

# Who are Sandra and Tracey?





# Family history writing

# What will you get out of this presentation?

- **Why you should tell a story**
- **The importance of making it personal and showing why you care**
- **Research and sources**
- **Photos**
- **Collecting information like a writer**
- **Citing sources**
- **Writing the story (story, structure, style, sound)**

# Why you should tell a story

- Your ancestors become real people
- You can point out their achievements and understand their tragedies
- You can preserve stories that might otherwise be lost
- You eliminate confusion and errors that can be repeated

# Thomas McHugh



# The importance of making it personal and showing why you care



# Who are you writing for?



# Sources of Inspiration

## Formal

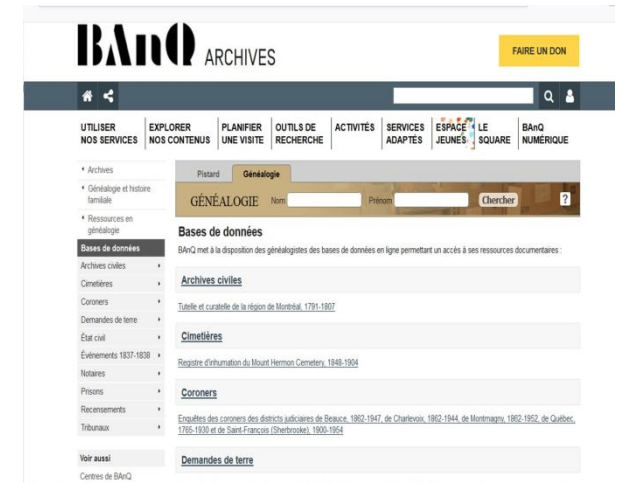
- **Genealogy Records**
- **Censuses**
- **Travel records**
- **Birth, Marriage, Death**
- **Military Records**

## Informal

- **Letters**
- **Diaries**
- **Scrapbooks**
- **Newspaper clippings**
- **Heirlooms/Photos**
- **Mysteries/Myths/Memories**



# Genealogy Records



# Censuses

TAKEN UNDER ACT 14th & 15th Vic. Chap. 40. *W. L. C.* ENUMERATOR.

PERSONAL CENSUS—ENUMERATION DISTRICT, No. *33* OF *18*

Name of Inmate.	Profession, Trade or Occupation.	Place of Birth.	Religion.	Residence out of Family.	Age next birth day.	Sex.	
						Male.	Female.
1 Charles Platt	Labourer	Canada	Chap. England	X	29	/	
2 William Platt	"	"	"	X	28	/	
3 Sydney Platt	"	"	"		6	/	
4 John Platt	"	"	"		1	/	
5 Charles Platt	Labourer	"	"	X	20	/	
6 Percy Beards	"	"	W. of W. Man	X	20	/	
7 Frank Beards	"	"	"	X	20	/	
8 Robert Beards	"	"	"		8	/	
9 John Carr	Farmer	Canada	W. of W. Man	X	52	/	
10 John Carr	"	"	"	X	51	/	
11 George Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
12 John Carr	Labourer	"	"		18	/	
13 George Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
14 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
15 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
16 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
17 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
18 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
19 John Carr	Farmer	Canada	W. of W. Man	X	21	/	
20 John Carr	"	"	"	X	21	/	
21 William Carr	Labourer	"	"		19	/	
22 George Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
23 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
24 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
25 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
26 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
27 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
28 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
29 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
30 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
31 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
32 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
33 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
34 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
35 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
36 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
37 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
38 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
39 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
40 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
41 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
42 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
43 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
44 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
45 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
46 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
47 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
48 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
49 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	
50 John Carr	"	"	"		18	/	

1881 Census, Canada West, Northumberland County, Grenville Township

PUBLIC ARCHIVES  
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES  
CANADA

# Travel Records

**OUT-GOING PASSENGERS**

P.M. 18.  
First Schedule

Name of Ship... "SS. AUSTRALIA"  
Date of Departure... 20th April 1955  
Owner or Agent... MR. SEVILL LTD.  
Where Bound... AUSTRALIA

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND IRISH REPUBLICAN PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF SOUTHAMPTON

(1) Contract Ticket Number	(2) Names of Passengers (Surname first)	(3) Class of Ticket	(4) Port at which Passengers have contracted to travel	(5) Sex (M. or F.)	(6) Date of Birth			(7) Married or Single (indicated or assumed to be correct except where stated)	(8) Address in the United Kingdom	(9) Occupation, i.e., Profession, calling, or kind of work done rather than industry in which engaged	(10) Country of which a citizen or alien as passenger, or citizen of U.K. and Colonies states also country of issue of passport	(11) Country of last permanent residence*	(12) Country of intended future permanent residence*
					Adults of 12 years and over	Children between 1 and 12 years	Infants under 1 year						
94070	Jones Dennis	Tourist	Spinyay	M	5.7.15	40		113 Commercial St. Newing Glas.	Building Contractor	England	England	Australia	
*	Jones William	"	"	F	14.12.15			" " "	Housewife	"	"	"	
*	Jones Joan	"	"	F	4.10.32	18		" " "	Daughter	"	"	"	
*	Jones Carol	"	"	F	15.2.45			" " "	"	"	"	"	
*	Jones Suzette	"	"	F	10.4.47	8		" " "	"	"	"	"	
*	Jones Paul	"	"	M	25.12.45			" " "	Inf	"	"	"	
94071	Liddell Robert	"	"	M	14.6.41			" " "	Inf	"	"	"	
94072	Lovely Ralph	"	"	M	14.2.21			2 West End House, Queens Lane, Stoke Newington, London N.16	Team-Feller	"	"	"	
*	Lovely Brenda	"	"	F	8.12.28			" " "	Housewife	"	"	"	
94073	Moran James	"	"	M	11.5.04	51		27 Windermere Gardens Belfast N.I.	Self-employed	"	"	"	
*	Moran Irene	"	"	F	1.5.05			" " "	Housewife	"	"	"	
*	Moran Thomas	"	"	F	24.8.43	12		" " "	Scholar	"	"	"	
94074	Smith Phillip	"	"	M	10.3.25			4/a NewWith "Harper" 30 Alder Crescent, Factory Weymouth, Dorset	"	"	"	"	
*	Smith Willie	"	"	F	14.4.19	26		" " "	Housewife	"	"	"	

