Using AI for Genealogy

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Artificial Intelligence Overview	
Overview **Agenda** • **Introduction to AI** • **AI Tools and Platforms** • **AI's Role in Genealogy** • **Using AI in Your Genealogy Efforts**	**History of Artificial Intelligence** • 1956 – AI development started • 1964 – Facial Recognition developed • 1997 - IBM's Big Blue beats Kasparov in chess • 2000 - Netflix recommendations – "Based on what you have watched, you might like the following…" • 2004 – Email Spam filters introduced • 2009 – Uber started in San Francisco • 2011 - Watson wins Jeopardy • 2012 – Voice Recognition Systems – Siri and Alexa • 2014 - Self-driving vehicles – Tesla pilot • 2022 – ChatGPT is released
AI in Genealogy • Optical Character Recognition (OCR) • Handwriting Recognition – 1950 Census Indexing • Photo Restoration • MyHeritage Photo Apps • 23andMe Tree Building • Thru-Lines and Theory of Family Relativity • Full-Text Search as FamilySearch	**Types of Artificial Intelligence** • Machine Learning • Natural Language Processing • Large Language Models **Large Language Models Used in Genealogy** • **ChatGPT** – Open AI • **Claude** – by Anthropic • **Gemini -** Google • **Co-Pilot** – Microsoft • **Meta AI** - Facebook • **Perplexity** – providing sources • **Lots of Others!**
Large Language Models – Text Prediction	
Input Options • Text • Images • Speech • Spreadsheets • Code	**How Are They Used Today** • Software Development • Customer Service • Marketing • Writing, Editing, Summarizing
ChatGPT	
History • November 2022 – Open to the public - ChatGPT 3.5 • The interface is like Texting/Chat • Prompts and Prompt Engineering • Blaine Bettinger's Facebook group, "Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence," became the central hub for discussions and insights. • GPT 4.0 – predominant model - $ • Accessing ChatGPT = https://platform.openai.com/overview • Adoption Statistics • Over 160 million worldwide users of ChatGPT daily	**Effective Use of Prompts** • Asking the right questions in the right way is critical to getting good output. • New skill – Prompt Engineering **Creating a Good Prompt** • Provide Context – Role – "act like" • Use Positive *Action* Verbs • Clearly State the Desired Topic or Task – what is the Goal • Set Guidelines • Specify the Output Format • Feed It Content or Reference Material • Give it Feedback; Rinse and Repeat

Using AI For Genealogy

Uses for Genealogy
- Document Processing
  - Text Analysis
  - Extraction
  - Summarization
  - Transcription
- Language Support
- Research Assistance
- Photo and Images
- Brainstorming/Idea Generation
- Writing and Creation
- Educational Support
- Tech Support

Research Assistance
- **Events** - What happened in 1860 that might have caused my ancestor to immigrate from Sweden to the US?
- **Research Help** - What resources could be helpful for genealogical research in Mexico?
- **Definitions** - What does the Genealogical Proof Standard mean?
- **Resources** - Where can I get a list of Irish parishes in 1850?
- **Tech Support** – How can I change an image in Family Tree Maker?

Writing and Creation
- Emails
- Family narratives
- Blog topics
- Presentation titles
- Images

Handwriting Recognition – Transkribus.org

Images
- Adobe Firefly 2
- Google Gemini
- Microsoft CoPilot
- ChatGPT (Dall-E 3)
- Others: Midjourney, DaVinci AI - offers access to multiple models, including Stable Diffusion XL, DALL·E 3, Midjourney, and DaVinci XL.
- Ideogram

Strategies for Success

Concepts to Remember
- Hallucinations happen – Check, check, check
- Not Your Ancestors, Your Ancestors in Context
- 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.
- You are the Human in the Equation

- Write a clear, complete prompt
- Don't hesitate to ask again and again – peel the onion
- Ask it what it can do
- Practice. It takes time to master this skill
- Dive in – the water's fine!

AI for Genealogy Resources

Facebook Group:
Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence (AI), https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyandai/

Blogs with Multiple Posts on Genealogy and AI:
Steve Little, AI Genealogy Insights, https://aigenealogyinsights.com/author/digitalarchivst/
Dana Leeds, Genealogy with Dana Leeds, https://www.danaleeds.com/
Diana Elder and Nicole Dyer, Family Locket, https://familylocket.com/

Books:
Dyer, Nicole. *Research Like a Pro with AI,* FamilyLocket Books, 2025, 1st Ed.,
https://familylocket.com/product/research-like-a-pro-with-ai-workbook-digital-only/

Macentee, Thomas, ***AI and Genealogy: A Practical Guide to Summarizing, Transcribing, and Translating Historical Documents,*** Dec 2024. https://a.co/d/1fJ8aZe

Other Resources
Comprehensive/Overview Articles

Abby Tanner, "AI Developments in Genealogy," 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/.

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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.

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Thomas McEntee, "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.

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," YouTube, 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, 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/.

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Denyse Allen, "The Most Talked-About AI Writing Prompt from Chronicle Lab," *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," 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.

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Specific Uses

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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/.

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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/.

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Ethan Mollick, *One Useful Thing*, blog and newsletter, https://www.oneusefulthing.org/ . Also, his book: *Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin Random House, April 2024), 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 7 July 2025