RESEARCH GUIDES
MERCED COUNTY HISTORY

VISIT US
California History Section
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday
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Though formed in 1855, Merced County’s written history actually extends back quite a bit further. This region was explored by Gabriel Moraga during his famous inland expedition and by Jedidiah Smith a few years later. It was divided into several ranchos during the Spanish and Mexican periods and it was also during that time that traffic along the historic Pacheco Pass began to increase. Later on, much of the region became part of Miller and Lux’s infamous cattle empire, but several cities and towns also managed to thrive, including Santa Nella and Los Banos. 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.
Can’t come to the library just yet? No worries. There are a number of online resources you can explore related to Merced County.

**Digitized Publications**

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

**URL:** [https://archive.org/](https://archive.org/)

**Type in Search Box:** (Merced County) 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 Merced County. You can see them on Calisphere.

**URL:** [https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/](https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/)

**Type in Search Box:** (“Merced County”)
California State Association of Counties

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

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

County Website

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

URL: https://www.co.merced.ca.us/
GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

Not finding what you need online? We have additional materials available that cannot be accessed digitally. You can use the following resources to learn about our resources.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for Merced 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:** (Merced County)

**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 Merced County deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more.

**URL:** https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/databases/cainfoii

**Type in Search Box:**
1. Merced
2. Name of a city in Merced County
**General Research Tips**

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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:** [https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/databases/citycounty](https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/databases/citycounty)

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

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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:** [https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/databases/phone](https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/databases/phone)

**Type in Search Box:**
1. Merced
2. Name of a city in Merced County
Specific Resources in Our Catalog

Merced 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.

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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: Merced County

**Map File**

Looking for a Merced 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: Merced

**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: Merced
Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about Merced 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:** Counties: Merced

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**Postcard Files**

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

**Subject Headings:** Merced County
OTHER PLACES TO LOOK

Can’t find what you need in our collection? You may want to contact the following organizations.

Other California State Library Sections

Government Publications Section
Within Law Library
Sutro Library
General Information

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

Merced County Library
Merced County Genealogical Society
Merced County Courthouse Museum
County Assessor-Clerk-Recorder

https://www.co.merced.ca.us/77/Library
http://sites.rootsweb.com/~camcgs/
http://www.mercedmuseum.org/
https://www.countyofmerced.com/239/
Recorder
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/