# Military Records

The Instructions regarding this form are contained in Chapter XIII, A.P. 1801 (War Manual Part II). **R.A.F. Form 1580.**

**ROYAL AIR FORCE.**

**AIRMAN'S/AIRWOMAN'S RECORD SHEET (Active Service).**

Official No. AWR 136581 Name ANGUS David Walter Brodie Rank T/SGT  
 (In full in block capitals, surname first). (Or acting appointment).

R.A.F. Trade af how (a) Special Qualifications \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e.g., Gas Instructor, Fire Fighter, Boxing Instructor).

Date of Birth 31.3.12 Religion M.C. Occupation in Civil Life clerk.

Last Enlisted 10.12.41 Current Engagement Def W.

If a member of the Auxiliary Air Force \_\_\_\_\_

If Reservist, which Class ("E," "F," V.R.) S.B. Whether Married, Single or Widower \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and relationship of legal next of kin (to be entered in pencil): \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and relationship of person (or persons) to be informed of casualties (to be entered in pencil).  
 (If this person is the legal next of kin, it is only necessary to insert here "Next of Kin.") \_\_\_\_\_

Any alteration to above (e.g., Promotions) to be made by crossing out and writing above.

SECTION 1—MOVEMENTS AND CASUALTIES.			SECTION 2— PROMOTIONS, ACTING APPOINTMENTS (PAID OR UNPAID), REDUCTIONS, REDETERMINATIONS.		
Unit FROM which.	Unit TO which.	Date of Effect.	* Authority.	Description.	Date of Effect.
8 AOS	1 Y Depot	16.10.42		AC2 Low O Sta	10.12.41
1 Y Depot	RAF TP	24.10.42		LAC Abz	20.5.42
	Emb learn	28.10.42		af how	20.6.42
	Dis UK	5.11.42		T/SGT spc	2.10.42
	3PRC				
2343 3PRC	4AOS	25.1.43			
4AOS	230TU	23.3.43			
230TU	1659 CW	7.6.43			
1659 Com Unit	41959	28.6.43			
419(RAF) SQDN	405 R.T.P. SQDN	23.7.43			
405 Sqdn	W in Casualty	18.8.43			
405 SQDN	RAF UK-NEW	19.8.43			
505 RCAF UK-NEW	PREP DEPT	19.8.43			

SECTION 3—GOOD CONDUCT BADGES.

SQUADRON 405  
GT. GRANSDEN

Dear Ian: Today in the bundle I received today you must have got one from him too so I don't need to repeat the contents there was a letter from Maryone Bruce in Glasgow too. She wants to be remembered to you, & would appreciate hearing from you.

Did mother tell you that Jimmie Addie is either over here now or on his way. I believe he is still with the service corps.

Oh yes, by the way should I fail to return some day I want you to take charge of my things, and send home such stuff as should go there. Take any thing you would like yourself if there is any thing you would like.

Now it is getting dark & I've put all I can think of into this letter, so guess I'll close now. Please acknowledge this so that I'll know you have received it.

Your Brother,  
Colin

# Letters

## Found: trunk of gold

KAREN SEIDMAN  
THE GAZETTE

**L**ike many discoveries, Dorothy Nixon's was accidental. She was doing some laundry in the basement of her father-in-law's house to help him out when she noticed a big Victorian trunk that had probably been sitting there forever.

As she gazed into the trunk, which was filled with hundreds of letters, Nixon wasn't sure whether she had chanced upon a dull chronicle of history or a treasure trove that would help her revisit a time long passed.

It turned out to be a wealth of information and insight into an era about 100 years ago and into her husband's family.

The old great-aunts her husband had been forced to visit, it turned out, were bright, articulate feminists who worked to help save the family's home during hard times. His grandfather, who everyone had dismissed as an old curmudgeon, left behind romantic love po-



COLIN O'CONNOR, THE GAZETTE  
Some of the letters Dorothy Nixon discovered can be found on her website.



# Newspaper Clippings



# Heirlooms





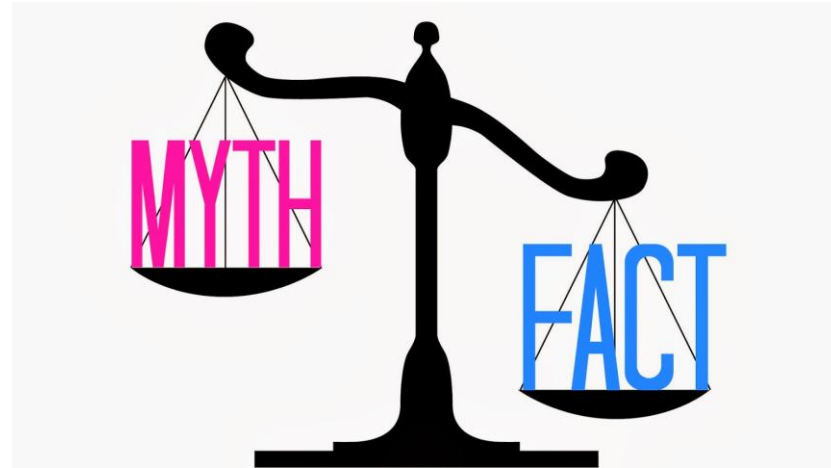
# Photographs



NOTMAN & SANDHAM—MONTREAL.

