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Transcriber's Handbook

Thank you for volunteering (or considering volunteering) to transcribe a census!

Transcribing Steps:

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STEP 1

Choose your method of obtaining the census to be transcribed

- Microfilm (requiring a visit to your local library or family history centre)
- Internet (restricting your choice to just three census years – 1851, 1901, 1911)
- Other...

In order to transcribe you MUST have access to the *original* census records ([see an example](#))

Microfilm

For obvious reasons we would love to see more volunteers willing to transcribe census records that are currently only available on microfilm. This means 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and early enumerations (before 1851). If you can spare an afternoon at your local library or family history centre PLEASE consider volunteering for a census from one of these years. You can copy the census and transcribe from home at your leisure.

Ontario census microfilms are available WORLDWIDE, living in Ontario or Canada is not a requirement

Step 1 FAQ

Can I purchase or borrow census microfilm for viewing at home?
Borrowing, no, but you might be able to purchase census microfilm. [Library & Archives Canada](#) has information regarding microfilm duplication.

Do you provide copies of the Census?
No, but there are exceptions. If a copy of a census has been provided by a Copy Volunteer, this copy will be provided to the transcriber and/or proofreader and listed as a [Volunteer From Home](#) census. If a census does not have this designation, we do not provide copies.

What if I incur expenses while volunteering for the Census Project?
Unfortunately Ontario Genweb is NOT ABLE to reimburse anyone for ANY expenses. This includes microfilm/microfiche rental costs, photocopying or mailing expenses etc.

Where to obtain census microfilm:

In Canada: Any public, college or university library with a microfilm reader can request census microfilms through Inter-Library Loan (ILL). Some libraries already have Ontario census microfilms in their holdings (check before requesting an ILL). Another option is your local [Family History Centre](#).

Outside Canada: Check with your library's inter-library (inter-institutional) loan office, they may be able to borrow the census microfilm needed. Otherwise head to your local [Family History Centre](#), they can order Ontario census microfilm to any of their locations.

Microfilm numbers are available on our website, just follow the [Sign Up!](#) instructions to locate the census you wish to transcribe and the microfilm numbers needed will be listed. If in doubt ask the [volunteer coordinator](#) for the microfilm number(s) you'll need.

| | | |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1871 | Brantford (Town) District: Brant South (#15) / Sub-District: Brantford (Town) (d) <u>Microfilm:</u> LAC: C-9914-6; LDS: 349145-6 | Transcriber Needed! |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|

The LAC # refers to microfilms loaned out by [Library & Archives Canada](#). The LDS # refers to microfilms loaned to [Family History Centres](#)

Internet

Until a few years ago census records were only available on microfilm. Thanks to [Library & Archives Canada](#) three census years (1851, 1901, 1911) are now available on the internet.

Where to obtain internet census images:

From the [Library & Archives Canada](#) website. Detailed instructions are available in the transcribers handbooks for the 1851, 1901 and 1911 census years.

Other

On occasion copies of census records are made available by copier volunteers (persons willing to visit their local library or FHC and photocopy a census sub-district for someone else to transcribe). When these are available they are listed on our [Volunteer From Home](#) page.

STEP 2

Choose which census sub-district you'd like to transcribe

From our [Census Search](#) page choose the county or district you're interested in as well as the census year. Choices range from pre-1851 (which covers all known census enumerations that took place prior to 1851) to 1911.

Census Search

Can't find the place you want in the county you think it should be in?
Use the [Township Index](#) to see where twps were located in any given year.
If you are unsure of the County/District or Township you need, please use the [Ontario Locator](#).

