

October 2025
Volume 25
Issue 10

Bay Area Genealogical Society Newsletter



BAGS General Meeting
October 24th, 7:00pm
After You're Gone: Future Proofing
Genealogy Research
with Thomas MacEntee

Try as we might, we really have little control over what will happen to our possessions, even our bodies, after we die. We can draw up legal documents, we can express our wishes to family members, and more; however, there are no guarantees when it comes to these matters. The best we can do is prepare, plan, and communicate now. When it comes to your years of genealogy research and material, what plans have you made to ensure that it doesn't die with you? Thomas MacEntee will share his advice on creating a realistic plan to get your "genealogy affairs" in order so that the next generation of researchers can benefit from your years of hard work.



Thomas MacEntee is a Baby Boomer guy with a love of punk rock music but also art history who somehow "fell" into the technology industry almost 40 years ago, and then left a lucrative IT career to pursue his love of family history and genealogy. Technology and historical research are opposites, but "tech people" like Thomas are needed to guide today's genealogists through the maze of options so they can deploy the best apps and devices to break down research brick walls. Thomas MacEntee: author, educator, advocate, entrepreneur, and that "genealogy guy" who helps you accomplish your family history goals.

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Special Points of Interest

Social Media Links
BAGS Partnerships
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BAGS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Education Spotlight Presentation

Going Further with AI and Genealogy

Oct 14th at 3:00pm (in-person)

and Oct 16th at 7:00pm (Zoom)

AI can be a powerful tool for genealogy research. In this session, we'll be reviewing some basics about AI usage. We will also put into practice what we've learned! Come prepared to "go further" with AI! **Don't forget your tablet or laptop!** This will be the last Education Spotlight session for this year.

Zoom registration for is available on the **Members Helping Members** page of the **BAGS website**.

AI Platforms for Translating, Transcribing and Summarizing Documents

The most discussed features of artificial intelligence are "deep learning" and "generative AI." Deep learning mimics the human brain in that it looks for patterns using vast amounts of information to interpret photos, audio, and text. Generative AI actually "generates" new photos, audio, and text, based on information provided by the user, and again, uses its own database of "training data" to understand patterns and generate output that matches the user's query.

While genealogy vendors are incorporating AI into features provided to users, these are some popular AI platforms open to the public that you might want to consider using.

ChatGPT: Meaning "Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer," ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) is the most popular publicly-accessible artificial intelligence platform.

Claude: Claude (<https://claude.ai/>) is an artificial intelligence chatbot created by the company Anthropic that is designed to generate text content and engage in conversations with users using human-like responses.

Copilot: Copilot (<https://copilot.microsoft.com>) is an AI-powered intelligent assistant that helps you get answers and inspirations from across the web, supports creativity and collaboration, and helps you focus on the task at hand.

Gemini: Developed by Google, Gemini (<https://gemini.google.com/>) formerly known as Bard, describes itself as "a family of AI models developed by Google's AI research labs DeepMind and Google Research. Gemini is Google's largest and most flexible AI model, able to run on data centers and mobile devices."

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Board Meetings

All BAGS Board Meetings are virtual via Zoom. Members are welcome to attend! If you would like to attend a meeting, request a link from info@txbayareagen.org

2025 Meetings

October 20th

November 17th

Board meetings are on Mondays at 6:30pm. Board meeting minutes are available on the Members Page.

Follow BAGS on Facebook!

[Facebook Group \(members\)](#)

[Facebook Page \(public page\)](#)



txbayareagen.org/

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS GROUPS

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATIONS

Going Further with AI and Genealogy (final spotlight for 2025)

Oct 14th at 3:00pm (in-person) and **Oct 16th at 7:00pm (Zoom)**

Education Spotlight presentation topics are introduced by a brief presentation, followed by hands-on “how to.” Attendees bring a laptop or table to practice presentation material during the remainder of the meeting. Several members will be on hand to help attendees. A handout will be provided.

Oct 14th in-person presentation will be at the Friendswood Library, 416 S. Friendswood Dr, Friendswood, TX, 77546 at 3:00pm

Oct 16th is a virtual repeat of the previous presentation via *Zoom* at 7:00pm. The *Zoom* registration is under the **Members Helping Members** section of the [BAGS website](#). More presentation details are available on [page 2](#) of this newsletter.

NEED ZOOM SUPPORT?

Kathleen Williams will be available **before** the in-person Education Spotlight session on **October 14th at 2:00pm** to help you learn how to connect with BAGS on *Zoom*. She can also answer questions or troubleshoot any *Zoom* issues you might be experiencing! Please bring your own electronic device to connect.



