

Urban Research
With an Emphasis on Los Angeles and Alameda Counties
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Check both the FamilySearch Catalog by county and city to see what records have been microfilmed. Also check the FamilySearch Wiki for additional resources.

Each county recorder's office provides information about how to order birth, marriage, and death records.

Search city, county library, and genealogical society's websites for historical record collections such as digitized newspapers, photos, and indexes to local records.

Check local genealogical society websites to see if they have placed records or abstracts online.

Search for government archives, i.e. "Sacramento County Archives" to learn what records they house, or might be available online.

Use city and telephone directories to find addresses and dates of residence.

When researching real property, try a Google search by city with the phrase "house history" to locate guides to local government and other resources.

Property records can sometimes be found online at city or county departments such as the Department of Public Works; Building & Safety; The Clerk Recorder/Registrar, and the County Assessor.

Los Angeles City and County Resources

Los Angeles City Clerk – Archives: <https://clerk.lacity.org/city-archives-and-records-center/online-resources>

Linkpendium – Los Angeles County Resources: http://www.linkpendium.com/los_angeles-ca-genealogy/

Los Angeles City (and some surrounding communities) Directories: <https://rescarta.lapl.org/ResCarta-Web/jsp/RcWebBrowse.jsp> and <https://sites.google.com/site/onlinedirectorysite/Home/usa/ca/losangeles>

Los Angeles Telephone Directories via the Library of Congress – White and Yellow pages:
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/united-states-telephone-directory-collection/?fa=location:california%7Clocation:los+angeles+central+area>

Los Angeles County records available through FamilySearch.org:
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&query=%2Bkeywords%3A%22los%20angeles%20county%22>

Los Angeles Conservancy Historical Research Guide:
<https://www.laconservancy.org/resources/guide/historical-research-guide> This guide can pertain to other urban areas as well.

Los Angeles County Deed Records 1850-1913, Indexes to 1922:
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/823810?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

Los Angeles County Mortgage Records 1850-1901, Indexes 1902-1910:

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/979988?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

Los Angeles County Parcel, Property, Surveyor's Records, etc. Maps:

<https://dpw.lacounty.gov/smpm/landrecords/ParcelMaps.aspx>

City of Los Angeles Building Records: <https://www.ladbs.org/services/check-status/online-building-records>

Los Angeles Dept. of Engineering: Search by address to obtain Tract name, street address, etc. The County Assessor Report may provide date of original construction: <https://navigatela.lacity.org/navigatela/>

How to Obtain Los Angeles Real Estate Records: http://www.laalmanac.com/main/records_real_estate.php

Baist's 1910 Real Estate Surveys of the City of Los Angeles:

<http://www.historicmapworks.com/Atlas/US/7446/Los+Angeles+1910+Baist%27s+Real+Estate+Surveys/>

Baist's 1920 Real Estate Surveys of the City of Los Angeles: San Fernando Valley and part of Los Angeles:

<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15799coll58/id/31391/rec/19>

Los Angeles County Superior Court Archives – Civil, Probate, Divorce, Criminal cases 1910-2004.

http://www.lacourt.org/generalinfo/Archives/GI_AR005.aspx

Los Angeles County Court Cases 1850s – 1910. Huntington Library. Searchable by name. Fees apply.

<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p16003coll10>

Area Maps: Automobile Club of Southern California: USC Digital Collections:

<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/search/field/rights/searchterm/Automobile>

Los Angeles Public Library Historical Photo Collections: <https://tessa.lapl.org/>

University of Southern California Digital Collections: <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/collections>

Alameda County

Alameda County Research Guide:

<https://www.library.ca.gov/Content/pdf/californiaHistory/AlamedaResearch.pdf>

Linkpendium – Alameda County resources: <http://www.linkpendium.com/alameda-ca-genealogy/>

Alameda County records available through FamilySearch.org -

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&query=%2Bkeywords%3Aalameda%20%2Bkeywords%3Acounty%20%2Bkeywords%3Acalifornia>

Alameda County Telephone Directories – includes many county cities:

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/united-states-telephone-directory-collection/?fa=location:california%7Clocation:oakland>

Alameda County Deed Record Search 1969-current: <https://acgov.org/auditor/clerk/opr/index.htm>

Alameda County Tract and Real Property Search (watch the Tutorial):

<https://www.acgov.org/MS/SurveyorDocSearch/Home/Index?type=1>

Alameda County House History Research Guide:

http://www.oaklandheritage.org/assets/2017_How_Old_is_My_House.pdf

Alameda County Superior Court Records: Civil, Probate, and Divorce records.

Address: Alameda County Superior Court Records Management, 2233 Shoreline Dr., Alameda, CA 94501

Contact: AskRecordsManagement under the "RECORDS" heading.

<http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Pages.aspx/Phone-Fax-Numbers>

&

<http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Resources/Documents/List%20of%20Charges%20for%20Records.pdf>

Fresno County

Fresno County Grantor/Grantee Deed Indexes (best to search volume-by-volume)

<https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/recorder/how-to-get-copies/recorded-documents>

Fresno County Public Library Digital Collections: <http://www.fresnolibrary.org/ref/collections.html>

Miscellaneous Collections

Free digital newspaper Collections: California Digital Newspaper Collection: <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>

Chronicling of America: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Online Archive of California (OAC): Primary source material maintained by over 200 institutions. It contains more than 250,000 digital images and documents. <https://oac.cdlib.org/>

Calisphere – Contains digital collections from museums, all 10 U. C. Campuses, libraries, and archives throughout the state: <https://calisphere.org/>

Significant collection of original Madera County records: <https://calisphere.org/collections/27184/>

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: Los Angeles Public Library with a personal library card. www.lapl.org

Library of Congress (full color maps), an ongoing project.

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps>

eBay: Historical postcards and photos. www.ebay.com

Archive.org is home to some original county records. A simple search for the words "Assessment Book" turned up about 10 volumes from San Jose, CA. www.archive.org