# Mysteries, Myths, and Memories

The 3 Ms – every family has them!



# Collecting information like a writer (good stories are better with quotes)

Unless you have an ancestor who participated in a court case or worked as an actor, singer or writer, it can be difficult to obtain quotes from his or her life.



# Tips for interviews



# Historical Context

**1803-1815 - The Napoleonic Wars prevent people from crossing the Atlantic**

**The 1820s – Immigrants from Great Britain settle in Upper Canada**

**The 1870s – The Canadian prairies see farming settlements**

**1885 – The last spike in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad**

# Timelines

- **The events in a timeline establish relationships**
- **These events situate your ancestor in his or her social context**
- **It is easy to see where there is missing information**
- **Research to find missing information will give you a more complete portrait of your ancestor**



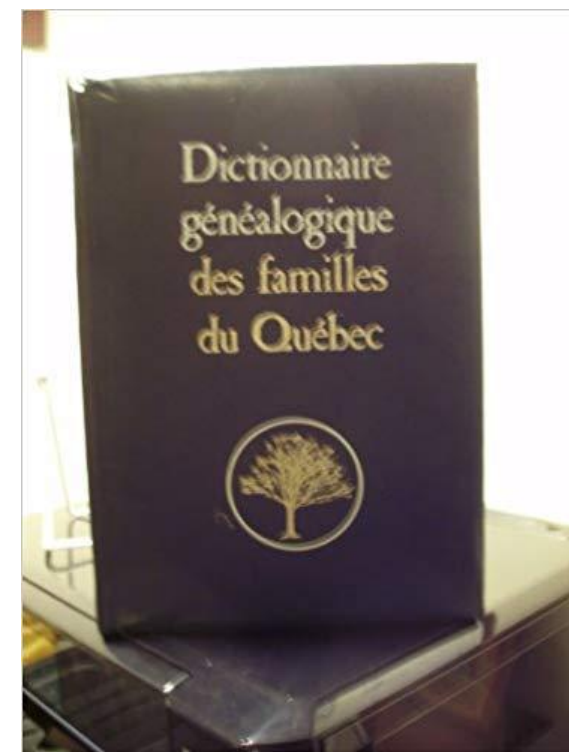
# Other Sources

- Other genealogists
- Genealogy societies
- Historical societies
- Genealogy and history blogs
- Online databases
- Maps
- Books, dictionaries, encyclopedias

