

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

GERMAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA



[VISIT US](#)

California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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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.



[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))



[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/>

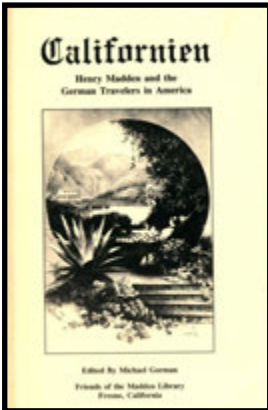
Type in Search Box: (German OR Germans OR Prussian* OR (Turn Verein))

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.



Gorman, Michael et al. [Californien](#). Fresno, Calif: Friends of the Madden Library, 1991.

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



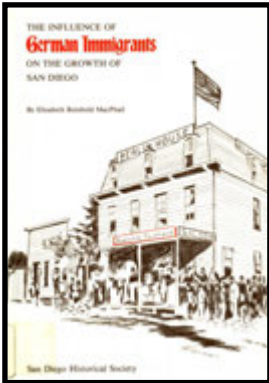
Hammond, George Peter. [German Interest in California before 1850](#). San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1971.

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

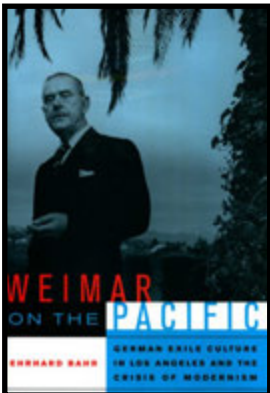


MacPhail, Elizabeth C. [The Influence of German Immigrants on the Growth of San Diego](#) San Diego: San Diego Historical Society, 1986.

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



Bahr, Ehrhard. [Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism](#) . Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

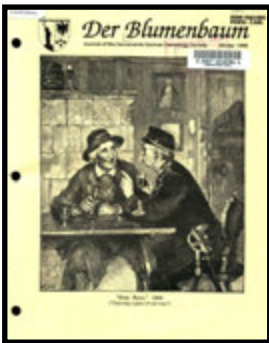
This book looks at the enormous cultural contribution German exiles made to American culture, particularly Los Angeles culture, in the 1930's and 1940's.



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: 990001478900205115



[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.



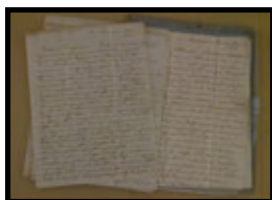
[Volle Family Collection, 1838-1978.](#)

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



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

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



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



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

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

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.



Type

[Maps](#)

[Books](#)

[Images](#)

[Manuscripts](#)

[Newspapers](#)

[Periodicals](#)

[Statistics](#)

Subject

[Agriculture](#)

[Art](#)

[Business](#)

[Cooking](#)

[Education](#)

[Festivals](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Migration](#)

[Mining](#)

[Music](#)

[Poetry](#)

[Politics](#)

[Shipping](#)

[Railroads](#)

[Religion](#)

[Restaurants](#)

[Taxes](#)

[Vitals](#)

[Wine](#)

[Women](#)

[1960's](#)

COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

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.

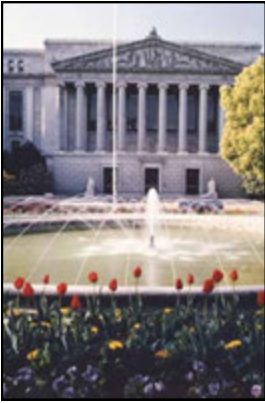


Subject Headings:

- 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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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:
<http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>