

Genealogy Gifts

by Dee Gibson-Roles

With Christmas fast approaching, everyone is busy with shopping and trying to find that perfect gift for loved ones and friends. Genealogists are certainly no exception.

The fruits of our research can easily be turned into great Christmas gifts for our family members. Most of us have relatives and friends who tease us about our "obsession" or who want us to do the research work and then share it with them. And most of us will gladly do just that! For these recipients a book or booklet containing the family information gleaned while researching makes a very welcome gift at very little cost. Ancestor charts, family group sheets, census data, military service information, and images of old documents and narrative report can be compiled into a nice book or booklet, which may also include family pictures (the older, the better), and images of family heirlooms. Most recipients will value a gift of this nature well above more expensive items.

Another choice for a gift is a calendar for the upcoming year with images of ancestors and their families on each page. This is indeed a gift which "keeps on giving" as it is used throughout the coming year and then saved as a keepsake for many years. The pages are easy to assemble using digital images and calendar page templates for the upcoming year (which is freely found online,) then printed on any printer. The compiled calendar can then be coil or spiral bound at almost any office supply or print shop. The images certainly do not have to be limited to human subjects; old home places, churches the family attended, even pictures of ancestors' tombstones may be used. Many families would love to have a large decorative ancestor chart (or pedigree chart, as many genealogists refer to it) to display on a wall in their home. These can be purchased online from many different companies. The researcher has the choice of entering the information by hand himself/herself or ordering a chart with the information already printed on it. The price can vary from very reasonable to quite expensive. One of the least expensive but most attractive ways to create such a chart is to obtain a blank decorative chart. These come in many sizes, but for such a gift, a size should be selected on which the information can be easily read when the chart is displayed on the wall. Clear self-adhesive address labels can be used to create a professional look. Family information for each step in the chart can easily be entered on a label via computer and printed on any printer. There are many font choices, from plain to elaborate (even calligraphy!) These printed labels can then be placed on the chart in the proper spaces, creating a very attractive chart. The completed chart can be matted and framed if desired for a very attractive display.

Those who have young people to buy for can whet these junior family members' interest in family history at an early age by giving them a "how-to" book written especially for young folks. Again, a variety of these are available online and many local genealogical societies and bookstores offer them. It is a good idea to include some basic material with the book, such as blank pedigree charts, family group charts, etc. and also some "starter" information about a family member the recipient may remember. An example of this would be the military service information for a great grandfather that the young person knew in childhood and remembers fondly if the person is now deceased.

While "it is more blessed to give than to receive," it is very appropriate to discuss the possibilities of genealogical gifts for the researcher in the family. Folks are often at a loss as to what would please the family genealogist. For this reason, it is advisable to inform family members of genealogical items that would make well appreciated gifts. These would include a reference and family history books, supplies such as charts, etc. It is important to also give the family members an idea of where these may be obtained, both online and locally. Another very welcome gift is a year's membership in any of the genealogical societies to which the recipient belongs. Most researchers belong to several societies, often one for each family line, and this gets very expensive when the yearly renewal for all comes due at the beginning of the year. Most societies offer gift certificates for membership as well as for the purchase of any publications the society may offer.

Still another idea for the genealogist is a subscription to a favorite family history magazine or an online data base. Some of the favorite magazines include Family Chronicle, Internet Genealogy and Family Tree. The first two are

under the umbrella of Moorshead Publishing, who also publishes "History" magazine (a great gift, by the way, for the history buff!). Subscription rates and gift subscriptions may be obtained online at <http://www.moorshead.com/> or <http://subscriptions.familytreemagazine.com/Magazine>.

There is a plethora of subscription data bases available today, from the large and famous Ancestry.com to very small ones. Some favorites include fold3.com (formerly footnote.com) which specializes in military records from all US wars from the Revolution to the present, Genealogy Bank (genealogybank.com) which offers digitized images of a huge number of historical newspapers, World Vital Records (worldvitalrecords.com) which offers vital records from all states (and from foreign counties with an international subscription), and MyHeritage (www.myheritage.com), which offers site on which to store and share a family tree, just to name a few.

Almost every family researcher has collected documents, ephemera, photographs, and heirlooms which need to be stored in archival storage material, such as acid free folders and boxes. This material makes a great gift for any genealogist. While the best tactic is to simply ask the researcher about his/her needs, those who wish to keep the gift a surprise can get advice from the companies who sell such supplies. An online Google search for "archival supplies" nets many "hits" to choose from.

Books are always a very welcome gift, and those that are autographed are especially welcomed by the researcher. With this in mind, the Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society will be holding a book signing on Saturday, December 15, from 1 PM to 3 PM. Nine different authors will be participating offering a variety of books, including a new publication on the life of the daughter of Frankie Silver (who was hung in 1833 for the murder of her husband), a new volume on the Jacob Shook family of Haywood County, family histories of the Robert Edney and Colonel Ambrose Mills families, a beautiful new hardback publication on the history of Asheville (with many pictures), and a new book on the history of the Justice Center at UNC-A, just to mention a few. The public is welcome and light refreshments will be served. For more information, call 828-253-1894 or e-mail info@obcgs.com or visit the website at www.obcgs.com.