Santa Cruz Public Libraries - Reference Department

Subject Guide: Genealogy Research

A guide to getting started with genealogy research with resources available from the Santa Cruz Public Library and Santa Cruz Genealogical Society collections.

Getting Started: Introductory Books

Here are some basic resources available in the Santa Cruz Library and Genealogy Society collections.

Books:

- **Ancestry's red book: American state, county and town sources**
  by Eichholz, Alice

  *Includes bibliographical references and index.*

- **Genealogies in the Library of Congress**
  by Library of Congress,

  *There are also several supplements to the original two-volume edition.*

- **Genealogist's guide to discovering your female ancestors**
  by Carmack, Sharon

  *Explains how to use different sources to trace one's lineage.*

- **Genealogy online**
  by Crowe, Elizabeth

  *Provides a guided tour of online resources and communities to help anyone begin or delve deeper into a family history project.*

- **Handybook for genealogists**
  by Everton, George

  *An indispensable resource for any genealogist attempting to trace their heritage using the county record system of the United States.*

- **Land and property research in the United States**
  by Hone, E. Wade

  *A comprehensive and useful review of land and property research for genealogists.*

- **Researcher's guide to American genealogy**
  by Greenwood, Val

  *A basic reference book for professionals or for anybody who wants to dig up family roots.*

- **They came in ships: a guide to finding your immigrant ancestor's arrival record**
  by Colletta, John

  *The author tells you not only what fundamental facts you need to know about your immigrant ancestor before beginning, but suggests where you may find that information as well.*

- **Unpuzzling your past: the best-selling basic guide to genealogy**
  by Croom, Emily

  *Describes methods for conducting genealogical research and explains how to trace the history of a family through the use of living sources and public records.*
Databases: Genealogy

These online subscription resources are available on the library’s website. These databases require a Santa Cruz Public Libraries card number. HeritageQuest is the one genealogy database that can accessed at home; the others are for in-library use only.

Reference Databases:

- **American Ancestors** ([http://www.americanancestors.org/](http://www.americanancestors.org/))
  
  Provides access to more than 2,400 searchable databases containing over 110 million names. Some of the most popular include: The American Genealogist, Massachusetts Vital Records, 1841-1910, The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, and Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850. Purchased through funds donated by the Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County. This database is available ONLY at the Downtown Branch Library.

  
  Ancestry Library Edition delivers billions of records in census data, vital records, directories, photos, and more. Unlock the story of you with sources like censuses, vital records, immigration records, family histories, military records, court and legal documents, directories, photos, maps, and more. This database is available ONLY from inside the Library (any branch).

  
  Research materials for tracing family history and American culture. Search over 25,000 family and local history books, US Federal Census Records from 1790-1930 as well as genealogy and local history articles. Purchased through funds donated by the Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County.

Databases: Newspapers & Magazines

These other library databases may also be helpful in genealogy research. Most of them require a Santa Cruz Public Libraries card number.

Reference Databases:

  
  Search current and archived coverage of issues, events, people, government, sports and more with the largest collection of full-text U.S. newspapers. Includes staff-written articles, obituaries, editorials, announcements, real estate and other sections.

  
  Designed specifically for public libraries, this multidisciplinary database provides full text for more than 2,000 general reference publications with full-text information dating as far back as 1922. Covering virtually every subject area of general interest, MasterFILE™ Complete also contains full text for nearly 1,000 reference books and over 107,000 primary source documents, as well as an Image Collection of more than 592,000 photos, maps & flags.

  
  Indexes over 11,500 periodicals, including over 7000 full-text publications, and over 400 newspaper services worldwide. Backfile coverage is to 1980. Also includes more than 500 travel guides, National Public Radio programs from 1990 to the present, and links to over 5,000 video files.

- **Historical Newspaper Index** ([https://www.santacruzpl.org/historical_newspaper_index/](https://www.santacruzpl.org/historical_newspaper_index/))
  
  Index compiled by the Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County to several newspapers published in Santa Cruz County. Coverage is primarily 1856-1965, with some additional citations from 1965 to date.

- **Local News Index** ([http://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/collections/show/3](http://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/collections/show/3))
  
  Index to early newspapers published in Santa Cruz, California. The papers indexed include the Santa Cruz Daily Surf, the Santa Cruz Evening News, and the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

- **Newspaper Clipping File** ([http://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/collections/show/3](http://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/collections/show/3))
  
  Index to the Santa Cruz Public Libraries' newspaper clipping file. The articles range in date from the
early 1900's to the present.

