

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

BAKERSFIELD HISTORY



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California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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Incorporated in 1873, the city of Bakersfield was established as the Kern county seat in 1873 and boasted a population of 372,680 people as of 2017. Built along the Kern River, Bakersfield is not only notable for its oil and ranching history but for its significant collection of historic buildings. It boasts log cabins and historic schoolhouses from all over the region that were rescued from development and rehomed at the Kern' County Museum's Pioneer Village. If you are looking for exciting local information resources in the [California History Section's](#) rich collections, then check out what we have for this city!

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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 Bakersfield!



[Digitized Publications](#)

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



URL: <https://archive.org/>

Type in Search Box: (Bakersfield) 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 Bakersfield. You can see them on Calisphere!



URL: <https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/>

Type in Search Box: ("Bakersfield")

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 Bakersfield resources.



Catalog

If you are looking for Bakersfield 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 7 of this research guide!



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

Type in Subject Box: (Bakersfield)



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 Bakersfield deeds, restaurant menus, pamphlets and more!



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

Type in Search Box:

1. Bakersfield

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



The screenshot shows a search interface for 'City and County Directories'. It includes a header with the title and a background image of city buildings. Below the header, there is a search instruction: 'Enter one or more search terms. The more terms you enter, the fewer results you will get. To search for a range of years, type a colon between the years, e.g., 1940-1950.' The search form contains several fields: 'County', 'City', 'Year', 'Title', 'Author', 'Publisher', and 'Material type'. Each field has a small 'GO' button next to it. At the bottom of the form, there is a larger 'Submit Query' button and a help icon.

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. Bakersfield



The screenshot shows a search interface for 'Telephone Directories'. It includes a header with the title and a background image of a telephone keypad. Below the header, there is a search instruction: 'Type in the city to search. If you get too many results, add the year to your search.' The search form contains several fields: 'Location-White Pages', 'Location-Yellow Pages', 'Year', and 'Material type'. Each field has a small 'GO' button next to it. At the bottom of the form, there is a larger 'Submit Query' button and a help icon.

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. Bakersfield

SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Bakersfield has a long and distinguished history! Check out our resources by type and by subject to learn more about this city's complex past!

Type		Residents
Maps	Manuscripts	Vitals
Books	Newspaper Indexes	African Americans
County Histories	Newspapers	German Americans
Images	Periodicals	Irish Americans
		Native Americans



Subject		
Aeronautics	Fiction	Music
Agriculture	Folklore	Oil
Art	Geology	Politics
Birds	Highways	Railroads
Business	Horse Racing	Religion
Cooking	Migration	Restaurants
Education	Mining	Water
Festivals		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 a variety of counties.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern: Bakersfield



Map File

Looking for a Bakersfield 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: Kern County



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: Bakersfield

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including individual cities. You can check them for pamphlets, certificates and even posters related to organizations, individuals, and area histories.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern: Bakersfield



Postcard Files

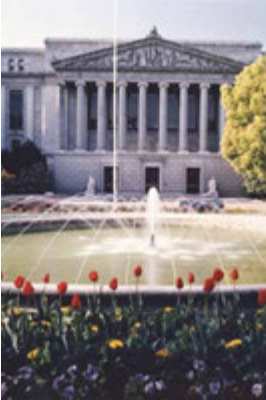
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to Bakersfield. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Counties: Kern: Bakersfield

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/>
- <https://www.library.ca.gov/services>



Other Organizations

[Kern County Clerk](#)
[Kern County Historical Society](#)
[Kern County Library](#)
[Kern County Museum](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.kerncountyclerk.com/>
- <http://http://kernhistoricalsociety.org/>
- <http://www.kerncountylibrary.org/>
- <https://kerncountymuseum.org/>

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Sacramento CA 95814

Phone: (916) 654-0176
E-mail: cslocal@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/>