Over Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's, I'd like to encourage everyone to take advantage of family gatherings, or technology, or both, to talk with family elders and record valuable stories about your ancestors.

Ways to do this:

• Write a list of open-ended questions to start discussions, like "What do you remember best about life in Peoria?" or "What was Grandmother Pickell like? What stories did she tell?"

• Use your phone or a digital recorder to record storytelling at the dinner table

• Schedule a little time for storytelling with your elders away from the noise and bustle of kids and cooking and the opening of presents

• Use a call recording app while speaking on your cell phone with relatives

• Use multiparty calling and record your calls so that far-flung relatives can tell their memories of specific stories together – collaboration can aid memory

• Use Facetime, Skype, Google Hang or a similar program or app in combination with a recorder app to get video as well as audio when talking with relatives in other locations

And above all, name and identify all mp3 and mp4 recordings, and back them up to the cloud immediately!! You can edit them and add them to your family tree later, preserving family lore for future generations. Don't let a spilled gravy boat destroy your work.

Automatic Call Recorder
        for Android

I recommend a call recorder app like this one. It doubles as a voice recorder, allows file naming and notes for each recording.

A most merry and blessed Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Solstice to all – may peace be with you and yours at this special time. And Happy New Year!! May 2017 bring advances to us all in our knowledge and in our capacity to help others.

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