MHM Online Research – Session #1 & #2

#1 Mondays, 10:00am to 12:00pm

with [Reneé Ball](#) & [George Porterfield](#)

#2 Mondays, 7:00pm to 8:00pm

with Kim Zrubek & friends

Need assistance with your family tree or a genealogical brick wall? BAGS members can participate in MHM sessions via *Zoom*. Participants share their screens and demonstrate research finds. Details for connecting to a *Zoom* MHM link are available on the [Members Helping Members page](#).

Genealogy Writing Special Interest Group

The BAGS Writing Special Interest Group meets **virtually, via Zoom**, on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays** of each month, **1:30 – 3:30pm** with an in person option, on the 3rd Thursday. Registration details are on the BAGS website or contact Becky Jones at vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org for more information and location directions.



[Family Tree Maker](#) – *by Appointment Only*

If you would like help using /installing Family Tree Maker or need to ask questions about how the software works and interacts with other genealogical sources, you can now make appointments directly with our FTM guru, [Reneé Ball](#). Help with technical concerns, such as software upgrading and exporting files, is also available. Connection details are on [Members Helping Members page](#).



[Need Extra Help?](#)

Complete the [BAGS Help Desk Form](#) and email it to [Kathleen Williams, Education Chair](#). She'll respond to discuss your research needs!

SUPPORT YOUR BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY!

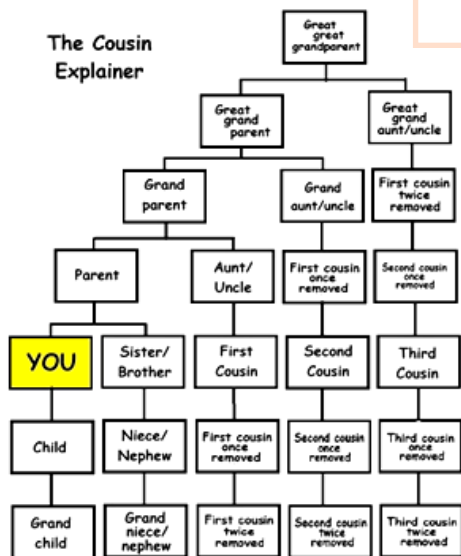


NGS Resources to Celebrate Family History Month

Family History Month begins on October 1st and NGS is excited to partner with BAGS! We've created free PDFs to explore and preserve your family history. Simply download the files at the **NGS Family History Month page** for the topics below.

- **Scan and Label Family Photos and Documents**
- **Record and Preserve Family Memories**
- **Write and Share Family Stories**
- **Join the Family History Community**

Family History Month PDFs can be used anytime! Share in the joy of discovery and the benefits of the genealogy community for **Family History Month** and all through the year.



BAGS Presents: *WE ARE FAMILY*

BAGS display presentation at the Freeman Library is **DECEMBER 2025**. Do you have a story that can be told with pictures or documents? Do you have memorabilia (*photos, clothes, letters, etc.*) to attract attention to the display?**YOU CAN HELP!**

Create a poster or send photos/memorabilia to Polly Swerdlin, at 281-814-4606 or webeditor@txbayareagen.org, and let her know when and where to pick up your part of this project.

BAGS CONTINUES TO NEED YOUR HELP!

✧ The Bay Area Genealogy Society is partnering with the Kroger Community Impact Program. You can link your **Kroger Plus Card** to the Bay Area Genealogy Society of Texas. It costs you nothing extra, but impacts BAGS in a mighty way! A percentage of your total purchases at Kroger stores go directly to the BAGS without any additional cost to you. It's part of Kroger's commitment to giving back to the communities they serve through their Community Rewards program.

HOW TO ENROLL

1. Sign in to your [Kroger account](#) OR create a NEW account.
2. Search for Bay Area Genealogy Society [here](#),
3. Type **HY346** in the search bar and then ←ENTER
4. Select the **BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** and click the blue **Enroll** button.

