

Local History/Genealogy Resources in Selected
Santa Clara County Libraries and Archives
SCCHGS Talk October 17, 2023

Santa Clara County is one of 58 counties in California and it consists of 15 cities or towns. This talk will focus on the primary library or archive(s) to start with in researching the local history of first the County overall and then each city or town. We will start with the county and then proceed to each city or town.

Place: **Santa Clara County**

Resource: Santa Clara County Archives

Website: <https://archives.sccgov.org/home>

Address: 1875 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112

Phone: (408) 755-7895 / **Email:** Archives@rec.sccgov.org

Access: By appointment only. To make an appointment email: Archives@rec.sccgov.org

Notes: The mission of the archives is to collect, preserve, and make available the historical records of Santa Clara County government. No historical documents available online but these types of documents located in the Archives are indexed online: County Map Books, County Naturalization Index, County Photographers Collection, County Probate Cases Collection, County Surveyor's Collections, County Wills, Register of Doctor's Certificates Collection.

Research Tip: Maps, Deeds, Surveys of the county's cities and towns may be found for the time period before they were incorporated – e.g., some towns like Campbell, Cupertino, Saratoga and Milpitas were part of unincorporated Santa Clara County until they were incorporated in the 1950s. History San Jose turned over all County government and county recorder's records once in its collection to the Santa Clara County Archives.

Place: **Santa Clara County**

Resource: Santa Clara County Library District Local History Collections

Website: <https://scclld.org/local-history/>

Notes: Library branch locations are in Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, and Saratoga. This weblink will allow you to link to information about their community newspaper holdings, city directories, and local history books. For locations and phone numbers of the County branch libraries, see this weblink: <https://sccl.bibliocommons.com/v2/locations>.

Place: **Santa Clara County**

Resource: Santa Clara County Historic Preservation

Website: <https://plandev.sccgov.org/policies-programs/historic-preservation>

Notes: This Santa Clara County Planning Department weblink provides a brief overview of County history and allow you to find a link to the *Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory*. Also has links to information about the Mills Act, Historic Preservation Zoning Districts, and Historic Heritage Grant Programs.

Place: **Campbell**

Resource: Campbell Historical Museum and Ainsley House

Website: <https://www.campbellmuseums.com/>

Address: 51 N. Central Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008

Phone: (408) 866-2119

Access : By appointment only but search digitized collections at:

<https://campbellmuseums.catalogaccess.com/home>

Historical Museum Hours: 11-3, Friday to Sunday

Notes: The collections include artifacts, documents, books and photographs with the majority of items having been donated directly from Campbell residents. Collection estimated to be approaching 11,000 items.

Research Tip: Campbell was incorporated in 1952 so government records before that are most likely to be found in the Santa Clara County Archives. Museum has some boxes of unprocessed documents and donations. Become a volunteer to help with the processing and cataloging efforts.

Place: **Cupertino**

Resource: Cupertino Historical Society + Museum

Website: <https://cupertinohistoricalsociety.org/>

Address: Quinlan Community Center, 10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: (408) 973-1495

Access: Call for appointment for use of archives.

Historical Museum Hours: Wednesday—Friday, 10-4, pending docent availability.

Notes: Archive includes A. Peter Emig “The Human Touch” news columns, some oral histories, family history files, subject files pertaining to schools and businesses, society publications and more.

Place: **Cupertino**

Resource: Louis E. Stocklmeir Regional History Library/Archives

Website: <https://www.deanza.edu/califhistory/library.html>

Address: California History Center at De Anza College: <https://www.deanza.edu/califhistory/> in the Le Petit Trianon Building, 21250 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: (408) 864-8987

Access: By appointment only. Phone is also the message line of Archivist Lisa Christiansen. There is a small day use fee for non-student users.

Notes: Collection includes oral histories, extensive number of local history student research papers, extensive number of photographs, maps, collections about local wineries, some personal papers collections, clipping files using over 150 subject headings, its own publications of a journal and books and more.

Place: **Cupertino**

Resource: Cupertino Library California Western American (CWA) Collection

Website: <https://scclid.org/local-history/#cu>

Address: Cupertino Library, 2nd Floor, 10800 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: (408) 446-1677

Access: Books and manuscripts shelved both in locked cases and on open shelving, same hours as Cupertino Library, Monday-Friday 10 -9 and Sat-Sun 10-6:30. Provide ID and ask Librarian at nearby 2nd floor reference desk to open locked cases.

