



## **Resources for Researching Individuals, Businesses, and Properties**

Founded in 1953, the Center for Sacramento History (CSH) is funded by the City and County of Sacramento and is the repository and research center for City and County historical public records. The Center also collects personal papers and records from local individuals, businesses, organizations, and institutions. Our collecting focus is on Sacramento County, with a goal to reflect the many aspects of the social, political, geographic, and cultural history of the region. Collections include public (government) records; court documents; personal papers; photographs; films; videos; oral histories; sound recordings; maps; architectural drawings; and ephemera.

The following is a summary of CSH collection resources commonly used for researching individuals, businesses, and properties. Online resources are included when available. Please contact us at [CSH@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:CSH@cityofsacramento.org) or 916-808-7072 with questions or to set up a research appointment.

See this guide online:



# Property Research

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## **City of Sacramento Assessment Rolls and Map Books, 1849-1955** (*City and County Assessors*)

- Assessment rolls list taxpayers within boundaries of the City of Sacramento, specifying property owner, assessed value of property, value of improvements made to property, and taxes paid. Roll volumes are ordered alphabetically by taxpayer.
- Map books show site of assessed property with property owner's name, within the boundaries of the City of Sacramento. Volumes are ordered by street and block.
- City boundaries changed over the course of time as territories were annexed to the city beginning in 1911. Rolls and map books after 1911 are divided into "Old Boundaries" (original city boundaries) or "Annexed Territories" (territories annexed to the original city boundaries).

Map books are digitized and available online at [archive.org/details/cshcityassessormapbooks](https://archive.org/details/cshcityassessormapbooks). See the City Assessor records finding aid at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c85q52wp/>.

## **Sacramento County Assessment Rolls and Map Books, 1850-1900; 1911-1978** (*County Assessor*)

- Assessment rolls and map books document the entire county, and include the same types of information as the City Assessor rolls and map books above.
- The earliest full county map book is 1870. There are twelve map books that cover only Folsom dating from 1856-1869, and three that cover only Galt dating from 1872-1875
- Roll volumes are ordered alphabetically by school district, and map book volumes are ordered by tract name (with a color key to school district names).
- Volumes are typically divided into "Annexed" (territories annexed to the original city boundaries), and "Outside Sections" (areas in the county expressed in "township" and "range" coordinates, outside of the city).

Map books are digitized and available online at [archive.org/details/cshcountyassessormapbooks](https://archive.org/details/cshcountyassessormapbooks). See the County Assessor finding aid at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c88059js/>.

## **Personal Property Rolls, 1893-1966** (*City and County Assessor*)

Rolls list value of personal property, solvent credit, intangibles, and total tax assessment of taxpayers. Volumes are arranged alphabetically by taxpayer. See the City Assessor records finding aid at [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c85q52wp/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c85q52wp/) and the County Assessor at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c88059js/>.

## **City Building Permits, c.1908-1970** (*City Building Department*)

Provide information about construction on particular buildings, including address of residence/business, owner's name, date of permit, amount paid, work done, and occasionally the architect's name. Some also include additional documents and plans on associated microfilm (those that have reel/frame numbers listed, for example R123 F456). Most permits back to around 1915 are searchable online under Advanced Search at [records.cityofsacramento.org](https://records.cityofsacramento.org). For earlier permits, see this index: <https://archive.org/details/building-permits-index-1878-1915>.

## **City Building and Plumbing Permits, 1894-1966** (*City Building Department*)

Similar in content to City Building Permits. Volumes are arranged chronologically by permit filing date. Some books are digitized and available online at <https://archive.org/details/centerforsacramentohistory?tab=collection&query=plumbers>

**City of North Sacramento assessor records and building permits, 1924-1964 (MS0192):**

The Center holds assessor records and building permits from the City of North Sacramento dating from its incorporation in 1924 until it was merged with the City of Sacramento in 1964. Properties included in the collection are within the approximate boundaries of the American River to the south, the Sacramento River to the west, Lampasas Avenue to the north, and what was then 10th Street but is now Evergreen Street to the east.

**City Tapper's Record Book, 1854-1877 (*City Building Department*)**

Documents connection into the city water supply, similar to building permits in content and arrangement. Records include addresses of structure, name of owner or business, side of street, and name of plumber. Volume entries listed chronologically by permit filing date.

