies
California State Archives
California Museum
California State Parks
Local California libraries or archives

URLs:
- http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/
- http://www.californiamuseum.org/
- https://www.parks.ca.gov/

Other Organizations
German American Heritage Museum
Sacramento German Genealogical Society
Sacramento Turn Verein

URLs:
- https://gahmusa.org/
- https://sggs.us/index.php
- http://sacramentoturnverein.com/
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California State Library
California History Section

California History Section
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E-mail: csilcal@library.ca.gov
Hours: 9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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