Keep in mind that census districts and sub-districts (townships) were [voting districts](#) and not actual "counties". Although the census district may have the same name as a county, it may not include the same townships (subdistricts). [How Canadian Census are Organized \(pdf\)](#)

Years without a link indicate that no census records are available, or the records were [enumerated as part of another county](#)

| | pre 1851 | 1851 | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Alqoma District | | | ALG |
| Brant County | BRA |
| Bruce County | | BRU |
| Carleton County | CAR |
| Dufferin County | | | | | | | | DUF |
| Dundas County | | DUN |
| Durham County | DUR |
| Elgin County | ELG |
| Essex County | ESS |

Click on your choice and a list of census sub-districts will appear

Brant County

Researching this area? Find out more by visiting [OntarioGenWeb's Research By Area](#) pages.
Can't find the area you want? Use the [Township Index](#)

| Year | Enumerated Area | Status |
|------|--|---|
| 1851 | Brantford (City) District: Brant (#2) / Sub-District: Brantford (6) Microfilm : LAC: C-11713; LDS: 348198 | Transcriber Needed! |
| 1851 | Oakland Twp District: Brant (#2) / Sub-District: Oakland (9) Microfilm : LAC: C-11714; LDS: 349199 | Finished! View Transcript |
| 1851 | Onondaga Twp District: Brant (#2) / Sub-District: Onondaga (10) Microfilm : LAC: C-11714; LDS: 349199 | Being Transcribed |

You can then choose any census with a 'Transcriber Needed' label by clicking on the link.

Step 2 FAQ

What can I volunteer to transcribe?

Any census listed as "transcriber needed" on the OGW census site. If the census you wish to transcribe is not listed, and you KNOW it exists, you can volunteer to transcribe that census, just make note of it when filling out the volunteer form.

What if the census I wish to transcribe is listed as "In Progress"?

That means another volunteer is currently transcribing this census. Please choose another or consider proofreading this census once transcription is complete.

How many censuses may I volunteer to transcribe?

As many as you'd like but we prefer that you sign up for no more than 2 at a time and complete these before signing up for another.

What if I can't find the Twp. or Town I wish to transcribe?

Many townships may have bordered on a county line or may be listed under a different county/district at the time of enumeration. It is suggested that you view nearby counties of check for a possible name change. OGW has chosen to list each county under the county/district it was enumerated with. Please see our [Township List](#).

I have seen townships already transcribed, either in full or just an index. Can I transcribe any of these?

We will accept all contributions as long as they are NOT copies of another person's work, which violates copyright laws. As long as you are transcribing from an original census image you can transcribe any Ontario census that has not yet been volunteered for.

STEP 3

Sign up!

First, please ensure that you understand and are willing to commit to the volunteer expectations.

To sign up follow [Step 2](#), then after clicking the 'Transcriber Needed' link, fill out the form and hit 'Submit'.

We require volunteers to sign up to transcribe in order to ensure there is no duplication within the project. Once you sign up the census you've volunteered for will be reserved for you and designated 'In Progress' allowing no other volunteer to sign up to transcribe this census. If you don't sign up another volunteer may transcribe the census you're working on and it will be their finished transcript we put online.

Once you've submitted your sign up form the volunteer coordinator will send you a confirmation e-mail within 2-7 days. To be added to our volunteer list (and for the census to be reserved for you) you will need to answer this e-mail and confirm your volunteer position. Once done you can [start transcribing!](#)

If you have any questions about transcribing that are not covered in this handbook please contact the [Volunteer Coordinator](#) and get an answer before you sign-up to volunteer.

Volunteer Expectations

- Transcribe the census sub-district you've signed up for.
- Keep in touch with the Volunteer Coordinator.

The volunteer coordinator will send an e-mail every three to four months to check on your progress. A reply is expected (it needn't be a long one) and if one isn't received within two weeks a follow-up message will be sent. If this follow-up message isn't replied to you will be removed as a volunteer.

- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you cannot complete the transcript.

There is no time limit for transcribing so there's no need to resign as a volunteer if you need to take a break to focus on other aspects of your life. However, if you know that you will not return to transcribing, or it may be six months or more before you can return, please resign. We gladly accept volunteers back after an extended absence in these instances.

- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you change e-mail addresses while you're an active volunteer.

Those in the midst of transcribing, inputting, or proofreading are considered active volunteers. If you change your address and the volunteer coordinator isn't notified you may be removed as a volunteer when no response is received from mail sent to your old address.

It is at the discretion of the OGW Census Project to remove a volunteer permanently from the volunteer list because of lack of progress, lack of communication or lack of respect. It is also the discretion of each volunteer to resign as a volunteer at any time.

STEP 4

Start transcribing

Within this part of the handbook are general instructions that are the same for all census years. For specific instructions regarding the census year you will be transcribing please also read the handbook covering that year. Links to these handbooks follow the general transcribing instructions.