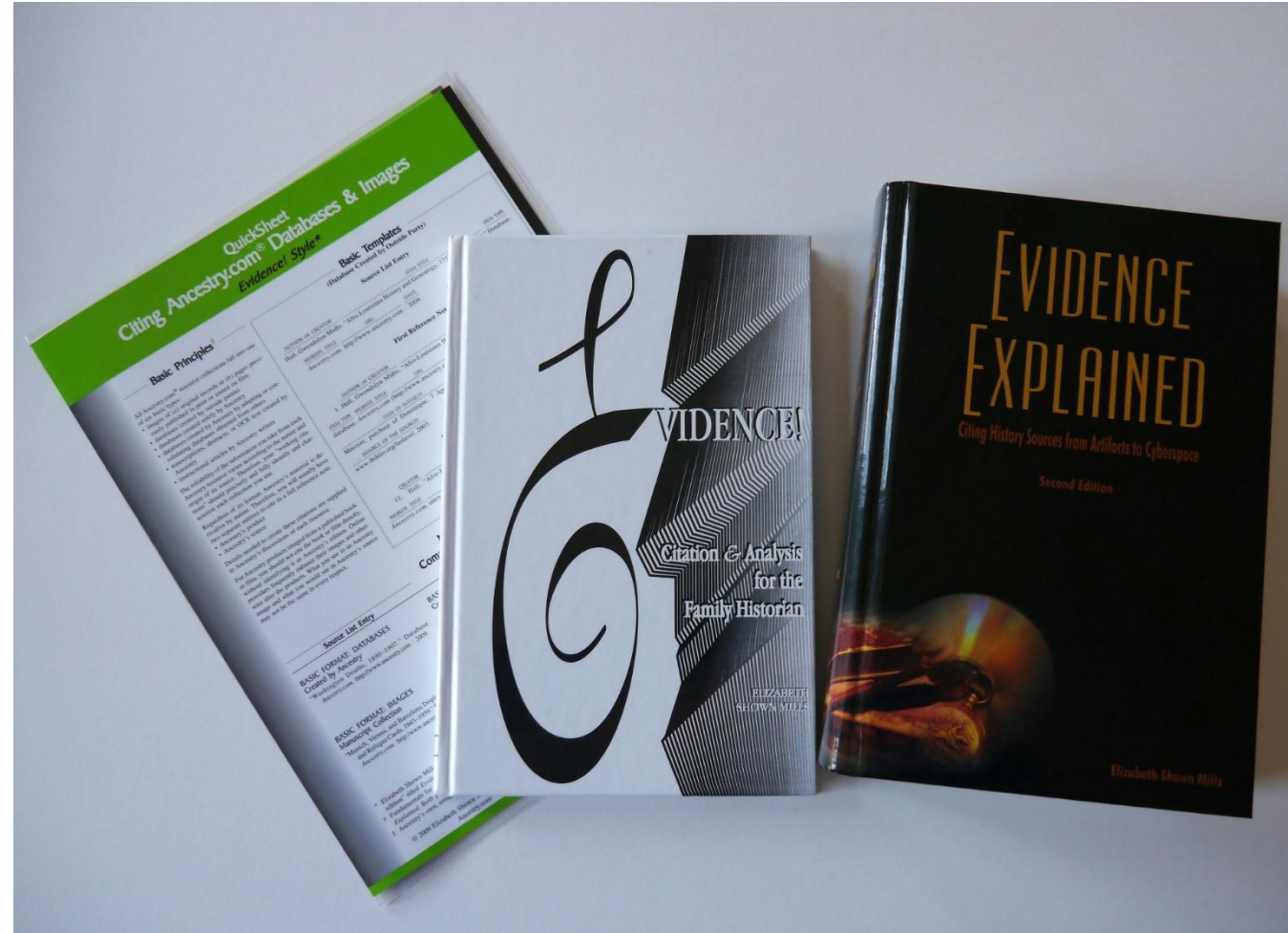


genealogyalacarte.ca

Genealogy à la  
carte | A daily  
genealogy news  
blog from a  
Montréal, Québec  
point de vue



# Citing Sources





# **We will all be ancestors tomorrow**

- **Label photos**
- **Attach the provenience to artifacts**
- **Organise and label documents such as birth and marriage records, curriculum vitae, etc.**
- **Keep letters and other writings such as annual Christmas letters, emails, etc.**
- **Write short little stories**

# Writing



# **Which of these two 28-word statements seems more memorable?**

**My grandmother, Evelyn Doris Johnston Forrest, married her husband Richard Charles Himphen on January 28, 1942 in the Baptist Church at the corner of Weston Road and Rowntree.**

**The twenty-year-old bride and her twenty-one-year-old soldier groom would see each other only once more after their Baptist wedding on January 28, 1942.**

