

# Introduction to AI for Genealogy

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Artificial Intelligence Overview	
<b>Overview</b> <b>Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Introduction to AI</b></li><li>• <b>AI Tools and Platforms</b></li><li>• <b>AI's Role in Genealogy</b></li><li>• <b>Using AI in Your Genealogy Efforts</b></li></ul>	<b>History of Artificial Intelligence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1956 – AI development started</li><li>• 1964 – Facial Recognition developed</li><li>• 1997 - IBM's Big Blue beats Kasparov in chess</li><li>• 2000 - Netflix recommendations – "Based on what you have watched, you might like the following..."</li><li>• 2004 – Email Spam filters introduced</li><li>• 2009 – Uber started in San Francisco</li><li>• 2011 - Watson wins Jeopardy</li><li>• 2012 – Voice Recognition Systems – Siri and Alexa</li><li>• 2014 - Self-driving vehicles – Tesla pilot</li><li>• 2022 – ChatGPT is released</li></ul>
<b>AI in Genealogy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optical Character Recognition (OCR)</li><li>• Handwriting Recognition – 1950 Census Indexing</li><li>• Photo Restoration</li><li>• MyHeritage Photo Apps</li><li>• 23andMe Tree Building</li><li>• Thru-Lines and Theory of Family Relativity</li><li>• Full-Text Search as FamilySearch</li></ul>	<b>Types of Artificial Intelligence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Machine Learning</li><li>• Natural Language Processing</li><li>• Large Language Models</li></ul> <b>Large Language Models Used in Genealogy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ChatGPT – Open AI</li><li>• Claude – by Anthropic</li><li>• Gemini - Google</li><li>• Perplexity/Comet – providing sources</li><li>• Co-Pilot – Microsoft</li><li>• Meta AI - Facebook</li><li>• Lots of Others!</li></ul>
Large Language Models – Text Prediction	
<b>Input Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text</li><li>• Documents</li><li>• Images</li><li>• Speech</li><li>• Spreadsheets</li><li>• Code</li></ul>	<b>How Are They Used Today</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Software Development</li><li>• Customer Service</li><li>• Marketing</li><li>• Writing, Editing, Summarizing</li><li>• Transcription and Translation</li></ul>
ChatGPT	
<b>History</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• November 2022 – Open to the public</li><li>• The interface is like Texting/Chat</li><li>• Prompts and Prompt Engineering</li><li>• Blaine Bettinger's Facebook group, "Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence," became the central hub for discussions and insights.</li><li>• GPT 5.0 – current model – free - \$ for more usage or enhanced tools</li><li>• Accessing ChatGPT = <a href="#">Create An Account</a></li><li>• Adoption Statistics - Over 800 million worldwide users of ChatGPT weekly as of October 2025.</li></ul>	<b>Effective Use of Prompts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asking the right questions in the right way is critical to getting good output.</li><li>• New skill – Prompt Engineering</li></ul> <b>Creating a Good Prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide Context – Role – "act like"</li><li>• Use <u>Positive Action</u> Verbs</li><li>• Clearly State the Desired Topic or Task – what is the Goal</li><li>• Set Guidelines</li><li>• Specify the Output Format</li><li>• Feed It Content or Reference Material</li><li>• Give it Feedback; Rinse and Repeat</li></ul>

