

Austin Families Association of America



Spring
2026

NEWSLETTER

Fostering Austin Genealogy & Heritage

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) as Your Personal Genealogy Assistant

Presented by David R. Neithamer – October 11, 2025 (Summarized by ChatGPT 5)

David Neithamer
PRESIDENT
7410 Boulder Creek Drive
Midland, MI 48642
president@afaoa.org

Anne Austin Alves
VICE-PRESIDENT
P.O. Box 266
Spring Valley, CA 91976
vpresident1@afaoa.org

Debbi Austin Brennan
VICE-PRESIDENT
2624 Maclary Drive
Wilmington, DE 19808
vpresident2@afaoa.org

William H. Austin
VICE-PRESIDENT
6322 Good News Drive
Charlotte, NC 28215
vpresident3@afaoa.org

Elizabeth Neithamer
SECRETARY
7410 Boulder Creek Drive
Midland, MI 48642
secretary@afaoa.org

Ann Wright
TREASURER
520 Welcome House Rd
Perkasie, PA 18944
treasurer@afaoa.org

Susan Joy Lewis
GENEALOGIST
115 Manor Ave.
Bardstown, KY 40004
genealogist@afaoa.org

Arthur M. Sikes, Jr.
DNA PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR
1175 River Blvd.
Suffield, CT 06078
Y-DNA@afaoa.org

NEWSLETTER TEAM
newsletter@afaoa.org

Debbi Austin Brennan
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
2624 Maclary Drive
Wilmington, DE 19808
membership@afaoa.org

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming nearly every field, and genealogy is no exception. This presentation explores what AI is, how it already intersects with genealogy, and how genealogists can ethically and effectively harness it as a powerful assistant. It also covers limitations, examples of good and poor usage, and a look toward the future of AI in family history research.

Defining Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems designed to mimic human intelligence—abilities such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation. These systems rely on complex algorithms, vast quantities of data, and substantial computational power. AI models are “trained” using large datasets to recognize patterns and make predictions or recommendations. Over time, they “learn” through feedback, improving accuracy as they process more information.

While AI holds enormous potential across society—from education and precision medicine to environmental protection and public welfare—it can also produce misleading or biased results when trained on inaccurate data. The adage “garbage in, garbage out” still applies. Like any tool, AI can be used constructively or maliciously, depending on how it is designed and deployed.

AI in Genealogy Today

AI already plays an important role in major genealogy platforms. **Ancestry, MyHeritage, and FamilySearch** use AI to suggest related records, transcribe docu-

ments, and generate hints or record matches. MyHeritage’s **PhotoDater™** estimates when photographs were taken, while **AI-based colorization** brings black-and-white family photos to life. FamilySearch now employs **AI-powered full-text search** to locate names in handwritten documents. These systems illustrate that AI is quietly embedded in the tools genealogists already depend on every day.

The Six Branches of AI and the Rise of Large Language Models

The field of AI is broad, encompassing six principal branches: machine learning, neural networks, robotics, expert systems, fuzzy logic, and natural-language processing. In 2017, a landmark Google paper introduced the **Transformer**, a new model architecture that revolutionized how computers process language. Building on this foundation, **OpenAI’s ChatGPT** launched in late 2022, pairing the deep logic of large language models (LLMs) with an intuitive chat interface that allowed non-technical users to interact conversationally with AI.

How Large Language Models Work

Large language models generate text by predicting which words are statistically likely to follow others. When given a **prompt** or **query**, the model draws from its training on centuries of written material—from Beowulf to modern news—to construct coherent sentences, paragraphs, and essays. These systems don’t “understand” information as humans do; they calculate probabilities.

However, LLMs can also “hallucinate,”

continued on page 2

Using Artificial Intelligence, continued from page 1

producing statements that are grammatically correct but factually wrong. Because they are not search engines, users might not realize when the output is inaccurate. Verification remains essential before relying on AI-generated results.

