Using GIMP to Combine Multiple Images

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Introduction

GIMP is an image and graphics editor, completely free for both PC and Mac users.

The official GIMP web site is http://www.gimp.org/

For those wishing to incorporate census images into the Exhibits folder of TMG, there is a common dilemma when families are split over two census pages.

In this presentation I will demonstrate how to display, save, and crop census images. The next step involves creating a template to combine two or more cropped images for a given household.

Search for Census Record on Ancestry

Amongst other uses, Ancestry is a service that provides access to census records. Depending upon your subscription level you have access to limited or unlimited countries.

One can perform a search in all databases, or a single one. In this example, the search will be limited to census records in Canada.

You can enter as much information for the person as you know, or keep it simple. In this example, I have entered his name, with middle initial, birth year, birth province, and events in Prince Edward Island. I've also selected data in Canada as a priority.

Searching for...

Name: william wallace

Birth: 1849-1853, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Any Event: 1891, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Collection Priority: Only Canadian

Edit Search

or Start a new search

Narrow by Category

▶ **All Categories**

▼ **Census & Voter Lists**

1700s	1800s	1900s
1700s	1800s	1900s
1710s	1810s	1910s
1720s	1820s	1920s
1730s	1830s	1930s
1740s	1840s	1940s
1750s	1850s	1950s
1760s	1860s	1960s
1770s	1870s	1970s
1780s	1880s	1980s
1790s	1890s	1990s

Matched 13,756 in Census & Voter Lists

View Summarized by category

1891 Census of Canada	2,685
1861 Census of Canada	2,284
1901 Census of Canada	1,847
1871 Census of Canada	1,812
1881 Census of Canada	1,536
Ontario, Canada Voter Lists, 1867-1900	1,298
1911 Census of Canada	1,082
1851 Census of Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia	677
Ontario, Canada Census Index, 1871	149
1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta	132
1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta	94
Durham County, Ontario Census, 1861	39
Millbrook, Ontario Census, 1891	15
Millbrook, Ontario Census, 1881	12
Kent County, New Brunswick Census, 1871: Eight Subdistricts	12
Port Hope, Ontario Census, 1881	11
Wellington County, Ontario Canada 1851 Census	9
Chatham and Blenheim, Kent County, Ontario Census, 1891	9
Port Hope, Ontario Census, 1891	7
Marquette District, Manitoba Census, 1891	5
Hope, Ontario Census, 1891	5
St. Catharines, Ontario Census, 1901	4

Top of list of names based on search criteria entered.

Searching for...

Name: william wallace

Birth: 1849-1853, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Any Event: 1891, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Edit Search

or Start a new search

Narrow by Collection

▸ All Categories

▸ Census & Voter Lists

▸ 1890s

▾ 1891 Census of Canada

Matches **1-50** of **2,685** Sorted By Relevance

View Record	Name	Parent or spouse names	Home in 1891 (Sub-District, District, Province)	Birth Year	Birthplace	Relation	View Images
View Record ★★★★★	William Wallace	Mary	Charlottetown Royalty, Queens, Prince Edward Island	abt 1851	Prince Edward Island	Head	📷
View Record ★★★★★	William Wallace	Louisa	Lot 4, Prince, Prince Edward Island	abt 1848	Prince Edward Island	Head	📷
View Record ★★★★★	William H Wallace		Lot 5, Prince, Prince Edward Island	abt 1851	Prince Edward Island	Head	📷

Click 'View Record' to see a transcription of the census return.

This is most likely the family, clues being his middle initial, living on Lot 5, born about 1851, and head of household.

1891 Census of Canada about William H Wallace

Name:	**William H Wallace**
Gender:	Male
Marital Status:	Married
Age:	40
Birth Year:	abt 1851
Birthplace:	Prince Edward Island
Relation to Head of House:	Head
Religion:	Methodist
French Canadian:	Yes
Father's Birth Place:	Prince Edward Island
Mother's Birth Place:	New Brunswick
Province:	Prince Edward Island
District Number:	134
District:	Prince
Subdistrict:	Lot 5
Neighbors:	View others on page

| Household Members:	Name	Age
	William H Wallace	40
	John W Wallace	16
	Alberta May Wallace	14
	Joseph H. Wallace	13
	Lester R Wallace	7
	Ruby Jane Wallace	6

View original image

A number of heads of households were displayed, but decided on this one.

Tip: Do not rely solely on the transcribed census return. In this case, William's wife is missing, as is their eldest son Ernest, but clearly they are on the original image of the page (transcription error). Also, he was not French Canadian, although he was checked as being so (census taker error).