✧ BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY will also be displayed in your account's Kroger Community ✧
 ✧ Rewards section. If you need to review or revisit your choice, you can always do so under your ✧
 ✧ Account details. Have questions? Please contact Treasurer, Todd Roberts, at treasurer@txbayarea.org. ✧

OCTOBER RESEARCH | LIBRARY UPDATES

Friendswood FamilySearch Center

In-Person MHM Research Session

TUESDAYS: Oct 21st Nov 20th Dec 16th

10:00am to 12:00pm

Now meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month! This MHM session is open to all BAGS members for research. The Friendswood FamilySearch Center is located at **505 Deseret Dr**, in Friendswood, TX. The center is also open to the public for research during the listed visitor hours:

Tues, Thurs, & Fri **10:00am – 2:00pm**

Tuesday evenings **7:00pm – 9:00pm**

The center has FREE access to the FamilySearch Center Portal page, with premium family history software.

League City FamilySearch Center

The League City FamilySearch Center is located at **4655 South Shore Blvd**, in League City and is open to the public for research:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays **7:00pm – 9:00pm**

Saturdays **10:00am – 12:00pm**

These centers have FREE access to the FamilySearch Center Portal page, with premium family history software.

DAY of RESEARCH at the SAM HOUSTON REGIONAL LIBRARY and RESEARCH CENTER, Liberty, Texas

The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center is one of twenty-four regional centers overseen by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The Liberty location covers the ten counties of Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto, and Tyler. Their collections include over 12,000 cubic feet of artifacts, maps, local government records, manuscripts, and business records for families, individuals, organizations, and businesses in the area. The library also provides several resources for general research on Texas.

BAGS has coordinated a membership day trip to the Sam Houston Library on **Saturday, October 18**.

Details are available on the [BAGS website](https://www.bags.org).

Information for this location, including finding aids for some of their collections, can be found at <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/>.

Visit www.tsl.texas.gov/arc for information on the archival holdings of the Texas State Archives.

Visit www.tsl.texas.gov/texasdigitalarchive for searchable digital collections.

HPL Clayton Library for Genealogical Research | FamilySearch Center and Clayton Library Friends (CLF) Events

The **FamilySearch Center at the Clayton Library Campus** is open for research! Staff members are available to help you get started and to assist in locating books, microfilms, periodicals, and databases to further your research.

CLF Book Sale & Scanning Saturdays – Oct 4th and 20th, 18th:00am – 3:00pm, Visit the Clayton Library Friends donated duplicate book sale held each 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month. Call 832-393-2600 to reserve your spot to scan photos and documents. Bring a flash drive to save all your scans!

Orientation to the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library – Oct 11th, 10:00-11:30am, Curious about your family history? Clayton offers a monthly orientation to the Family History Research Center where you can learn about the history of the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus, the resources we provide, and how to uncover your ancestors' stories [Register here](#)

Clayton Library Friends Partner Societies | [The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society](#) | [Texas Bay Area Genealogical Society](#) | [The Baytown Historical Preservation Association](#) | [Galveston County Genealogical Society](#) | [The German-Texan Heritage Society](#) | [The Greater Houston Jewish Genealogical Society](#) | [Hispanic Genealogical Society of Houston](#) | [The Houston Genealogical Forum](#) | [Houston History Alliance](#) | [The Humble Area Genealogical Society](#) | [League City Historical Society](#) | [The Matagorda County Genealogical Society](#) | [Texas Research Ramblers Genealogical Society](#) | [West Houston Area Genealogical Society](#)

Family History Research Center @ the Clayton Library, 5300 Caroline Street, Houston, Texas 77004

BAGS BUSINESS | INFORMATION

OCTOBER GENEALOGY LOCK IN

Hosted by Waco McLennan County Library and Central Texas Genealogical Society This event is available virtually. Eight presentations will be on **Friday, October 17, 2025**. Check the [Waco McLennan County Library](#) website for information! Details available on page 7.



Nominations are now being accepted for the following Bay Area Genealogical Society positions (2026-27) by the Nominating Committee.

President

1st VP

2nd VP/Programming

Secretary

Registrar

Treasurer

If you are interested in serving on the board, or know someone who would love the opportunity to serve, please email the name to 1stvicepresident@txbayareagen.org **before October 10th**. The official nominees will be announced at the October meeting on October 24, 2025.

Other positions and committees are board appointed. Voting will be in November at the General Meeting. The results will be announced in the December newsletter and on the BAGS website.