**Sanborn Insurance Maps of Sacramento, Elk Grove and North Sacramento**

The fire insurance maps show commercial and residential buildings, with floor plans and structural information. Published as a two-volume set in 1915 and a three-volume set in 1952, the Sacramento volumes show change over time in the built environment with yearly paste-over edits. The North Sacramento volume was published in 1926, when the area was a separate city. The Elk Grove map book is from 1902. See the collection finding aid at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8tf053v/>.

**Building Surveys, 1970s-2000s (*City Planning Department, Historic Environment Consultants*)**

Both the City Planning Department and Historic Environment Consultants collections include building surveys that document individual residences, businesses, and public buildings. Information includes the building's date of construction, architectural styles, ownership history, usage, and photographs. See the City Planning Department records finding aid at [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8j390d9/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8j390d9/) and the Historic Environment Consultants finding aid at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8k362cv/>.

**Sacramento City Block Study Collection, c. 1960-1990**

This set of records includes social, economic, and historical studies of specific city blocks from the 1850s through the 1950s, primarily focusing on old city boundary areas, prepared by California State University students and others. Index cards to individual case studies arranged by numbered and lettered streets.

**Old City Residential Building Survey, Charles Hall Page & Associates Sacramento, 1976**

A 1976 survey of residential homes within the old city boundaries built before 1920 that met certain criteria for historical/cultural, architectural, and environmental significance. Information includes date of construction, original owner, and owner as of 1976, additions and alterations, architectural analysis, and historical background. Homes are listed by numbered and lettered streets.

**Homestead Records, 1860-1929 (County Recorder)**

Includes Abandonment of Homesteads, Declarations of Homesteads, and Homestead Declarations of Married Persons. Three separate records all pertaining to property. Collections contain the name of homesteader, description and location of property, and dates. Volumes arranged chronologically by date of homestead establishment; typescript index to dates arranged by name of homesteader.

# People/Business Research

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## **Sacramento City Directories, 1850-1990 (not inclusive, some on microfilm)**

Entries are listed alphabetically by individual or business name. In 1914, the directories began providing a reverse directory by street name and address. Entries can include a person's name; address of residence and whether they rented or owned; business and business address; occupation; spouse's name; and, in the case of the earliest directories, where they came to Sacramento from. Volumes include business listings and advertisements. See digitized directories at <https://archive.org/details/cshcitydirectories> and the collection finding aid at <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c87s7vk7/>.

## **County Coroner Records, 1850-1977**

Contains case files, registers, and inquests of deaths registered in Sacramento County. Inquests usually include a cause of death, coroner's report, and cemetery where deceased was buried. See the collection finding aid and search for names at [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c80k2g9z/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c80k2g9z/).

## **Naturalization Records, 1850-1955**

Include declarations of intention, naturalization records, and petitions for naturalization of people who sought citizenship through Sacramento County. Records can be found in three different courts: County, District, and Superior. Information includes country of nativity, name of petitioner, and witnesses. Declarations sometimes include a photo of the declarant. See the collection finding aid at [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8db87q1/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8db87q1/)

## **Wills Records, 1857-1927** (*County Clerk*)

Contains a copy of the last will and testament of deceased individuals who resided in the county. An index can be found at <https://archive.org/details/wills-index>.

## **Probate Records, 1849-1945**

Includes probate indexes, case files, and registers of estates and actions. Case files usually include an inventory of an individual's property, list of heirs, last will and testament, and appraisements. In addition to estate cases, indexes also note guardianships, adoptions, and declarations of incompetence, but CSH does not hold those case files. See the collection finding aid at [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c89k4hzf/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c89k4hzf/). Indexes are searchable online:

**Probate cases, 1850-1879:** [archive.org/details/SacramentoCountyProbateIndex1850-1879](https://archive.org/details/SacramentoCountyProbateIndex1850-1879).

**Probate cases, 1880-1945, last names A-K:** <https://archive.org/details/general-index-A-K>

**Probate cases, 1880-1945, last names L-M:** <https://archive.org/details/general-index-L-Z>

## **Sacramento City and County Court Cases, 1849-1967**

The Center has case files from all courts of the city and county (see listing below). Case files usually include the nature of complaint, demurrer, dismissal, answer, summons, testimony, subpoenas, and judgment. Divorce cases can be found in civil suits. Some indexes are digitized and available online.