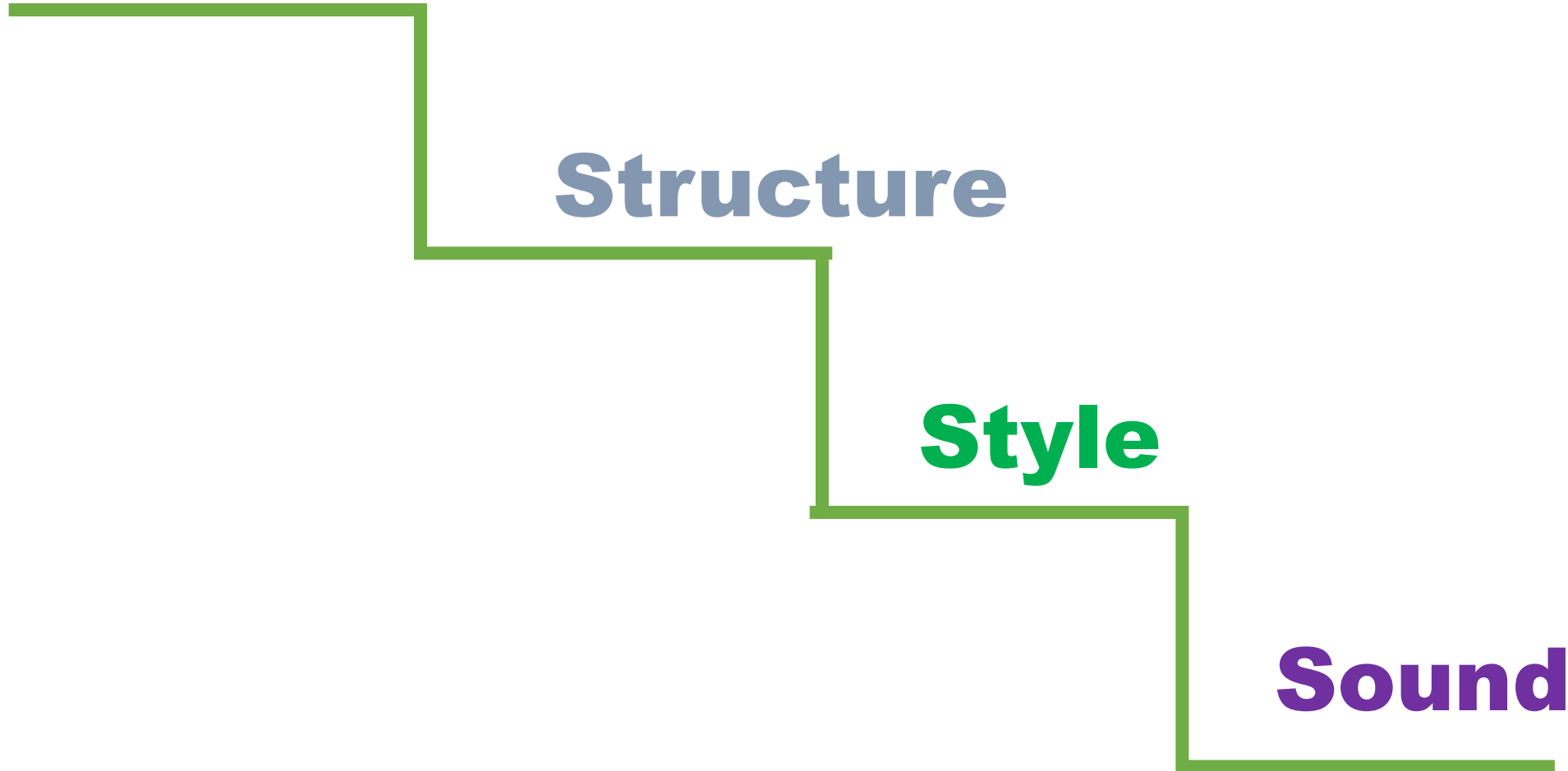
# Four Steps to Profile Your Ancestors

**Story**

**Structure**

**Style**

**Sound**



**What's your story?**

# Five story types

## A day in the life

## Anne-Joseph's Journey-filled life

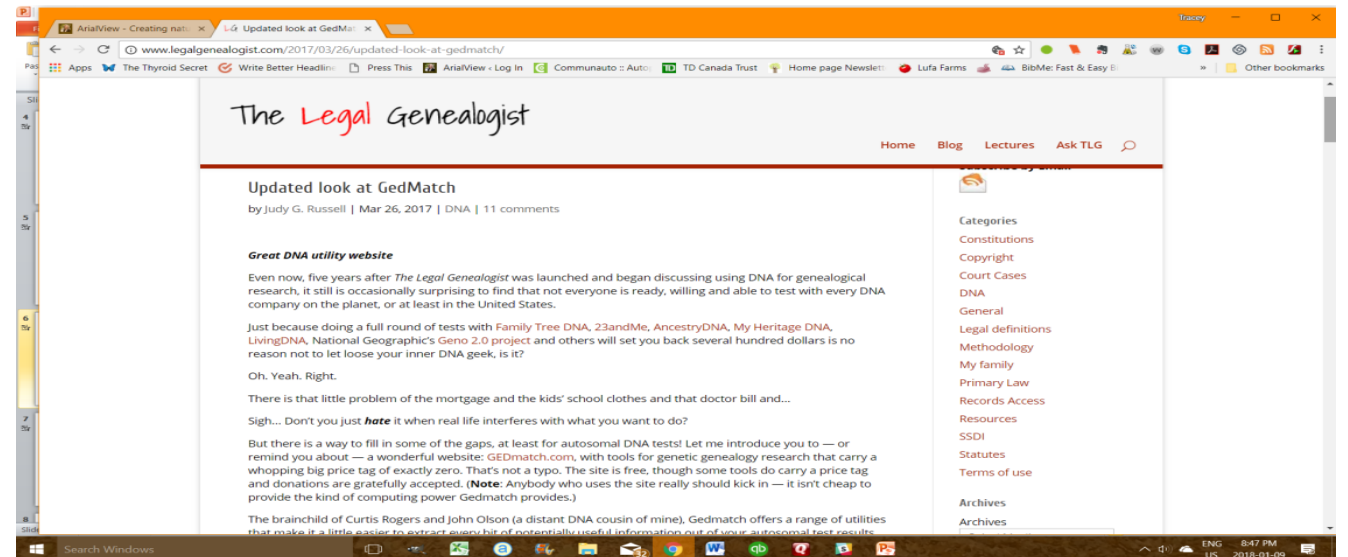
The image shows a page from the 1901 Canadian Census, specifically Schedule Table No. 1, titled "POPULATION". The document is a detailed table with multiple columns for demographic and geographic data. It includes handwritten entries for "Ontario" and "District No. 10, Russell". The table lists various households and individuals, with columns for name, sex, age, marital status, and place of birth. The document is densely packed with text and numbers, reflecting the complexity of early 20th-century census data collection.

# Five story types

A day in the life

My own journey

What is your process?