Statement of Activity as of October 1, 20225

Checking Account	\$3,061.37
Savings Account	\$2,176.17
CDs	\$10,039.60
PayPal	\$81.83
Total Monetary Assets	\$15,358.97

Additional points of BAGS contact:

Don't know the Members Page password? registrar@txbayareagen.org — George Porterfield

Have an article or idea to share? newsletter@txbayareagen.org — Cindy Austin

Submit information for the Journal: journal@txbayareagen.org — Todd Roberts

Ideas for BAGS advertising: publicity@txbayareagen.org — Terri Myers

Not receiving emails? emailcoord@txbayareagen.org — Fred Roe

Research questions or provide research assistance: education@txbayareagen.org — Kathleen Williams

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the Bay Area Genealogical Society, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the people of Harris and Galveston counties, Texas, who are interested in genealogy. Articles on genealogy are welcome. Inclusion is based on space available and is subject to editing. Please include permissions with copyrighted material submissions. Questions or comments about the BAGS Newsletter should be addressed to the Editor at newsletter@txbayareagen.org. All rights reserved.

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2025 Family History Day/Genealogy Workshop (LOCK-IN)

Friday, Oct 17th, 9:00am – 6:30pm (virtually) or 10:00am – 4:00pm (in-person @ FPL)

The event is free, but virtual registration is required. [Click Here to Register](#) virtually

Come celebrate Family History Month with us! Sponsored by the Genealogy Network of Texas, a network of individual libraries/societies participating in this annual event. Each organization hosting their own event is tied together by the shared programs that are presented. Our goals are to provide the public a free educational opportunity, connect libraries and societies, and showcase the genealogy collections and resources across Texas. Eight presentations, recorded specifically for this event, will be streamed throughout the day with lunch on your own.

Schedule

9:00 – 9:50am From Names to Narratives: A Simple Guide to Writing: *Presented by Hannah Kubacak, Librarian from the Waco-McLennan County Library's Genealogy Center.* Learn the art of biographical writing by weaving historical context, personal anecdotes, and family lore into your ancestors' stories. Review tips on maintaining accuracy while crafting a compelling narrative to preserve and share your family history. Join us and be inspired to transform your genealogy research into captivating biographical sketches cherished by future generations.

10:00 – 10:50am Following a Civil Case Through Documents Filed in Court: *Presented by J. Mark Lowe, FUGA, Ky-Tn Research Associates Researcher.* Learn the basics of the legal system. Understand the process of following a case through court including dockets, orders, depositions, etc. Find the key to solving a problem using these records.

11:00 – 11:50am Jakten - Researching Your Scandinavian Ancestors: *Presented by Carl Smith, Manager of the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus.* Do you have ancestors who emigrated from Denmark, Norway, or Sweden? These countries each did an amazing job of recording and preserving their church and government records from early-modern history until the present - many of which are accessible online. Review record sources and strategies for researchers ready to uncover their Scandinavian family roots.

11:50am – 12:50pm Lunch on Your Own

12:50 – 2:10pm The Stories of Our Lives: Beginning Your Family History: *Presented by Curt Witcher, Director of Special Collections at the Allen County Public Library.* Discover (or review) straightforward steps to take when starting your family history. Easy steps for comfortably gathering as much information as possible will be shared along with how to organize that information to lead one to next steps and new discoveries.

2:25 – 3:15pm Research Road Trips: Productive for You, Fun for Family: *Presented by Jessica Horne Collins, President of the Clayton Library Friends.* Uncover your family's past with a balance of research and family fun. Learn how to prepare yourself for research trips to libraries, courthouses, archives, and other repositories. Explore ways to take completed and in-progress research and craft a road trip that showcases your family history to loved ones of all ages.

3:30 – 4:20pm Resources for New Orleans Area Genealogical Research: *Presented by Stephen Stuart, President of the Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans.* Family historians can access a wealth of libraries, archives, and other resources to learn more about their roots in Southeast Louisiana. This presentation provides an overview of those resources – both prominent and not so well known – and key features of their collections. Participants will also receive contact information to get started.

4:35 – 5:25pm Family Trees Get Smart: AI as Your Genealogy Assistant: *Presented by Sherri Taggart Ahmadzadeh, Chief Genealogist at Family Tree Tracer, LLC.* Artificial Intelligence is transforming how we discover, analyze, and connect family history records. Join us to explore the emerging ways AI tools are revolutionizing genealogical research - from document analysis to pattern recognition to breakthrough research techniques. Whether you're a tech enthusiast or just getting started with digital research, this presentation will help you harness AI's potential in uncovering your family's story.

5:40 – 6:30pm All in the Family: Using Collateral Research to Build Your Family Tree: *Presented by Sandra Crowley, Director of Development for the Texas State Genealogical Society.* Collateral research is a powerful genealogical method that extends beyond direct ancestors to investigate the broader family network. Explore strategies to find additional records, reconstruct family dynamics, and navigate challenges posed by missing direct ancestor documentation. This approach is useful when primary records are scarce, offering contextual clues, migration patterns, and unexpected biographical details. Learn to transform fragmented family history into a rich and comprehensive narrative.

