

Help future generations trace your family tree

Anyone who has ever tried tracing their family tree knows what a thrill it is to find the names of their ancestors on official documents. It can be like finding a needle in a haystack or striking gold.



One of the best sources of official information is the census. Censuses have been used for centuries to record information about mothers, fathers, children, and peoples' ways of life, income and occupations. To see the name, address and profession of an ancestor who lived a hundred years ago or more can be quite exhilarating.

The rest, as they say, is history, Canadian history. The census has evolved over time into the modern census we have now that takes place every five years. This year marks the 350-year anniversary of the first census.

The first census in Canada was conducted by Jean Talon, a civil administrator, in 1666. The census counted all 3,215 inhabitants of European descent and logged their age, sex, marital status and occupation. Talon conducted the census to gather information that would help plan and develop the colony. In fact, Talon was so committed to the process that he collected much of the information personally, visiting settlers throughout the colony.

To make it easier for your descendants to trace their family tree 100 years from now (census records are kept sealed for 92 years), jot down May 2 in your calendar this year. You will be receiving a package in the mail inviting you to complete the census online or on paper.

The 2016 Census is mandatory for all Canadians. Three in four households will receive a short-form census, while one out of four will receive the long-form census.

The only difference between the two is more detailed questions in the long-form, about things like citizenship and immigration status, birthplace of parents, educa-

tion, income, housing, child care and other support payments and employment history.

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Tips on backyard entertaining

Warmer weather means making the most of your backyard space. And dining is a simple way to extend your time outdoors. Whether it's enjoying everyday meals, hosting an intimate dinner party or welcoming larger groups for a barbecue, there are a few things to consider when purchasing patio-dining furniture.

Conversation sets: These are becoming increasingly popular to provide comfortable seating which replicates the living room. They provide a great space to sit back, put your feet up and enjoy a good book in the afternoon and provide the optimal area to linger long after a meal is done. For less formal gatherings, food stations can be set up, buffet style around the perimeter of the set. This allows

guest to easily move around and talk to different people while they make their plates of food. Look for a conversation set with matching side and coffee tables so guests have a place to rest plates of food and glasses.

Dining sets: When it's warm out, why not take your meal outside? Whether prepared indoors or on the grill, outdoor dining sets are great for enjoying any meal. You can bring indoor elegance outside with decorative table linens, candles and colourful tableware. Great for smaller, more intimate dinner parties as well, food can be plated or served family style allowing your guests to remain at the table and lose track of time as they eat.

Flexibility: If you can't decide

between an intimate dining set or a casual conversation set, or if you just want the best of both worlds but don't have the space, look for a conversation/dining combination. Lowe's offers the new Prescott dining set which includes a table, a sofa, two end chairs and two stools that can be used for seating or foot rests.

Whichever set you choose, you may also want to consider the ease of adding additional seating like matching chairs or benches for when you have a larger group. Stools are great as extra seating or end tables.

More information and product inspiration is available online at Lowe's.ca

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