Notes: The CWA collection includes extensive runs of Santa Clara County city directories, both Polk and Haines, on open shelves. The Santa Clara County Great Registers of Voters (1867-1890) are in a locked case. Also has an extensive collection of California history books, old and new, the Sierra Club Bulletin back to 1906, and a long run of Sunset Magazines back to 1918 and the annual Sunset Magazin indexes from the 1950s to 1990s. Has Cupertino Scene Magazine back to 1971.

Place: **Gilroy**

Resource: Gilroy Historical Society and Museum

Website: <https://www.gilroyhistoricalsociety.org/> and: <https://www.cityofgilroy.org/386/Gilroy-Historical-Museum>

Address: 195 Fifth Street, Gilroy, CA 95020

Phone: (408) 846-0446

Access: Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10-4 plus 1st & 2nd Saturday of month 10-2

Please call museum to verify open hours and for a research appointment.

Notes: Resources include -- Gilroy newspapers as far back as 1869, Family Files, Subject Files, Births, Deaths and Marriages index, burial permits, telephone books as far back as 1907, and high school yearbooks, extensive collection of photographs, oral histories.

Place: **Los Altos**

Resource: Los Altos History Museum

Website: <https://www.losaltoshistory.org/collections/research/>

Address: 51 S. San Antonio Road (between the Library and community center), Los Altos, CA 94022

Phone: (650) 948-9427 / **Email:** research@losaltoshistory.org

Access: By appointment only, please contact by email. Appointments to view and examine materials are generally made available Tuesdays and Thursdays.

History Museum Hours: Thursday-Sunday, Noon-4

Notes: Collection comprises over 16,000 object, artworks and paper collections. With an emphasis on material culture and photographs from the early decades of the 20th century to present-day Silicon Valley, the Permanent and Education Collections bring to life the stories and history of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and Mountain View. Has oral history program and collects the stories and memoirs of local residents, community members and individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to Los Altos. Has some audio memoirs and interviews from longtime residents about life in early Los Altos.

Place: **Los Altos Hills**

Resource: Los Altos Hills Historical Society

Website: <https://www.losaltoshillshistory.org/index.html>

Phone: (650) 776-9226

Notes: No archive but webpage has links to neighboring cities and historical organization's archives that include Los Altos Hills history. The Los Altos History Museum archives (see above) includes a significant amount of material on Los Altos Hills.

Place: **Los Gatos**

Resource: Los Gatos Library History Room

Website: <https://www.losgatosca.gov/1471/Local-History>

Address: 100 Villa Ave., Los Gatos, CA 95030

Phone: (408) 354-6891 / **Email:** history@LosGatosCA.gov

Access: By appointment but 'Ask a Librarian' reference services available via email.

Notes: Contains a wealth of resources related to Los Gatos history, including books, articles, pamphlets, photographs and more. Has a Families of Los Gatos Collection and a Los Gatos Historic Property Research Collection: <https://oac.cdlib.org/institutions/Los+Gatos+Library?descriptions=show>

Research Tip: What started as a "Hooked on Los Gatos" digital photo database is now available at: [Catalogit HUB](#).

Place: **Los Gatos**

Resource: New Museum Los Gatos [NUMU] The Los Gatos History Project

Website: <https://www.numulosgatos.org/lghp>

Address: 106 E. Main Street, Los Gatos, CA 95030

Phone: (408) 354-2646

Access: Museum Hours: Friday-Sunday 10-4, Admission charge for non-Los Gatos residents but the public can register for a free ticket the first Sunday of the month: see:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/first-free-sundays-numu-1486749>

Notes: The Los Gatos History Project first launched in September 2020. The Project includes documenting the Museum's over 3000 objects, photographs, ephemera and artwork tied to the history of Los Gatos and creating an accessible database.

