Say Cheese!

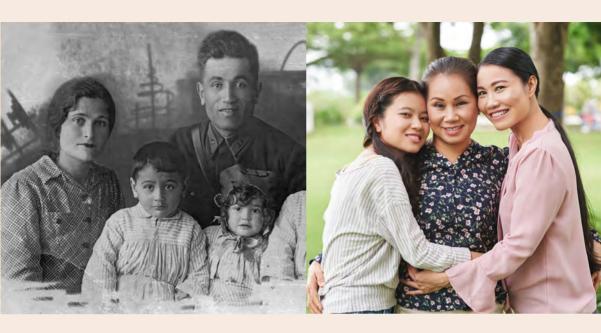**Family photos have changed a lot over the decades, but all of them have a story to tell.**

Why do people look so grumpy and bored in old family photos? It could have been because taking a photo was a long process, and it would have been too hard to hold a smile the whole time. It could also have been because without great dentists like we have today, people didn't have very good teeth, so they wanted to keep them hidden. But in fact, the main reason is that having a family photo taken wasn't cheap, so it didn't happen very often. It was considered an important occasion that would produce a photo to last for a long time. So everyone from the parents to the smallest child kept their faces serious.

Library and Archives Canada, iStockphoto

Looking closely at the clothes people are wearing can help you figure out when the photo was taken. What other clues are there in the photo about the people it shows?

With digital cameras and then cameras right on phones, suddenly anyone could take a photo any time. How does your family keep track of its pictures? Do your older relatives have photo albums?

How do you think we will keep and display family portrait photos in the future?