SCANNING PICTURES
by Lesly Klippel, 4/15

You've bought a scanner and color printer and want to know what you can do with them. If you've never used a scanner before you need to understand the following definitions.

1.   **Twain driver** - a software program that comes with the scanner and is an interface between the image editor program and the scanner. It has names such as VistaScan, ScanWizard or PrecisionScan and contains tools to control the scan qualities such as **dpi, mode, tonal quality and color balance.**

2.   Dots per inch (**dpi**) - number of image pixels per inch. The larger the dpi, the clearer and sharper the picture will be even when it is enlarged.

3.   **Mode** refers to either color or gray scale. A color picture should be scanned in color mode and converted to gray scale mode to make the best possible print on a black and white printer. Black and white is usually used for line drawings. Scan a black and white picture as if it were a color picture to preserve the sepia tone.

4.   **Tonal qualities** include contrast, brightness, shadows and highlights. Your Twain program that came with the scanner may have controls to vary these qualities as well as controlling the **color balance**. Further controls will be found in an image editor such as Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Paintshop Pro, PhotoImpact, Photoshop Elements, etc. One of these types of programs usually comes with the scanner.

5.   Universally accepted image **formats** include **TIFF**, a large high-quality file that is good for master copies of your scans; **JPEG**, a lossy format that is compressed and thus loses some quality but is good for e-mail attachments because of its smaller size; **BMP** (Windows Bitmap), a large high-quality file that is also good for master copies; **GIF**, an 8-bit color format best suited for simple graphics with few colors which used to be used on web pages but are now being replaced with JPEGs.

6.   Image editors automatically save files in their own **format**s (Adobe Photoshop = .psd; Adobe PhotoDeluxe = .pdd; Paintshop Pro = .psp; Windows Paintbrush = .pcx; etc.). These formats are not generally accepted in word processors and publishing software. Most image editors will also allow you to save the file in a universally accepted format.

7.   **Storage** problems arise when saving graphic files because they are large. A back-up drive or a DVD burner are possible solutions for storing graphics. **Do not** store on a rewriteable CD or DVD as that technology has proved to be unstable and after a few accesses, the data becomes corrupted. The best solution is to store in the Cloud on a back-up web site like Backblaze, Mozy, Carbonite, Google, etc.

8.   The **ideal resolution** depends upon your hardware. Both your scanner and printer have certain dpi capabilities. In general, it is not necessary to scan at higher than 300 dpi and 150 dpi is probably sufficient for most purposes. Experiment with the equipment to find what works best.

9.   Experiment with various **digital camera** settings, load the pictures into your computer and print several combinations on one page to compare how each one looks.

10.   **Organize** your photos in folders under My Pictures. Family History photos should be filed by surname with sub-folders as needed. A word processing document identifying the people in a group folder should accompany the photo. A numbering system can be devised for filing photos or else you must use adequate descriptive titles for the photos. Family pictures can be filed under the date of the photo.