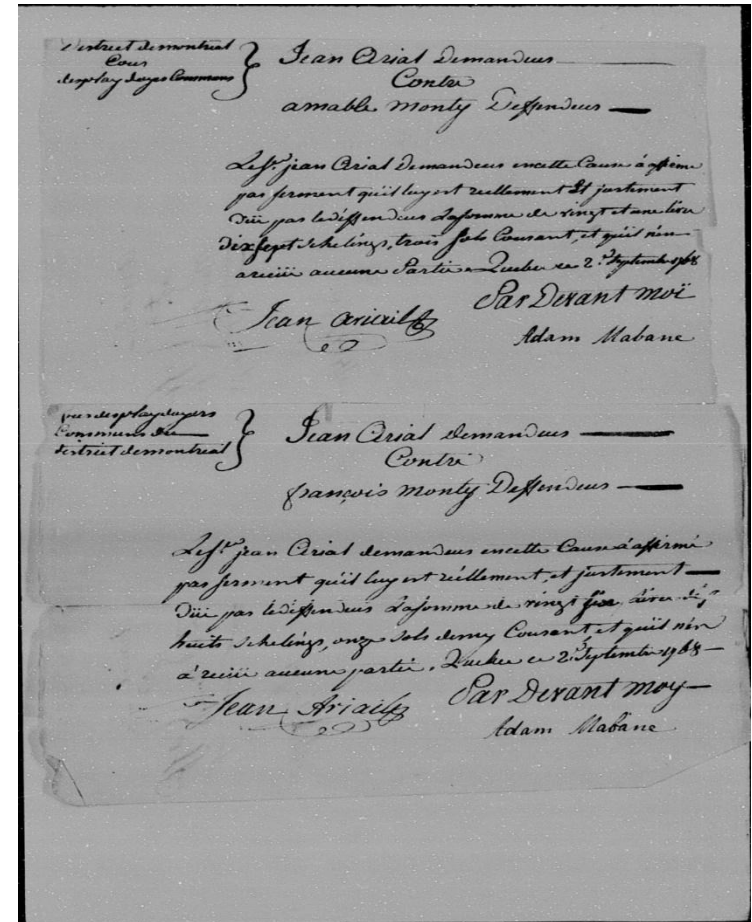
# Five story types

A day in the life

My own journey

Biography

Jean Ariaille





# Five story types

**A day in the life**

**My own journey**

**Biography**

**News event**

Paul Emile Hurtubise



# Five story types

**A day in the life**

**My own journey**

**Biography**

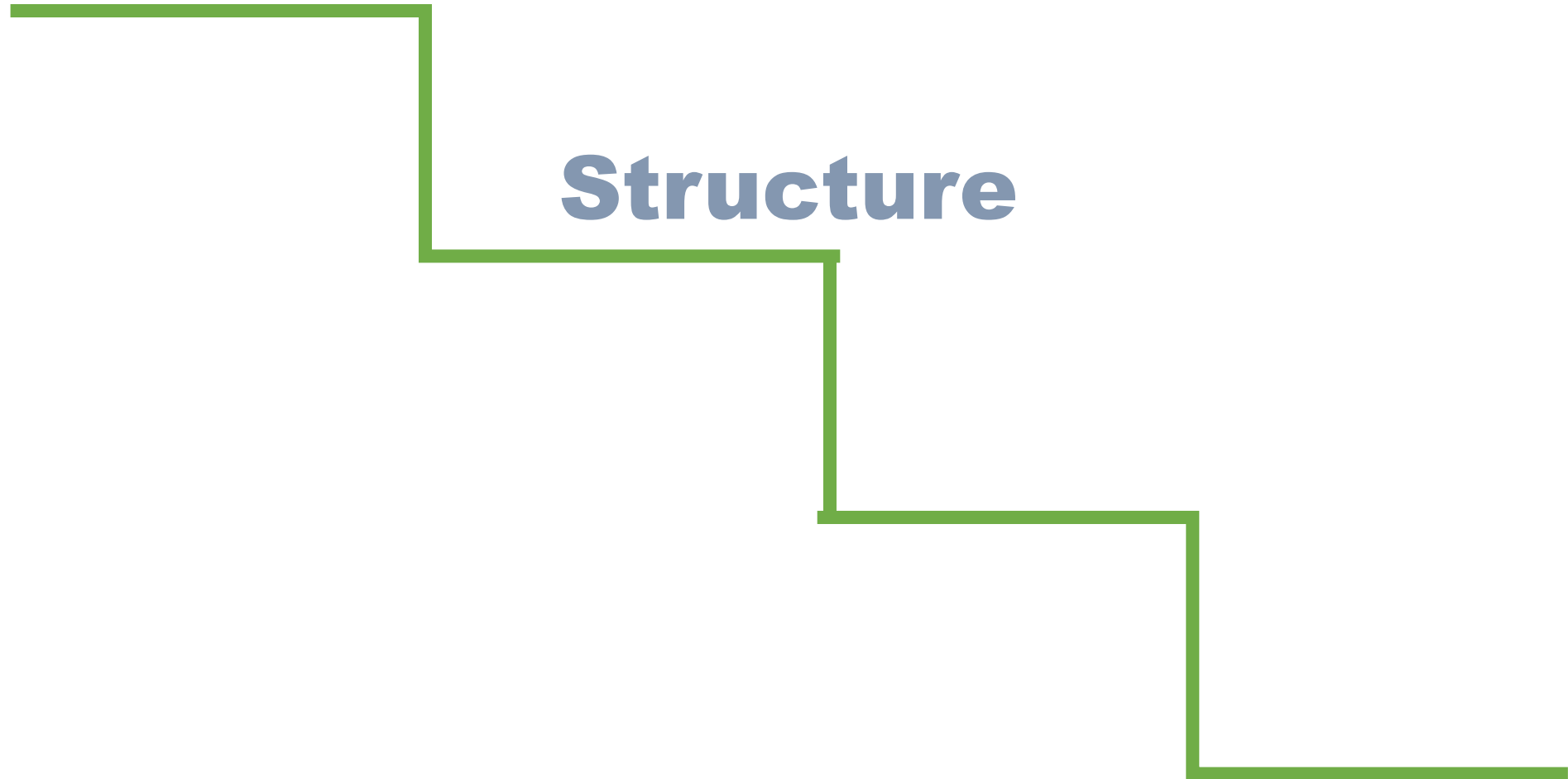
**News event**

**Detective story**

**Did Louis Riel hide in our family hotel?**



# Four Steps to Profile Your Ancestors



# Structure

- **Narrative**
- **Traditional news style**
- **Nutgraph style**

# Narrative Structure

*Jack and Jill climbed up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water  
Jack fell down and broke his crown  
And Jill came tumbling after*

*25 words*

# Traditional News Structure

*Jack fell down and broke his crown  
and Jill came tumbling after.  
They were climbing up the hill  
to fetch a pail of water.*

