

STANISLAUS



RESEARCHER



Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County



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April Program
 17 April 2025
 7:00 P.M. Member Jack Koso will report on New England genealogy including Mayflower connections.

Now is the time to Renew Your GSSC Membership

If you do not see 2025 by your name on your email address line it IS time to renew

Presidents Message

by Karen Souza

Hello fellow researchers! Daniel Horowitz's presentation on Maximizing the MyHeritage Technologies for Your Family Research was fantastic! He gave us so much insight into the information we can get to fill in our family trees that I am ready to log in and get to work! He is an excellent speaker; not only did he give us incredible information, but also made us laugh!

Your Board of Directors is hard at work! **Joyce** and **Vicky** are advertising the seminar on Mexican Records that is al-

most here! **Lauren** and **debee** will be helping them make sure the seminar goes smoothly on Saturday, the 29th. **Jackie** provided a new packet to the newest member that **Anna** registered as a member! All three attended the Horowitz presentation on MyHeritage. **Vicky** and **David Wolff** were there to open the doors and make sure everything was set up. **Roxanne** made sure to collect the fees and earlier in the week, walk me through banking and mail pickup. **Lewis** gave his help at the board meeting and is always working on the website and the newsletter (even when the president doesn't send her message to him on time.) **Joann** made sure we had good bowls to eat our soup out of and always displays the goodies so beautifully. **Pam** faithfully prepares the minutes of both meetings and keeps the records. **Judy** provided a large binder of the history of the GSSC for us to see at the last meeting. **Anna** is diligently working on getting a pattern of our logo to be applied to T-shirts, tote bags, etc. **Amy** is planning to have Katherine Borges tell us how AI will work with genealogy. **Colleen** handles queries: she's waiting to see if you or your family need her to look something up. **Martha** suggests great speakers to the Programs personnel. **Linda** is regularly available at the general meeting. Please thank your board members for all the hard work they do in making the GSSC happen!

April General Meeting

by Amy Mowery

Member Jack Koso will share his New England Genealogical Expertise with us responding to questions received from question slips distributed at our February and March General Meetings. Jack brings considerable experience researching genealogy in New England and on the East Coast. He has tailored his presentation to the responses he has received from his question slips and received via email.

23 and Me Files Bankruptcy

March 24 (Reuters) - 23andMe (ME.O), opens new tab on Sunday filed for bankruptcy in the U.S. after struggling with weak demand for its ancestry testing kits and a 2023 data breach that damaged its reputation.



The company's shares fell 50% to 88 cents in Monday trading after co-founder Anne Wojcicki, who made multiple failed takeover bids, resigned as CEO. 23andMe did not say whether there are other interested bidders. It will continue to operate during the sale process, having secured \$35 million in financing over the weekend.

Officials, including California Attorney General Rob Bonta, had questioned what would happen to the genetic data collected by 23andMe, though the company's privacy policies say that the data could be sold to other firms. The company said the bankruptcy process will not affect how it stores, manages or protects customer data.

23andMe garnered lots of attention from investors when it was first taken public via a special-purpose acquisition vehicle (SPAC) run by billionaire Richard Branson at a \$3.5 billion valuation in 2021. Its market value peaked later that year at nearly \$6 billion due to booming interest in DNA testing kits but demand has waned since, hurting 23andMe and its Blackstone-owned (BX.N), opens new tab rival AncestryDNA.

Sales of the consumer kits frequently picked up during the holiday season, but 23andMe has struggled to retain customers mainly because people would use the kits once and see little reason to order another one. Bernstein analysts have said that the market for ancestry testing kits might be close to tapped out.

In 2023, hackers exposed the personal data of nearly 7 million 23andMe customers over a five-month period, dealing a major blow to the company's reputation and compounding its growth problems. The breach raised alarm among customers concerned about their privacy and how DNA-testing firms handle their data.

23andMe eventually agreed late last year to a \$30 million settlement in a lawsuit related to the breach.

The San Francisco-based firm has also laid off 200 employees and stopped the development of all therapies as part of what will be a major overhaul.

Wojcicki has been pushing for a buyout since last April, but has been rebuffed by 23andMe's board. She reportedly used her contacts, including ex-husband and Google (GOOGL.O), opens new tab co-founder Sergey Brin, to help drive initial investments. She will be replaced by Chief Financial Officer Joe Selsavage on an interim basis.