There is a lot of information within this step, please take care to look over it twice and if in doubt don't hesitate to contact the [volunteer coordinator](#) for clarification.

There are two 'methods' for transcribing:

- By Hand
- By Computer

Transcribing By Hand

This method involves writing out your transcript by hand, either onto [paper templates](#) we offer or a template of your own creation*. Please print clearly.

*If you choose not to use the paper templates we offer you can create your own using graph or lined paper. Use the census itself as your guide and duplicate the column headings onto your transcript.

Be sure to have enough copies of the template to accommodate your transcript. Just in case set aside one blank copy of your template to use for photocopying in case you need to make extra copies.

Once you have completed transcribing your census onto paper you then have two choices:

1. To input your transcript onto the computer (if you choose this method see [transcribing by computer](#) for instructions). This choice would eliminate the need for an inputter volunteer and will get your finished transcript online much faster. If you have a friend or family member who might be willing to type on your behalf please take them up on their offer (be sure to notify the volunteer coordinator so your friend/family member can be credited for their contribution).

Step 4 FAQ

What is a transcriber?

A person who extracts data from original census images onto handwritten page, into computer, or onto photocopied page. A transcription is a 'copy' of what you see, not an interpretation of what you think it should be. You must NOT copy from another transcription! That is a violation of copyright laws.

May I submit a page of two of a census?

No, each census must be transcribed completely. We just don't have the ability to keep track of what pages are done and which aren't.

May I use a photocopy of the census and transcribe at home?

Yes, but only if you photocopied the census yourself or if you received it from this project! (Please do not use a photocopy obtained elsewhere. It may be copyrighted.) Some libraries have microfilm copiers that allow you to create 'photocopies' of census pages. You can make these types of copies and take them home for transcribing.

How long does it take to transcribe a census sub-district?

It depends on you. How much time can you spend transcribing? How fast do you type or write? It also depends on the size of the census sub-district. On average each page could take 5-20 minutes each to transcribe depending on your typing speed and how difficult the handwriting is on the census. Don't worry if you take longer than 20 minutes per page, it'll go faster as you familiarize yourself with the handwriting.

How long do I have to complete a transcript?

There is NO TIME LIMIT. Our focus is on accuracy not speed. And we don't expect you to put your life on hold and spend every spare moment transcribing. This is a 'when you have time' project. Granted we do appreciate when a transcript is completed in a reasonable amount of time but we don't expect next day service. (Reasonable = a few months, a year at most)

I'm having trouble reading the handwriting. What do I do?

The best you can! If you have ANY doubt about a name or letter, place a ? [question mark] in it's place. **DO NOT GUESS!** If there are obvious errors, such as John Jones classed as a female, just use F(?) in the gender column. Some given names may have been used for either gender. It is not advised that you change entries. This decision is up the viewer. Again – **DO NOT GUESS.** If you feel that something is misspelled or incorrect and would like to point it out, please use the *Transcriber's Remarks* column, don't correct the enumerator. Also be aware of the double 'ss' – in olden handwriting they often look like f's or p's. Need more help with handwriting? See [the links available](#) on our FAQ.

2. To send your transcript to the volunteer coordinator who will then locate an inputter volunteer to type the transcript into the computer. There are two options for sending your transcript to the volunteer coordinator.
 - i. To mail the transcript to the volunteer coordinator (you will have to mail the transcript at your own cost, sorry but we cannot reimburse for any costs incurred).
 - ii. To scan the transcript and send to the volunteer coordinator. You can either burn the scans to CD and mail, or send the scans via a file share website. This method is easier as you retain the original transcript (no worry of it being lost in the mail) and CDs are much cheaper to mail than a stack of paper.

Transcribing By Computer

This method involves typing your transcript into the computer using [templates](#) we offer or a template of your own creation*.

*If you choose not to use the templates we offer you can create your own using the census itself as your guide - duplicate the column headings onto your transcript and fill in each column. Be sure to also add the [census location information](#) at the top of your transcript.

We have made three types of templates available - .dbf, .xls and .txt.