Always click on 'View original image' to see the original census return. This option is not available for Scotland returns.

In the first of two images, we need to straighten it before doing anything else. This is accomplished by selecting Tools > Transform Tools > Rotate. Use the incremental angle for fine adjustment. Tip: While holding the mouse cursor on a horizontal line in the image view the coordinates displayed in the lower left corner. The second value will advise you if the image needs further tweaking. Click 'Rotate' when you have finished.
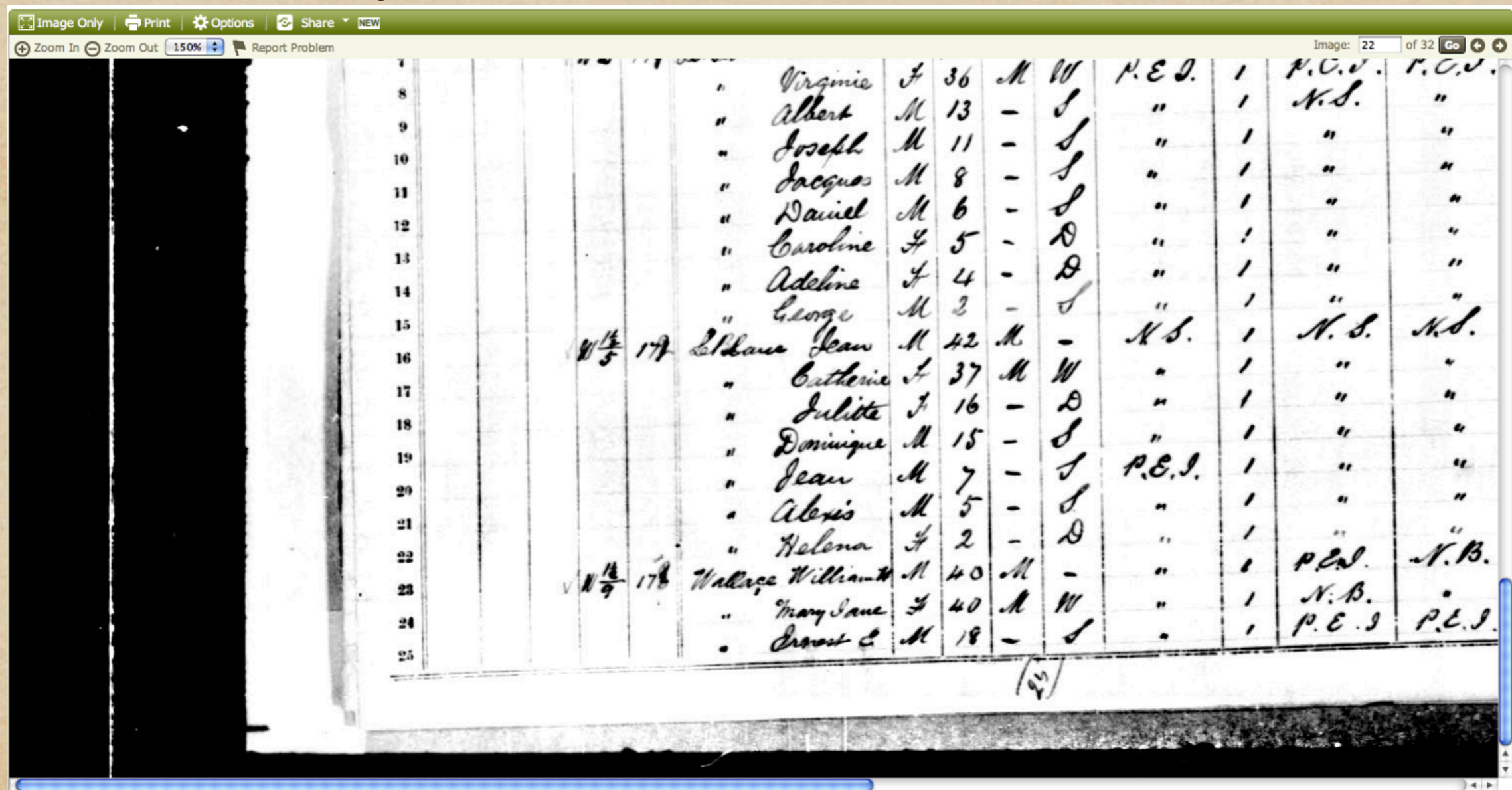
The rotated image must now be cropped. It is entirely your choice as to how many columns you wish to include in your final image. I usually start with the household number on the left, and go as far as the column that includes occupation, if it exists. Select Tools > Transform Tools > Crop. After you have cropped the image, click the mouse anywhere inside the image.