Understanding the Limits of AI Assistants

Leading AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, and Perplexity are not omniscient digital librarians. They operate based on linguistic patterns, not factual databases. Although they are improving, they remain poor at logic, math, and negation. They are best suited for processing and synthesizing information, not conducting original archival research.

Newer systems increasingly integrate live internet access through **Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG)**, combining statistical reasoning with verified external data to reduce hallucinations. Even so, users must learn to craft precise prompts, issue multiple smaller queries rather than one long one, and always request and verify cited sources.

The Strengths of AI Assistants (GETS)

AI excels at four primary functions summarized by the acronym **GETS**:

- **Generation** – creating something new or converting material into new formats, such as transforming a chronology into a narrative biography or generating a GEDCOM file from a pedigree chart.
- **Extraction** – pulling key information from large texts, such as listing beneficiaries from a will along with relationships and bequests.
- **Transcription/Translation** – converting text between languages or converting difficult handwriting into a more readable form or level, invaluable for genealogists dealing with old German or Latin records.
- **Summarization** – condensing long passages or articles into concise narratives suitable for genealogy notes.

These strengths make AI a uniquely valuable companion for modern family historians.

Popular AI Assistants and Genealogical Tools Most major AI platforms are freely accessible (with optional paid tiers). All require registration, but none can be “broken” through ordinary use. They differ from search engines, though search providers like Google and Bing are rapidly integrating AI responses into their results.

Each tool has its niche: **ChatGPT** and **Perplexity** handle general queries and text generation, **TurboScribe** specializes in transcribing audio or video, and **Transkribus** focuses on handwritten text recognition. In 2025, the market share among generative AI chatbots shows

strong diversity, with users choosing platforms that fit their workflows. ChatGPT dominates the market, but smaller models, Perplexity and Claude, are the fastest growing.

Examples of Poor Genealogical Prompts

AI assistants cannot perform unrestricted genealogical miracles. Prompts like “Generate my entire family tree for eight generations” or “Show me all the records about my great-grandmother” misunderstand what AI can do. Such tasks require access to subscription databases and human research judgment. AI can summarize, structure, and translate—but it cannot replace foundational genealogical detective work or access records behind paywalls.

Practical Applications for Genealogists

AI can enhance genealogical research in numerous ways:

- Generating lists of records to examine for a given event.
- Producing social history descriptions of towns during specific timeframes.
- Converting chronologies into narrative biographies and vice versa.
- Transcribing or translating printed and handwritten records.*
- Transcribing audio and video files
- Calculating complex kinship relationships.
- Summarizing long articles or interviews.
- Converting pedigree charts into GEDCOM files.
- Compiling lists of historical sites related to ancestral locations.

* Handwritten records still prove a major challenge depending on the quality of the document reproduction, style of script or handwriting, language, and use of abbreviations.

Demonstrations and Case Studies

Several real-world examples highlight these uses:

- **Record Identification:** Using Perplexity, the presenter queried what U.S. records might document Georg and Regina Niethammer, who immigrated from Mötzingen, Württemberg to Baltimore in 1852, revealing useful categories of passenger lists and local archives.
- **Social History Generation:** A prompt to ChatGPT—“What was life like in Brügg, Bern, Switzerland between 1845 and 1883?”—produced a narrative that contextualized the Schneider family’s life in Brügg before they immigrated.

continued on page 4

Austin Families Association of America Newsletter

Spring
2026



As most of you know, the Board has voted to move forward with filing for nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status for our organization. The two primary reasons for this decision—given changing banking and legal regulations—are to

establish a proper business tax identity with our own unique Employer Identification Number (EIN) for banking purposes, and to provide liability protection in the unlikely event of legal action against AFAOA.

There are also several additional benefits to obtaining 501(c)(3) status. These include the ability for donors to make tax-deductible contributions (for those who itemize their tax filings), improved banking options such as opening an interest-bearing account that could generate a modest annual income which we currently do not have.