- dbf's should be compatible with most database programs (DBase, Access, FoxPro, Quattro, etc).
- xls is Microsoft Excel and should be compatible for all versions released since 2003. Excel is our 'default' software of choice (the one used by the volunteer coordinator)
- txt is text and should be compatible with most programs.

If you don't have a database program or Excel choose text and import it into the program of your choice. Once you've finished transcribing merely save a copy your transcript as text (while working on the file you can save it in the format of the program you're using). Information on sending in your completed transcript is in [Step 5](#).

Onto the transcribing...

Transcribers are expected to make a duplicate copy of an original record – so you transcribe what you see *including* errors. Many enumerators were creative with their spelling and each approached census taking with their own unique ideas of what should be recorded. So while you may know the family is NICHOLS but the enumerator has them as NICKLES you would write down NICKLES as their name (and use the [TRANSCRIBERS REMARKS](#) column to point out the error). It's not the job of a transcriber (or a proofreader) to correct an enumerator. It's your job to record the information as close to the original as possible.

In order to run this project efficiently we've used the same sub-districts as the government, each sub-district is a 'census area' needing transcription. Some are as few as 1-2 pages while others are upwards of 100 pages. It's requested that you transcribe all* the pages within the sub-district you choose. (*There are some exceptions which are discussed fully in the handbooks covering each census year).

We are concentrating on transcribing Schedule 1 (the population census) of each Ontario census for all census years. Handbooks specific to each census year go into detail regarding which columns are to be transcribed.

But it's not just the people that are important – it's the census record itself. As a transcriber you are transcribing only Schedule 1 of the census. The other schedules contain other interesting information that could be valuable to genealogists (like how many cattle, if any, did your ancestor own? Did they

own or rent their home? On what plot of land did they live?). So it's important that we accurately identify each census record so it can be located by those wishing to view the original.

This information is referred to as the **Census Location Information** and it can differ from census to census. Here it's explained in general terms and in the handbooks for each census year there is more detail and image examples specific to that census year.

At the top of each transcript the following information is requested:

- LAC_FILM_NO - can be provided by the [Volunteer Coordinator](#)
- LDS_FILM_NO - can be provided by the [Volunteer Coordinator](#)
- CEN_YR - the census year you're transcribing (ie. 1861)
- DISTRICT NAME - see the handbook covering the year you're transcribing
- DISTRICT NUMBER - see the handbook covering the year you're transcribing
- SUB-DISTRICT NAME - see the handbook covering the year you're transcribing
- SUB-DISTRICT NUMBER - see the handbook covering the year you're transcribing
- ENUMERATOR - Name(s) of enumerator(s)
- TRANSCRIBER - your name
- INPUTTER - name of person who typed the transcript into the computer (if not you)
- PROOFREADR - leave blank

Within each transcript there should be two columns at the end of each row:

- TRANSCRIBERS REMARKS
- PROOFREADERS REMARKS



| DIV | PG | LN | LAST_NAME | FIRST_NAME | OCCUPATION | PLAC_BIRTH | RELIGION | RESIDENCE | AGE | SEX | MARITAL | REMARKS | TRANSCRIBERS_REMARKS | PROOFREADERS_REMARKS |
|-----|----|----|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----|-----|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | Nichols | William | Farmer | England | Methodist | | 55 | M | M | | | |

These columns are where transcribers & proofreaders can put personal remarks regarding that row (ie. Surname could be Nicholas; Age was smudged, could be 56). When using these columns keep in mind that they are put online with the transcript so don't write anything you don't want posted on the internet!

For further information on transcribing, please read the handbook that covers the year you're transcribing:

- [pre-1851](#)
 - [1851](#)
 - [1861](#)
 - [1871](#)
 - [1881](#)
 - [1891](#)
 - [1901](#)
 - [1911](#)
-

STEP 5

Send in your completed transcript

We cannot accept pages as you complete them so once you've finished the entire transcript (all pages within the census sub-district you've chosen), send it to the [Volunteer Coordinator](#).

It's also preferred that the transcript be all in one file. If you've created multiple files please [zip](#) all files and send only the one zip file.

If possible please give your transcript an identifying name, for instance if you've transcribed the 1851 census enumeration of Charlottesville Township in Norfolk County name your file Norfolk-Charlottesville-1851. This clearly shows what county, which sub-district and the year the transcript covers.