The first image is from the bottom of a census page, rotated and cropped. The second image is from the top of the next census page. The two images below are the result of rotation correction and cropping to include household number over to occupation.

178	Wallace William...	M	40	M	–		"		1	P.E.I.	N.B.	Methodist	Farmer
"	Mary Jane	F	40	M	W		"		1	N.B.	.	.	–
.	Ernest E	M	18	–	S		.		1	P.E.I	P.E.I.	.	–

Wallace John W	M	16	–	S	P.E.I.		–	P.E.I.	P.E.I.	Methodist	–
" Alberta May	F	14	–	D	"		–	"	.	.	–
" Joseph N.	M	13	–	S	.		–	"	..	.	–
" Lester R	M	7	–	S	"		–	"	.	.	–
. Ruby Jane	F	6	–	D	"		–	"	..	..	–

Optionally, you may wish to include a third image, that of the column headers. Otherwise, it is not obvious to your readers what some of the columns represent.

Families.	NAMES.	Sex.	Age.	Married or Widowed.	Relation to Head of Family.	Country or Province of Birth.	French Canadians.	Place of Birth of Father.	Place of Birth of Mother.	RELIGION.	Profession, Occupation or Trade.
178	Wallace William H.	M	40	M	—	"	1	P.E.I.	N.B.	Methodist	Farmer
"	Mary Jane	F	40	M	W	"	1	N.B.	.	.	—
"	Ernest E.	M	18	—	S	.	1	P.E.I.	P.E.I.	.	—
	Wallace John W.	M	16	—	S	P.E.I.	—	P.E.I.	P.E.I.	Methodist	—
"	Alberta May	F	14	—	D	"	—	"	.	.	—
"	Joseph H.	M	13	—	S	.	—	"	"	.	—
"	Lester R.	M	7	—	S	"	—	"	.	.	—
.	Ruby Jane	F	6	—	D	"	—	"	"	.	—

The next step is to merge these three images into a single image. Using GIMP, open each of the three images and make note of their dimensional measurements.

In this example, the header image is 1200x82 pixels, the first of the family images is 1193x99 pixels, and the second of the family images is 1198x178 pixels.

Using GIMP, we are going to create a new blank image, into which we will copy each of the above three images. This new blank will be sized to 1200x359 pixels, 1200 representing the longest dimension of the column header image, and 359 being the sum of the heights of all three images.
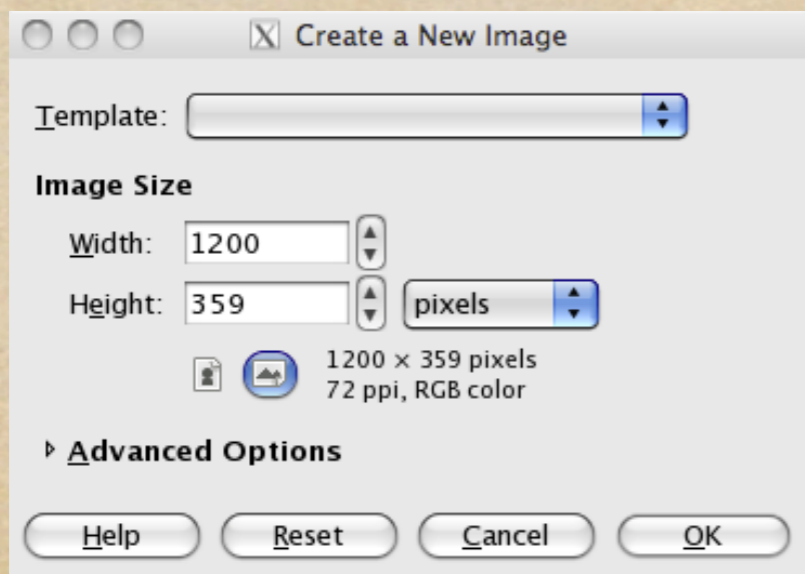
Select File > New > Image Size. Enter 1200 for width, and 359 for height. Click OK.

You should have all three images displayed in GIMP, each in a separate window.