Wojcicki said, in a post on X on Monday, that she intends to make another bid, without giving details. Her last offer of 41 cents per share 23andMe said any buyer will be required to comply with applicable law about how customer data is treated, it said. The company made at least 30 deals with pharmaceutical and biotech companies such as British drug-maker GSK (GSK.L), opens new tab giving it access to its database. Most of its agreements remain undisclosed.

"How the data is used is really the privacy policy that anybody who has used 23andMe clicks through and then accepts. But as we know, most people don't read the privacy policies," said Anya Prince, a professor of law at the University of Iowa.

On Friday, California's Bonta urged customers to delete their genetic data, citing 23andMe's financial distress. Social media posts laid out how users can delete their data. Prince said deleting one's account can help minimize future risks, though it does not guarantee that everything is removed.

"Once that data is out there, then, even if you requested your account to be deleted, they can't find your information because it no longer has your name attached. So for most people that might be fine as long as their names (are) not attached," Prince added.

Reporting by Anusha Shah, Shubham Kalia, Surbhi Misra and Bhanvi Satija in Bengaluru and Christine Soares in New York; Editing by Mrigank Dhaniwala, Savio D'Souza, Shounak Dasgupta and Alan Barona valued 23andMe at about \$11 million.

On Sunday, the company listed assets and estimated liabilities between \$100 million and \$500 million.

[DNA testing firm 23andMe files for bankruptcy as demand dries up | Reuters](#)

Editor—It is recommended that you download, copy and safely store your entire 23andMe file immediately.

GSSC Writing Group

by Joann MacDonald

April 10, 10:00 A.M. The GSSC Writing Group is looking for members. If you are needing assistance writing your family's history this is the group to join. All have written something and are here to help.

Never written before, no matter, they are here to assist.

Contact Joann MacDonald if you can attend or are interested:

(209) 521-2140 or jmastergardner@aol.com



For Library Assistance - The Stanislaus County Main Library is closed until 2026

Should you need Library assistance please contact Jackie Niemeyer Library Assistance - The Stanislaus County Main Library is closed now until 2026j Jackie Niemeyer jackie.niemeyer@prodigy.net

You can also get assistance from the LDS FamilySearch:

4300 Dale Road
Modesto
209-402-2268
Open by appointment

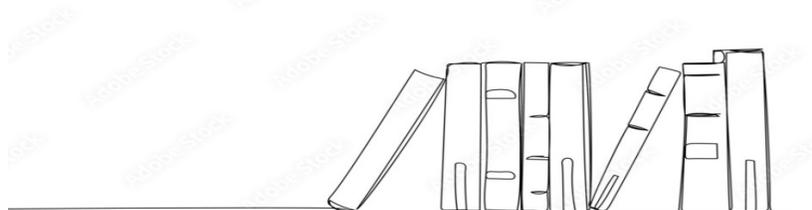
713 El Vista Ave.
Modesto
209-968-4796
Open by appointment

4300 Geer Road
Turlock
209-402-4085
Open Wed. 10—1
Thursday 6:30—9

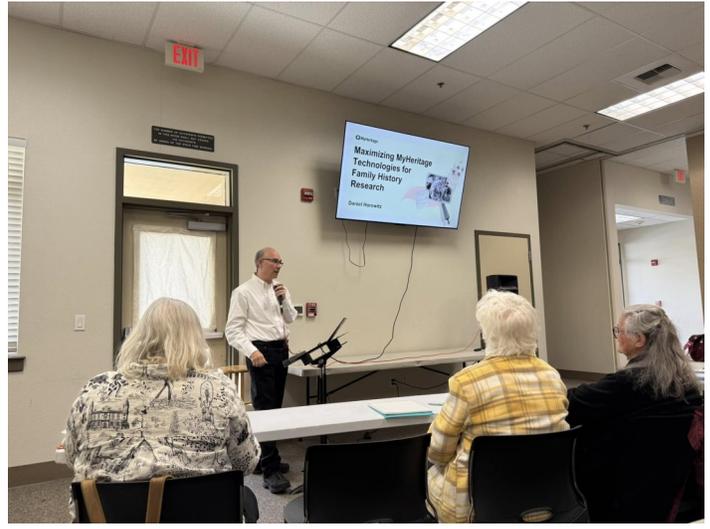
Modesto Library Closed for Renovation

The Modesto Library is closed for renovation, and expected to reopen in Summer 2026. The Modesto Library collection will reopen for hold requests on Monday, March 10. Holds may be sent to any open Stanislaus County Library location, including the Modesto Express Library at 1002 10th Street. To learn more about the renovation, please visit the [Modesto Library Improvement Project page](#).