This event is also available IN-PERSON at the Friendswood Library, Baker Room, 10:00am-4:00pm. [Check here for the Friendswood Library schedule.](#)

Genealogy and AI

PRESENTED BY BAY AREA GENEALOGY SOCIETY OF TEXAS



BAGS Membership Appreciation Seminar

with Nicole Dyer

Saturday, January 24, 2026

1:00pm to 5:30pm

Online - Zoom Presentation



Mark your calendar and save the date for our next **MEMBERS' ONLY SEMINAR!** Beginning at 1:00pm, the Texas Bay Area Genealogy Society will host a 3-session online seminar entitled *Genealogy and AI* with Nicole Dyer.

Nicole Dyer is a professional genealogist who specializes in Southern United States research and genetic genealogy. She is the creator of [FamilyLocket.com](https://familyloket.com) and **Research Like a Pro Genealogy Podcast**. She co-authored *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide* and *Research Like a Pro with DNA* with Diane Elders and is an instructor for the study groups of the same name. Nicole lectures at national and local conferences and institutes throughout the US. She is a member of the Pima County Genealogy Society and has served as their secretary and publicity chair. Nicole holds a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in History Teaching. At Family Locket Genealogists, Nicole is a project manager, editor, and researcher.

Seminar Schedule

12:45p – 1:00p	Set Up – Check your connection before and print handouts 1:00pm.
1:00p – 2:15p	Session 1 – <u>AI Fundamentals and Responsibilities: A Practical Overview:</u> <i>Learn how to select and effectively use leading AI tools including ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity based on genealogical needs.</i>
2:15p – 2:30p	Break
2:30p – 3:45p	Session 2 – <u>Objectives, Analysis, and Research Planning with AI:</u> <i>Discover how Artificial Intelligence streamlines genealogy research, from defining objectives to analysis and planning.</i>
3:45p – 4:00p	Break
4:00p – 5:15p	Session 3 – <u>Transcription with LLMs:</u> <i>This hands-on class teaches genealogists how to use Large Language Models as transcription tools for historical documents.</i>
5:15p – 5:30p	Q and A – Session Wrap-up with time for questions

Registration details and further information will be available at the Texas Bay Area Genealogy Society website, <https://www.txbayareagen.org/>. Registration is free for BAGS members. BAGS membership is only \$25. Join BAGS TODAY!



BAGS - Bay Area Genealogical Society

For the latest news and event updates,
visit our website at txbayareagen.org



October 2025

Calendar of Events 2025 – 2026

OCTOBER

2	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
6	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
13	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
14	3:30p	Education Spotlight, FPL
16	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
	7:00p	Education Spotlight (Zoom)
17	9:00a	Genealogy Network of Texas (aka Genealogy Lock-in) – online
18	8:00a	Bus Trip to Sam Houston Research Center and Library
20	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
21	10:00a	BAGS @ Friendswood FSC
24	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom) <i>After You're Gone: Future Proofing Genealogy Research</i> with T. MacEntee
26	4:00p	Meet and Munch – <i>Hoppes Sports Bar and Grill</i> – League City
27	10:00a	Members Helping Members #
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2

NOVEMBER

3	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
6	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
10	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
17	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
18	10:00a	BAGS @ Friendswood FSC
20	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
21	12:00p	BAGS Members Meeting: (Zoom) <i>Carl Smith – GenZ and Genealogy: Getting the Next Generation Interested In Genealogy</i>
24	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
27	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch – <i>Red River BBQ</i> League City

DECEMBER

1	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
2	10:00a	Freeman Library Display begins: We Are Family (set-up)
6	11:30a	BAGS Holiday Luncheon - TBA
8	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
15	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
16	10:00a	BAGS @ Friendswood FSC
22	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
29	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
30	10:00a	We Are Family – Freeman Library Display ends (tear down)

JANUARY 2026

5	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
12	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	7:00p	Members Helping Members #2
15	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
19	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	6:30p	Members Helping Members #2
20	10:00a	BAGS @ Friendswood FSC
25	4:00p	Meet and Munch – <i>Hoppes Sports Bar and Grill</i> – League City
26	10:00a	Members Helping Members #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
30	12:00p	BAGS Members Meeting Potluck