Starting with the columns image, select Edit > Copy. Next, highlight the new blank image window. Select Edit > Paste. In the GIMP window that displays various editing tools, select Move.
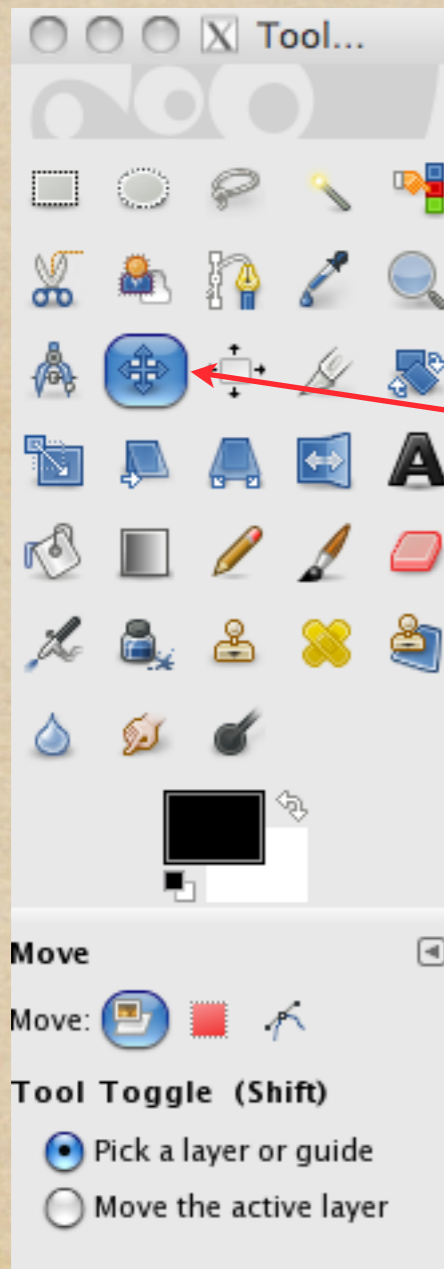
The first of the three images is now in place. Repeat this procedure for each of the remaining two images.
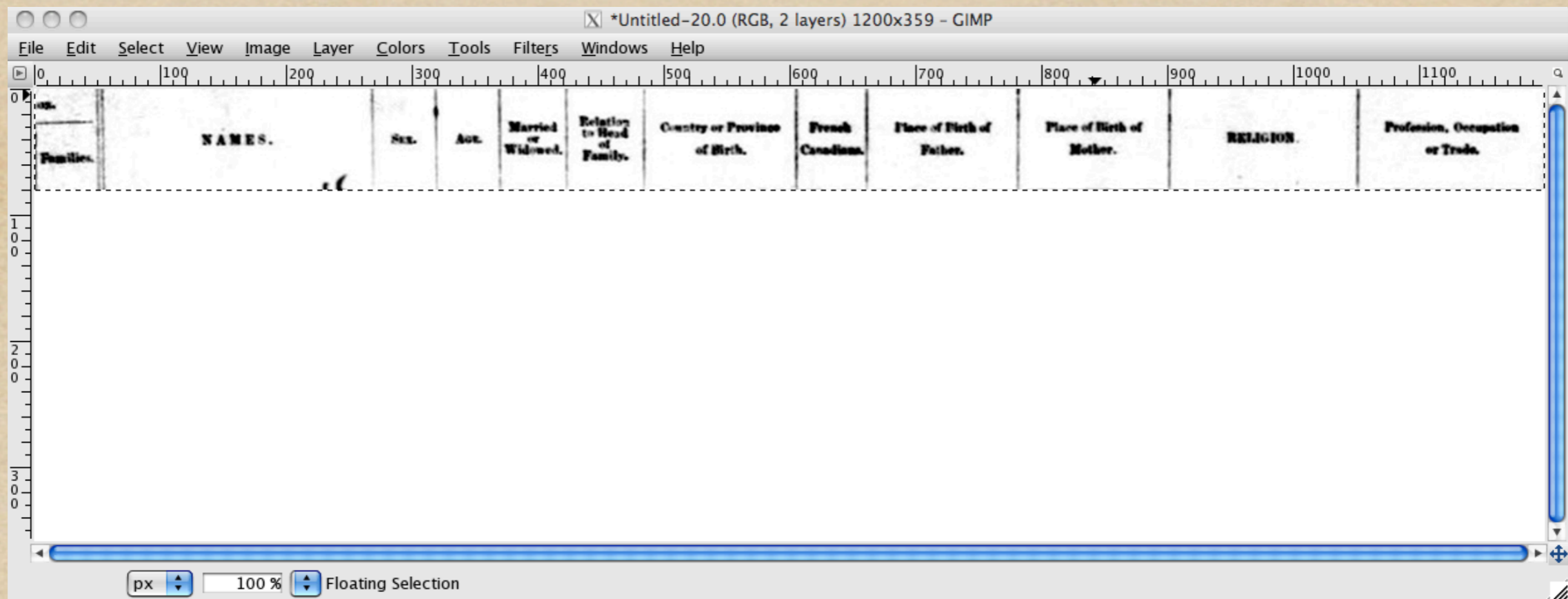
All three images are now merged into a single frame. Since the length of each of the images was not the same, you may wish to crop the merged image, as seen below.