https://www.stanislauslibrary.org/modesto_library.shtm



March Photographs
Special Genealogical Presentation
by Daniel Horowitz March 13, 2025



Daniel, Katherine Borges and Daniel's wife Debbie
Photos courtesy of Katherine Borges of ISOGG

March Roundtable General Meeting
by Heidi Arno



President Souza setting up the program

Discussions in progress



Checking out the food

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

SEMINAR ON MEXICAN GENEALOGY



Speaker Lisa Medina

Lisa Medina is a professional genealogist and experienced lecturer. She is an alum of several genealogical institute's programs (ProGen, SLIG, Gen-Fed), and her expertise is in Mexican genealogy. When not researching, Lisa is the Director of Admissions & University Registrar at a California State University.



- DATE:** Saturday, March 29, 2025
- WHERE:** 1600 Carver Rd, Modesto, Telle Center, Trinity United Presbyterian Church
- TIME:** 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- COST OF SEMINAR:** \$50.00 per person

For additional information visit our website at stanislausgenealogy.org, or call 209-529-9430.

Limited seating, so register early.

REGISTRATION FORM (Please register by Monday, March 24th)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL _____

How Many to Attend _____

Make Check Payable to GSSC and send registration to:

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County
 P.O. Box 1352
 Modesto, CA 95353

Food will be catered for an additional fee. You will also have the option of finding food offsite. A list of restaurants will be available at the seminar.

Hero Sandwich (roast beef, turkey, ham, cheddar)	\$15.00	\$ _____
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Chef Salad	\$15.00	\$ _____
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(Meals include drink, chips & cookie)

Registration Fee	\$50.00	\$ _____
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TOTAL		\$ _____
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Summary

This full-day seminar is interactive and jam-packed with the tools necessary for successful Mexican genealogical research. The day will begin with an introduction, including an overview of Spanish language tools, historical context, jurisdictions, and fundamental resources and records. As the seminar proceeds, we will explore relevant U.S. records, Mexican civil registration and catholic church records, as well as a variety of additional resources. Finally, the day will wrap-up with a case study to demonstrate the application of the tools and information presented throughout the seminar.

Detailed Description

The full-day seminar is comprised of multiple interactive lectures, each with supplemental material (handout and/or in-class activity). Participants will gain fundamental knowledge and tools necessary to begin (or continue) research of their Mexican ancestors. The following topics will be covered:

Introduction to Mexican Genealogy Research An introduction into important foundational concepts in Mexican genealogy research (names, jurisdictions and governmental entities, language resources, etc.), as well as a brief overview of records available online.

Key U.S. Records for Mexican Research: An overview of U.S. records from the 20th century that contain information about Mexican immigrants, as well as tips for finding clues for tracing them to their origins in Mexico.

Mexican Civil Registration: A Deep Dive Mexican Civil Registration began in the 1860s. Since that time, these vital records have offered researchers an excellent resource for tracing ancestry in México. Learn about their history, what information you will find, as well as where to find them.

Sacred Archives: An Exploration of Mexican Catholic Church Records From the colonial period to the 20th century, parish sacramental records represent a treasure trove of genealogical information for family history researchers. In this presentation, we will review the historical context of these records, as well as practices for analyzing them to advance your research.

A seminar where your Mexican—American genealogical heritage answers can be found.

Please inform any of your interested connections of this valuable seminar

The History of April Fool's Day: The Best Pranks in Newspapers

By Marc McDermott

Introduction: Marc McDermott is a genealogist and blogger at GenealogyExplained.com. In this guest blog post, Marc shares some of the most memorable April Fool's Day pranks from historical newspapers.

There's still debate about how April Fool's Day began. Some argue that its roots lay in the ancient Roman festival of Hilaria. Others say it was with the crowning of a Byzantine jester as "King for a Day." However, there is no evidence for any of these stories. The historical references to April Fool's Day begin in the Middle Ages. Some believe the concept was born from confusion over the celebration of the New Year when France switched from the Julian to Gregorian calendar in the late 16th century.



Kansas 1898

The confusion that April Fool's Day can bring hasn't stopped, and newspapers worldwide still join in the fun. The first pranks began appearing in newspapers in the 19th century. In 1898, the *Iola Kansas Register* claimed to have the tomahawk of the fearsome Native American leader "Loof Lirpa." The name was April Fool, spelled backward. The successful prank took a month to dispel.