Using AI For Genealogy	
<b>Uses for Genealogy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document Processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text Analysis</li> <li>• Extraction</li> <li>• Summarization</li> <li>• Transcription</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language Support</li> <li>• Research Assistance</li> <li>• Photo and Images</li> <li>• Brainstorming/Idea Generation</li> <li>• Writing and Creation</li> <li>• Educational Support</li> <li>• Tech Support</li> </ul>	<b>Research Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Events</b> - What happened in 1860 that might have caused my ancestor to immigrate from Sweden to the US?</li> <li>• <b>Research Help</b> - What resources could be helpful for genealogical research in Mexico?</li> <li>• <b>Definitions</b> - What does the Genealogical Proof Standard mean?</li> <li>• <b>Resources</b> - Where can I get a list of Irish parishes in 1850?</li> <li>• <b>Tech Support</b> – How can I change a profile image in Family Tree Maker?</li> <li>• <b>Location Specific Resources</b> – What genealogical libraries, societies and resources are available in Dallas, Texas?</li> </ul>
<b>Writing and Creation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Family narratives</li> <li>• Blog topics</li> <li>• Presentation titles</li> <li>• Images</li> </ul> <p><b>Handwriting Recognition</b> – Transkribus.org or Google Gemini 3 Pro in AI Studio</p>	<b>Images</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adobe Firefly 2</li> <li>• Google Gemini</li> <li>• Microsoft CoPilot</li> <li>• ChatGPT (Dall-E 3)</li> <li>• Others: Midjourney, DaVinci AI - offers access to multiple models, including Stable Diffusion XL, DALL·E 3, Midjourney, and DaVinci XL.</li> <li>• Ideogram</li> </ul>
Strategies for Success	
<b>Concepts to Remember</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hallucinations happen – Check, check, check</li> <li>• You are the researcher, it is the research assistant</li> <li>• LLMs (like ChatGPT) are just text predictors; VERY sophisticated text predictors, but the basics are still the same. They are predicting the next "word" in a sequence.</li> <li>• You are the Human in the Equation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a clear, complete prompt</li> <li>• Don't hesitate to ask again and again – peel the onion</li> <li>• Ask it what it can do</li> <li>• Ask it to write a better prompt</li> <li>• Provide it with context</li> <li>• Practice. It takes time to master this skill</li> <li>• Dive in – the water's fine!</li> </ul>
AI for Genealogy Resources	
<b>Facebook Group:</b> Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence (AI), <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyandai/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyandai/</a>	
<b>Podcasts:</b> <b>Ancestors and Algorithms: AI for Genealogy. Podcast.</b> Hosted by Brian. via <a href="http://ancestorsandai.com">ancestorsandai.com</a> ; associated Facebook community "Ancestors and Algorithms: AI for Genealogy. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/ancestorsandalgorithms/">www.facebook.com/groups/ancestorsandalgorithms.</a>	
<b>Family History AI Show.</b> Podcast. Hosted by Steve Little and Mark Thompson. Described at "The Family History AI Show" Facebook page, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/The-Family-History-AI-Show-61568524478564/">www.facebook.com/The-Family-History-AI-Show-61568524478564/</a> .	
<b>Blogs with Multiple Posts on Genealogy and AI:</b> Steve Little, AI Genealogy Insights, <a href="https://aigenealogyinsights.com/author/digitalarchivist/">https://aigenealogyinsights.com/author/digitalarchivist/</a> Dana Leeds, Genealogy with Dana Leeds, <a href="https://www.danaleeds.com/">https://www.danaleeds.com/</a> Diana Elder and Nicole Dyer, Family Locket, <a href="https://familylocket.com/">https://familylocket.com/</a>	
<b>Books:</b> Nicole Elder Dyer and Diana Elder, <b>Research Like a Pro with AI Workbook</b> (Phoenix, Arizona: Family Locket Books, 2025), digital PDF and DOCX; online at FamilyLocket.com. <a href="https://familylocket.com/product/research-like-a-pro-with-ai-workbook-digital-only/">https://familylocket.com/product/research-like-a-pro-with-ai-workbook-digital-only/</a>	

## Other Resources

### Comprehensive/Overview Articles

Abby Tanner, "AI Developments in Genealogy and How They Impact You," FamilySearch.org, blog, 15 August 2024, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ai-developments-genealogy>.

Abhilash Pillai, "AI Revolutionizes Genealogy: Discovering Family History and Relationships with Data-Driven Insights," *LinkedIn.com*, blog, 4 March 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ai-revolutionizes-genealogy-discovering-family-history-pillai/>.

Blaine Bettinger, "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence Tools for Genealogical Research," *APG Quarterly*, December 2023, Volume XXXVIII, No. 4, Association of Professional Genealogists.

John Beaumont, "Using AI for genealogy," *Family Tree*, 2 July 2025, <https://www.family-tree.co.uk/how-to-guides/ai-for-genealogy/>.

Legacy Tree, "Part Two: Using AI in Genealogy Research Best Practices," *LegacyTree.com*, blog interview with Steve Little, <https://www.legacytree.com/blog/part-two-using-ai-in-genealogy-research-best-practices>.

Mark Rabideau, "The Revolutionary Impact of AI on Genealogy and Historical Research," *Many-Roads.com*, blog, 4 April 2025, <https://www.many-roads.com/2025/04/04/the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-genealogy-and-historical-research/>.

Melanie McComb, "Using AI in Family History Research," *AmericanAncestors.com*, YouTube video, January 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n7\\_sEYYXbc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n7_sEYYXbc).

Melanie McComb, *Using AI in Family History Research* (Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey State Library, March 2025), PDF, <https://www.njstatelib.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Using-AI-in-Family-History-Research.pdf>.

Steve Little, "AI Resources for Genealogists," downloadable resource guide, March 2025, PDF, <https://aigenealogyinsights.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/AI-Resources-for-Genealogists-v20d2.pdf>.

Thomas MacEntee, *AI and Genealogy: A Practical Guide to Summarizing, Transcribing, and Translating Historical Documents* (self-published, 2024), <https://a.co/d/3sgQK1m>.

Thomas MacEntee, "AI & Genealogy: Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence for Family History Research," *MyHeritage.com*, blog, 2024, <https://education.myheritage.com/article/ai-genealogy-harnessing-the-power-of-artificial-intelligence-for-family-history-research/>.

### Genealogy Uses for AI

Brenda Leyndyke, "10 Ways I Use Artificial Intelligence in My Genealogy Research (with prompts)," *Journey to the Past*, blog, 8 May 2025, <https://www.journeytothepastblog.com/2025/05/10-ways-i-use-artificial-intelligence.html>.

