RESEARCH GUIDES

CALIFORNIA ODDITIES

VISIT US
California History Room
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday
California is full of odd sights and strange people. We are after all the home of Emperor Norton, the Winchester Mystery House, the Fresno Sunken gardens and more! If you are doing a research project about an unusual aspect of this state’s history, please feel free to explore the odder personalities and places in California’s past via the California History Section’s rich collections!

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**ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!**
Books

Not only is California a place full of odd wonders and strange sights, Californians take pride in it! These are just a few books you can use to start researching California’s stranger stories.


California has always had its personalities. Read about 20th century ones in this book providing biographies of many of California’s more eccentric individuals.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author


Do you like the Queen Mary? Then check out these other haunted California locations! This book provides a comprehensive rundown of haunted spots across the state.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author
Books

Greenberg, T. (2002). *California firsts: The famous, infamous, and quirky of the Golden State*. Philadelphia: Camino Books. There’s a first for everything, and almost everything new seems a little odd at first. Check out the unusual firsts that have put California on the map, for both good and bizarre reasons.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
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Search by: Title and/or author


URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author

Full of strange anecdotes and oddball incidents, this book proves that truth really is stranger than fiction sometimes. Especially in California.

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author


Do you want to dominate the competition whenever you play California trivia? Check out this book. It is filled with zany facts in a quick question/answer format!

URL: https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank
Search by: Title and/or author
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 California’s odder sites.

**Catalog**

If you are looking for images, books and articles on California’s oddities, one source is our catalog.


**Type in Search Box:** (anecdotes OR Miscellanea OR Curiosities OR Natural Phenomena OR legends OR Folklore OR Oddities OR Follies OR Ghosts OR Circus)

**Limit:** By desired material type or company

**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 Mystery Spot bumper stickers, Winchester Mystery House pamphlets and more!

**URL:** [http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm](http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm)

**Type in Subject Box:** (Miscellanea OR Curiosities OR Natural Phenomena OR Oddities OR Follies OR Ghosts)

**For a narrower search:** Add a place or company to your keyword search
Are you researching an odd person, a legend or a strange spot in a specific county? While these catalog links don’t list all that the California History Section has, they are a good starting point.

Alameda
Butte
Fresno
Humboldt
Imperial
Kern
Lassen
Los Angeles
Marin
Mendocino
Monterey
Nevada

Orange
Placer
Riverside
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Ventura
Yuba
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 history…including its eccentricities.

Subject Headings:

1. Characters: Eccentric
2. First Events
3. Ghosts
4. Mysteries of California

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:

1. Subject heading for specific oddity (check with librarians)
**Other On-Site Resources**

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about any information on California oddities contained in the following files.

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**Vertical Files**

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including California’s oddities. You can check them for pamphlets, fliers and other information.

**Subject Headings:** Check with librarians.

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**Postcard Files**

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to unusual sites or tourist attractions. Most are not online.

**Subject Headings:** Check with librarians

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**Map Files**

Want maps of an odd spot in California? Our map collection contains a wide variety of resources, some of which might help you!

**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

**Other Government Agencies**
- California State Archives
- Center for Sacramento History
- Sacramento Room
- Local California libraries or archives

**URLs:**
- http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/
- http://www.centerforsacramentohistory.org/
- https://www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Sacramento-Room
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

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