Germany 1905

In a more serious twist, the 1905 April Fool's prank pulled by the German newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt* became international news. An article entitled "Der Millianardenraub im Bundes Schatzamt" was falsely attributed to a reporter in New York. The paper reported that the United States Treasury had been drained. The article claimed that well-funded American thieves had tunneled under the Treasury Building and, using a submarine and coding technology, made off with \$269,000,000. In the currency of 2019, this is equivalent to approximately \$8 billion.

The author of the piece was identified as a former member of the German Parliament. The article caused immense dismay around the world.

Denmark 1965

In Copenhagen, the newspaper *Politiken* reported chaos in the Danish Parliament as a measure was passed decreeing that all dogs be painted white. They stated that the law was passed in response to the low visibility of dogs during the night. The article touted the law as an improvement to safety on Danish roads. The joke was debunked only after readers began calling the paper to verify its truthfulness.

Famous Fools of the 1990s

One of the most famous newspaper pranks occurred in 1996. The fast-food chain Taco Bell took out a full-page ad in eight major newspapers. The *Washington Post* was one of the pranked papers. Claiming to have purchased the Liberty Bell, the restaurant company stated they made a move to control the national debt (which had grown to over \$5 trillion by September of that year, about \$8 trillion today). The ad claimed the symbol of American democracy would now be known as the "Taco Liberty Bell." Although the prank was debunked by noon on April Fool's Day, it left a bad taste in the mouths of many Americans.

In 1998, a second fast-food chain tried its hand at a newspaper prank. Burger King published a full-page ad in *USA Today*. Lamponing traditional attitudes about right-hand dominance versus left, Burger King invented the "left-handed Whopper." The ad suggested that the left-handed Whopper would bring equality among all Burger King patrons. To customers' disappointment, it was debunked after people appeared in stores and ordered the mythical sandwich.

The same year the left-handed Whopper reigned supreme, the National Fluid Milk Production Board claimed to have discovered a previously unknown Andy Warhol painting. The prank described the work as featuring Marilyn Monroe with a milk mustache. When readers called the 900 number at the bottom of the article, they were sent a calendar of celebrity milk mustaches for taking part in the joke.

April Fool's Pranks Offer Glimpse into the Past

April Fool's pranks have become a mainstay of the newspaper industry. They are an invitation not just to have a little fun but also to use caution and be careful readers. For the genealogist, they can be an intriguing look into the concerns of a historical period, ranging from fiscal responsibility to good governance and international relations.

Happy April Fool's Day, everyone!

<https://blog.genealogybank.com/the-history-of-april-fools-day-the-best-pranks-in-newspapers>.

Membership Information

Dues: Single membership, \$25.00 per year Family membership, \$35.00 per year

Address changes:	Send address, email and phone number changes to Anna Keppel at: GSSC, P. O. Box 1352, Modesto, CA 95353-1352 Email: gssc-founded1968@gmail.com Telephone: 209-324-7147 (Anna Keppel)
GSSC web page:	http://stanislausgenealogy.org/ Stanislaus Researcher Published 10 times per year by Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County, P. O. Box 1352, Modesto, CA 95353-1352. Delivered via email. Submit articles for publication to the editor via email: lruddick@ix.netcom.com by the 15th of each month. The newsletter is posted at this website, along with other interesting society-related items.
General meeting:	7:00 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday of each month, except July and December at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Telle Center, at 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto, CA.
Board meeting:	7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month Ridgeway's Restaurant, 2401 E Orangeburg Ave, Modesto, CA

2025 Officers		2025 Standing Committee Chairs	
President	Karen Souza	Acquisitions:	Vacant
1st Vice President	Amy Mowery	Audit:	Board of Directors
2nd Vice President	Joyce Hickman	Budget:	Roxie Ferrari
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Director at Large 3	Martha Carter Bhatti	Newsletter & Website	Lewis M. Ruddick
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Director at Large 5	Jackie Niemeyer	Seminar:	Vacant
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		Refreshments	Joann MacDonald Carol Lee
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		Research & Publications	Vacant
		Research Day Trips	Vacant
		Seminar & Workshops	Joyce Hickman debbie loyd Lauren Hastings
		Social Media	Pam Atherstone
		Special Collections	Jackie Niemeyer
		Sunshine	Joyce Hickman

53 2025 Members

[GSSC Website](#)

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and donations are appreciated.



Genealogical Society of
Stanislaus County
P O Box 1352
Modesto, CA 95353-1352



Don't get caught!