Updated bylaws have been sent out for your review. Beginning April 8 and continuing for one week, members will have the opportunity—and responsibility—to vote on accepting the bylaw revisions required to proceed with the nonprofit filing. If you have any questions, please send an email to president@afaoa.org or write to me at the address listed on page 1 of this newsletter. Please make every effort to participate and cast your vote.

In our last newsletter, I mentioned that the Board was planning to upgrade our members' website (www.afaoa.org) to a new responsive design that will work seamlessly, not only on desktop computers, but also on smaller devices such as tablets and smartphones. This upgrade will likely occur in May or June, as the developer is encouraging all customers to transition soon. Our webmaster, Bill Austin, has been busy designing the new look of the site in preparation for the upgrade. Currently, we are beta testing the website before making the final switch. You may not even notice the change until the first time you visit the site and see its refreshed appearance.

Finally, our 2026 AFAOA conference will be held in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Our conference chair is already hard at work organizing the details, including the venue and schedule. This will be a wonderful opportunity to explore one of the most significant battlefields of the American Civil War. As always, the conference will feature a variety of engaging speakers and topics of interest to our members. I encourage you to consider making the trip to Gettysburg to enjoy the beautiful rolling hills of Pennsylvania and the hospitality of the Keystone State.

Enjoy the Spring newsletter, and remember, "Genealogy is like playing Hide & Seek—our ancestors hide, and we seek!"

David Neithamer
president@afaoa.org

Austin Y-DNA Project

**Calling All Austin Men
Unlock a 375-Year-Old Family Mystery!**

A rare opportunity has arrived for a man carrying the Austin surname — and it could rewrite a chapter of early American family history.

The AFAOA Austin DNA Project is searching for a living **direct paternal (Y-line) descendant of William Charles Austin (c.1650)**. The *first qualified volunteer* will receive a **FREE Big Y-DNA test kit — a \$400 value**.

For nearly 20 years researchers have pursued one question: **What is the true Y-DNA signature of the original Austin patriarch?**

Despite decades of traditional research, the answer remains just out of reach — and only a modern descendant can provide it.

Who Might Qualify?

The ideal participant descends in an unbroken father-to-son line from **Benjamin Austin, Sr. (1743)** — most likely through the families of:

- William Preston Austin (1884–1970)
- Jonas Partee Austin (1886–1979)

Men from these lines may still be found around Hickory in Catawba County — but descendants could be anywhere today.

Why It Matters

This single DNA test could:

- Identify the original Austin paternal genetic fingerprint
- Connect — or separate — multiple colonial Austin families
- Solve a mystery stretching back nearly four centuries
- Help hundreds of descendants finally understand their origins

One person. One test. Generations of answers.

Volunteer or Ask Questions

Art Sikes — Y-DNA@afaoa.org

John Clinard — treebyjohn@gmail.com

If your last name is **Austin** and your family roots trace back to North Carolina — this could be *your* chance to make genealogical history.

Using Artificial Intelligence, *continued from page 2*

- **Chronology Conversion:** A detailed table of events for Frederick Schneider was transformed into a flowing biography with superscript source references and formatted endnotes. Conversely, a paragraph biography of John Andrew Reed was reconverted into a structured timeline, showing bidirectional conversion capabilities.
- **Transcription:** ChatGPT transcribed obituaries for Henry Roche and Lauretta Laffey Moran from image files. It also handled printed German text, such as the 1930 article “Auswärtiges Amt Schweigt,” and translated it into English.
- **Handwritten Text:** ChatGPT and Transkribus were both tested on 19th-century German church records and letters—ChatGPT managed both transcription and translation, while Transkribus handled transcription only. However, Transkribus did a much better job of translating the record correctly. Both required careful review and accuracy checking.
- **GEDCOM Generation:** ChatGPT successfully converted 4-generation and 5-generation pedigree charts into structured GEDCOM files for import into Legacy software, though the more complex 5-generation chart required breaking the GEDCOM into smaller parts, and manually combining them.
- **Relationship Calculations:** In 2024, AI assistants produced inconsistent kinship results, but by 2025 most (ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) correctly identified the relationship “2nd cousin, 3× removed.” Perplexity asked why it was wrong and then agreed with the provided logical explanation – it learned!
- **Historical Sites:** ChatGPT created descriptive paragraphs about **Fort Wayne, Indiana’s** historic landmarks, automatically bolding site names for readability.
- **Audio Transcription:** Using TurboScribe, a two-minute segment of John Clinard’s September webinar on “Uses of DNA Testing Results in DAR Proofs” was transcribed exactly and prepared for publication.
- **Custom GPTs:** These are programmed queries used for repetitive tasks or queries directed to a specific purpose. For example, a specialized “Obituary Analyser” extracted structured data (names, dates, relationships) from an obituary illustrating how tailored AI modules can automate repetitive genealogical tasks.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are critical when using AI in genealogy. Three

