

# An Introduction to AI in Genealogy

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## What AI Is — and Is Not

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is software trained to recognize patterns and generate helpful responses. It predicts text, translates languages, analyzes images, and organizes information — but it does not think, feel, or act on its own.

✓ What AI CAN Do	✗ What AI CANNOT Do
Summarize documents Translate records Organize notes & timelines Draft biographies & stories Suggest research next steps Restore & enhance old photos	Access Ancestry or FamilySearch for you Prove a family relationship Replace solid genealogical method Know facts you haven't provided Log into your accounts Change your family tree

## AI You Are Already Using

If you use any of these tools, you have already been using AI — often without realizing it:

- Ancestry — handwriting recognition for indexing, and automated hints
- FamilySearch — Full-Text Search uses machine learning to read handwritten records
- MyHeritage — photo colorization, enhancement, and facial repair tools
- Google Photos — facial clustering and intelligent image search

## 5 Practical Applications to Try

Application	What to Do
Summarize a document	Paste in a long probate, deed, or census transcription and ask for a plain-English summary.
Extract info & create a table	Paste several records and ask AI to pull out names, dates, and places into a table.
Generate a biographical sketch	Give AI the facts you know about an ancestor and ask it to draft a short biography.
Translate a record	Paste foreign-language text and ask for a translation — Latin, German, Swedish, and more.
Analyze a photograph	Describe or upload a photo and ask AI to help identify details — clothing, setting, era.

## Tips for Getting Better Results

### Prompts Matter

- Be specific — tell AI exactly what you want and in what format
- Ask it to explain its reasoning or list its assumptions
- It is fine to correct mistakes or ask follow-up questions
- Think of it as a conversation, not a one-time command
- You can request sources or ask it to slow down and explain step by step

## AI Is Only As Good As What You Give It

- Provide accurate facts, dates, and names for better results
- Include your sources when asking for help with research
- Always verify AI output against original records — never cite AI as a source

## Using AI Safely

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- Do not share private information about living people
- Keep DNA kit numbers out of AI chats
- Only upload content you are comfortable sharing publicly
- Review the privacy settings of any AI tool before using it
- Ask yourself: How important is privacy? Do I want the AI to remember past conversations?

## Choosing the Right AI Tool

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Before choosing an AI tool, ask yourself these questions (from genealogy educator Diahana Southard):

- How important is privacy to me?
- Do I want the AI to remember past conversations?
- Do I need it to analyze data?
- Do I want it to cite sources or explain its reasoning?
- Am I willing to pay a subscription fee for more features?

"You are hiring an AI tool to do a job for you. Know your requirements before you hire." — Diahana Southard

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## Resources

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### Organizations & Guidelines

**Coalition for Responsible AI in Genealogy (CRAIGen)** <https://craigen.org> A group dedicated to the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of AI in genealogical research. Excellent starting point for best practices and ongoing guidance.

### Learning & Getting Started

#### FamilySearch RootsTech — AI & Family History Foundations

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/ai-family-history-foundations-first-steps-mastering-ai-basics-for-genealogy>  
A free on-demand RootsTech session covering the basics of AI for genealogy research. Beginner-friendly and practical.

**Diahana Southard — AI Tools: What to Look For** <https://my.yourdnaguide.com/c/diahana-s-corner/ai-tools-what-to-look-for> Practical guidance from genealogy educator Diahana Southard on how to evaluate and choose an AI tool based on your personal research needs.

### AI Tools to Explore

Tool	Website	Notes
ChatGPT	<a href="https://chat.openai.com">chat.openai.com</a>	Most widely used; free and paid plans; optional memory feature
Google Gemini	<a href="https://gemini.google.com">gemini.google.com</a>	Integrated with Google tools; free to use
Microsoft Copilot	<a href="https://copilot.microsoft.com">copilot.microsoft.com</a>	Built into Windows & Office; free with Microsoft account
Claude	<a href="https://claude.ai">claude.ai</a>	Known for clear, thoughtful responses; free and paid plans
MyHeritage AI	<a href="https://myheritage.com">myheritage.com</a>	Built-in photo colorization and restoration tools

## Photo Restoration Tools

Tool	What It Does
<b>MyHeritage Photo Enhancer</b> <a href="https://myheritage.com/photo-enhancer">myheritage.com/photo-enhancer</a>	Colorize, sharpen, enhance, and animate old photos. Free for basic use.
<b>Remini</b> <a href="https://remini.com">remini.com</a>	Sharpen and restore blurry or damaged photos using AI. Mobile app available.
<b>Adobe Photoshop</b> <a href="https://adobe.com">adobe.com</a>	Professional-grade restoration with AI-assisted tools. Subscription required.
<b>Google Photos</b> <a href="https://photos.google.com">photos.google.com</a>	Free basic enhancement, face grouping, and image search built into Google account.