

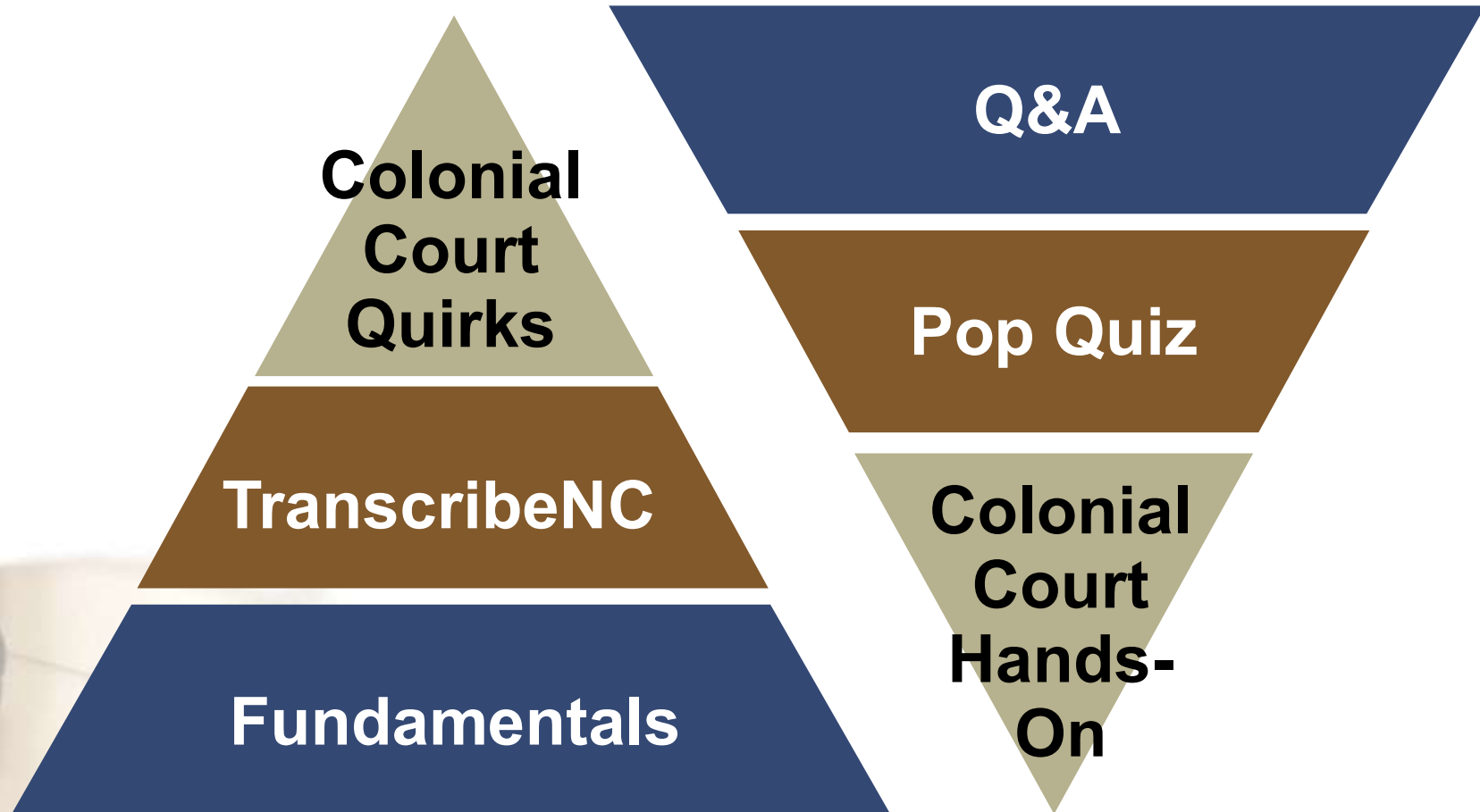


TranscribeNC Transcription Training: Colonial Court Records

by Diane L Richard

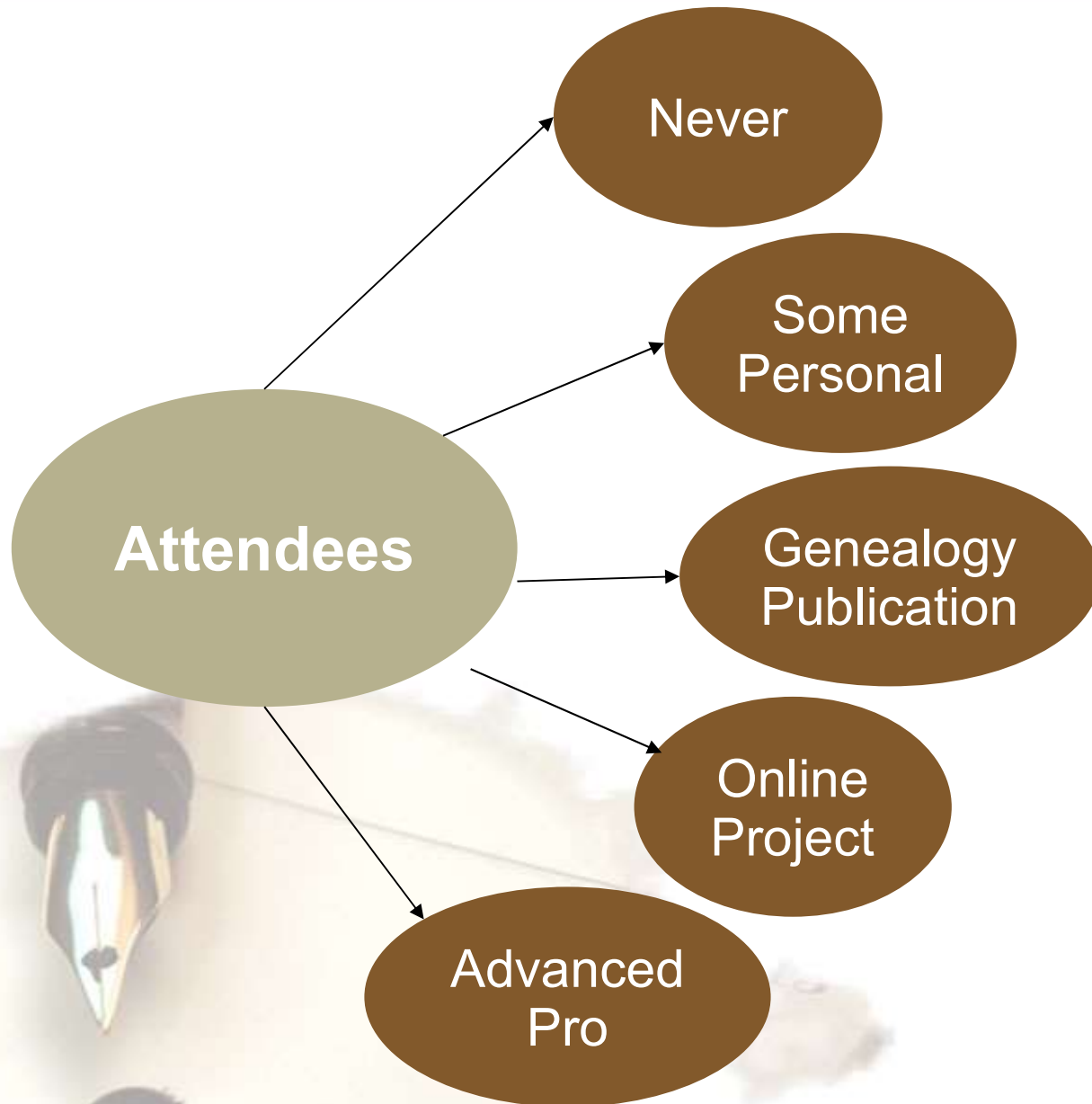
Transcriber Training

Today's Plan



Transcriber Training

Experience Level as a Transcriber



Good Practices

Colonial Court Record
Idiosyncracies

Differences Between Offline
& Online

Refresher

TranscribeNC Idiosyncracies

Stylistic Choices

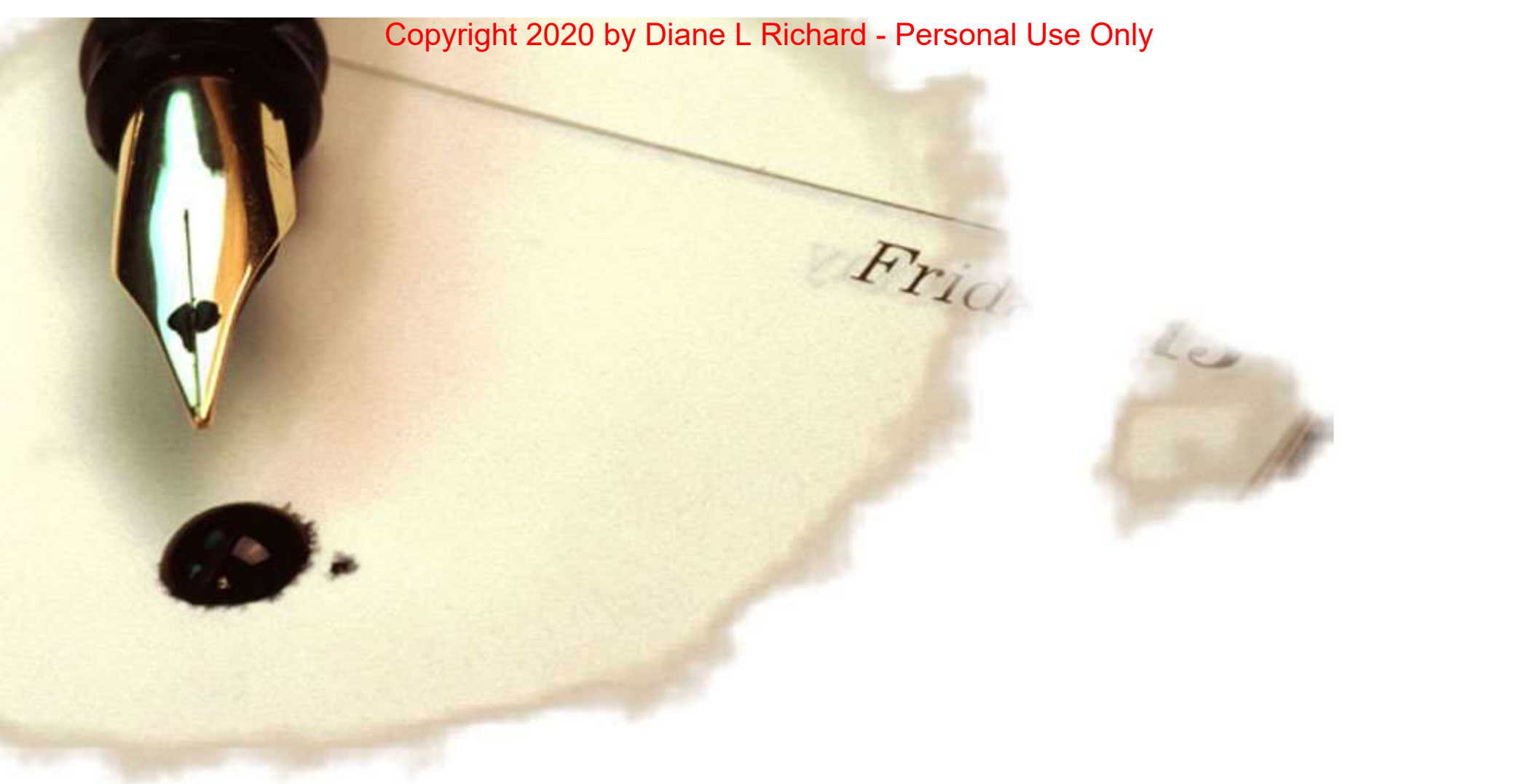
+ Technical Limitations

(NOT easily capable of all
WYSIWYG options)

+ Ease for Transcriber

(NO complex coding, e.g., `<sup> text
</sup>`)

= TranscribeNC Preferences



Keys to Transcribing “General”

Transcriber Training

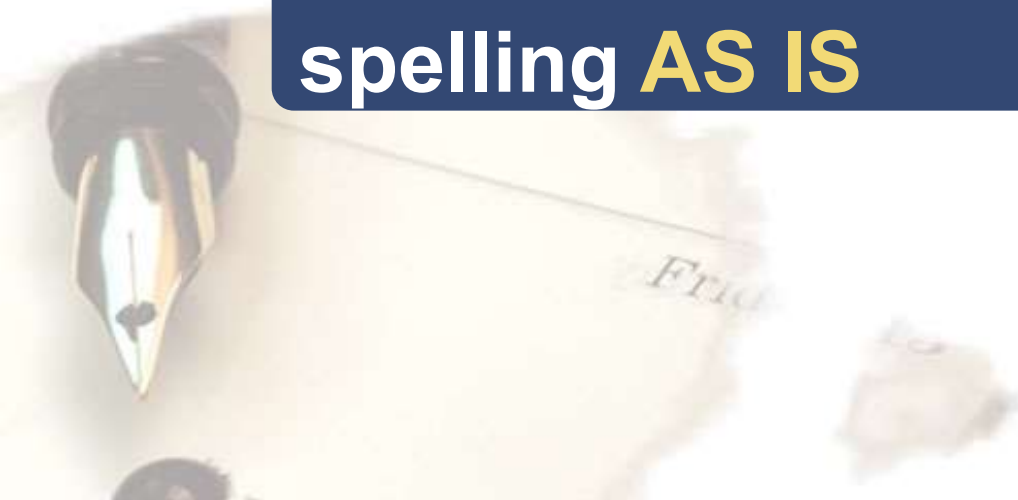
Keys

Do **EXACTLY** as you see

Do include **EVERYTHING**

Do **NOT** interpret

Do **NOT** normalize spelling; keep spelling **AS IS**



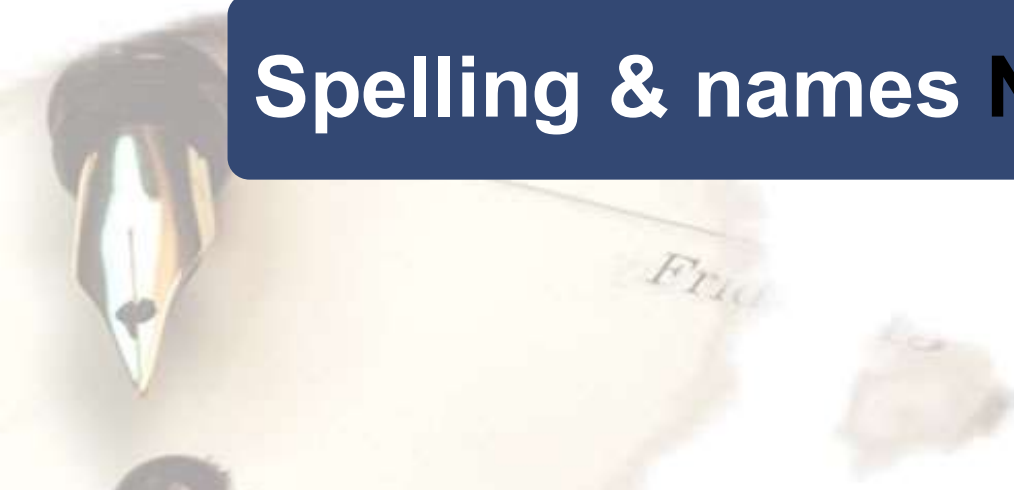
Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Do **NOT** assume that words/names are spelled the same throughout a document