major areas arise: **copyright, fair use, and citation.**

• Copyright and AI:

The U.S. Copyright Office recognizes only human authorship. Courts have reaffirmed that AI-generated works, lacking human creativity, cannot be copyrighted. This poses implications for genealogists who produce narratives or images entirely via AI—human input remains essential for ownership.

• Fair Use:

Genealogists must ask what training material AI models draw from. Public-domain works, such as Shakespeare’s sonnets, pose no issue, but generating content “in the style of” modern authors like J.K. Rowling raises legal and ethical questions. The same concerns apply to AI-generated likenesses or voices of living individuals.

• Source Citations:

As genealogists know, “Genealogy without documentation is mythology.” AI outputs, while not records per se, still require citation when used to inform research or provide social context. The **Modern Language Association (MLA)** recommends a clear format, e.g.:

“[Query].” Prompt. [Name of AI Platform], [Date or Version], [Company Name], [Date of Query], [URL].
Example: “What was life like in Brügg, Bern, Switzerland between 1845 and 1883?” Prompt. Perplexity Pro, ChatGPT 5, OpenAI, 9 October 2025,
<https://www.perplexity.ai/>

Future Uses of AI in Genealogy

The near future promises even greater integration of AI with genealogical tasks. Customized GPTs will automate transcription of old scripts, **DNA triangulation tools** will rapidly analyze genetic relationships, and systems will be able to process multiple documents and images simultaneously to generate narrative life stories. Massive indexing and organization of digitized archives will become increasingly automated, vastly accelerating historical discovery.

Choosing the Right AI Assistant

Each major AI assistant has strengths suited to different users (see source 7 for links to the AI Assistants):

- **ChatGPT** – versatile, broad-ranging, and flexible across tasks.
- **Copilot** – ideal for interactive tasks and integration with Microsoft tools.
- **Gemini** – excels at contextual understanding and multi-lingual applications.

Austin Families Association of America Newsletter

Spring
2026

Using Artificial Intelligence, *continued from page 4*

- **Claude** – handles complex analytical queries with exceptional depth.
- **Perplexity** – fast, concise, and excellent at providing cited sources.
- **TurboScribe** – best for transcribing audio or video recordings.
- **Transkribus** – best for transcribing handwritten records, and documents, but it does not translate them. To obtain a translation you should copy and paste the transcription into Google translate, ChatGPT, or one of the other AI Assistants.

Summary and Reflections

AI represents a revolutionary shift for genealogical research, akin to humanity's discovery of fire—powerful and transformative, yet potentially hazardous without care. The best way to navigate the hype is to stay informed and experiment responsibly. Observe how other genealogists apply AI to save time, improve translation, and enrich ancestral narratives. Whether you dive fully in or simply test the waters, you will find that AI can illuminate your family history in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

Sources

The presentation draws upon webinars, articles, and demonstrations from recognized genealogical educators, including Thomas MacEntee, Steve Little, Geoff Rasmussen & Andrea Bentschneider, James Tanner, and Andrew Redfern. It also references platforms such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, TurboScribe, and Transkribus, and guidance from the Modern Language Association of America on citing generative AI. Additional resources include MyHeritage's AI & Genealogy knowledge base and analyses of copyright law from the Copyright Clearance Center.