Place: **Milpitas**

Resource: Milpitas Historical Society:

Website: <https://milpitashistoricalsociety.org/>

Address: (c/o Milpitas Library) 160 North Main Street, Milpitas, CA 95035

Phone: (408) 262-1776 / **Email:** tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org

Access: By appointment only. Archives stored in multiple locations. Call (408) 263-1351, message line for Society Archivist Joseph Ehardt

Notes: Explore the "People and Places" tab on the Society's website which includes selected information on People, Places, Parks, School Name Stories and Street Name Stories. Much more digitized historical stories and archival information will be placed on Society's website in near future. Read the impressive timeline of the Society's Activities and Projects: <https://milpitashistoricalsociety.org/about/1992-2013-timeline/>. Exhibits at Milpitas Library where Society receives its mail and holds its monthly meetings, generally 2nd Wednesdays of month. Exhibits also located at Alviso Adobe Park, 2087 Alviso Adobe Court, Milpitas, CA 95035. Alviso Adobe, generally open for tours on 2nd Saturday of month or by appointment. Some additional information at the Milpitas Community Museum website created by Steve Munzel: <http://www.milpitashistory.org/home/>.

Place: **Monte Sereno**

Resource: City of Monte Sereno History Webpage

Website: <https://www.montesereno.org/2213/City-History>

Notes: Gives access to an online scrapbook compiled by local historian Doug McNeil called the Monte Sereno History Project: <https://www.montesereno.org/DocumentCenter/View/2807/Monte-Sereno-History-Project-by-Doug-McNeil?bidId=>.

Place: **City of Mountain View**

Resource: Mountain View History Center

Website: <https://library.mountainview.gov/visit/mountain-view-history-center?locale=en>

Address: Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin Street, Mountain View, CA 94041

Phone: (650) 903-6890 / **Email:** info@mountainviewhistorical.org

Access: History Center is open 1-5 p.m. on Tuesdays or phone and leave message to request an appointment.

Notes: History Center has extensive collection of photographs, obituaries, school yearbooks, newspapers, oral histories, and Mountain View Historical Society archives and publications. To browse and search the digitized photographs, see:

<https://archive.org/details/mountainviewlibrary?tab=collection> and for an index to their obituary files, see: <https://library.mountainview.gov/learn/mountain-view-history/mountain-view-obituaries>. Here is information about their local newspaper holdings:

<https://library.mountainview.gov/learn/mountain-view-history/mountain-view-historical-newspapers-online>

Place: **Morgan Hill**

Resource: Morgan Hill Historical Society

Website: <https://www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org/>

Address: Villa Mira Monte, 17860 Monterey Road, P.O. Box 1258, Morgan Hill, CA 95038-1258

Phone: (408)779-5755 / **Email:** info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

Access: By appointment only, call or email to request appointment.

Notes: The Morgan Hill Museum is housed in the 1911 farmhouse of orchardist John Acton. It includes an archives collection with maps, photographs, manuscripts, clipping files and memorabilia.

Place: **Palo Alto**

Resource: Palo Alto Historical Association Archives

Website: <http://www.pahistory.org/archives.html>

Address: Cubberly Community Center, Room K-7, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Phone: (650) 329-2353 / **Email:** steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org or darla.secor@cityofpaloalto.org

Access: Open Tuesdays 4-8 or Thursdays 1-5

Notes: Has over 15,000 digitized photographs online: <https://cdm16865.contentdm.oclc.org/>, some oral histories in process of being put on online, obituaries, historic houses information, reminiscences files, newspapers and other archival materials. Archivists are Steve Staiger and Darla Secor who can be contacted by email (see above) during non-open hours.

Place: **Palo Alto – Stanford Campus**

Resource: Stanford Historical Society:

Website: <https://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/about-stanford-historical-society>

Address: Office location is Green Library, East Wing, Room 351-F, Escondido Mall, Stanford, CA

Phone: (650) 725-3332 / **Email:** historicalsociety@stanford.edu or oralhistory@stanford.edu

Access: By appointment only

Notes: View its Discover History webpage: <https://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/discover-history> for access to information about its journal *Sandstone & Tile (1976-present)* and its *Campus Historic Houses Project*: <https://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/discover-history/historic-houses-project>. Oral history information at: <https://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/discover-history/oral-history-program>.

The Stanford Historical Society Oral History Program explores the institutional history of the university through interviews with members of the Stanford community. Powered by the efforts of skilled volunteer interviewers and editors, the program has completed over eight hundred oral history interviews since its inception in 1978 and is growing rapidly. Ongoing interviews of faculty, staff, and alumni.