Carole McCulloch, "Getting Started with AI for Genealogy Confidently," *Family Tree Magazine* (UK), November 2025, p.24, <https://www.family-tree.co.uk/>

Connie Knox, "Artificial Intelligence for Genealogy with AI Guys!" *GenealogyTV.org*, YouTube video, 28 March 2025, <https://genealogytv.org/artificial-intelligence-for-genealogy-with-ai-guys/>.

FamilySearch, "Research Documents and Letters with Artificial Intelligence," *FamilySearch*, YouTube video, 5 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/live/7tSNF2xm2Y8>.

Randy Seaver, "Ask AI: 'How Can Artificial Intelligence Help a Genealogist Do Family History Research?'" *GeneaMusings.com*, blog, 26 September 2024, <https://www.geneamusings.com/2024/09/ask-ai-how-can-artificial-intelligence.html>.

### Ethics

Craig Enger, "Ethical Use of AI for Genealogy," *Craigen.org*, blog, <https://craigen.org/>.

James Tanner, "Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Genealogy at RootsTech 2025," *The Family History Guide Blog*, 9 March 2025, <https://www.thefhguide.com/blog/guidelines-for-the-responsible-use-of-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-genealogy-at-rootstech-2025/>.

## FamilySearch Full Text Search

Family Tree, "Have you tried the FamilySearch AI Full Text Search?" *Family Tree (UK)*, early 2025, <https://www.family-tree.co.uk/how-to-guides/ai-know-how-for-family-history-have-you-tried-the-familysearch-ai-full/>.

## Prompting

Denyse Allen, "The worst AI advice genealogists keep getting" *Chronicle Makers*, Substack, <https://denyseallen.substack.com/p/good-ai-prompts-genealogy>.

Lisa Lisson, "The 4-Part AI Prompt Approach Every Family Historian Needs to Know," *LisaLisson.com*, blog, 2025, <https://lisalisson.com/ai-prompts-for-genealogy-framework/>.

## Writing

Diane Henricks, "AI and Family History: Creating a Perfect Ancestor Biography Using ChatGPT," *Know Who Wears the Genes in Your Family*, blog, 15 December 2024, <https://www.knowwhowearsthegenesinyourfamily.com/blog/ai-and-family-history-creating-a-perfect-ancestor-biography-using-chatgpt>

Randy Seaver, "Using Artificial Intelligence in the Ancestor Biography Creation (ABC) Process," *Genea-Musings*, blog, 24 April 2025, <https://www.geneamusings.com/2025/04/using-artificial-intelligence-in.html>.

## Specific Uses

Nicole Elder Dyer, "Handwritten Text Recognition with Google AI Studio," *FamilyLocket.com*, blog, 13 Oct 2025, <https://familylocket.com/rlp-379-handwritten-text-recognition-with-google-ai-studio/>.

Barbara Krasnoff, "Find the Best AI-Powered App to Transcribe Your Audio," *TheVerge.com*, blog, 28 August 2024, <https://www.theverge.com/23316220/transcription-ai-otter-temi-how-to>.

Generations Genealogy, "AI-Generated Images in Family History: Ethics, Accuracy and Avoiding Historical Fakes," *GenerationsGenealogy.com.au*, 5 June 2025, <https://generationsgenealogy.com.au/tag/ai/>.

Thomas MacEntee, "AI and Genealogy: Using AI to Translate Genealogy Records," webinar, *FamilyTreeWebinars.com*, 8 August 2024, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/ai-and-genealogy-using-ai-to-translate-genealogy-records/>

Lance Whitney, "How to Use Google's AI-Powered NotebookLM to Organize Your Research," *ZDNet.com*, 11 July 2024, <https://www.zdnet.com/article/how-to-use-notebooklm/>.

## General AI (Non-Genealogical)

"AI Model Comparison: Which AI Reigns Supreme in 2025," *DoneForYou.com*, blog, April 2025, <https://doneforyou.com/ai-model-comparison-which-ai-reigns-supreme-in-2025/>.

AI-Pro, Multiple articles comparing the various AI Models, *AIPro.com*, blog, example: <https://ai-pro.org/learn-ai/articles/a-comprehensive-comparison-of-all-l1ms/>

Ethan Mollick, *One Useful Thing*, blog and newsletter, <https://www.oneusefulthing.org/>. Also, Ethan Mollick, **Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI** (New York: Portfolio/Penguin Random House, 2024); Amazon.com (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/059371671X> ).

## Online Education on AI for Genealogy (\$)

Coach Carole, "Master AI Skills for Genealogy in 2025," *Essential Genealogist*, 2025, <https://coachcaroleonline.com/master-ai-skills-for-genealogy-in-2025/>.

Kimberly Powell, "Hands-On AI for Family History Writing: Prompts and Practice," *National Genealogical Society*, on-demand training course, June 2025, <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/genealogy-courses/gentechtoolbox/>.

All links active as of 22 Jan 2026

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