- 1 Thomas MacEntee, "AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?", live webinar sponsored by The Erie Society for Genealogical Research (ESGR), (<https://www.genealogyerie.org/>) 14 May 2024.
- 2 Steve Little, "Artificial Intelligence and Genealogy: New Beginnings in 2024", live webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/artificial-intelligence-and-genealogy-new-beginnings-in-2024/>, 3 Jan 2024 (accessed 5 Oct 2024).
- 3 Geoff Rasmussen & Andrea Bentschneider, "Using AI to Translate German Church Records (and more) into English", live webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/using-ai-to-trans->

[late-german-church-records-and-more-into-english/](#), 28 Jul 2024.

- 4 James Tanner, "Using Artificial Intelligence Tools to Expand Your Genealogical Research Universe", live webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/using-artificial-intelligence-tools-to-expand-your-genealogical-research-universe/>, 23 Apr 2024 (accessed 8 Oct 2024)
- 5 Andrew Redfern, "Artificial Intelligence & Family History: An introduction", live webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/artificial-intelligence-family-history-an-introduction/>, 12 Apr 2024 (accessed 9 Oct 2024)
- 6 AI & Genealogy: Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence for Family History Research - MyHeritage Knowledgebase, <https://education.myheritage.com/article/ai-genealogy-harnessing-the-power-of-artificial-intelligence-for-family-history-research/?lcpt=article>
- 7 AI Assistants: ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com>); Perplexity (<https://www.perplexity.ai>); Claude (<https://claude.ai/new>); Copilot (<https://copilot.microsoft.com>); Gemini (<https://gemini.google.com>); TurboScribe (<https://turbo-scribe.ai>); Transkribus (<https://www.transkribus.org/>)
- 8 Top Generative AI Chatbots by Market Share – October 2025, <https://firstpagesage.com/reports/top-generative-ai-chatbots/>
- 9 Laura Clark Murray, "Making ChatGPT a Valuable Genealogy Assistant", Family Locket blog, 20 April 2023, <https://family-locket.com/making-chatgpt-a-valuable-genealogy-assistant/>
- 10 How do I cite generative AI in MLA style? - Modern Language Association of America, <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>
- 11 Intersection of AI & Copyright - Copyright Clearance Center, <https://www.copyright.com/resource-library/insights/intersection-ai-copyright/>
- 12 Thomas MacEntee, "Translating, Transcribing, and Summarizing Documents Using AI", recorded webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, (<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/translating-transcribing-and-summarizing-documents-using-ai/?cractical>)
- 13 Andrew Redfern, "10 Practical Uses of AI for Family History", recorded webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/10-practical-uses-of-ai-for-family-history/?category=technology&sortby=newest>, 24 Jan 2025 (accessed 19 Sep 2025)
- 14 Andrew Redfern, "10 Advanced Ways to Use AI in Family History", recorded webinar sponsored by Legacy Family Tree Webinars, <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/10-advanced-ways-to-use-ai-in-family-history/?category=technology>, 25 Jun 2025 (accessed 20 Sep 2025)

Austin Families Association of America Newsletter

Spring
2026

NEW MEMBERS — And their Earliest Known Austin Ancestors

Austin Morris Jr.