Place: **Palo Alto – Stanford Campus**

Resource: Stanford Libraries Special Collections & Archives:

Website: <https://library.stanford.edu/spc/university-archives/about-archives>

Address: Cecil H. Green Library: <https://library.stanford.edu/libraries/cecil-h-green-library>

Privileges Desk: <https://library-hours.stanford.edu/libraries/green/locations/privileges-desk>

557 Escondido Mall, Stanford, CA 94305-6063

Phone: (650) 723-1493 / **Email:** greencirc@stanford.edu

Access: Visitors allowed seven days a year – free entrance -- but registration required, see instructions at: <https://library.stanford.edu/visitor-access>

Notes: Of special interest to the public within the Green Library are the David Rumsey Map Center: <https://library.stanford.edu/libraries/david-rumsey-map-center> and the Silicon Valley Archives: <https://library.stanford.edu/libraries/silicon-valley-archives>

Place: **San Jose**

Resource: History San Jose Research Library and Archives:

Website: <https://historysanjose.org/research-collection/research-library/>

Address: 1650 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112

Phone: (408) 287-2290, ext. 251 [Main] or (408) 521-5025 [Direct]

Access: By appointment only. Archivist Cate Mills prefers to be contacted by email at: research@historysanjose.org. [Archives Building located at 1661 Senter Road].

Notes: History San Jose is one of Silicon Valley's largest and most comprehensive historical organizations. Names of many people and families who made a mark on Santa Clara Valley are recorded in the collection which includes a "Biographies" clipping file and the old San Jose Mercury newspaper morgue. Among its most used collections are its 77,000 photographs, a San Jose telephone book collection from the 1920s-2005, city directories from 1870-1979, its maps and architectural drawings, and for exhibits, its artifacts. Another significant collection is the San Jose Pueblo Papers:

<https://sites.google.com/historysanjose.org/spanishmexicanarchives/home>

Research Tip: There are over 75 collections that include online access and over 190 physical collections. The best way to search for digitized and online collections and keep up with new additions is to use HSJ's online catalog at: <https://historysanjose.catalogaccess.com/>. This catalog offers both keyword and advanced search methods for retrieving information and digitized images. Additional information about some specific collections can also be found on the Online Archive of California (OAC) at: <https://oac.cdlib.org/institutions/History+San+Jose+Research+Library>.

Place: **San Jose**

Resource: San Jose Public Library California Room

Website: <https://www.sjpl.org/caroom>

Address: Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 5th floor, 150 E. San Fernando Street, San Jose, CA 95112

Phone: (408) 808-2000

Access: Open Hours, Mondays & Saturdays 1-6, Tuesdays-Fridays 11-6

Notes: Has an online California Room index: <https://www.sjlibrary.org/caroom-index>

The California Room Index is an online index of citations to people, places, and events in the history of San José, Santa Clara County, and California. The index contains citations that are not found in the [Library Catalog](#), including Maps, Newspaper Clipping Files, Primary Resources, Scrapbooks, Vault Items and more. Most used collections: School Yearbooks, City Directories for San Jose and Vicinity, Photographs, Newspapers and Clippings, and San Jose building permits. Has a digital collections database: <https://digitalcollections.sjlibrary.org/>

Research Tip: Apply for a free San Jose Library card and gain full text access to the Newsbank San Jose Mercury Historical database covering 1900-1985: <https://www.sjpl.org/resource-newsbank-san-jose-mercury-news-archive-details/>. Also gain access to Digital Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for California, 1867-1970: <https://sjpl.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S156C2584551>.

Place: **San Jose – SJSU Campus**

Resource: Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History:

Website: <https://www.sourisseauacademy.org/>

Address: Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 5th floor, 150 E. San Fernando Street, San Jose, CA 95112

Phone: (408) 808-2064

Access: By appointment only, call for appointment

Notes: Archive is a resource of the San Jose State University History Department. Although the collection includes ephemera, early Santa Clara Valley newspapers, business records, San Jose building permits, and maps, its strength is in its extensive photograph and postcard collections of over 80,000 images. Some of the very earliest photographs taken in Santa Clara Valley are found in this collection.