### **Sacramento County Court of First Instance (1848-1853)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8708786/>

### **Sacramento County District Court (1849-1880)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8j1092f/>

Criminal case index: [archive.org/details/SacCoDistrictCourtCrimIndex](https://archive.org/details/SacCoDistrictCourtCrimIndex)

**Sacramento County Court (1850-1879)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8ms40k5/>

Civil case index: [archive.org/details/saccountycourtcivilcaseindex](https://archive.org/details/saccountycourtcivilcaseindex).

Criminal case index: [archive.org/details/SacCountyCourtCrimIndex](https://archive.org/details/SacCountyCourtCrimIndex)

**Sacramento County Court of Sessions (1850-1879)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c81n86zf/>

Criminal case index: [archive.org/details/SacCoCourtSessionsCrimIndex](https://archive.org/details/SacCoCourtSessionsCrimIndex)

**Sacramento County Justice Court (1852-1967)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c89w0p2f/>

Civil case index: <https://archive.org/details/justice-court-index-civil>

Criminal case index: <https://archive.org/details/justice-court-index-criminal>

Franklin Township civil case index: <https://archive.org/details/justice-court-index-franklin-township-civil>

**Sacramento County Small Claims Court (1925-1961)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8vq39nw/>

**Sacramento County Municipal Court (1939-1974)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8m61t65/>

**Sacramento City Police Court (1857-1938)**

Finding aid: <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8474jt2/>

**Cemetery Records**

Includes plot maps of the Old City Cemetery; deed and record books for the Old City Cemetery, New Helvetia, and East Lawn; and burial cards for Old City Cemetery. On our website, we have a searchable map showing who is buried where at the Old City Cemetery: [centerforsacramentohistory.org/collections/city-cemetery-plot-map](https://centerforsacramentohistory.org/collections/city-cemetery-plot-map). It can be searched by a number of variables, including name, sex, race, birth date, death date, birthplace, age, cause of death.

**Corporation Files, 1850-1978** (*County Clerk*)

Approximately 19,640 Articles of Incorporation filed by commercial and nonprofit organizations. Includes file number, name of corporation, place of operation, purpose of corporation, date of filing, names of directors, and other information.

**Great Register of Voters, 1866-1914** (*County Clerk*)

Entries include the name of the individual, nativity, residence, height, occupation, age, and date of registration. Women appear in the 1912 through 1914 registers, after having received the right to vote in California in 1911. Volumes arranged alphabetically by name.

# Digital Resources

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The Center hosts its collection finding aids and digitized collection material online at the following sites.

## Online Archive of California

Searchable finding aids for the Center's collections. Over 150 are currently posted, with more continually being added. [oac.cdlib.org/institutions/Center+for+Sacramento+History](http://oac.cdlib.org/institutions/Center+for+Sacramento+History)

## Internet Archive

The Center's digitized archival and audiovisual material can be accessed at [archive.org/details/centerforsacramentohistory](http://archive.org/details/centerforsacramentohistory). Digitized audiovisual material includes news film and other film, home movies, oral histories, and audio recordings. Digitized textual material includes maps, police mug books, police jail registers, city and county assessor map books, court indexes, city directories, and other indexes.

## CSH Online Database

Our searchable online catalog. There are around 75,000 searchable entries from our collections (photographs, museum artifacts, reference books and reports), but this is in no way a comprehensive catalog. Not all of the Center's collections are searchable via this database.

[sacramento.pastperfectonline.com](http://sacramento.pastperfectonline.com)

## The Center's collection material is also available at the following sites:

### Sacramento Bee Archives

With a Sacramento Public Library card, users can access and search the entire run of the Sacramento Bee, starting in 1857. [Bee archives](#)

### California Digital Newspaper Collection

Newspapers published in Sacramento County from 1849 to 1922, including the Sacramento Union. [cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc](http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc)

### City of Sacramento Digitized Records

City of Sacramento building permits, city council minutes, ordinances, resolutions, and building permits. [records.cityofsacramento.org](http://records.cityofsacramento.org)

### Sacramento History Online

A collection of photographs from four local institutions that trace the history of transportation and agriculture in the Sacramento region. [sacramentohistory.org](http://sacramentohistory.org)

### Sacramento County Maps

Sacramento County maps of record, including parcel maps, subdivision maps, record of surveys, assessment maps, highway maps, USGS quads, corner records, unrecorded maps, and maps of the Sacramento-San Joaquin line. [sacmaps.com](http://sacmaps.com)