P.O. Box 2006, Novato, CA 94948 AustinNovato@gmail.com; **"Richard Austin of Charlestown, MA"**; Anthony b.1636 Eng., Dr. Nathaniel b.1678 MA, Capt. Nathaniel b.1703 MA, Lt. Joab b.1740 MA, Henry b.1770 MA, Warren b.1798 NY, Henry W. b.1828 NY, Sophia b.1869 IL (m. Thomas Morris)

Diana Morris Wild

832 Euclid Ave., San Francisco, CA 94118 dianamwild@gmail.com; **"Richard Austin of Charlestown, MA"**, Anthony b.1636 Eng., Dr. Nathaniel b.1678 MA, Capt. Nathaniel b.1703 MA, Lt. Joab b.1740 MA, Henry b.1770 MA, Warren b.1798 NY, Henry W. b.1828 NY, Sophia b.1869 IL (m. Thomas Morris)

Jack Hamilton

1010 Avalon Dr., Jacksonville, TX 75766 surferjack07@gmail.com; **"Richard Austin of Charlestown, MA"**; Anthony b.1636 Eng., Dr. Nathaniel b.1678 MA; Capt. Nathaniel b.1703 MA; Lt. Joab b.1740 MA; Aaron b.1773 MA; Norman D. b.1811 NY; George N. b.1851 IN; Mary Luther b.1894 TX (m. Stuart Moore) [Marjorie Sue Moore Hamilton is the granddaughter of Mary Luther Austin and Stuart Moore.]

Darlene Conner Sampley

8035 Rainey Street, La Mesa, CA 91942 darlene.sampley@gmail.com Harriet Austin b.1818 England; d. 1903 Waukesha, WI (m. John Cooper)

Kevin Squier Austin

320 Broadway St., Saint Simons Island, GA 31522 kevinsquieraustin@gmail.com

Stephen Austin

3400 KY Highway 2141, Stanford, KY 40484 saus_ky_62@yahoo.com; **"John and Ann Austin of Albemarle Co., VA"**; John W. b.1755 MD, Jonas R. b.1782 VA, George W. b.1832 KY, Archibald b.1860 KY, Henry J. b.1888 KY

Angelia Thompson

560 Ashcreek Rd, Paducah, KY 42001 angelia.thompson@yahoo.com; Charles d.1837 KY, William d.1808 KY, Wilson b.1799 NC d.1870 KY, Lethena b.1842 KY (m. Dillard Halter)

Kimberly Lawrence

2862 W 4th Ave, El Dorado, KS 67042 jyhawk58@gmail.com

Timothy "Tim" Hueter

1540 Willow Ridge Rd, Columbus, OH 43228; thueter.15@gmail.com, **"Caleb Austin of Oneida and Lewis Counties NY"**: Caleb b.~1777, Alfred Andrew b.1804 NY; Eva Anne b.1852 OH (m. Lemuel Shiflet) [ancestors of Patti Shiflet Hueter]

Deborah Wheat

3838 Washington Square, Louisville, KY 40207 deborah.wheat@gmail.com; **"Thomas Austin of New Kent Co., VA"**; Richard b.~1622 Eng., Richard II b.~1660 VA, William b.1690 VA, Bartholomew b.1715 VA, Davis b.~1736 VA; Davis b.1777 GA, Mary Jane b.1816 (m. William Williams)

Katherine Austin Tang

2560 Rolling Hills Court, Alamo, CA 94507 katherinetang@mac.com; **"John Austin of New Haven, CT"** b.1643 CT; John b.1677 CT; Joshua b.1708 CT; Abner b.1734 CT; Eli b.1778 CT; Gideon b.1824 CT; Franklin b.1863; Carl b.1889 OH; Robert Dale b.1915

Mary Schange

64086 727 Rd, Auburn, NE 68305 gs62505@windstream.net

Melanie Wright

587 Hunt Station Dr, Lawrenceville, GA 30044 melaniewright1960@yahoo.com

Bruce Austin

716 S 17th St, Unit 4, Tacoma, WA 98405 brucelawrenceaustin@gmail.com **"Jonah Austin of Taunton, Bristol, MA"**

William Lee Carbrey Jr.

