

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

CALIFORNIA ODDITIES



[Visit Us](#)

*California History Room
900 N Street Room 200
9:30-4 Monday-Friday*

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California is full of odd sights and strange people. We are after all the home of Emperor Norton, the Winchester Mystery House, the Fresno Sunken gardens and more! If you are doing a research project about an unusual aspect of this state's history, please feel free to explore the odder personalities and places in California's past via the [California History Section's](#) rich collections!

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

ONLINE RESOURCES

Can't come to the library just yet? No worries! These resources might help you develop an understanding of the scale and scope of California's oddities.



Image Courtesy of Yolo County
Archives, LK 12-005

Sacramento Archives Crawl Online.

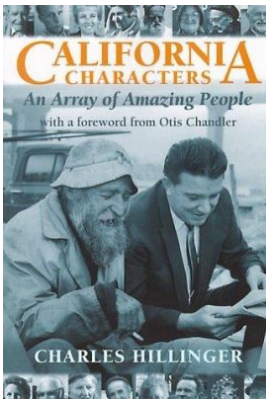
Want to see the sorts of odd things various archives in the Sacramento area have? If you couldn't make the 2017 Sacramento Archives crawl, you can still see highlights from the California State Library's displays!



URL: [http://www.library.ca.gov/calhist/
events.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/calhist/events.html)

BOOKS

Not only is California a place full of odd wonders and strange sights, Californians take pride in it! These are just a few books you can use to start researching California's stranger stories.

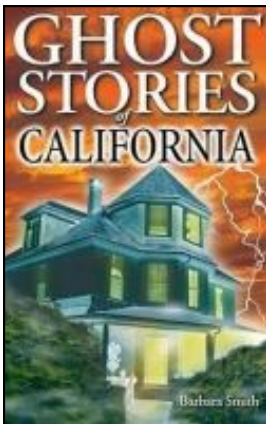


Hillinger, C. (2000). *California characters : [an array of amazing people]*. Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press.

California has always had its personalities. Read about 20th century ones in this book providing biographies of many of California's more eccentric individuals.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001258452



Smith, B. (2000). *Ghost stories of California*. Edmonton ; Renton, WA: Lone Pine Pub.

Do you like the Queen Mary? Then check out these other haunted California locations! This book provides a comprehensive rundown of haunted spots across the state.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001112567

BOOKS

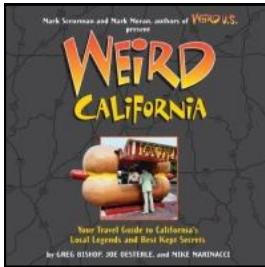


Greenberg, T. (2002). [*California firsts : The famous, infamous, and quirky of the Golden State*](#). Philadelphia: Camino Books.

There's a first for everything, and almost everything new seems a little odd at first. Check out the unusual firsts that have put California on the map, for both good and bizarre reasons.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001145333

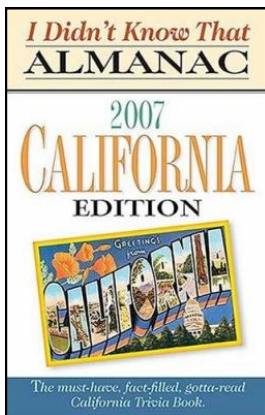


Bishop, G., Oesterle, J., Marinacci, M., Moran, M., & Sceurman, M. (2006). [*Weird California : Your travel guide to California's local legends and best kept secrets*](#). New York, NY: Sterling Pub.

Do you want to see the hubcap ranch? How about Salvation Mountain? Check out some out-of-the-way, (and out-of-this-world) California haunts with this fun travel book!



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001265984

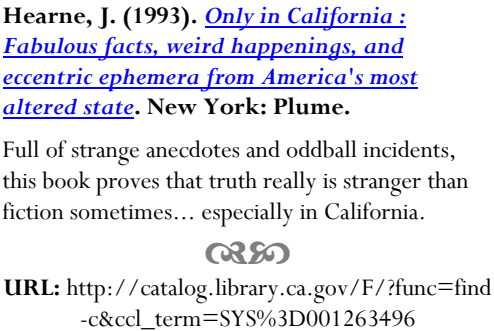


Chavez, J. (2007). [*I didn't know that almanac : California edition*](#). Nashville, TN: Cool Springs Press.