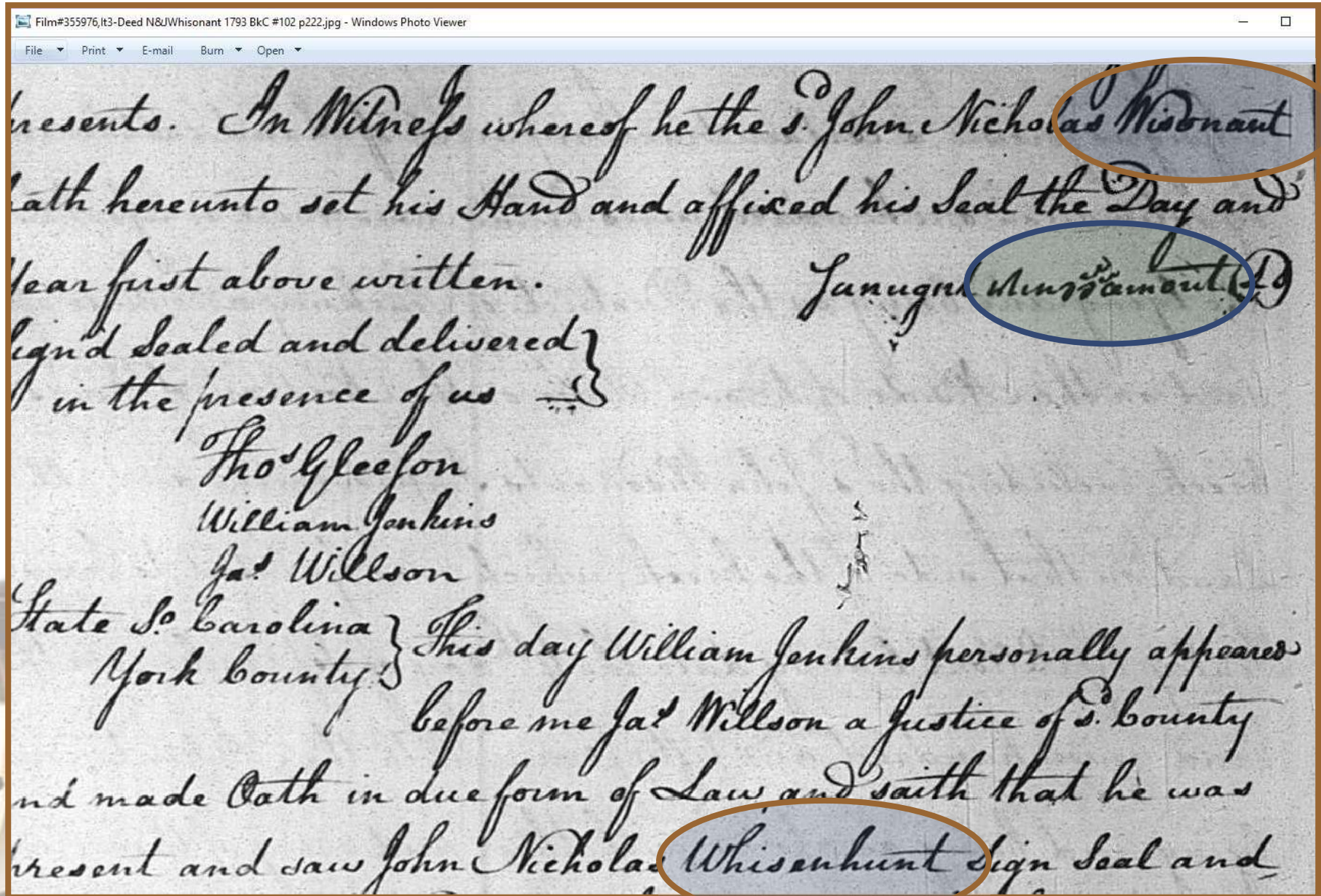
It is not unusual for a signature to also show a **DIFFERENT** spelling; document “as seen”

Spelling & names **NOT** standardized!



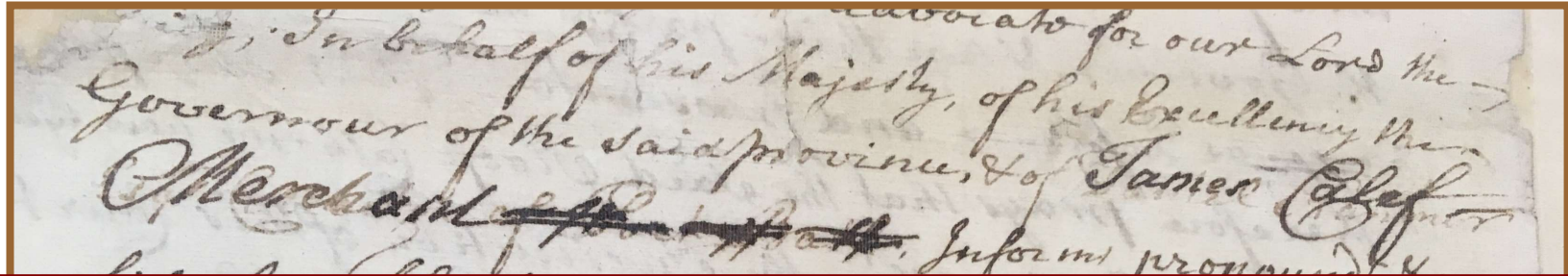
Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)



Transcriber Training

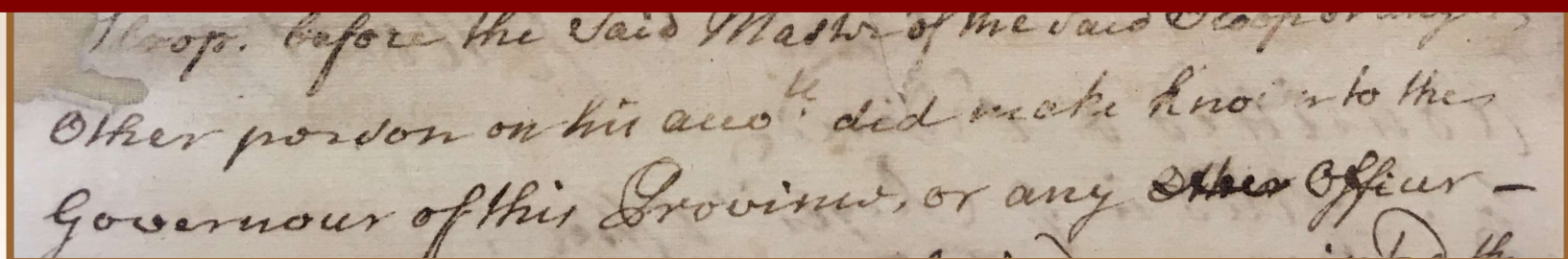
Keys (cont'd)



...In behalf of his Majesty, of his Excellency the
Governour of the said Province, to James Calfe
Merchant ~~of the said Province~~, Inform pronounced

This does **NOT** just happen with forenames and surnames!

Have seen legal terms and other words spelled **DIFFERENTLY** in one document written by one author.



...before the said Master of the said Court
Other person on his acc^t did make known to the
Governour of this Province, or any other Officer -

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

A single list may have **MULTIPLE** name spellings – maybe different authors in a then combined document?

McKenzee, McKensey, McKenzie, McKenzy, McKincey, McKincy, McKinsie, McKinsey, McKinsie, McKinsey, MacKenzie, MaKenzie, MacKynzie, Makensie, McKenzeigh, Macenzie, Mickenzie, etc.

Keeping a list of name, place and word **VARIANTS** can prove helpful

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Many names and words were written
PHONETICALLY [NO standardized spelling]

Adding letters

- “wee” for “we”
- “doe” for “do”

Dropping letters

- “puding” for “pudding”
- “begining” for “beginning”

Substituting letters

- “heyrs” or “hairs” for “heirs”

Substituting sounds

- “wine” for “vine”
- “prosuant” for “persuant”

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Has someone already transcribed the same type of document?

BOILERPLATE language (aka repeated formal language) can be a great place to start because of the repetition of the same words, phrases, sentences, and sometimes whole paragraphs



Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Even spelling used in “boilerplate” content is **NOT** consistent for an author or across authors

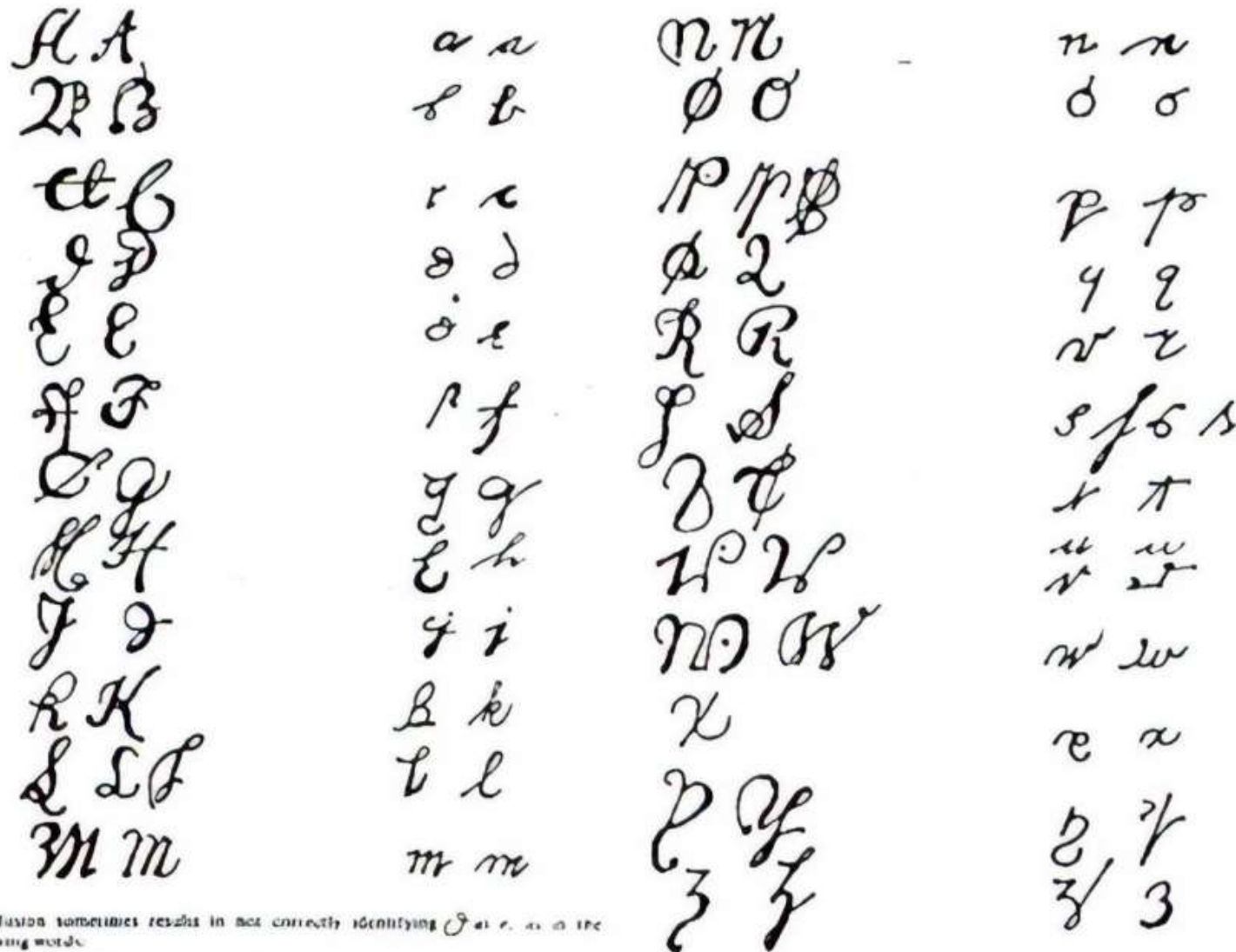


**Condison instead of
Condition**

Everyone writes a little **DIFFERENTLY** even if taught the same way; now imagine taught differently

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)



Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Recognize that many forenames and legal terms were abbreviated and/or “superscripting” was used

Ab^a: = ABRAHAM
 Abra^a: = ABRAHAM
 Anth^s = ANTHONY
 Beny: = BENJAMIN
 Cha^s = CHARLES
 Ch^s = CHARLES
 X^pter = CHRISTOPHER
 Cath^{ne} = CATHERINE
 Kath: = KATHERINE
 Ed: = EDWARD
 Edw^d = EDWARD
 Euz^{ne} = EBENE
 Ezry = EZRA
 Elizth = ELIZABETH
 Eliz: = ELIZABETH
 Em^l: = EMILY
 Fra^d: = FRANCIS
 Fran. = FRANCIS

Hen: = HENRY
 H^{by} = HENRY
 Ja^d. = JAMES
 Jos: = JOSEPH
 Jere: = JEREMIAH
 Jno = JOHN
 Ji^e = JEROME
 Matt^u = MATTHEW
 Ni^l: = NICHOLAS
 Nick^s = NICHOLAS
 Nich: = NICHOLAS
 Sam^{el} = SAMUEL
 Reb^a = REBECCA
 Rob^t = ROBERT
 Sam^l: = SAMUEL
 Tim: = TIMOTHY
 Tho^s = THOMAS
 Tris^{tr} = TRISTRAM

J. d^o // = DITTO MARKS
 Sr. F^r = FEMALE
 P^r = PER
 P^{son} = PERSON
 Pish = PARISH
 Inf^t = INFANT
 Sam Smith^e = SAM SMITH
 Atto^e = ATTORNEY
 a^ls = AFORESAID
 Ch^h = CHURCH
 W^r Rec^t = PER RECEIPT
 C^d = CONTINUED
 ff = ^{“SUPRA SCRIPTUM”}
 (AS WRITTEN ABOVE)
 W^r = ^{“WIDE LINES”}
 (NAMES 2-4)
 Test = ^{“TESTIS”} (WITNESS)
 L. S. ^{real}
^{“LOCUS SIBILLI”} (PLACE OF THE SEAL)

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

FREQUENT in
Colonial Court
Records!

Superior-letter abbreviations were also used, for example:

superior-letter
aka

Like today, **NOT** everyone used the **SAME** abbreviations, shorthand notations, and/or superscripted letters! Many did and highly dependent on how and by whom educated.

VARIETY truly was “the spice of life.”

- “abt two hund wt of spare Cordage,” which reads as “about two hundred weight of spare Cordage”

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Superscripted letters

e.g., Jn^o, Alex^r, Esq^r,
Capⁿ, dec^d, hon^{ble}, ag^t,
judg^t

Option 1: Recreate as – dec^d, hon^{ble}

Option 2: Spell out (often with italics to indicate added letters) – *deceased*, *honorable*

Option 3: Silently drop – decd, honble

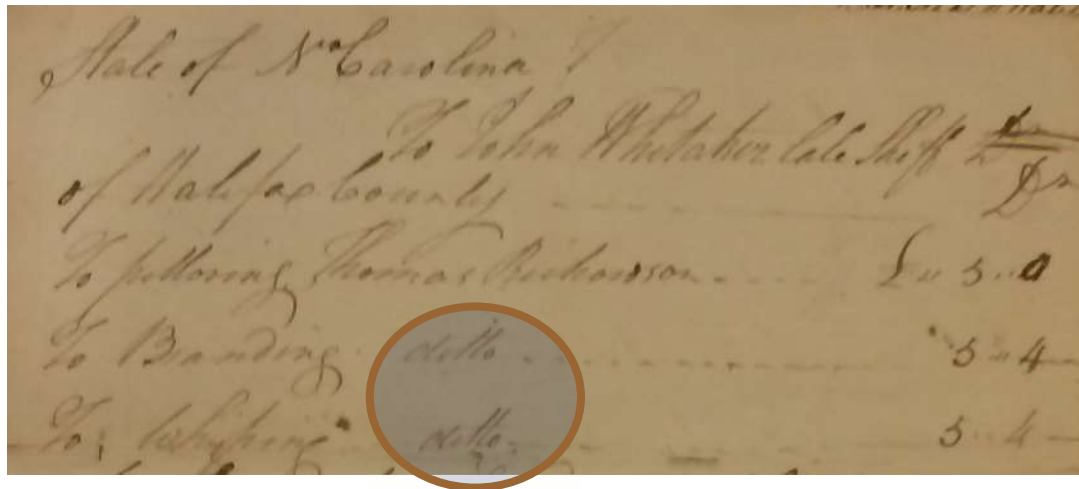
Option 4: Spell out if you can, otherwise use ?? if you don't know, e.g. *deceased* or dec?d

For TranscribeNC use Option #4

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Do **NOT** “repeat” words where you see Ditto, Do, D°, or “ “ [do as is]



Jas [Jos?] Jones or J?s Jones

There can be **MULTIPLE** ways to “accurately” represent what we are transcribing

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

WATCH for tails of letters interfering with words above (e.g. cursive “l”) or below (e.g. “g”)

Be **AWARE** of flourishes on the ends of words, which may first appear to be an ‘e’ or ‘s’

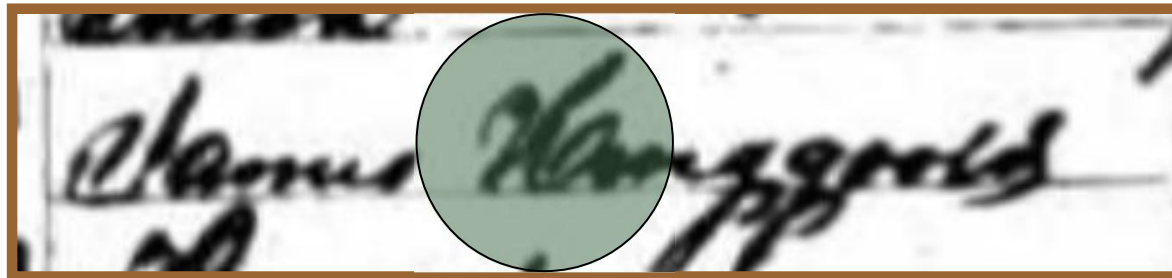
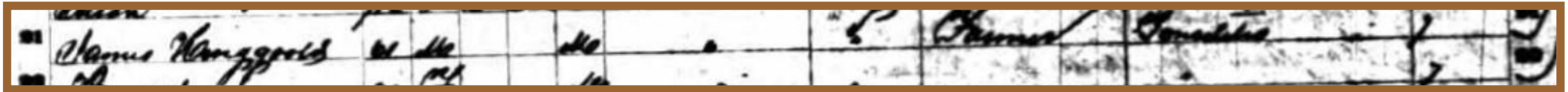


Some people just had to write ornately!