10 Pinnacle Cv, Madison, MS 39110; wlc511@aol.com **"William and Ruth Austin of NC"** William b.1693 Ireland; John b.1727 Ireland; Bryant Sr. b. abt.1751 Ireland, Jacob b. abt.1775 NC

Allyn "Lyn" Sykes

5499 Country Route 30, Granville, NY 12832 lyn.sykes@andelynfarm.com

Suzanne Coon

2001 Birchfield Pvt Ct, Kingsport, TN 37660 suz@bcweb.com; **"Thomas Austin of New Kent Co., VA"** b. abt.1600 Eng; Richard b. abt.1622 Eng; Richard II b. abt.1660 VA; Richard III b. abt.1690 VA; Nathaniel b. abt.1740 VA; William b.1776 VA; John b.1802 TN; Spencer b.1835, Frances Arthur b.1874

Virginia "Ginger" Oettinger

9291 SW 66th Loop, Ocala, FL 34481 vao68@hotmail.com

Keep your membership records up to date!

- Names and dates for your Austin ancestors
- Any Austin ancestors in the AFAOA Database?
- Any changes to postal or email address?

Contact us with changes or new information at membership@afaoa.org

Austin Families Association of America Newsletter

Spring
2026

👉 SAVE THE DATE 👈

2026 Austin Families Association Annual Conference
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
October 15th - 17th, 2026

Greetings Austin friends and cousins! By recent vote of the AFAOA membership, historic Gettysburg, PA has been chosen as the site for our 2026 Austin Families Conference. Gettysburg was founded in 1786, named after early settler Samuel Gettys. In addition to being a beautiful and scenic area, it is known for Gettysburg National Battlefield, site of a major turning point in the Civil War, and now part of the Gettysburg National Military Park. The park also includes the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center and Gettysburg National Cemetery, where a memorial marks the site of Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address. The Visitor Center features a variety of exhibits for visitors to orient themselves, including a museum; "A New Birth of Freedom," a 30-minute movie narrated by Morgan Freeman; and the Cyclorama, the largest painting in North America, which brings to life Pickett's Charge on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Other attractions include The Gettysburg Museum of History, a unique museum that spans several different historical periods, and the Eisenhower National Historic Site. There are many historic buildings and sites throughout Gettysburg. Check out the David Willis House and see where Abraham Lincoln put the final touches on his Gettysburg Address. Visit the Shriver House and the Jennie Wade House to learn about the civilian experience of the Battle of Gettysburg. Go to the Seminary Ridge Museum and experience the first day of the

battle. Local genealogical resources include the Adams County Historical Society and the Pennsylvania State Archives.

What better way to commemorate our nation's 250th anniversary than by standing upon the hallowed ground of Battle of Gettysburg, the pivotal turning point of the American Civil War. Just a short journey away—less than three hours by car—awaits Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were debated and ultimately adopted by the Founding Fathers. Together, these historic sites offer a meaningful and memorable way to honor this milestone in our nation's story.



Our conference hotel will be the Courtyard by Marriott Gettysburg. A block of rooms has been reserved, at the conference rate, for the nights of Tuesday, October 13th through Sun, October 18th. More information will be coming soon on how to make your reservation, register for the conference, pre-arrival activities, etc. We look forward to seeing you there!



7

www.afoa.org

Austin Families Association of America

Austin Families Association of America
P.O. Box 92
Blooming Glen, PA 18911-0092

Address Service Requested

Austin Families Association of America

Objectives

- To gather, preserve and disseminate Austin genealogies and Austin family histories.
- To establish a specialized database of Austin information that can assist genealogists and family members to learn as much as possible about their Austin heritage.
- To foster acquaintances and long-term friendships among the members of all branches of Austin families.

Please notice the membership renewal date on your address label.

If you receive your Newsletter only by email, find your dues expiration date on our website (AFAOA Members Login – Profile)

Annual dues are \$20.

Dues may be paid for 1, 2 or 3 years

It is now possible to renew your membership and pay dues by credit card on the website. (You do not need a PayPal account.)

If you prefer, you may pay by check.

Send to: Austin Families Association
P.O. Box 92
Blooming Glen, PA 18911-0092