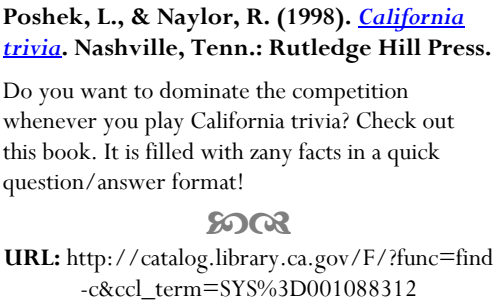
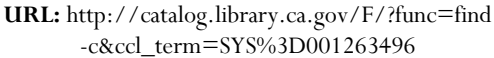
Curious about what happened on a particular day in history? Want some fast, fun facts? Check out this California specific almanac! It's full of interesting and unusual California tales.



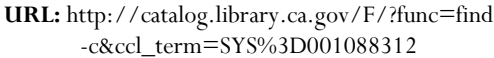
URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001480697



Full of strange anecdotes and oddball incidents, this book proves that truth really is stranger than fiction sometimes... especially in California.



Do you want to dominate the competition whenever you play California trivia? Check out this book. It is filled with zany facts in a quick question/answer format!



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's odder sites.



The screenshot shows the 'California State Library' catalog search page. It features a 'Guided Search' section with fields for 'Title begins with', 'Author', 'Subject', 'Year', 'Publisher', 'Words adjusted?' (Yes/No), and 'Collective in search?'. Below these are 'Limit results to' options for 'Language' and 'Format'. A 'Search Tips' section at the bottom provides instructions on using quotation marks for exact phrases, wildcards for truncation, and Boolean operators (AND, OR) for combining terms.

Catalog

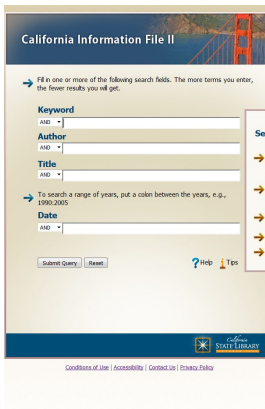
If you are looking for [images](#), [books](#) and [articles](#) on California's oddities, one source is our [catalog](#).



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-a-0>

Type in Subject Box: (anecdotes OR Miscellanea OR Curiosities OR Natural Phenomena OR legends OR Folklore OR Oddities OR Follies OR Ghosts OR Circus)

Limit: By desired material type or company



The screenshot shows the 'California Information File II' search page. It includes a header with a bridge image and the title 'California Information File II'. Below is a search instruction: 'Fill in one or more of the following search fields. The more terms you enter, the fewer results you will get.' The search fields are 'Keyword', 'Author', 'Title', and 'Date', each with a dropdown menu for 'AND' or 'OR' operators. A 'Date' field has a range selector (1990-2005). At the bottom, there are 'Submit Query' and 'Reset' buttons, along with a 'Help' link and a 'Tips' icon. The footer contains the 'California State Library' logo and a link to 'Conditions of Use | Accessibility | Contact Us | Privacy Policy'.

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 Mystery Spot bumper stickers, Winchester Mystery House pamphlets and more!



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

Type in Subject Box: (Miscellanea OR Curiosities OR Natural Phenomena OR Oddities OR Follies OR Ghosts)

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

COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Are you researching an odd person, a legend or a strange spot in a specific county? While these catalog links don't list all that the California History Section has, they are a good starting point.



[Riverside](#)
[Sacramento](#)
[San Bernardino](#)
[San Diego](#)
[San Francisco](#)
[San Joaquin](#)
[San Luis Obispo](#)
[San Mateo](#)
[Santa Barbara](#)
[Santa Clara](#)
[Santa Cruz](#)
[Ventura](#)
[Yuba](#)

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 history...including its eccentricities.



Subject Headings:

1. Characters: Eccentric
2. First Events
3. Ghosts
4. Mysteries of California



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:

1. Subject heading for specific oddity (check with librarians)

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including California's oddities. You can check them for pamphlets, fliers and other information.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians.



Postcard Files

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to unusual sites or tourist attractions. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians



Map Files

Want maps of an odd spot in California?

Our map collection contains a wide variety of resources, some of which might help you!



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](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.library.ca.gov/gps/index.html>
- http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/law_coll.html
- http://www.library.ca.gov/about/sutro_main.html
- http://www.library.ca.gov/collections/general_coll.html



Other Government Agencies

[California State Archives](#)

[Center for Sacramento History](#)

[Sacramento Room](#)

Local California libraries or archives



URLs:

- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
- <http://www.centerforsacramentohistory.org/>
- <http://www.saclibrary.org/Locations/SacramentoRoom>



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