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

1880 Federal Census – Mortality Schedule

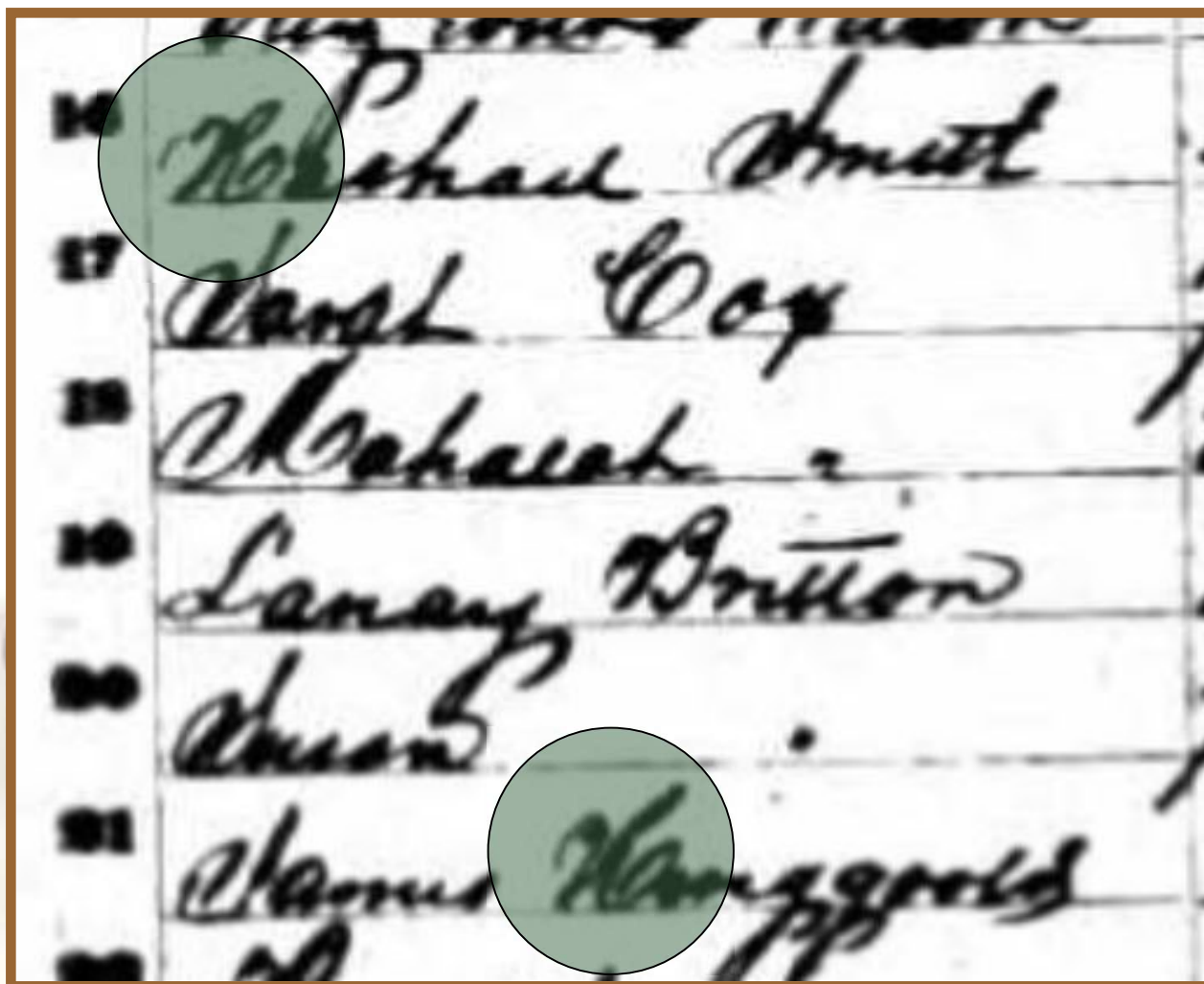


Maybe "H"? [how indexed on Ancestry.com] or "K"?

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

1860 Federal Census – Mortality Schedule



Now we can see that an “R”

Surname is typically Ring(g)old though written here as Ranggold

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Typically

Keep **CAPITALIZATION** or **LACK THEREOF** as you see it

Do keep **“CREATIVE PUNCTUATION”** or **LACK THEREOF** as you see it

If unsure
DEFAULT
to
IGNORING

For TranscribeNC

CAPITALIZATION – MODERNIZE for readability

PUNCTUATION – ADD modern periods;
DON'T add commas and apostrophes

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Capitalization

- > Use of capitals where we would not
- > Not capitalize (aka use “lower case” names and proper words like we do today)



Saith That Plea Such Priviledge Because

Not at beginning of a sentence nor a proper noun
and so do as

saith that plea such priviledge because

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Punctuation

Often missing –
periods, commas
and apostrophes

Though, ignoring the
handwriting and the
density of material,
they read fairly
straightforward

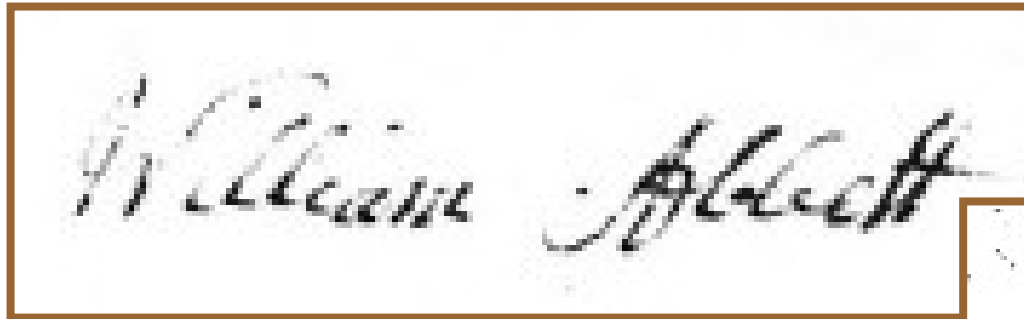
Not one bit of punctuation!

My *NCGS Journal*
proofreaders would fire me!

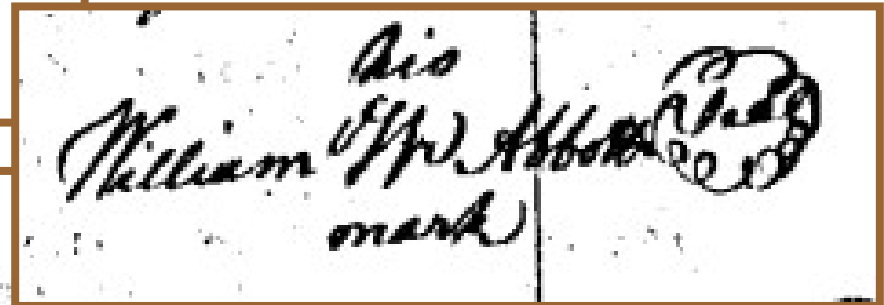
Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

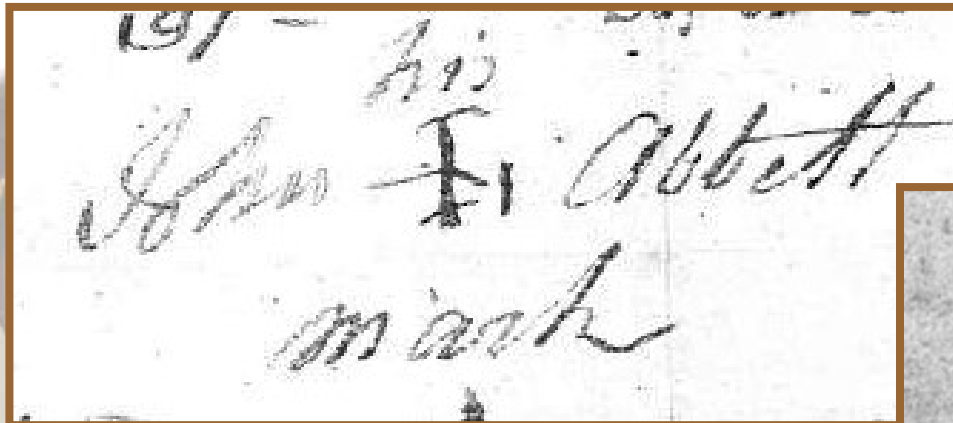
Do indicate **EXACTLY** how someone signed – signature, mark as an “X”, another type of mark, etc



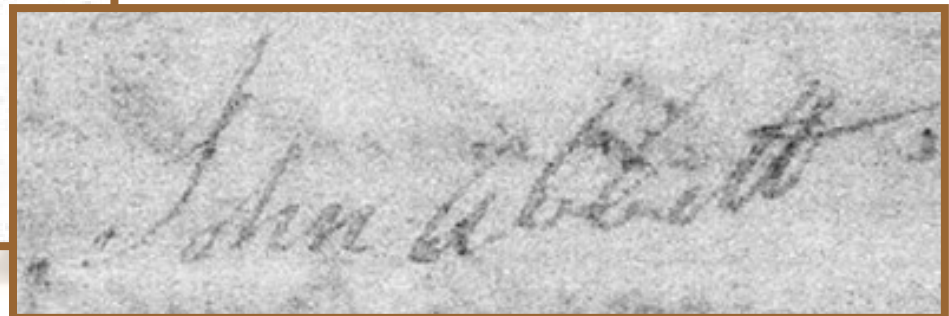
William Abbott



his
William W. Abbott
mark



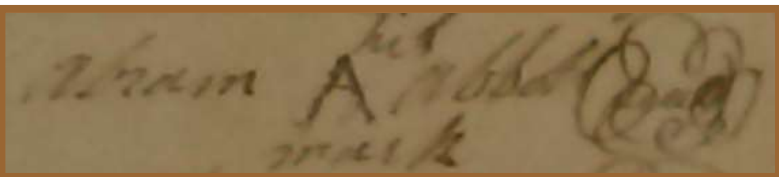
his
John F. Abbott
mark



John F. Abbott

Transcriber Training

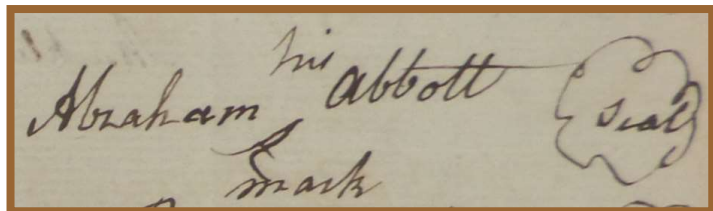
Keys (cont'd)



his
abram A abbot
mark

NOT an
option in
Transcribe
NC

Abram (his "A" mark) Abbot



his
Abraham  abbott
mark

NOT an
option in
Transcribe
NC

Abraham (his "angled A" mark) Abbott

NOTE: both used "lower case a" for surname

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

For TranscribeNC **DO** include “seal” as (seal)

Most effective way to indicate an original signature or mark

Jos Lane (seal)

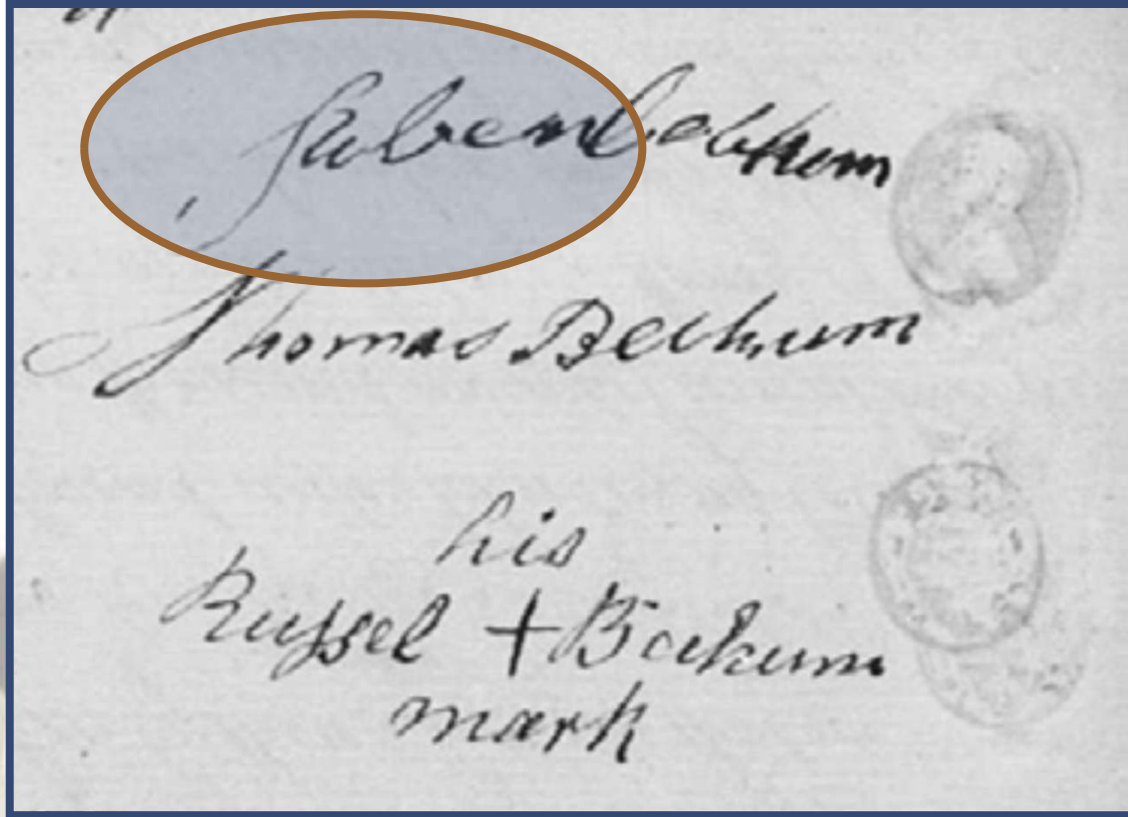
Abraham (his “A” mark) Abbott (seal)



Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

What is the “name?” [1782]



Clerk says
“R[e]uben”

What do you say?
Maybe Saben?
Laben?

Unusual
handwriting of
Ruben??