Families	NAMES.	Sex.	Age.	Married or Widowed.	Relation to Head of Family.	Country or Province of Birth.	French Canadians.	Place of Birth of Father.	Place of Birth of Mother.	RELIGION.	Profession, Occupation or Trade.
178	Wallace William H.	M	40	M	-	"	1	P.E.I.	N.B.	Methodist	Farmer
"	Mary Jane	F	40	M	W	"	1	N.B.	•	•	-
•	Ernest E.	M	18	-	S	•	1	P.E.I.	P.E.I.	•	-
	Wallace John W.	M	16	-	S	P.E.I.	-	P.E.I.	P.E.I.	Methodist	-
"	Alberta May	F	14	-	D	"	-	"	•	•	-
"	Joseph H.	M	13	-	S	"	-	"	"	•	-
"	Lester R.	M	7	-	S	"	-	"	•	•	-
•	Ruby Jane	F	6	-	D	"	-	"	"	•	-

The last step is to resize the new composite image to use as a TMG exhibit. My size preference for census images is 1000-1200 pixels wide, depending the clarity of the image.

In a new window, open the new merged file. Select Image > Scale. Enter 1000 in the Width field. The value for Height will be recalculated automatically. Click Scale.
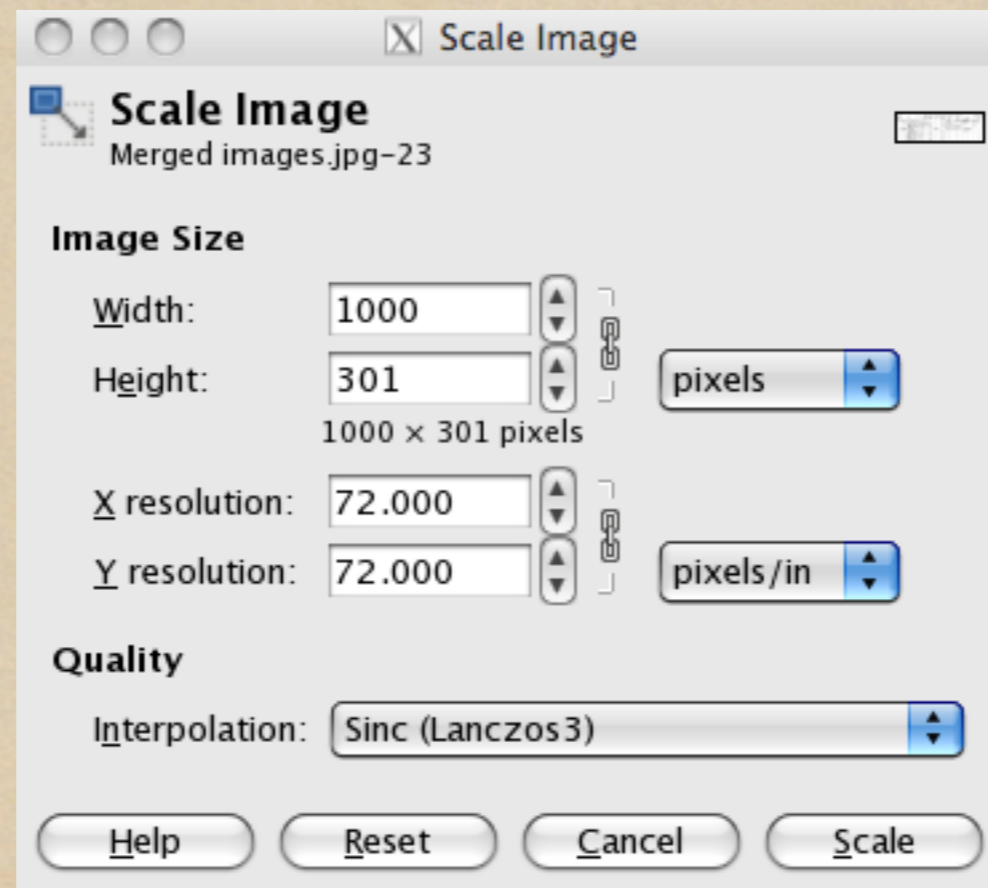
The remaining task involves copy/move the file to your TMG Exhibits folder.