

California State Genealogical Alliance

Vital Record Finding Aid

Vital Records

When California became a state, the recording of vital records was left to each county. Deaths and marriages were more likely to be recorded than births. In 1905 the state instituted state recording of births and deaths, the event was recorded at the county level and sent on to the state. Marriage records were not collected at the state level until 1949. See *Pre Statehood Records for vital records recorded by the California missions*.

Original Records

California Department of Health Services
Office of Vital Records
M.S. 5103
P.O. Box 997410
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410

[Note: It is recommended that you contact the county of origin, rather than the state.]

Statewide Indexes

Item	Library	Vital Search free and paid	Ancestry subscription	Rootswab
Births 1905-1995	Microfiche	Yes	Yes	
Marriages 1850-1877			limited counties	
Marriages 1949-1985	Microfiche	Yes		
Marriages 1960-1985			Yes	
Deaths Pre 1905				Yes
Deaths 1905-1994	Microfiche and Microfilm			
Deaths 1940-1997				Yes
Deaths 1905-2000		Yes		

California State Genealogical Alliance

Cemetery, Mortuary and Obituary Files

[California National Cemeteries](#)

Fort Rosecrans [San Diego]
Golden Gate [San Bruno],
Los Angeles,
Riverside, San Francisco [Presidio],
San Joaquin Valley [Gustine]

[Ancestor Hunt](#)

Court Records

Court records are generally held at the county level. These records include probates, divorces, criminal cases, civil cases, military discharges and more. See each county for more information.

[Superior Court Locator](#) [California Supreme Court](#)

Land Records *Contact County Recordors for Deeds / Patents and Mortgages recorded in each county*

[Bureau of Land Management](#)

California State Office
2800 Cottage Way
Suite W-1834
Sacramento, CA 95825-1886
Phone: (916) 978-4400 - Fax: (916) 978-4416

Contact for pre 1908 records <http://www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov/PatentSearch/Default.asp?>
Post July 1, 1908 records are online

Use online maps for principal meridians and baselines. Records held by the California State Office include: GLO/BLM Field Notes and Plats, 1850-present; Rancho Records. Records of the various Spanish and Mexican land grants including GLO field notes and plats, as well as certain private land claim dockets, disenos, and indexes to land grant cases;

California State Genealogical Alliance

Mineral Surveys 1850-present; Contract Examiners Books 1885-1917 In 1885, Comm. Sparks made it mandatory for each survey to be examined prior to approval. These books contain information regarding name of the examiner, dates of examination, character of the survey, and actions by the GLO;

Tract books noting all transactions affecting public lands from the 1880's to 1970's;

Letters from Commissioner to Surveyor General-1851-1898. Washington's side of the conversation;

Letters from the Surveyor General of Calif. to Commissioner of the GLO, 1851-1879. These letters are on microfiche (from NARA records) and are sorted, roughly, by date sent.

California State Archives

Index to land grants confirmed by US 1855-1875

http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives/level3_ussg3.html ; Spanish Archives - Title pages and sketch maps found in Monterey abt 1871 , missions ranchos pueblo lands Indian reservations, government lands; homesteads; State Reclamation Board; Fish and Game; Natural Resources Board; Forestry Board; Native American Heritage Commission; Mining; Agricultural; Forestry

National Archives-Pacific Region

California Private Land Claim Docket;

California Spanish Archives;

Index to Private Land Grant Cases;

Index of Spanish-Mexican Private Land Grant Records;

Bureau of Land Management Records; Mining; etc.

Naturalization Records

Coming Soon - an article on Naturalization Records

US Citizenship & Immigration Services

US District Court Southern CA

also available on microfilm from LDS Library and at NARA Laguna Nigel

US District Court Northern CA

The original northern California District court records are available in at the Pacific Region - San Bruno. They are indexed by a card file on microfilm.

California State Genealogical Alliance

Military Records

Contact individual bases for availability of historical records and base histories. Military Naturalization Records might be held in local repositories.

[California State Military Museum](#)

1119 Second Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: (916) 442-2883 Fax: (916) 442-7532 _____

[Civil War Regimental Histories](#)

California National Cemeteries

see **Cemetery, Mortuary and Obituary Files**

Church Records

Use city directories to find what churches existed in a community at the time your ancestors lived there. If church still exist ask for location of records, if not look for repositories for that church denomination.

[Church Angel](#)

Ethnic

[Society of Hispanic Historical and Ancestral Research](#)

[African Ancestry in California](#)

[Coast Archeological Research \[Chinese content\]](#)

[Chinese Historical Society of Southern California](#)

Organizational

Fraternal Organizations

[IOOF California](#)

[Masons California](#)

[Native Daughters of the Golden West](#)

California State Genealogical Alliance

Multi-County Resources

[California Genealogical Society](#)

[Southern California Genealogical Society](#)

Other Recommended Websites

[Southwest Oral History Association](#)

[California Biography Projects](#)

[Cyndis List - California](#)