Signatures
present unique
challenges – may
not be repeated

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Any handwriting can be **IDIOSYNCRATIC**

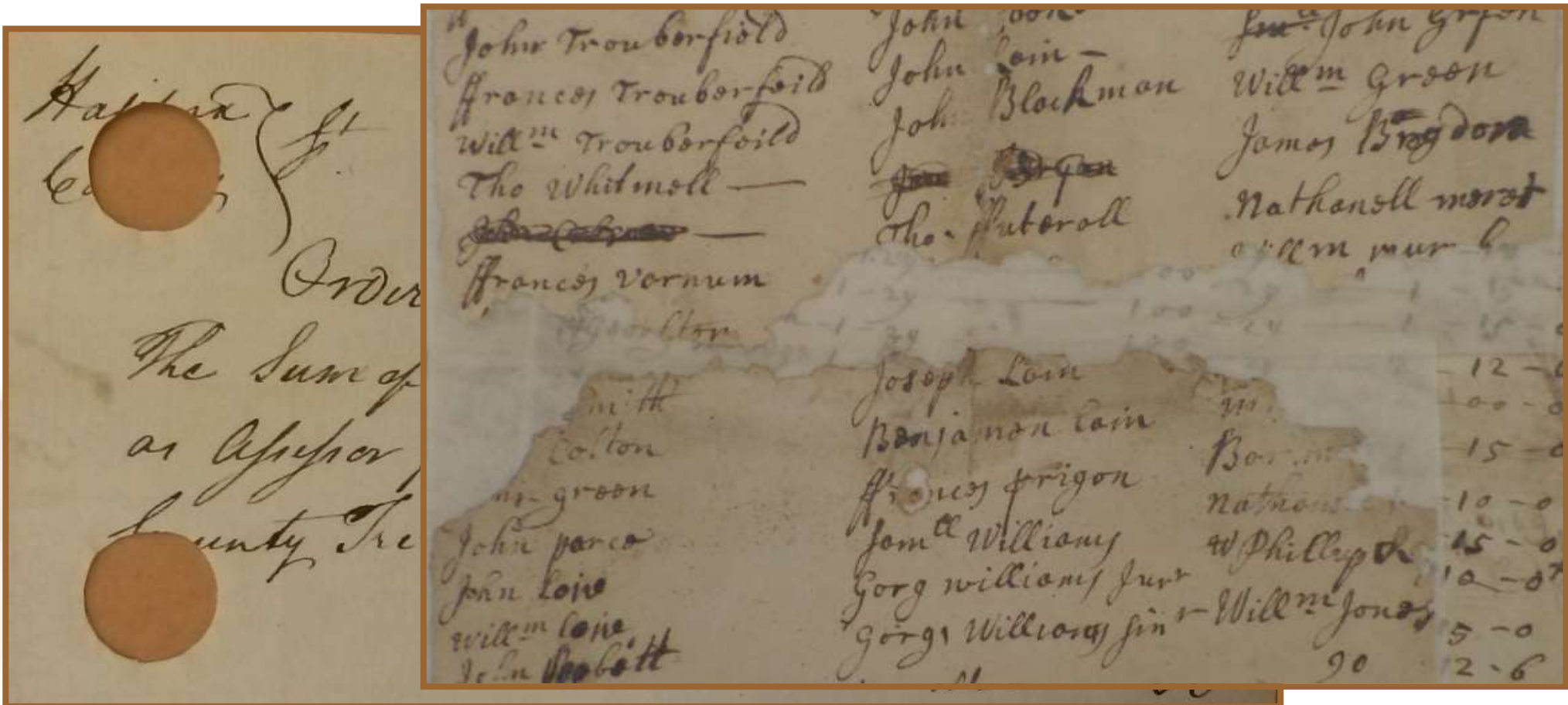
Some words, phrases may **NOT** be able to be transcribed



Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

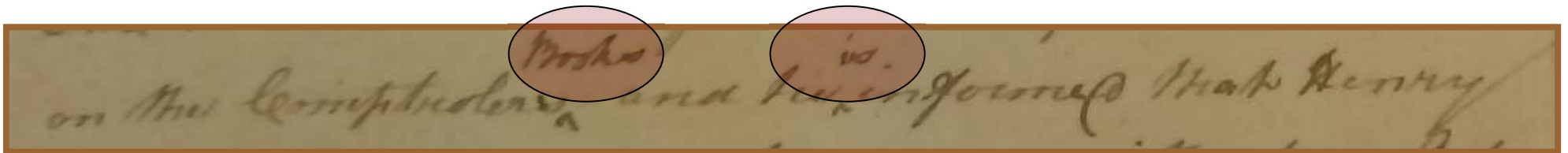
Do **INDICATE** document issues leading to unreadable text, e.g. [illegible] [torn] [faded] [spotch] [punch] [hole]



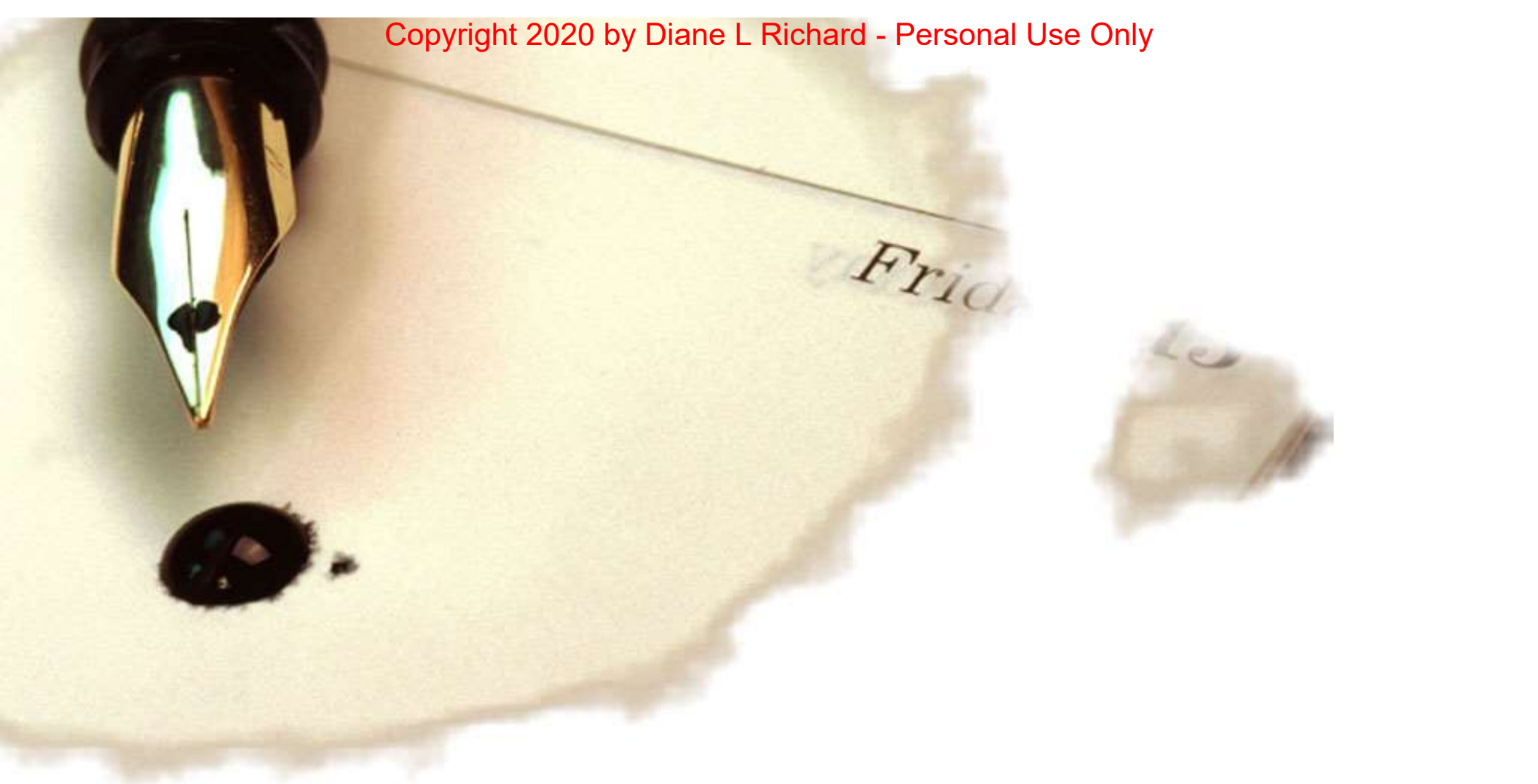
Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Sometimes we see where the author has put text (**INSERTED TEXT**) above or off to the right or left of where it “should have” been placed



On the Comptrolers ^ (Books) and he ^ (is)
informed that Henry



Keys to Transcribing “Colonial”

Transcriber Training

Long s = f

Typically

Do **KEEP** the “long s” -- often looks like an ornate “f” next to an s and is the equivalent of what ss is to us today ...

Afsembly = Assembly

Afsefsor = Assessor

Acrofs = Across

Ifsued = Issued

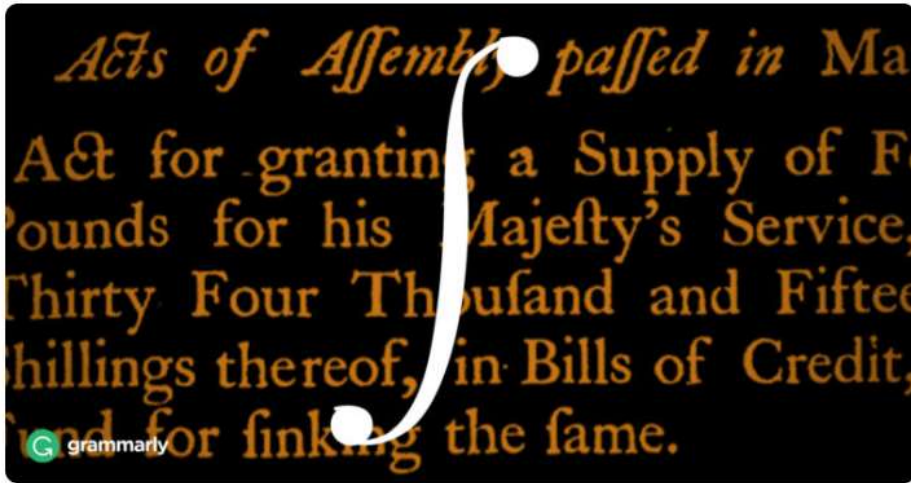
A close-up photograph of a fountain pen nib, showing the intricate details of the writing instrument. The nib is silver and has a classic shape with a split tines. It is positioned vertically on the left side of the slide.

For TranscribeNC

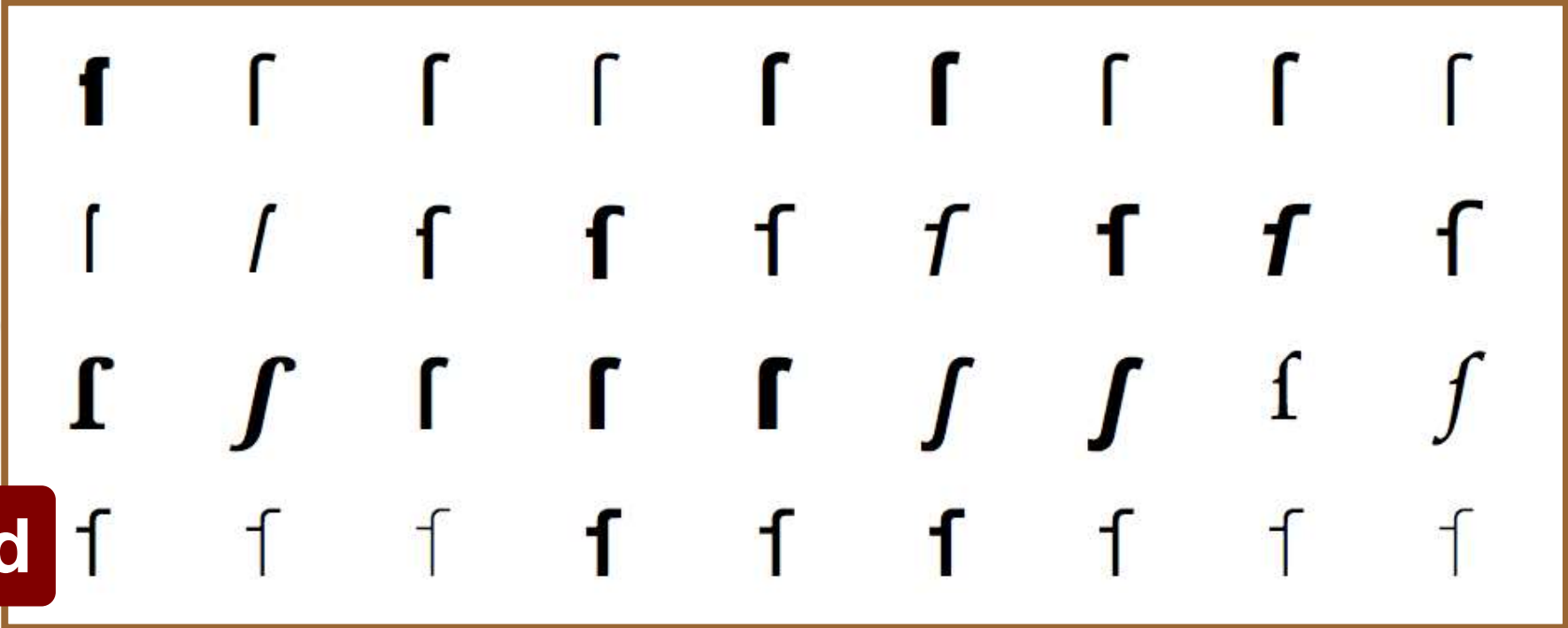
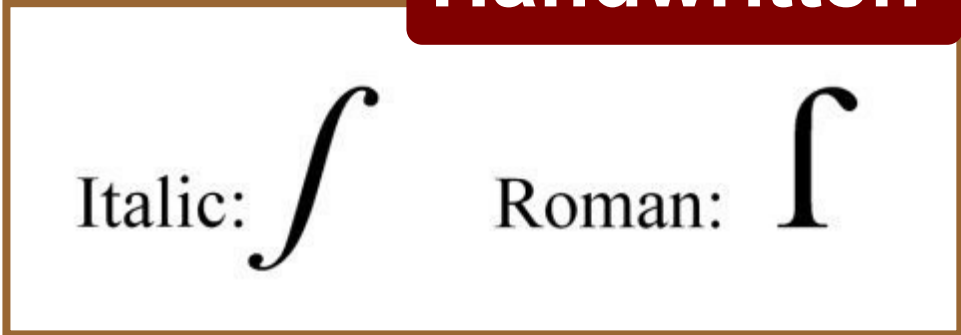
Convert to modern spelling using “ss”

Transcriber Training

Long s = f



Handwritten



Typed



Transcriber Training

Long s = f (cont'd)

State of North Carolina to Jas Gillstrom
To taking a certain Joseph Christian from
Denton to Wilmington Jail committed by
J Dickson Esq^r and finding him Victuals £100-00
To 1 pair of handcuffs for Do 0-00
To Ferriage across the Sound to Duckinfield 0--
To Do at Roanoke and Tar River 0'
Allowed £ 116-00

Transcriber Training

Long s = f

Use continues
into the late
1800s! 1860
Orange Co [NC]

477

Minutes July Term 1860
The State

A. McFarland } Plea not Guilty
 } Long charged writ

Long No 2

1 Fielding Morris	7 Wm H Ellis
2 Geo A Smith	8 James Bishop
3 Hardy Horn	9 Charles King
4 Hugh B. Rudes	10 Barranton Dutton
5 Stephen Cole	11 Saml Kirkland
6 Simpson Barber	12 James Christopher

Who find the defendant not Guilty

Seven Justices being present
and motion to the Court
License is granted to Joseph
Chase to detain spirits in the Tavern of
Willsborough for one year from this date
The State

issued

Plea not Guilty

Guilty in manner
The Bill of Indictment

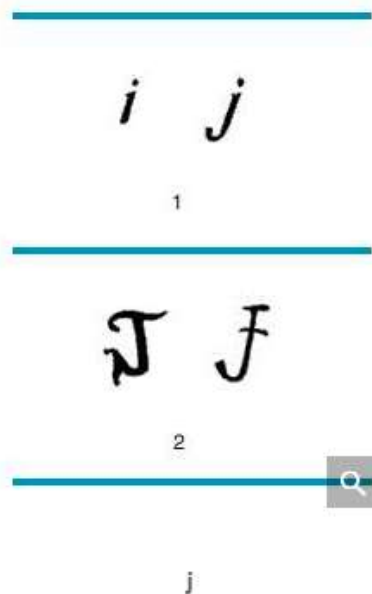
Present
the Court
nted to Joseph
ly in the Tavern of
for one year from this date
The State

Transcriber Training

I vs J

J didn't really exist until modern times; so, often **NOT** differentiated from the letter I

J, tenth letter of the [alphabet](#). It was not differentiated from the letter *i* until comparatively modern times.



