

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

SHIPS AND SHIPPING IN CALIFORNIA



[Visit Us](#)

California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Do you enjoy imported goods and products? You may rely on California's shipping industry! Research the development of the California shipping industry, its labor relations, and economic impact not to mention the ships themselves via the [California History Section's](#) rich collections!

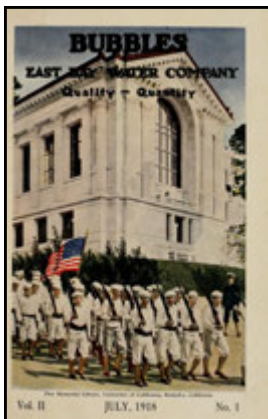
Digitized Resources	3
<u>Reference Works:</u>	
General References	4
Periodicals	7
Manuscript Collections	8
Specialized Lists	9
<u>Search:</u>	
Catalog General Research Tips	10
Subject-Specific Resources in our Catalog	11
County-Specific Resources in our Catalog	12
On-site Research Resources	13
Other On-site Resources	14
Other Places to Look	15

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 vessels and navigation in California!



[Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our fragile shipping industry publications. You can see them on Internet Archive!



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

Type in Search Box: ((Harbor*) OR (Ship*) OR (sailor*)) AND collection: (californiastatelibrary)



[Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive art and photography collection, including images related to California ships. You can see them on Calisphere!

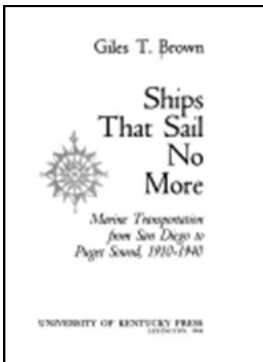


URL: <https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/>

Type in Search Box: ((Harbor*) OR (Ship*) OR (sailor*))

GENERAL REFERENCES

Unsure about where to start? Consult a book! If you are interested in the history of California's shipping industry, these items will point you in the right direction.



Brown, G. (1966). [Ships that sail no more.](#) Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

This older book looks at the business side of California's shipping industry. It not only tracks the effects that shipping had on California ports but also the effects of a devastating shipping company trade war on western development.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



Delgado, J. (1990). [To California by sea.](#) Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Without ships and shipping along the California coastline and waterways, the Gold Rush would have been very different. This book looks at the role that ships played in Gold Rush California.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



Martin, W., & National Maritime Museum Association. (1983). [Sail & steam on the Northern California coast, 1850-1900.](#) San Francisco: National Maritime Museum Association.

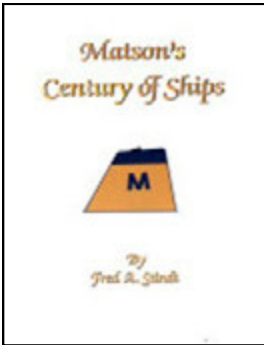
This book abstracts information from several Humboldt region papers to cover 50 years of shipping and shipwreck history up and down the northern California coast.



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

Search by: Title and/or author

GENERAL REFERENCES



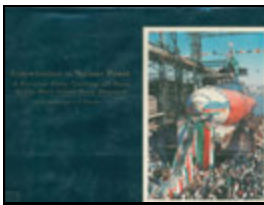
Stindt, F. (1982). [Matson's century of ships](#). Kelseyville, Calif.: F.A. Stindt.

Although this book only covers the Matson line, by tracking the events that affected this company, Stindt is able to discuss not only 100 years of company history but allude to larger events affecting shipping history in general.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



Lemmon, S., & Wichels, E. (1977). [Sidewheelers to nuclear power](#). Annapolis: Leeward Publications.

This sweeping narrative looks at the military side of California's shipping past, specifically Mare Island's role in building and maintaining the Pacific fleet.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



Hull, D., & Book Club of California. (2003). [Up the river](#). San Francisco: Book Club of California.

Inland navigation forms an important part of California shipping history. While only looking at Northern California, this book provides a good introduction to the topic.



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

Search by: Title and/or author

GENERAL REFERENCES



Riegel, M. (1987). [California's maritime heritage](#). San Clemente, CA: Riegel Publishing.

This approachable text provides an overview of California's shipping history, touching on unique designs and important events, as well as providing profiles of prominent vessels.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



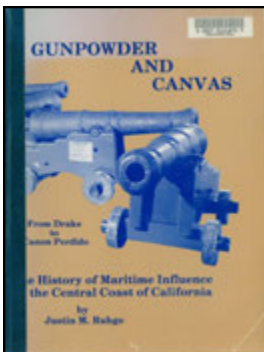
Riegel, M. (1988). [Historic ships of California](#). San Clemente, CA: Riegel Pub.

This small book profiles prominent California vessels from early exploration up through the 1940s, including information about their voyages and contributions to history.



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

Search by: Title and/or author



Ruhge, J. (1987). [Gunpowder and canvas](#). Goleta: Quantum Imaging Associates.

Covering maritime exploration and activity in California from Sir Francis Drake up through to the 1880's, this book contains extensive historic and archeological research.



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

Search by: Title and/or author

PERIODICALS

Interested in bite-sized amounts of industry information? Check these publications for real-time information on shipping trends and historic essays.



Pacific American Steamship Association. (1904-1950). [Pacific Marine Review.](#)

Covering over 40 years of shipping history, this periodical focuses in particular on topics of interest to shipbuilders and ship repair workers including tools, innovative ships and regulations.