*24 words*

# Nutgraph Structure

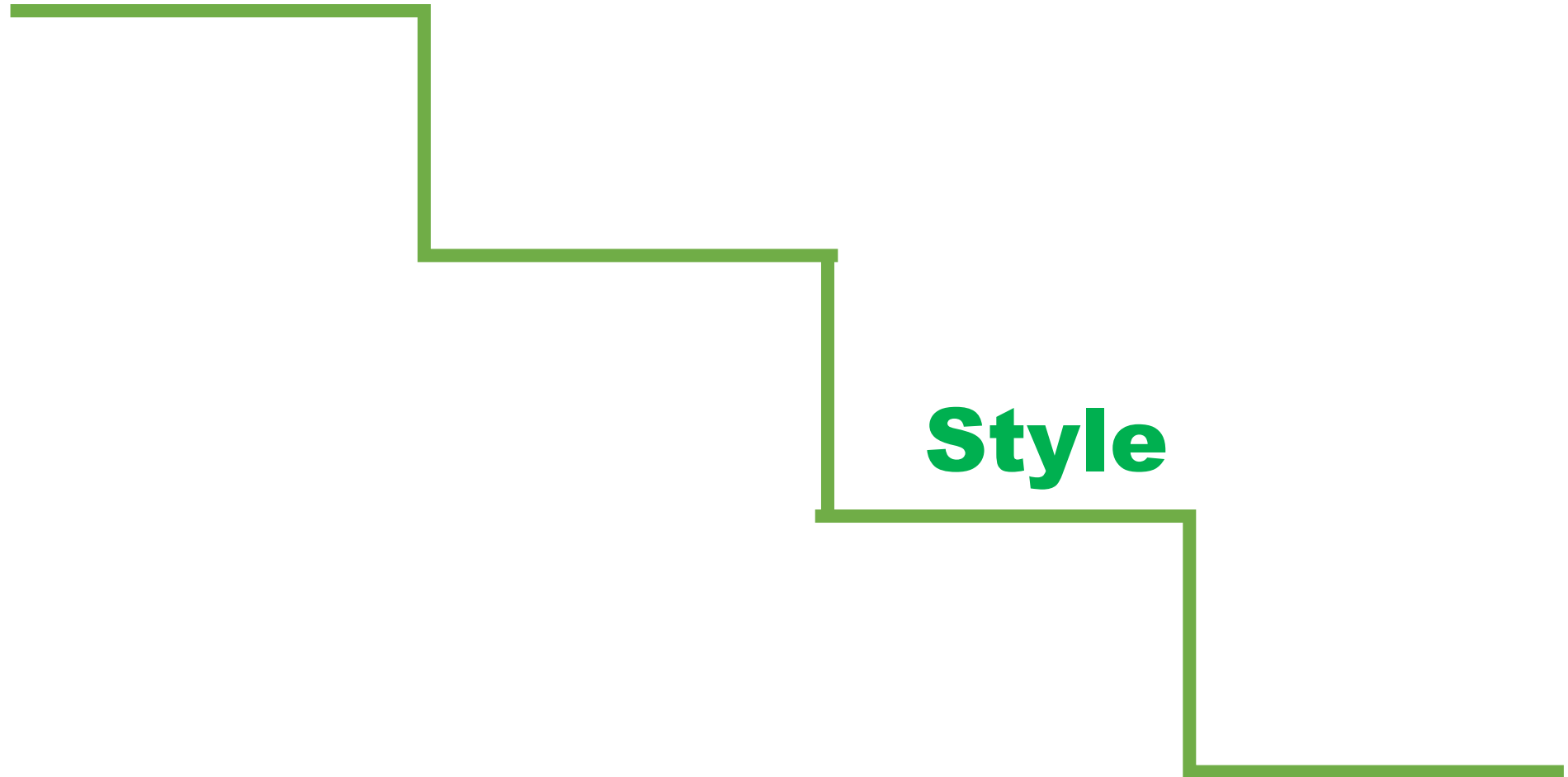
*Rain, fog and cold permeated the atmosphere the day Jack and Jill climbed up the hill, like some sort of premonition.*

*Sure enough, Jack fell down and broke his crown. Jill came tumbling after.*

*No word on what happened to the pail of water they went to fetch.*

**48 words**

# Four Steps to Profile Your Ancestors





# Style

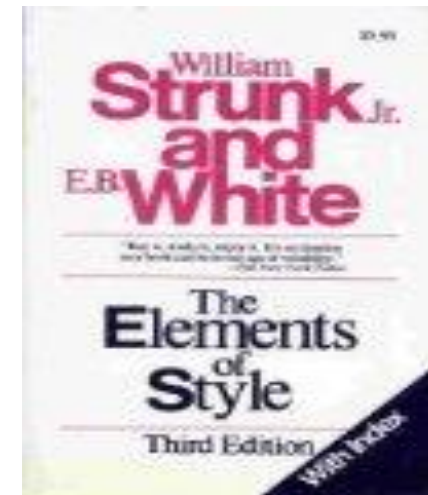
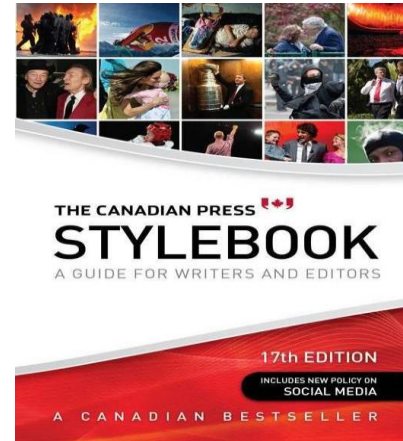
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Word usage
- Names and terms
- Numbers
- Quotations
- Dialogue
- Abbreviations
- Sources

# Useful Style Guides



Revised and Expanded  
**THE CANADIAN**  
*Style*  
**A Guide to Writing and Editing**

by Dandurn Press Limited in co-operation with  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Translation Bureau