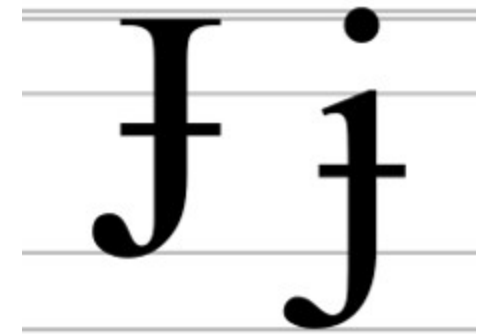
The English letter *j* did not come into existence until the end of the Middle Ages, when scribes began to use a tailed form of *i*, with or without the dot, next to the short form of *i* (1). When printing was invented, the tailed form of *i* (2) was often used for an initial *i*, which is usually consonantal. Not until the 17th century, however, was the distinction between *J* or *j* as a consonant and *i* or *i* as a vowel fully established.

Transcriber Training




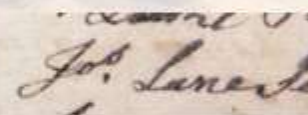
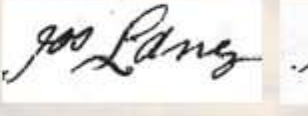
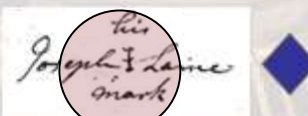
I vs J

Many individuals whose forename started with “J” (e.g., Joseph, John, Joel, Jesse, etc.) seemed to sign with a mark that look like an “I” with a line through it. Possibly a version of an early “J”

[J with a stroke]



Signatures (pre-1754)

Date	Signature	Source
1721	Joseph Lane Gulian, his wife	
1725		
1743	Joseph X Lane Patience X Lane	
1747		
1749		
1750		
1754		
1754		

TranscribeNC

When you see this “mark,” and definitely if associated with a name that starts with “J” (e.g., Joseph, John, Joel, Jesse, etc.), indicate by putting ...

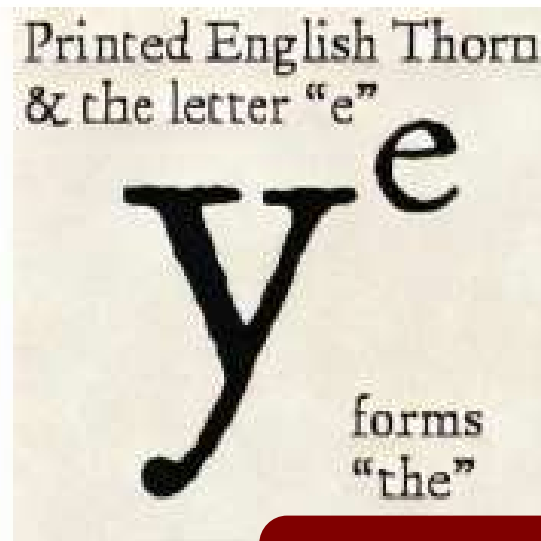
Joseph (his “J with stroke” mark) Lane Junior

Transcriber Training

Thorn

Often mistaken for the letter “y”
actually represents the “th” sound

- y^e is “the”
- y^t is “that”
- y^m is “them”



For TranscribeNC
Write as “Ye”

Transcriber Training

Dashes at end of line

Dashes added at the end of lines to fill the space [kind of what we do when writing personal checks; prevents extra words being added later]



For TranscribeNC
Do **NOT** include these dashes

Transcriber Training

Secretary Hand

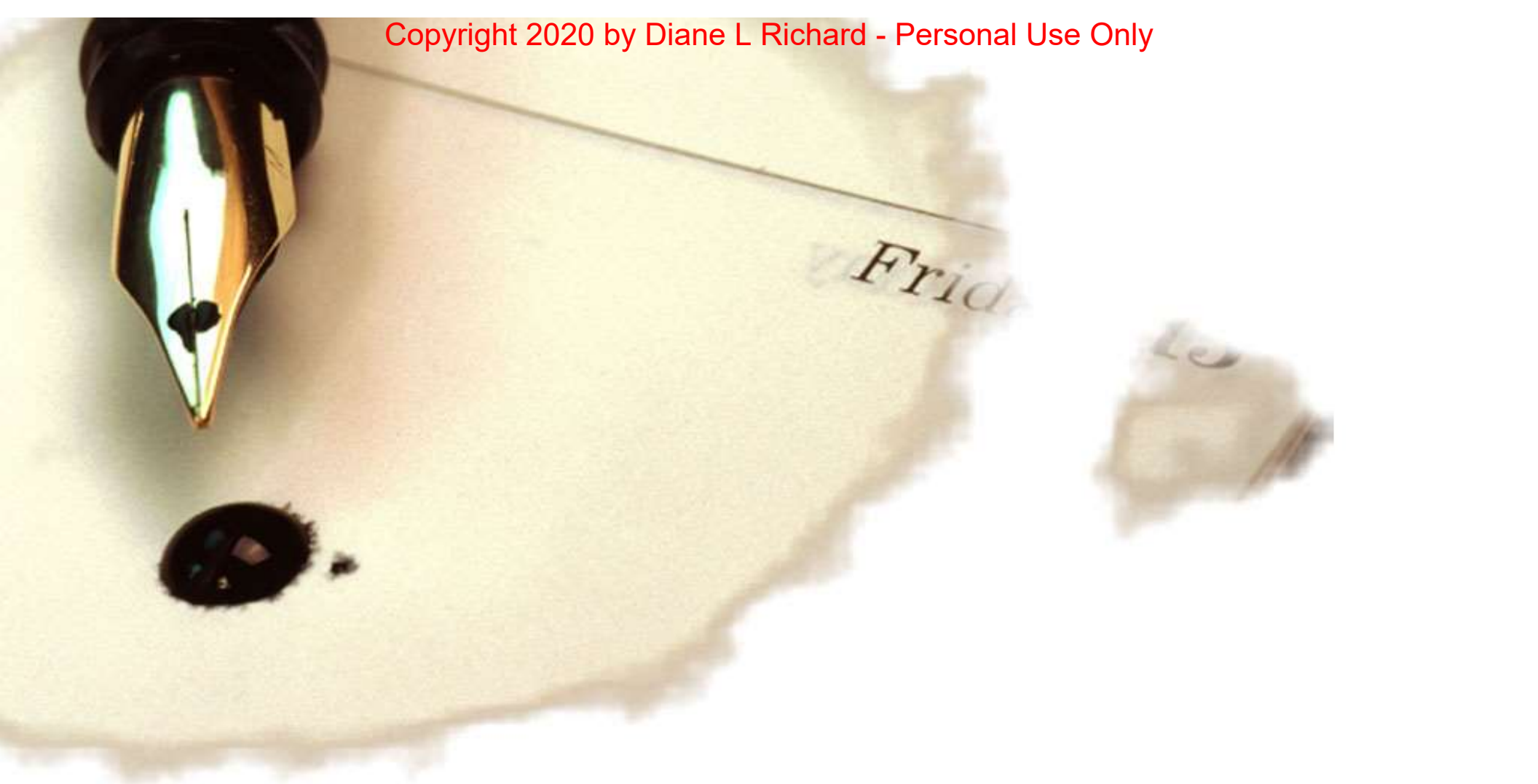
Secretary Hand Prevalent in 16th & 17th centuries; does **NOT** mean that it disappeared from use!

Full chart amongst resource materials provided

Letter	Letter Form Variations	Letter	Letter Form Variations
A	A ʌ ʌ ʌ	a	ɑ ʌ ɑ
B	B ʙ ʙ ʙ	b	ʙ ʙ ʙ
C	C ʃ ʃ ʃ	c	ʃ ʃ ʃ
D	D ʒ ʒ ʒ	d	ʒ ʒ ʒ
E	E ʋ ʋ ʋ	e	ʋ ʋ ʋ
F	F ʃ ʃ ʃ	f	ʃ ʃ ʃ
G	G ʒ ʒ ʒ	g	ʒ ʒ ʒ
H	H ʃ ʃ ʃ	h	ʃ ʃ ʃ
I	I ʃ ʃ ʃ	i	ʃ ʃ ʃ
J	J ʃ ʃ ʃ	j	ʃ ʃ ʃ
K	K ʃ ʃ ʃ	k	ʃ ʃ ʃ

Letter	Letter Form Variations	Letter	Letter Form Variations
A	A ʌ ʌ ʌ	a	ɑ ʌ ɑ
B	B ʙ ʙ ʙ	b	ʙ ʙ ʙ
C	C ʃ ʃ ʃ	c	ʃ ʃ ʃ
D	D ʒ ʒ ʒ	d	ʒ ʒ ʒ
E	E ʋ ʋ ʋ	e	ʋ ʋ ʋ
F	F ʃ ʃ ʃ	f	ʃ ʃ ʃ
G	G ʒ ʒ ʒ	g	ʒ ʒ ʒ

Not the only "hand/style" to be used in colonial times



Strategies

Transcriber Training

Strategies

Initially just **LOOK** at the document and see how much you can read

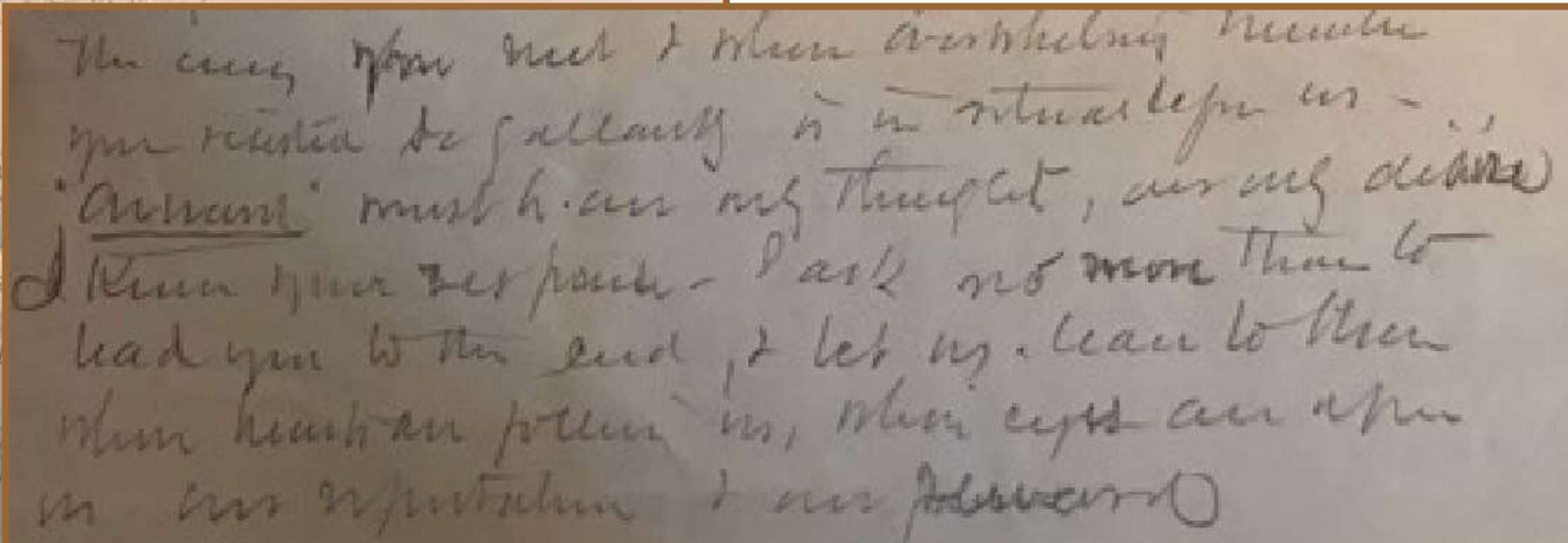
Are **OTHER** documents authored by the same person? Maybe more legible?!?!

Look **BEYOND** letter/word you cannot read (aka “skip”); might be found elsewhere in an easy to read/ understand context

Don't spend too **LONG** or get **FRUSTRATED!**
Stop, take a break (hours, days), revisit, repeat a few times & eventually satisfied or “done”

Transcriber Training

Strategies



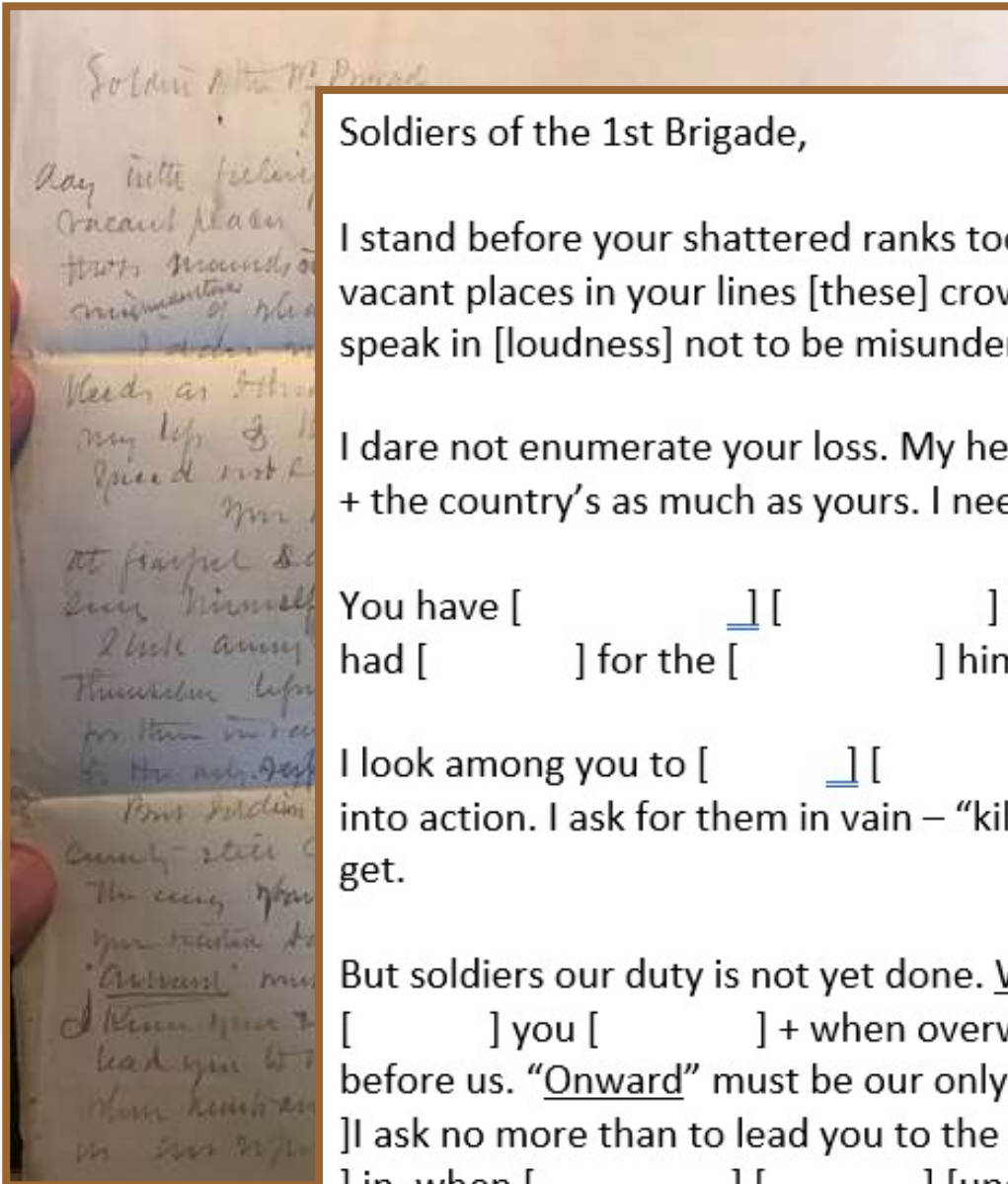
The cause you meet & when overlooking remember
you resisted to fallowly in in situar life us - ..
"Answer" must h. our only thought, our only desire
I know your bet path - I ask no more than to
lead you to the end, & let us learn to know
them heart an follow us, when eyes are open
in our reputation & our power. O

Used with permission of Chris Bryan who is publishing a Civil War history with Savas Beatie, www.savasbeatie.com, tentatively scheduled for 2021.