Once your transcript is ready to send, attach it to an e-mail and send to the volunteer coordinator at ogwcensusvol@geneofun.on.ca. Please be sure to keep a copy of the transcript until you see it appear on [our website](#).

Sharing Agreement

By completing and sending us your transcript you are agreeing to allow us, OntarioGenWeb's Census Project, to post your transcript on our website indefinitely with the understanding that your transcript will be freely available (no fees charged, no registration required to view) for as long as our website exists. This agreement does not restrict you from sharing your transcript with any other organization, nor does it mean you cannot sell your transcript. However you can only use the transcript you've completed – not a proofread transcript (unless the proofreader gives you prior written permission).

As things progress on the internet OntarioGenWeb's Census Project may enter into agreements or collaborations with like-minded projects – those intent on sharing genealogical data freely (no fees charged) – to pool resources and data. In this case each project may share transcripts in order to reach a common goal. As a transcriber you have full authority to choose whether or not your transcripts would be used in this manner. The choices are:

- To share your transcript(s) ONLY with OntarioGenWeb's Census Project. Your transcript will remain solely on our website.
- To share your transcript(s) with any like-minded project we enter into agreements or collaborations with. Your transcript will then be shared and you will be credited by both/all parties involved.
- To share you transcript(s) only with like-minded projects you approve of. In this case you will be asked for a 'yes I'll share' or 'no I won't share' each time.

There is NO WRONG ANSWER so choose the option that fits you best and let the [volunteer coordinator](#) know of your choice.

Step 5 FAQ

Who is the owner of my transcript?

You. The transcriber remains the owner of the transcript and OGW becomes a secondary "owner", meaning that the transcriber and only the transcriber can decide to use the transcript for profit. As secondary owner OGW is caretaker of the transcript while it remains on the Census Project site

Zipping

'Zipping' is when you combine or compress multiple files into one file for easy shipping (much like packing a suitcase – multiple items are put into the suitcase to make them easier to transport). Zipping is only required if you have multiple files to send. One lone file does not require zipping. (Don't know how to zip? Click these links for step-by-step instructions for [PC](#) and [Mac](#)). Once your file is zipped, attach it to e-mail as you would any other file.

Frequently Asked Questions

Most of the Frequently Asked Questions from volunteers are included throughout this handbook (see the yellow sidebars). If you have a question that isn't answered here please ask the volunteer coordinator.

General FAQ's from visitors to the site: <http://ontariocensus.rootsweb.ancestry.com/faq.html>

Who do I contact with questions or concerns?

The [volunteer coordinator](#)

Can I work with another volunteer?

Yes, we encourage this! Feel free to work with a friend or relative of your choosing.

Once a transcription is submitted, how long does it take to be put online?

Once sent to the Volunteer Coordinator, it will appear online as soon as possible. On the main page of the website it shows the date the site was last updated – we try to update every 1-3 months (depends how busy the volunteer coordinator is with other GenWeb projects!). Your transcript would be added on the next update.

How long will it take for my transcript to be proofread?

That depends on two things - how quickly a proofreader is found and how quickly they work. If you have a friend or relative willing to proofread this speeds up the process considerably. Keep high school students, guides and scouts in mind - they may be willing to proofread as part of volunteer requirements for school or group activities!

How many censuses can I volunteer to transcribe, proofread or input?

You can volunteer to transcribe, proofread or input as many censuses as you like but only TWO AT ONE TIME (finish one or two first then volunteer for more)!!!

Volunteer Downloads:

[Handbooks for Transcribing & Proofreading](#)

[Templates for transcribing on paper or on computer](#)

[Other Useful Genealogy Forms from OGW](#)

Where to obtain census records:

[Library & Archives Canada](#) (LAC)

[Family History Centre](#) (LDS)

Where to obtain census records:

[Religion Codes](#)

[Dictionary of Census Terms](#)

Contact & Questions

Have questions about transcribing or need to contact the Volunteer Coordinator?

Web Form: <http://ontariocensus.rootsweb.ancestry.com/contact-form.html>

E-Mail: ogwcensusvol@geneofun.on.ca