Place: **Santa Clara**

Resource: Santa Clara County Historical & Genealogical Society

Website: <https://www.scchgs.org/>

Address: Central Park Library, 2nd floor, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara, CA 95051

Phone: (408) 615-2986

Access: For the calendar of times Genealogy Consultants are available to the public for free, view: [SCCHGS - Free Consultants](#). Early Settler files in the foyer of the Heritage Pavilion are available whenever Central Park Library is open. Hours will be extended soon, see:

<https://www.sclibrary.org/about-us/locations-and-hours#central>

Notes: Explore the online indexes tab and find Early Settlers index, scrapbook and clipping files indexes, funeral home indexes, vital records indexes and more. Be aware though-- if you are a member of the Society, through the password protected **Members Area** tab additional access includes a 50+ page directory of Local & Family History Resources in Santa Clara County, a 20+ page guide to researching the history of a historic home in Santa Clara County, and digitized issues of the Society's newsletters and Connections journal.

Place: **Santa Clara**

Resource: Santa Clara Public Library Heritage Pavilion

Website: <https://www.sclibrary.org/services/genealogy>

Address: Santa Clara Central Park Library, 2nd Floor, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara, CA 95051

Notes: In addition to the Genealogy & Local History Services webpage (see above), the Library also maintains these local history webpages which are not easy to locate from the Library homepage. So here are the direct links:

Santa Clara City History webpage: <https://www.sclibrary.org/books-more/books/special-collections/local-history/santa-clara-city-history>

Santa Clara County History webpage: <https://www.sclibrary.org/books-more/books/special-collections/local-history/santa-clara-county-history>

Scrapbook Indexes webpage including digitized Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce Scrapbooks from 1937-1961: <https://www.sclibrary.org/books-more/books/special-collections/local-history/scrapbook-indexes>

Silicon Valley High Tech History webpage: <https://www.sclibrary.org/books-more/books/special-collections/local-history/silicon-valley-high-tech-history>

Place: **Santa Clara – SCU Campus**

Resource: Santa Clara University Archives & Special Collections:

Website: <https://www.scu.edu/library/asc/>

Address: University Library, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053-0500

Phone: (408) 554-5530 / **Email:** specialcollections@scu.edu

Access: By appointment only, call or email at least 2 days prior to day you want to visit

Notes: Includes Mission Santa Clara Sacramental records:

<https://content.scu.edu/digital/collection/mission>, Mission Santa Clara manuscripts, extensive photograph collections, Santa Clara University yearbooks and University newspaper. The University has digitized over 50,000 images and documents for online access. Search across the digitized collections using this weblink: <https://content.scu.edu/>.

Place: **Saratoga**

Resource: Saratoga Historical Foundation:

Website: <https://www.saratogahistory.com/overview.htm>

Address: 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road, Saratoga, CA 95070-5935

Phone: (408) 867-4311

Notes: Has some archival materials and clippings files. See this webpage within the Foundation's website for a guide to Saratoga history resources:

<https://www.saratogahistory.com/History/bibliography.htm>

Place: **Sunnyvale**

Resource: Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association

Website: <https://heritageparkmuseum.org/sample-page/about>

Address: 570 E. Remington Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

Phone: (408) 749-0220 / **Email:** info@heritageparkmuseum.org

Access: Use of special collections or archive files is by appointment only. Contact "Archives Team" by email at info@heritageparkmuseum.org with your specific query. They will research and determine which files to pull before they make an appointment for you to visit.

Museum Open Hours: 12-4 Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday

Notes: Historical Society has a searchable archive of its local history blog posts dating back to 2012, see:

<https://heritageparkmuseum.org/blog>. In support of their Orchard Heritage Park Interpretive Exhibit [OHPIE]: <https://heritageparkmuseum.org/sample-page/programs-and-exhibits/orchard-heritage-park-interpretive-exhibit> the Museum collected information sheets and files on some of the major Orchard Families of Santa Clara Valley.

Research Tip: A list of the Orchard Families Sunnyvale Historical Society surveyed, arranged alphabetically by surname, was published in the SCCHGS Journal Connections, Spring 2014 issue. Connections issues are digitized and can be viewed by SCCHGS members in the Members Area of the SCCHGS website: <https://www.scchgs.org/>.