Samuel Crawford, "Address to 1st Brigade," Union Battle Reports, 1861-1865 (Trifolded Segment) Unpublished, Vols. 11-13 (Box 4), Record Group 94, National Archives Records Administration.

Transcriber Training

Strategies



Soldiers of the 1st Brigade,

I stand before your shattered ranks today with feelings not to be expressed in words. The vacant places in your lines [these] crowded hospitals [those] wounds on yonder battlefield, speak in [loudness] not to be misunderstood of what you have done + suffered.

I dare not enumerate your loss. My heart bleeds as I think of it. Your loss did I say. Alas, my loss + the country's as much as yours. I need not say that I am proud of you.

You have [] [] the reputation of the brigade at fearful sacrifice, + you had [] for the [] himself a hitherto [] [].

I look among you to [] [], [] [] [before you] led most of you into action. I ask for them in vain – “killed” “wounded” or “prisoners” is the only [response] I get.

But soldiers our duty is not yet done. We live + our country still calls upon us for help. [] [] you [] + when overwhelming numbers you resisted so gallantly is in retreat before us. “Onward” must be our only thought, our only desire. I know your [] [] I ask no more than to lead you to the end, + let us learn to then when [] [] [] in, when [] [] [upon] [in our reputation] + [] [].

Transcriber Training

Strategies

Blanks 1 and 2 ... the word almost looks like testament or something similar

You have reputation and might it be respect?

Blank 3 ... exerted

Blank 4

Blanks 5 & 6 ... to brav[e]ry

Blanks 7, 8, 9 & 10 .. xxxx them who, p

Blanks 11, 12

Blanks 13 .. met

Blanks 14, 15

Learn to then when or Lean to them wh

Blanks 16, 17, 18 .. hun*** [I do suggest

Blanks 19, 20 ... xxxx are

Blanks 21, 22 ... I am forever

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade,

I stand before your shattered ranks today with feelings not to be expressed in words. The vacant places in your lines [these] crowded hospitals [those] wounds on yonder battlefield, speak in [loudness] not to be misunderstood of what you have done + suffered.

I dare not enumerate your loss. My heart bleeds as I think of it. Your loss did I say. Alas, my loss + the country's as much as yours. I need not say that I am proud of you.

You have [just] [earned] the [respect] of the brigade at fearful sacrifice, + you had [] for the [] himself a [tribute] [to your] [bravery].

I look among you to [find] [those who] [placed] [themselves] [before you] led most of you into action. I ask for them in vain " -killed" "wounded" or "prisoners" is the only [response] I get.

But soldiers our duty is not yet done. We live + our country still calls upon us for help. [The] [enemy] you [meet] + whose overwhelming numbers you resisted so gallantly is in retreat before us. "Onward" must be our only thought, our only desire. I know your [] []. I ask no more than to lead you to the end, + let us [] to [those] [whose] [] [are] [fallen] in, [when or whose] [eyes] [] [upon] [in our reputation] + [our] [].

Transcriber Training

Strategies

You have [just] [earned] the [respect] of the brigade at fearful sacrifice, + you had [extended?] for the [enemy?] himself a [tribute] [to your] [bravery].

I know your [] []. I ask no more than to lead you to the end, + let us [leave or lean?] to [those] [whose] [hands?] [are] [fallen] in, [when or whose] [eyes] [are?] [upon] [in our reputation] + [our] [].

"Soldiers of the 1st Brigade,

I stand before your shattered ranks today with feelings not to be expressed in words. The vacant places in your lines these crowded hospitals those wounds on yonder battlefield, speak in loudness not to be misunderstood of what you have done + suffered.

I dare not enumerate your loss. My heart bleeds as I think of it. Your loss did I say. Alas, my loss + the country's as much as yours. I need not say that I am proud of you.

You have just earned the reputation of the brigade at fearful sacrifice, + you had exhorted from the enemy himself a tribute to your bravery.

I look among you to find those who placed themselves before you led most of you into action. I ask for them in vain – "killed" "wounded" or "prisoners" is the only response I get.

But soldiers our duty is not yet done. We live + our country still calls upon us for help. The enemy you met + whose overwhelming numbers you resisted so gallantly is in retreat before us. "Onward" must be our only thought, our only desire. I know your despondent. I ask no more than to lead you to the end, + let us [illegible] to those whose hearts are fallen in, whose eyes are upon us our reputation + our perseverance."

Transcriber Training

Strategies (cont'd)

Read the document out loud and try to sound out the word exactly as written

Use other material to facilitate

+ For example – for a 1786 petition, look at the 1790 census

+ For an 1891 document, maybe you can access a deed index?

+ Research geography, county officials names & positions, etc.

For TranscribeNC

**Use provided reference material;
NOT required to do more**

Transcriber Training

Keys (cont'd)

Alternately, some letters are **VISUALLY SIMILAR** and when combined with handwriting idiosyncrasies can challenge us ...

L and S

J and T

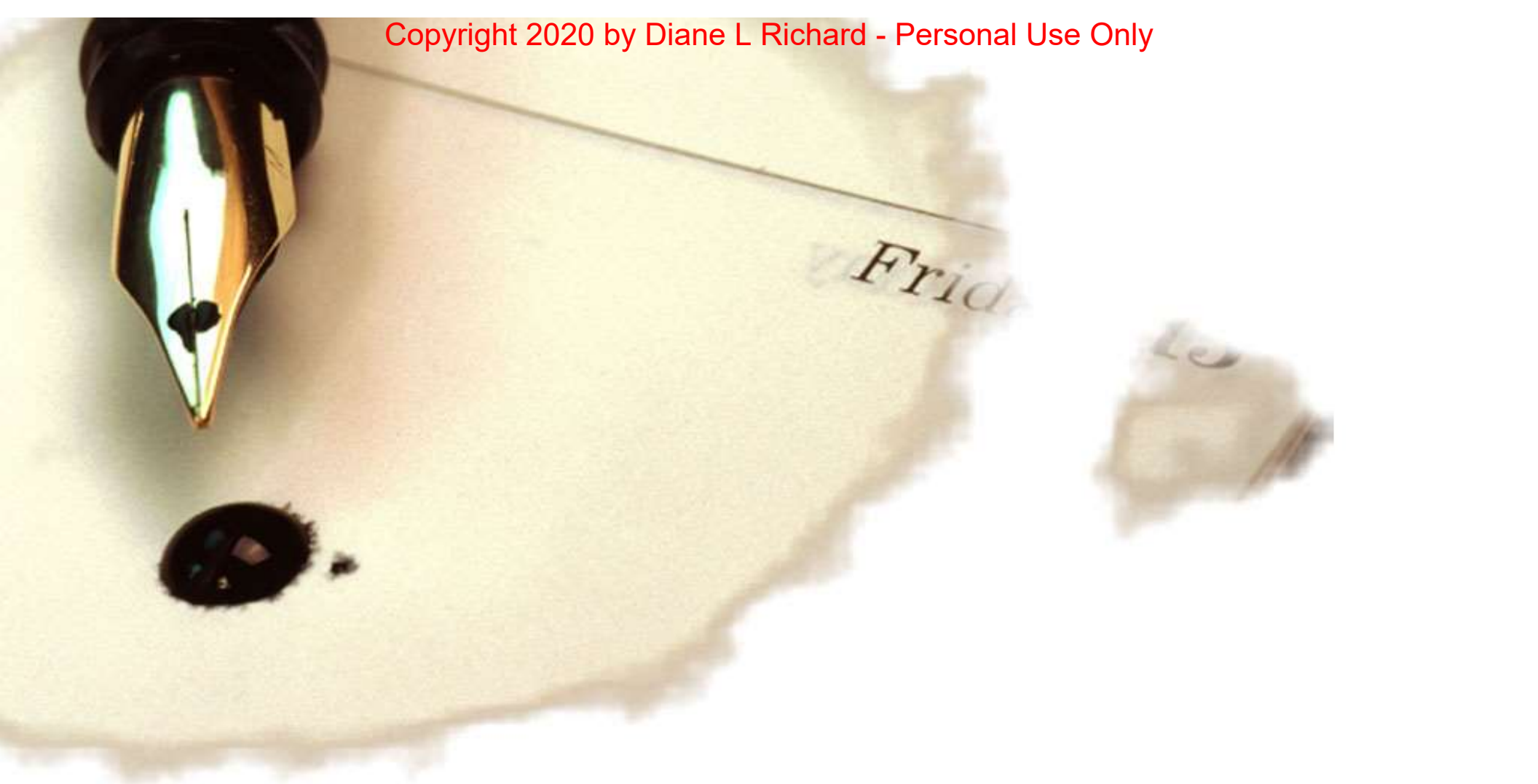
K and R

a and e and o

u and v


m and w

Etc.



The Future

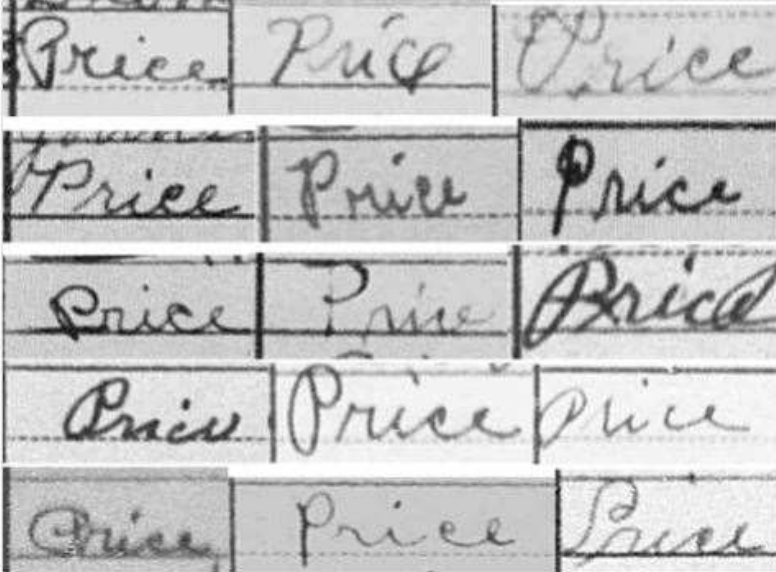
Transcriber Training




 **BYU Record Linking Lab** 17 hrs · 🌐

We just finished auto-indexing the name field for each of the 122 million people in the 1930 census. Stanley Fujimoto made this possible and has it set up now to do other fields and census years. We did the name field first because it will allow us to fix any transcription errors and better link people across census records.

We'll be loading these into our mobile indexing app: bit.ly/rl-index and we'll have a new app ready by Rootstech that will allow you to do indexing for a specific surname. If you put your surname below in the comments, we'll set up your surname for the pilot for you to try before Rootstech.

The new app will let you type in a name and we will show a large set of images that our machine learning algorithm thinks is that name. Then you will simply mark the ones that don't belong. We've attached a picture of some of the Prices and you can see that it is doing really well. Feel free to give us some hard names to do, if you want.



   59

78 Comments 29 Shares

Cutting edge auto indexing project [using 1930 US census] shows **VARIABILITY** in handwriting for one surname

Transcriber Training

Handwritten Text
Recognition –
project based on
22 characters
from John
Quincy Adams
Papers.

UConn Library, School of Engineering to Expand Handwritten Text Recognition

July 9, 2020 - Jean Nelson '04 MS, The UConn Library



Countless handwritten historical documents could become more accessible, thanks to research being done at UConn (Getty Images).

The UConn Library and the School of Engineering are working to develop new technology that applies machine learning to handwriting text recognition that will allow researchers to have improved access to handwritten historic documents.

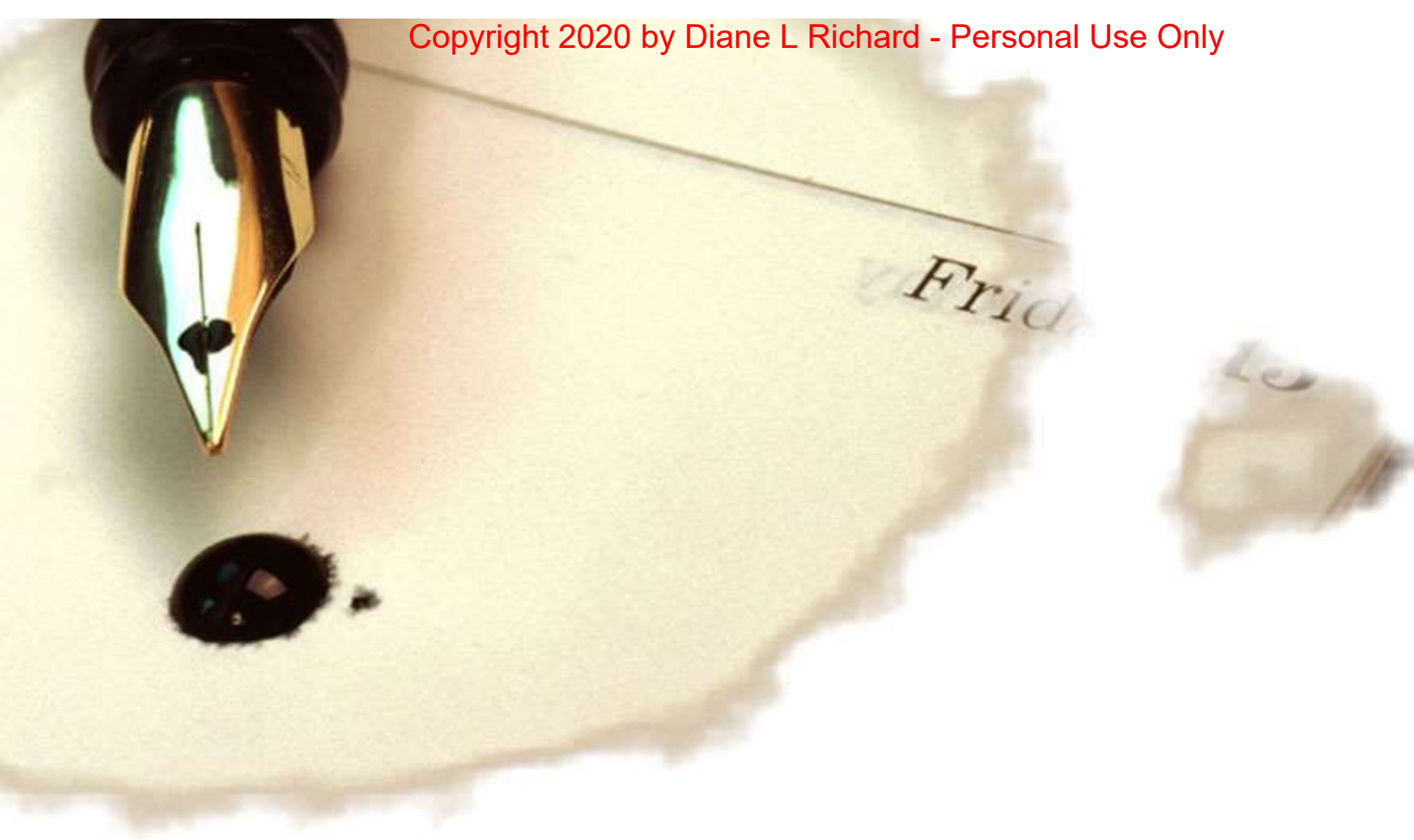
Handwritten documents are essential for researchers, but are often inaccessible because they are unable to be searched even after they are digitized. The Connecticut Digital Archive, a project of the UConn Library, is working to change that with a \$24,277 grant

Transcriber Training

Meaning we are not yet close to a machine accurately transcribing handwritten documents.

We need YOU!





Concluding Thoughts

“Transcribe what you SEE and not what you ought to see”

RELAX

Don't be afraid to SKIP around; you do NOT have to go linearly!

We often want to be exact and correct, but transcribing documents is an INEXACT process

You will NOT be graded 😊

**Cannot read or illegible -- find
ANOTHER!**

**Someone else WILL review
anything you have a question
about**

**Have FUN! This is not meant to be
a chore! If not having fun or being
positively challenged – STOP or
switch to another document**

Work on the EASIER to read elements FIRST (low hanging-fruit) & then go back to challenging letters, words, expressions

PARTNER with someone – virtually or in-person

We will NOT always be able to figure everything out!

