

Guidance to Authors Preparing Papers for *Families*

Prepared by John Becker, Editor

These guidelines will help you and us prepare your paper for publication and will save much time. If you have any questions, please write to us at <familieseditor@ogs.on.ca>.

Include your postal address and telephone number in your first email to us.

We do not intend to interfere with your personal style. But we want to tell you what to expect from us.

You provide the basic words, style and emphasis; we supply the editing, typography and page appearance.

MOST IMPORTANT Study a number of issues of *Families* before you start your final composing. Usually our papers are multigenerational narratives which focus on Ontario or Canadian families. By reviewing the appearance of these articles, their content and how they have been embellished with various “visuals,” you will see how others made their paper into an interesting story.

Preparing Your Paper – Do the Hard Part First

Don't worry about our length guidelines (which are between 600 and 5,000 words). Put all of your data down first and review it. It is easier to cut than to add words. As you review, concentrate on:

- Finding the main story line or focus
- Identifying sections that are off-topic, out of chronological order, too long, or uninteresting
- Considering the overall style: degrees of informality, missing connectors, missing steps in logic, source references, etc.

As You Write, Consider the Following:

- Arrange your story in chronological order. Earliest ancestors recorded first.
- Spell names consistently throughout the paper.
- Insert birth and death dates in parentheses after names, e.g. John Smith (1913–2002), to clearly distinguish this individual from all others bearing the same name.
- List children of a family one child per line, including dates of birth and death, name of marriage partner if known. Stay close to one descendency line; too much on collateral lines is confusing.
- Avoid adjectives describing the traits of one's own ancestors if no source can be quoted.
- Delete parts that are repetitious or off-topic.
- Make sure you are not using appellations that have become odious to some groups. For instance, members of the Huron Nation much prefer the name “Wyandot”. “Huron” is a derogatory name given them by early French settlers.
- Consider visual elements that will enhance your story. Photos, charts and tables are attractive additions. Genealogy cannot be separated from geography or history. We can help prepare suitable maps to support your story but your sketch maps are a critically important starting point for us.
- Identify items that can make your story “come alive.”
- Put sources, references, bits on historical events and incidental notes in footnotes—not endnotes.
- Use your spell checker frequently and particularly before sending your paper to others.

As you progress through various drafts, ask some “readers” – skilled friends – to read your work and give you feedback. This winnowing process may go through several cycles. Each time your piece will improve. Please do not send us a paper which has not been read by at least one other person!

Before You Send Your First Draft to the Editor

Read your paper aloud to yourself and to others to ensure that the sentences are clear and follow a logical sequence. Rewriting your paper several times is not a bad thing. You will find that each time you do, it gets better.

Keep your life simple. Do not use unnecessary italics, capitals or underlining in your typewritten versions. We will look after typographical niceties later in the process.

You will notice that in *Families* two short supplementary items follow the title:

- A biographical sketch of the author (maximum 40 words)
- Keywords divided into two sections: surnames and place names (maximum 50 words).

Write these sections and insert them into your file after you have finished the main story.

At the end of the paper and in the same word processing file, include your preliminary thoughts about visuals - photos, maps, charts, etc.

- Number and describe these items, including their computer file format.
- Include captions for each item.
- Note in the body text where you think each visual should be placed in relation to the text.

Please do NOT SEND these visual items with your initial submission. You will be asked to submit them closer to the publishing date. Minimum resolution required of photos is 300 dpi—nothing less.

The Review Process

After we get your first draft you will receive our edited version with comments. This sharing of views on sequential versions of your paper may be repeated. After the Editor finalizes the paper, the author will get one last opportunity to review the paper. Following that, the Copy Editor reviews spelling, consistency in nomenclature, grammar, and flow. Your paper and accompanying visuals then go to the Layout Editor for final page design. We do not usually send you a draft of your paper complete with visuals in place.

Communications and Deadlines

Please email all documents to familieseditor@ogs.on.ca. If original photos, maps, etc. are going to be used, the Editor will let you know where they are to be mailed. Originals will be returned to the author. When we first receive your paper you will get a production schedule indicating when *Families* must receive your final copy and your visuals (maps, photos, charts and tables). Because OGS has fixed mailing deadlines for *Families* and *Newsleaf* which go out together, our deadlines are not flexible.

Some Technical Tips

For all editing we use “Track Changes”, a Word program you will find under Tools. If you are not familiar with it, we ask you to learn it and use it. There are useful tutorials available for it.

Each time a version of your paper containing any changes is sent out by yourself or the editor, it must be clearly marked and saved by the sender with a unique version number and word count in the upper left corner of page one. This way we will not get confused and end up retracing our steps. Acknowledge receipt of each version quickly.

If your email connection stops working, we will reluctantly cease all work on your paper.

End