- **Newspapers.com - World Collection**
  Newspapers.com is the online home of over 1 million pages of historical newspapers from around the United States and beyond. Includes Santa Cruz newspapers.

**Databases: People & History**

These other library databases may also be helpful in genealogy research. They require a Santa Cruz Public Libraries card number.

**Reference Databases:**

- **Demographics Now**
  With Demographics Now you can search for individuals, households, and companies by a variety of parameters. You can also find demographic reports by geographic range for information including income, housing, age, education, and consumer expenditures. See the tutorials center for instructions on how to run searches, create sales lead lists, generate demographics reports, search U. S. Census data, and more.

- **Reference USA**
  Directory information for more than 24 million U.S. businesses and over 267 million U.S. residents. Businesses are searchable by name, zip code, SIC, and geographical location. U.S. residential database is searchable by name, address, and phone number.

- **U.S. History in Context (Gale Cengage)**
  Comprehensive coverage of the most studied topics in U.S. history courses. This integrated collection covers all areas of U.S. history from the arrival of Vikings in North America 1,000 years ago to Vietnam, Watergate and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. A rich collection of primary documents, original reference sources and newspaper/journal articles.

- **World History in Context (Gale Cengage)**
  World History in Context reaches back nearly 5,000 years to chronicle the rise and fall of cultures and societies across all continents and eras. Rare primary sources combine with reliable references to put content into context for every learner. Includes primary source documents, thousands of full-text articles and reference documents.

**Online Resources**

These are free resources available on the Internet.

**Related Websites:**

- **Best State Websites**
  Family Tree Magazine's list (with links) of the best state archives and historical and genealogical societies.

- **California Center for Health Statistics and Informatics**
  The access portal to births, deaths, and marriage records for California. Other states have similar gateways to vital records information.

- **California Digital Newspaper Collection**
  A free repository of over 8 million California newspaper articles from 1846 to the present.

- **California Genealogical Society and Library**
  The Society maintains a library, makes available vital records, teaches research methods, and offers research services.
- Cyndi’s List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet (http://cyndislist.com/)
  A genealogy staple for almost 20 years, this is a comprehensive, categorized, and cross-referenced list of links to research sites online.

- Ellis Island (http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/)
  Search over 51 million passenger arrival records and find out more about the immigrant experience.

- Family Search (https://familysearch.org/)
  This LDS/Mormon Church-maintained site provides genealogy records search help as well as links to websites.

- Find a Grave (http://www.findagrave.com/)
  Contributors from around the world provide cemetery information on millions of individuals, often including pictures and biographies.

- Local History & Genealogy Reference Services (http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/)
  The Library of Congress is a rich resource for all genealogists. This site has links to several resources at the library, including the American Memory digital collection of U.S. history materials.

- National Genealogical Society (http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/)
  The Society has helped beginning and advanced researchers since 1903 by providing education and training, and promoting access to and preservation of genealogical records.

- RootsWeb (https://www.rootsweb.com/)
  The oldest and largest free online community for genealogists, this site also contains many interactive guides and research tools.

- SFGenealogy (http://sfgenealogy.net/)
  An extensive list of links to free websites on genealogy and history for Bay Area counties, including Santa Cruz, this is also a resource for exchanging information among researchers.

- SteveMorse.org (http://stevemorse.org/)
  This site has tools for finding immigration records, census records, vital records, and for dealing with calendars, maps, foreign alphabets, and many other applications.

- ThoughtCo Genealogy Section (https://www.thoughtco.com/genealogy-4133308)
  Written and compiled by a professional genealogist, this site offers how-to articles, genealogy lessons, news and product reviews, and an extensive list of online resources.

  Official government records, such as armed forces rosters dating back to the American Revolution, and immigration and naturalization records can be traced from here. There are also helpful research tips and tools.

- USGenWeb Project (http://usgenweb.org/)
  The project consists of groups of volunteers working together to provide free genealogy websites in every county and state. Organization is by state and county. Information can include cemetery records, newspaper articles, historical societies, surname indexes, land records, obituaries, and queries from researchers. See also CaliforniaGenWeb and SantaCruzCountyGenWeb.