You WILL get better & it WILL get easier with practice

ASK questions

INSERT comments/observations

DON'T become paralyzed or
stressed

AVOID GUESSING

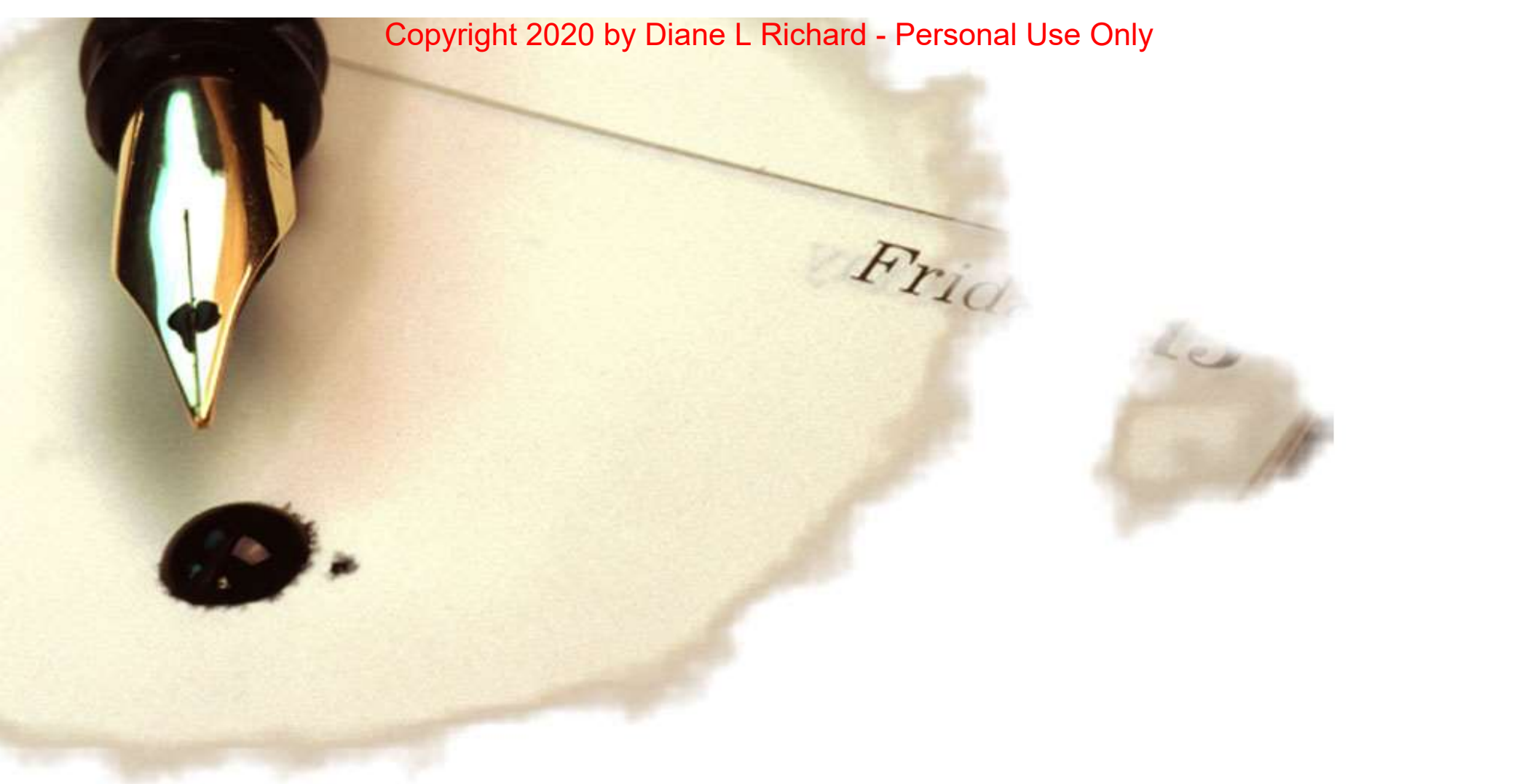
**educated deductions of
subscripted words & names
acceptable**

DON'T FORGET

**Use brackets [xxx] to make clear
content you have added that is
NOT in the original document**



ANYTHING you transcribe will
make **AVAILABLE** to researchers
something **NOT** previously
accessible



Resources

Resources

Provided

1. **Transcription Samples_Transcribathon**
2. **Reading Handwriting_Transcribathon**
3. **Tips for Reading Handwritten Documents_NSW State Archives**
4. **NHM_Palaeography_Guide_2014**
5. **Misspellings and Misnomers in the Archives_The Case of Simon (LVA)**
6. **Handwriting Helps – FamilySearch.org**
7. **How to Read 18th Century British-American Writing**
8. **5 Tips for Deciphering Old Handwriting**
9. **17th Century Handwriting**
10. **Wiggle and squiggles**

Resources

1. [provided] Transcribing – Let’s Be Accurate, by Diane L. Richard, Your Genealogy Today, July/August 2017
2. [FYI] [New] (\$) National Genealogical Society courses
 1. Reading Old Handwriting
 2. Transcribing, Extracting, and Abstracting Genealogical Records

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Transcribing – Let’s Be Accurate

Diane L. Richard looks at the importance of precision when transcribing documents for historical accuracy


Whether you are transcribing documents for your own use, or to share, for a website, or for a genealogical journal or similar publication, ACCURACY is key.

We transcribe documents to gain/provide greater access to the content and a transcribed version is easier to use. Though transcribing can be challenging (horrible handwriting, faded, torn and stained documents, uncommon spelling and language, etc.), the result is invaluable. That said, the simple concept of transcribing can often be frustrating and stymy even the most dedicated and experienced genealogist.

Overall, we want our transcriptions to reduce the amount that we incorporate. The following is an editor for two generations. I quickly learned elements stated for granted and a intuitive to other “the devil is in the very an element and, if not carefully interpreted in a multiple also reinforced the very visual, so “something in a d like in the original transcribed version quite proficient how they transcribed any journal editor

Let’s start with some key ideas, which may seem obvious, and yet, are so often ignored! In all cases DO:

- EXACTLY what you see.
- Include EVERYTHING.
- NOT interpret.
- NOT normalize spelling – keep spelling AS IS.
- KEEP names spelled as is – if spelled three different ways, you also spell it three different ways.
- NOT expand abbreviations (keep Oct or Octr, do NOT spell out as October).
- NOT “repeat” words where you see Ditto, Do, D^o or “ – do exactly what you see. Ditto is a surname!
- KEEP superscripted letters, e.g., Jn^o, Alex^r, Esq^r, Capⁿ.
- Be CAREFUL of Jas [Jos] [J?]s Jones – it’s easy to confuse vowels and certain consonants.



Two New NGS Online Courses

Learn to Read, Transcribe, and Abstract Genealogical Records

Reading Old Handwriting

Reading old handwriting is an essential skill for genealogists but sometimes it can be challenging. This illustrated course explains the writing systems and styles used in the United States over the last three centuries. Experience hands-on exercises to practice reading different types of handwriting. Upon completion of the course, you will be equipped with techniques and nine strategies for reading handwritten documents encountered in your research.

A a	
B b	
C c	
D d	
E e	
F f	

Transcribing, Extracting, and Abstracting Genealogical Records (Revised 2020)

Why is it important to learn how to transcribe, extract, and abstract? These skills are used to read, understand and accurately record information in legal documents and other handwritten records. It helps us to recognize evidence and the meaning of the document more fully, apply the knowledge we learn to our work, and distribute it more easily to others. Using numerous examples, practices, and assignments, this course teaches new skills and allows you to test them at the end of each lesson.

Learn more at ngsgenealogy.org | 800-473-0060
Special rates for NGS Members

NGS Education. Build Your Skills. Build Your Family History.

Resources

FYI

BYU Script Tutorial LOGIN Search

HOME ABOUT

Script Tutorial: : making sense of old handwriting

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The English Documents

RETURN TO MAIN SCREEN LANGUAGE OPTIONS

English Documents

HOME

TECHNIQUES & TOOLS

- Hands
- Abbreviations
- Numbers, Calendar, Currency
- Latin

ALPHABET DOCUMENTS

- All Documents
- Browse By Record Type
 - Church Records
 - Court
 - Military
 - Poor Law
 - Probate
 - Property
 - Miscellaneous
- Browse By Year
 - 16th Century/ 1500-1599
 - 17th Century/ 1600-1699
 - 18th Century/ 1700-1799
 - 19th Century/ 1800-1899

INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH SCRIPT

Between 1500 and 1800 Britain and Ireland used a variety of scripts—often mixing forms from an old with newer innovations. While much material written after 1750 is decipherable without specialized training, some older, difficult, forms of writing persisted in particular record types until the 1850s. The dominant script from the early modern period (1500-1700) in England, Wales, Ireland, and colonial America was the secretary hand. Secretary hand was also used in Scotland, though Scots writers developed a unique letterforms and strokes not found in other places within Britain. This tutorial concentrates on secretary hand, but begins with more modern hands to provide paleographic practice; it also introduces older scripts used between the middle ages and the sixteenth century.

While English is the dominant language in all early modern British, Irish, and American sources, certain documents might be in other languages, or contain portions in other languages. Latin was the official ecclesiastical-legal language in England until 1733 and Latin phrases lingered in British and Irish documents until the eighteenth century. Scottish documents might also contain words or phrases in Gaelic. Documents from the Celtic areas (Ireland, Scotland, Isle of Man) might have Gaelic words or Gaelic phonetic spellings and documents from the Channel Islands will contain French.

This tutorial is designed to introduce you to the various hands used between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in much of the English-speaking world. It also provides you with tools to interpret manuscripts from that period. Manuscripts are made up of more than just letters and pen strokes. They contain a host of details that made sense to early modern readers, but which often appear opaque to modern readers. Additionally, manuscript sources adopted different numbering systems or calendars at different times. Additionally, manuscript sources often contain references no longer common knowledge. What follows sketches the various types and provides clues for deciphering the contents.

The English Documents

RETURN TO MAIN SCREEN LANGUAGE OPTIONS

English Documents

HOME

TECHNIQUES & TOOLS

- Hands
- Abbreviations
- Numbers, Calendar, Currency
- Latin

ALPHABET DOCUMENTS

- All Documents
- Browse By Record Type
 - Church Records
 - Court
 - Military
 - Poor Law
 - Probate
 - Property
 - Miscellaneous
- Browse By Year
 - 16th Century/ 1500-1599
 - 17th Century/ 1600-1699
 - 18th Century/ 1700-1799
 - 19th Century/ 1800-1899

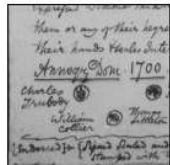
LAND, LEASES, & LITIGATION

INTERACTIVE EXERCISES


- Short Interactive Exercises
 - Easy
 - Intermediate
 - Hard
- Full Exercises
 - 1-1
 - 1-2
 - 1-3

BIBLIOGRAPHY


18th Century 1700-1799




Deed
Livery Parish Registers
Cornwall, England
1700
TRANSCRIPTION



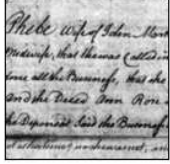
Meeting Minutes
Guestwick Congregation
Norfolk, England
1701
TRANSCRIPTION




Marriages, Christenings, Burials
Acle Parish Registers
Norfolk, England
1802
TRANSCRIPTION




Church Pew Agreement
England
1777
TRANSCRIPTION



Coroner's Inquest
Middlesex, England
1786
TRANSCRIPTION



Revolutionary War Payroll
United States
1778
TRANSCRIPTION



North Carolina Inventory
Cross Creek, North Carolina
1771
TRANSCRIPTION

<https://script.byu.edu/>

Resources

FYI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDPVI7yFaSE>



The image is a YouTube video thumbnail. At the top left is the profile picture of a woman and the channel name 'Genealogy TV' with a '2 hrs' duration. The main text on the thumbnail reads 'Genealogy TV Transcription Tips for Genealogy Dictation of Old Documents in Microsoft Word'. The background features a blue microphone on the left, a dictation menu with 'Dictate' and 'Voice' options on the right, and a fountain pen nib in the bottom left corner. The background is a collage of old, handwritten documents.

Genealogy TV
2 hrs · 🌐

Learn how to transcribe old documents by simply dictating them into Microsoft Word or similar software. Using this technique allows you to transcribe many documents faster just by reading them using a microphone and then editing as you go. <https://youtu.be/NDPVI7yFaSE>

Genealogy TV
Transcription Tips for Genealogy
Dictation of Old Documents in Microsoft Word

YOUTUBE.COM
Transcription Tips & Techniques for Genealogy Research: Dictation of Old Documents in Microsoft Word

Resources

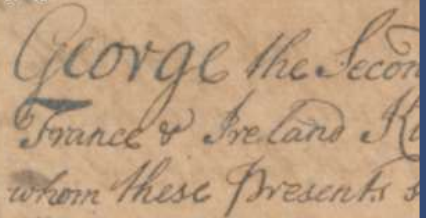
FYI

https://www.georgiaarchives.org/online_exhibits/handwriting

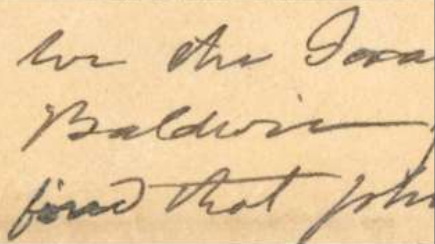
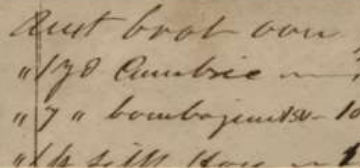
Reading and Interpreting Handwriting Online Exhibits

Original entry by ahudgins, Georgia Archives Staff, October 02, 2017. Last edited July 26, 2018.

1 of 19

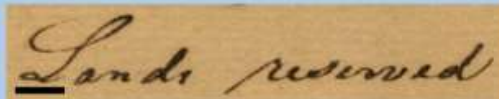


Reading Handwriting



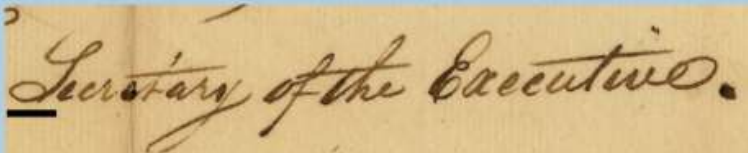
4 of 19

Some letters look the same. It's easy to mistake one for another when there isn't enough context to tell you what the letter is.



Lands reserved

S and L

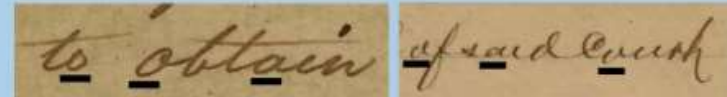


Secretary of the Executive

Does the last name start with S or L?



o and a



to obtain

of said court

e and i

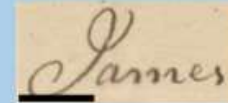


his

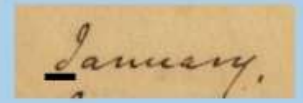
he

subscribed

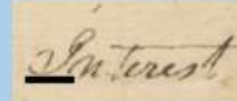
I and J



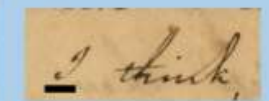
James



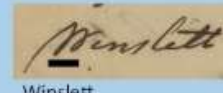
January



Interest



I think



Winslett

M, N and W



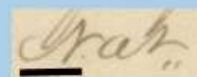
Missionary House



William



Mills

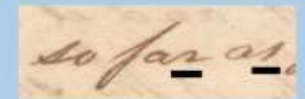


Nat



William

s and r



so far as

Resources

FYI

11 of 19
deced

deceased

Dist Sect Lots

District, Section, Lots (used in records describing land)

Ludville 1370 Dist. G.M.
[Insert name of township, town, precinct, district, or other civil division, as the case may be. See instructions.]

Ludville 1370 District Georgia Militia

Recev^d

received

D.

Ditto

Guard of Charles Nelson

Guardian of Charles Nelson

of the s^r in willis

of the said William Willis

Peter Hill
M. G.

