

Finding Family – December 2017

What are Genealogists Whispering in Santa' Ear?

By Christine Duinn

If you have a genealogist on your gift list, you are lucky. Focus on finding a gift that supports their hobby and you have a winner. Holiday gift suggestions for genealogists include the latest in techie gadgets as well as more traditional enhancements for their passion.

Genealogists often need to make copies of important documents such as photos, legal documents and diaries. Whether the need arises while visiting Great Aunt Sophie or on a trip to the Highlands of Scotland to track down that elusive ancestor, copy machines are not always available.

Although genealogists have been using mobile scanners for a while, they are gaga over the Flip-Pal. The scanner, which does not require a computer to operate, is battery powered and stores files on an SD card. It is able to scan photos and documents "in place" without removing them from albums or frames.

One of the Flip-Pal's niftiest features is the ability to combine a recorded voice and a scan in a single file. Just imagine sending a photo of your mother as a child to your family, with a recording of her describing her first day of kindergarten.

The device also is able to automatically assemble multiple scans of larger originals such as portraits or quilts. If your favorite genealogist already owns a Flip-Pal, maybe they need an accessory like a carrying case, back-up device or microphone for recordings.

Gadgets are not the only thing that appeal to genealogists. Family Tree charts that can be framed and hung on the wall are a wonderful way to share and enjoy family history. Charts can be as simple as pre-printed versions that can be filled in by hand. The internet is a great source for charts that can be downloaded, filled in on a computer with your personal information and printed out. With a nice frame, this makes a thoughtful, budget-friendly gift. You also can order a chart from online companies that create personalized charts. Or, you can go all out and commission an artist who specializes in Family Tree charts to create one for your family.

Scrapbooks are another popular way to preserve and share family history and genealogical research. Scrapbooks tailored to genealogy, and all of the papers, stickers, stamps, and embellishments that go along with them, are widely available. This can be a reoccurring gift, as additional supplies can be given for almost any special occasion, including birthdays, graduations and weddings.

Finally, don't overlook a gift membership in your local genealogical society. For the new genealogist, membership in a genealogy society is an important resource for learning how to start their family research. Even genealogists who are current members appreciate having their membership renewed.

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For more than 40 years, the Napa Valley Genealogical Society has served the community, helping people gain a deeper understanding of who they are through the study of genealogy. The Society's library, which is supported and maintained entirely by volunteers, houses one of the finest family research and history collections in Northern California. In addition to the collection, which includes more than 9,000 research materials, the library also provides unlimited access to Ancestry.com and other paid subscription sites on four online computers. Monthly programs conducted by trained genealogy experts help amateur researchers expand their knowledge.

An individual membership in the Napa Valley Genealogical Society is only \$30 and can be purchased from the comfort of your easy chair by filling out the application available on Society's website: napavalleygenealogy.org.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of membership in a genealogical society is the enjoyment of sharing a passion with fellow genealogists. Genealogists find that they discover more than their family history, they also discover rewarding friendships. Working together with other genealogists enriches the experience, deepening our understanding of our place in history and, ultimately, of who we are.

Photo caption: Levi and Pauline Chapman's dining room table set for Christmas dinner in 1926. The house was located at 1414 First Street, Napa.