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

Search by: Title



Sailors' Union of the Pacific. (1889-1937). [Coast Seamen's Journal.](#)

A seaman's union publication dating from the late 1890's through the 1930's, while this periodical focuses on California issues, it also makes reference to international issues affecting trade and labor rights.



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

Search by: Title



Maritime Museum Association of San Diego. (1964-) [Mains' haul.](#)

Featuring over 40 years of scholarship, the magazine contains articles on the history of seafaring along the Pacific Coast from the exploration period forward.



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

Search by: Title

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

In addition to books and periodicals there are many archival resources that focus on California's shipping history. Here are some relevant collections at the State Library.



[Allan Ottley Collection](#)

Compiled by Allan Ottley, this collection contains extensive research materials related to shipping in California. Much of this material was for an unpublished book.



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

Search by: Title



[William Heath Davis Collection.](#)

The papers of a prominent early shipping magnate, this collection deals with waterborne commerce in both San Diego and San Francisco.



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

Search by: Title



[Stanley Hiller Sr. Collection.](#)

The papers of a prominent fishing businessman, this collection touches on both Hiller company boats and the merchant marines.



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

Search by: Title

SPECIALIZED LISTS

In addition to books and periodicals there are many archival resources that focus on California's shipping history. Here are some relevant collections at the State Library.



[Trading vessels on the California coast, 1786-1848](#)

Containing early California ship information including itineraries, cargoes and captains, this list of ships that plied California's coast between 1786 and 1848 is a treasure trove of information.



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

Search by: Title



[Ship Crew Lists.](#)

These collections of immigration and customs information provide a clear picture of international shipping patterns and crew nationalities for San Francisco.



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

Search by: Title



[Newspaper and information files : ship and vessel reference cards.](#)

A microfilmed version of the California History Section's home-grown indexes related to shipping, this file provides newspaper and periodical references to specific vessels.



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

Search by: Title

CATALOG 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 California vessels.



Catalog

If you are looking for [images](#), [books](#) and [articles](#) on ships, your best source is our [catalog](#).



URL: <https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?>

`vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&lang=en&sortby=rank`

Type in Subject Box: =(Ship* OR Harbors OR Port OR (Water transportation) OR Boat* OR (Marine Terminals) OR Wharves OR (merchant marin*) OR sailor*)

Limit: By desired material type



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 information about individual shipping articles and more!



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

Type in Subject Box: (Harbors OR Port OR (Water transportation) OR (Marine Terminals) OR Wharves OR (merchant marines) OR sailors OR Ships OR Boat*)

For a narrower search: Add a place to your keyword search

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

California's shipping industry has had far-ranging effects, not only on transportation but on politics, agriculture and more! Explore our subject specific resources via these catalog links!

Type

[Maps](#)
[Books](#)
[County Histories](#)
[Images](#)
[Manuscripts](#)

[Newspapers](#)
[Periodicals](#)
[Statistics](#)

Residents

[Vitals](#)
[African Americans](#)
[Chinese Americans](#)
[German Americans](#)
[Italian Americans](#)
[Japanese Americans](#)
[Latin Americans](#)
[Native Americans](#)
[Women](#)

Subject

[Aeronautics](#)
[Agriculture](#)
[Art](#)
[Birds](#)
[Business](#)
[Cooking](#)
[Education](#)
[Environment](#)
[Fiction](#)
[Fish](#)
[Folklore](#)
[Freedom Movements](#)
[Highways](#)
[Horse Racing](#)
[Legislation](#)
[Migration](#)

[Mining](#)
[Music](#)
[Oil](#)
[Poetry](#)
[Politics](#)
[Railroads](#)
[Restaurants](#)

[Water](#)
[Wildlife](#)
[Wine](#)
[1960's](#)



COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Curious about how ships, ferries and other vessels affected a specific county? While these catalog links don't list all of what the California History Section has, they are a good start.



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 shipping articles, books, and manuscripts.



Subject Headings:

1. Vessels (various subdivisions)
 2. Voyages to California
 3. Navigation (various subdivisions)
 4. U.S. Navy
 5. Ferries (various subdivisions)
-



Picture 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 photographic card catalog.



Subject Headings:

1. Vessels (various subdivisions)
-



Map Files

Our map files contain a number of maps referring to shipping routes. Most are not online but a large number are listed in our card file.



Subject Headings:

1. Check by location
 2. Routes: Ocean
-

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including vessels and ships. You can check them for information on specific shipping companies and general industry information.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians.



Postcard Files

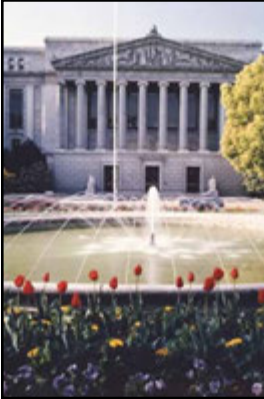
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of vessel images. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians

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](#)



- <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/>



Government Agencies

[California State Archives](#)

[Board of Pilot Commissioners](#)

[Division of Boating and Waterways](#)

[Delta Protection Commission](#)

[California Department of Water Resources](#)

[California State Lands Commission](#)

[California Coastal Commission](#)



- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
- <https://bopc.ca.gov/>
- http://www.dbw.ca.gov/?page_id=28702
- <http://delta.ca.gov/>
- <https://www.water.ca.gov/>
- <http://www.slc.ca.gov/>
- <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/index.html>



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