RESEARCH GUIDES
Kern County History

VISIT US
California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday
Organized in 1866, Kern County had a population of 878,744 people as of 2017. Though typically known for its oil wells, there is more to this region than just industry. Kern is also the home of one of the Southern Pacific Railroad’s major engineering feats, the Tehachapi Loop, as well as a reserve for California’s state tortoise. Several prominent early explorers also passed through this region as did the Butterfield Stage route and the borax mule teams. 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 Kern County!

Digitized Publications

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

URL: https://archive.org/
Type in Search Box: (Kern) AND collection: (californiastatelib)
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 Kern County. You can see them on Calisphere!

URL: https://calisphere.org/institution/51/
Type in Search Box: (“Kern County”)
**California State Association of Counties**

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

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

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**County Website**

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

**URL:** https://www.kerncounty.com/
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 Kern County resources.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for Kern 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:** (Kern)

**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 Kern County deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more!

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

**Type in Search Box:**
1. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County
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. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County

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. Kern
2. Name of a city in Kern County
Kern County has a long and distinguished history! Check out our resources by type and by subject to learn more about this county’s complex past!

### Type
- Maps
- Books
- County Histories
- Images
- Manuscripts
- Newspapers
- Periodicals
- Statistics

### Residents
- Vitals
- African Americans
- German Americans
- Irish Americans
- Latin Americans
- Native Americans
- Women

### Subject
- Agriculture
- Birds
- Business
- Cooking
- Education
- Environment
- Festivals
- Fiction
- Fish
- Folklore
- Geology
- Highways
- Land
- Migration
- Mining
- Music
- Oil
- Politics
- Shipping
- Railroads
- Religion
- Restaurants
- Taxes
- Water
- Wildlife
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: Kern

**Map File**
Looking for a Kern 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: Kern

**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: Kern
**Other On-Site Resources**

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about Kern county information contained in the following resources.

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**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:* Counties: Kern

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**Postcard Files**

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to Kern County. Most are not online.

*Subject Headings:* Kern County
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
Kern County Clerk
Kern County Historical Society
Kern County Library
Kern County Museum
Kern Valley Museum

URLs:
- http://www.kerncountyclerk.com/
- http://www.kerncountylibrary.org/
- https://kerncountymuseum.org/
- http://www.kernvalleymuseum.org/
California State Library
California History Section

California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
Sacramento CA 95814

Phone: (916) 654-0176
E-mail: cslcal@library.ca.gov
Hours: 9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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