# Style

- ✓ **Use simple words to describe complex ideas.**

# Style

## Eliminate:

- qualifiers

~~✓ rather~~

~~✓ slightly~~

~~✓ very~~

- redundancy

~~✓ the reason is~~

~~✓ due to the fact that~~

~~✓ at this point in time~~

- and meaningless adjectives

~~✓ distinctive~~

~~✓ interesting~~

~~✓ special~~

# Style

**Ensure every word conveys meaning.**

# Style

Use active, precise, dynamic verbs and avoid static ones like

- ~~✓ appear~~
- ~~✓ become~~
- ~~✓ seem~~
- ~~✓ sound~~
- ~~✓ show~~
- ~~✓ remain~~
- ~~✓ would.~~

# Style

- Avoid all eight forms of “to be”

• ~~*is*~~

• ~~*are*~~

• ~~*was*~~

• ~~*were*~~

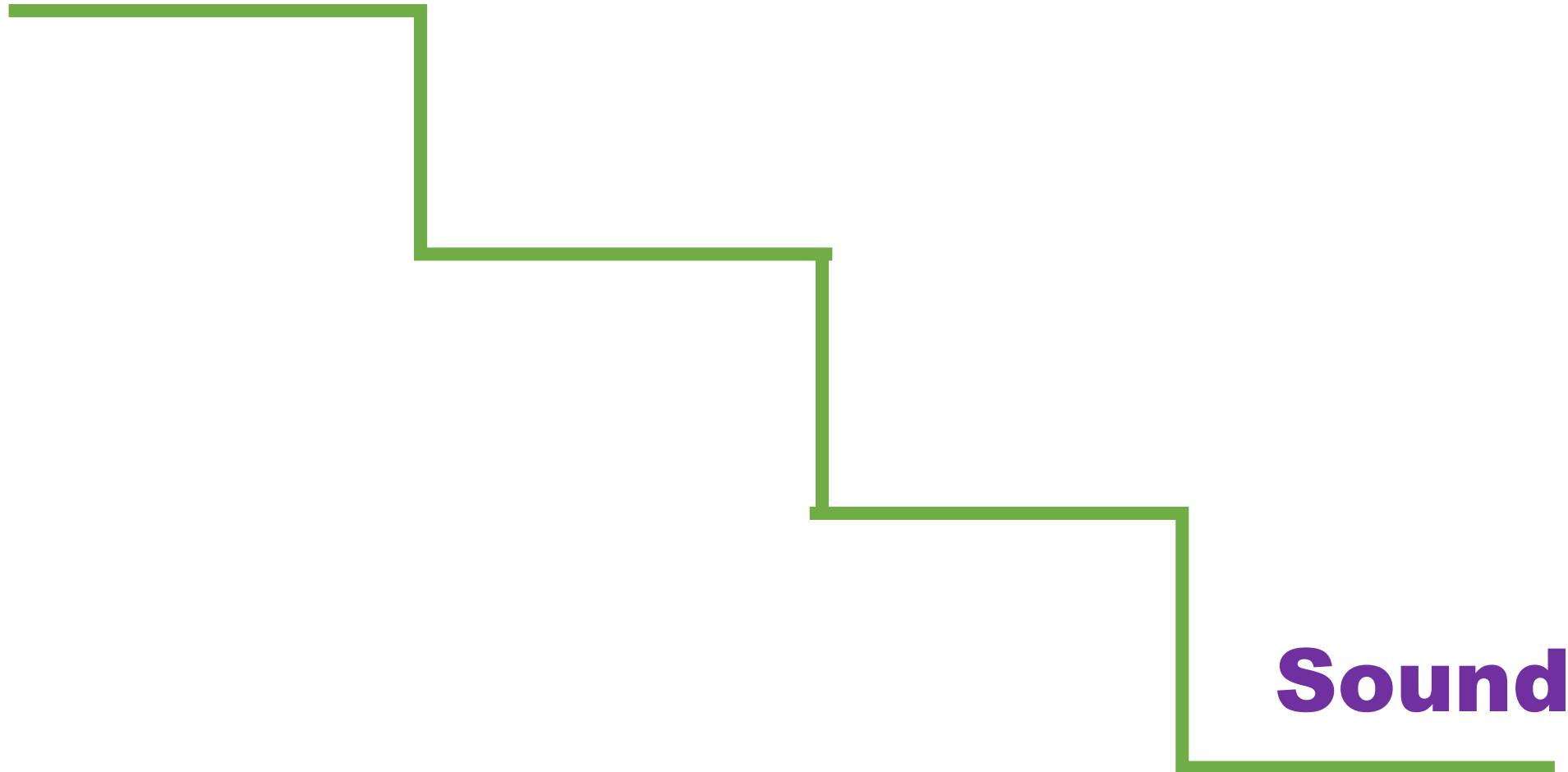
• ~~*been*~~

• ~~*being*~~

• ~~*be*~~

• ~~*am*~~

# Four Steps to Profile Your Ancestors





# Sound

Rhythm = beat

Cadence = speed

Tone = mood

# Rhythm

If the court cases are to be believed, while Marie Louise took care of their children, Jean specialized in getting inn guests drunk so that he could scam them out of land and money.

During the winter of 1749, Coquart inspected farms for the King of France.

He and my aunt taught us that aging wasn't to be feared.

# Cadence

If the court cases are to be believed, while Marie Louise took care of their children, Jean specialized in getting inn guests drunk so that he could scam them out of land and money.

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# Tone

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# Four Steps to Profile Your Ancestors

**Story**



**Structure**

**Style**

**Sound**

# Questions & Comments

# HANDOUTS FOR YOU

- *2018 Writing Tips for Writers*  
By Tracey Arial and Janice Hamilton
- *How to start a Writers' Group*  
By Dorothy Nixon
- *Research sources*



Our collaborative blog inspired us to write a book

[www.genealogyensemble.com](http://www.genealogyensemble.com)