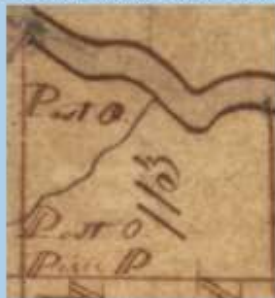
Peter Hill, Minister of the Gospel

Elizabeth Nelson Admin^r
David Simpson Admin^r

Elizabeth Nelson Administratrix
David Simpson Administrator

Ag^t for Mrs Emma Askew

Agent for Mrs. Emma Askew



Post Oak
Pine Post
(trees used to mark land boundaries)

Successors

What is this?

Long "s" written as "f"

Successors

Russel + Brannen
his mark.

Russel ^{his} X Brannen
mark

Resources

Blacks Law Dictionary, 2nd edition (public domain)
https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Dictionary_of_Law/jLtDAQAAMAAJ

FYI

Use to **CONFIRM** that a combination of letters “is” a legal term or **SPELL OUT** the legal term Fi[eri] fa[cias]

A Dictionary of Law

Containing De

Front Cover

Search in this book

Google Books

Front Cover

fi fa

Showing 2 results in this book for fi fa

Order by relevance

Clear search

PAGE

diocese or to the archbishop, (during the vacation of the bishop's see) commanding him

courts at Westminster, whose duty it was to file the writs on which he made process.

By Henry Campbell Black - 1891

PAGE 489 »

small or limited number. In cases where exact description is required, the use of this word will not answer. 53 Vt. 600; 2 Car. & P. 300.

FI. FA An abbreviation for *feri factas*, (which sec.)

FIANCER. L. Fr. To pledge one's faith. Kelham.

assumption or supposition of the law.

“*Fictio*” in the old Roman law was properly a term of pleading, and signified a false averment on the part of the plaintiff which the defendant was not allowed to traverse; as that the plaintiff was a Roman citizen, when in truth he was a foreigner. The object of the fiction was to give the court jurisdiction. Matuo, Anc. Law, 25.

Fictio cedit veritati. Fictio juris non est ubi veritas. Fiction yields to truth.

AL AND COM
MS AND

Terminology

Resources

FYI

The North Carolina Gazetteer via NCPedia
<https://ncpedia.org/gazetteer>

NC PEDIA

Take our [survey!](#) Let us know your interests & needs for NC history resources. Thank you from the State Library of NC.

The North Carolina Gazetteer

This content is from the *North Carolina Gazetteer*, edited by William S. Powell and Michael Hill. Copyright 1987. Used by permission of the publisher. For personal use and not for further distribution. Please submit per [publisher](#).

Some place names included in *The North Carolina Gazetteer* contain terms that are considered offensive.

[Preface to the 2nd edition](#) | [Preface to the 1st edition](#) | [Acknowledgments](#)

"*The North Carolina Gazetteer* is a geographical dictionary in which an attempt has been made to list all of the places that are historical as well. Many features and places that no longer exist are included; many towns and counties included. Some names appearing on old maps may have been imaginary, but many of them also appear in history.

Each entry is located according to the county in which it is found. I have not felt obliged to list every town, may appear in the beginning of one entry and at the end of another. Some entries may be found. If there is no comment on the origin or meaning of a name, it is because the information is not available. Some suggest the meaning of many names."

--From *The North Carolina Gazetteer*, 1st edition, preface by William S. Powell

Browse the North Carolina Gazetteer

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [All](#)

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NC PEDIA

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resources.

[Citing Sources](#) [Contact Us](#) [Fun Stuff!](#)

[U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#) | [All](#)

If you are seeking
HISTORICAL
CONTEXT start here

Selected North Carolina Topics

<p>Get NC Quick Facts</p>	<p>State Symbols</p>	<p>Counties</p>
<p>Geography & Places</p>	<p>Women's History</p>	<p>NC Digital Textbook</p>

Resources

FYI

North Carolina Government, 1585-1979
Via North Carolina Digital Collections,
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/455988>

The screenshot shows the North Carolina Digital Collections website. The main content area displays the cover of the book "North Carolina government, 1585-1979 : a narrative and statistical history". The cover is yellow with black text and features several illustrations of historical buildings. The title is prominently displayed at the top. Below the title, the author "THAD EURE" and his title "Secretary of State" are listed. The editor "JOHN L. CHENEY, JR." and his title "Director of Publications" are also listed. The publisher information "North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, Raleigh, North Carolina" is at the bottom. A large red callout box is overlaid on the image, containing the text: "Might help IDENTIFY the names of officials that you come across mentioned in or authoring documents". The callout box has a white border and the word "IDENTIFY" is in yellow. The website's navigation menu is visible at the top, including "Home", "Browse", "About", "More Resources", "Contact", and "Give Feedback". The Internet Archive logo and navigation icons are also present at the top of the page.

North Carolina Digital Collections

Home Browse About More Resources Contact Give Feedback

INTERNET ARCHIVE

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Search

Search inside

Home > State Publications II > North Carolina government, 1585-1979 : a narrative and statistical history

North Carolina government, 1585-1979 : a narrative and statistical history

Page 1

Might help IDENTIFY the names of officials that you come across mentioned in or authoring documents

North Carolina State Library
Raleigh
**NORTH CAROLINA
GOVERNMENT**
1585-1979
N. C.
Doc.

THAD EURE
Secretary of State

Edited by
JOHN L. CHENEY, JR.
Director of Publications


North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State
Raleigh, North Carolina

6 / 1608

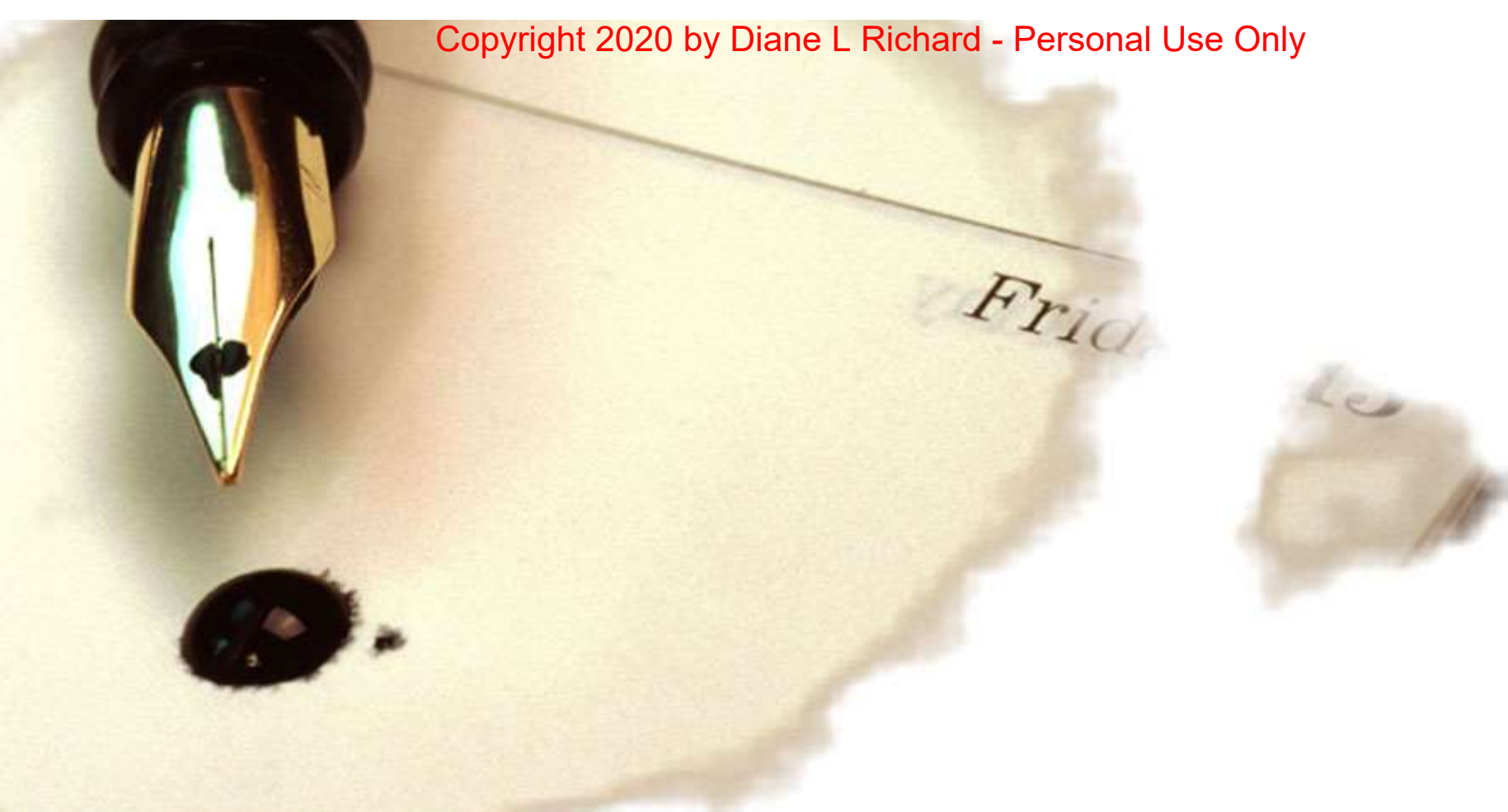
North Carolina government, 1585-1979 : a narrative and statistical history

A close-up photograph of a fountain pen nib resting on a piece of aged, yellowed, and torn paper. The nib is dark with a gold-colored tip. The paper has a rough, deckled edge and the word "Friday" is faintly visible in the background. A small, dark, circular object is on the paper near the nib. The overall scene is lit with soft, warm light.

QUESTIONS?


A close-up photograph of a fountain pen nib, likely gold or brass, resting on a piece of aged, yellowed, and torn paper. The nib is positioned in the upper left corner, pointing downwards. A dark, circular ink blot is visible on the paper just below the nib. The paper has a rough, torn edge and some faint, illegible text, including the word "Friday" and a date "10". The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Pop Quiz

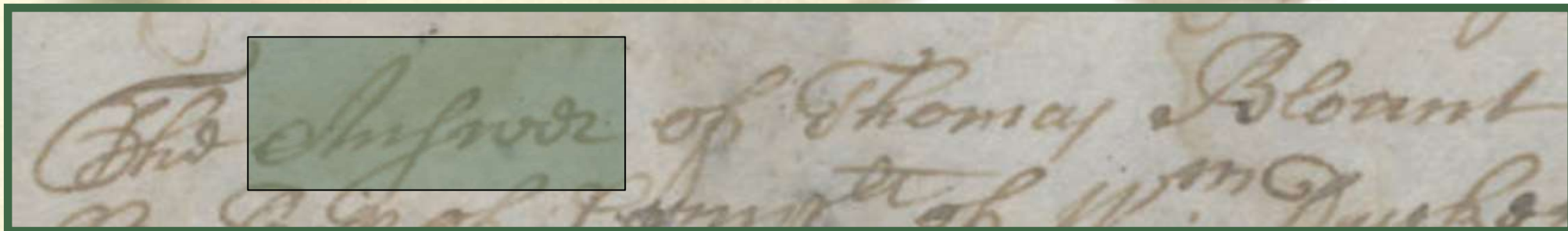


Examples are all from ...

**Colonial Court: Court of
Chancery, 1689-1775**



How would you transcribe this?

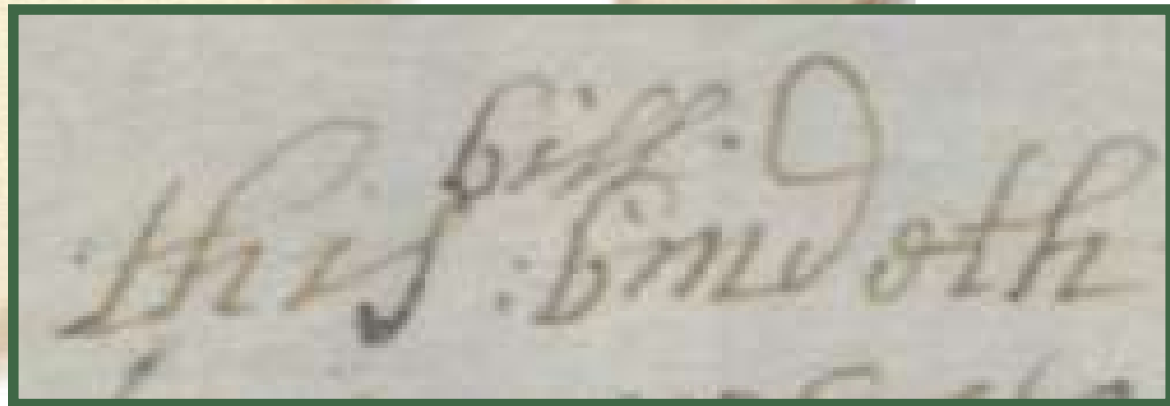


Answer

Example of long tailed s
though NOT as ss

Please use “chat” feature to answer

How would you transcribe this?



This [^][bill] bindeth

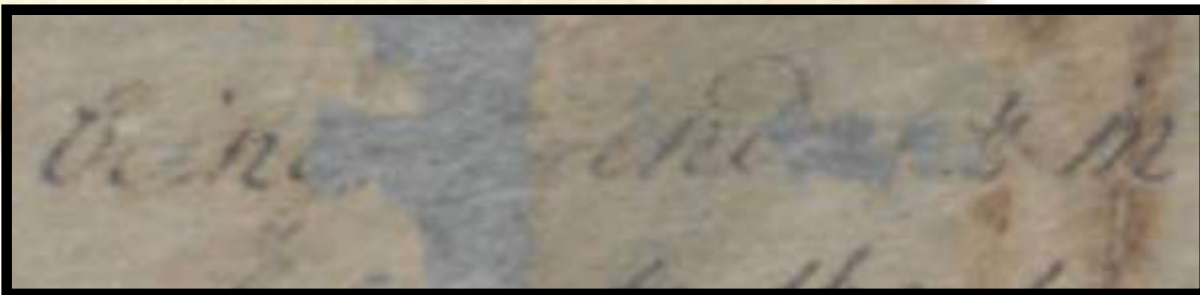
Example of inserted text; e as slightly open version of o

Please use “chat” feature to answer

How would you transcribe this?



Thomas Pollock
Bein[g] [torn]end [torn] in this suit.



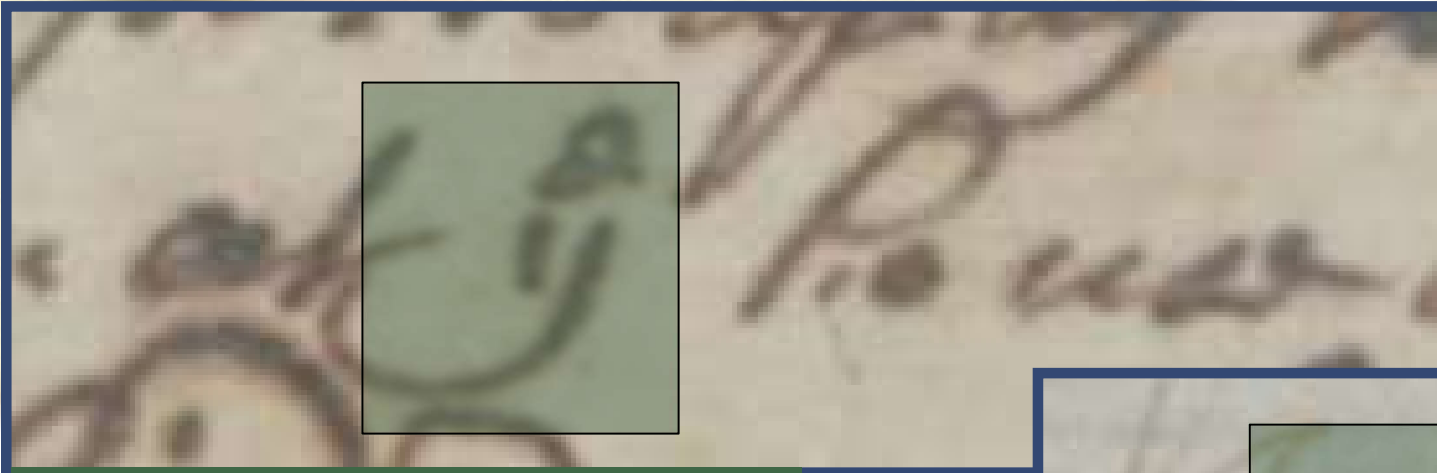
Bein[g] [torn]end [torn] in

Example of
damaged document

Bein[g] [torn]end [torn] in

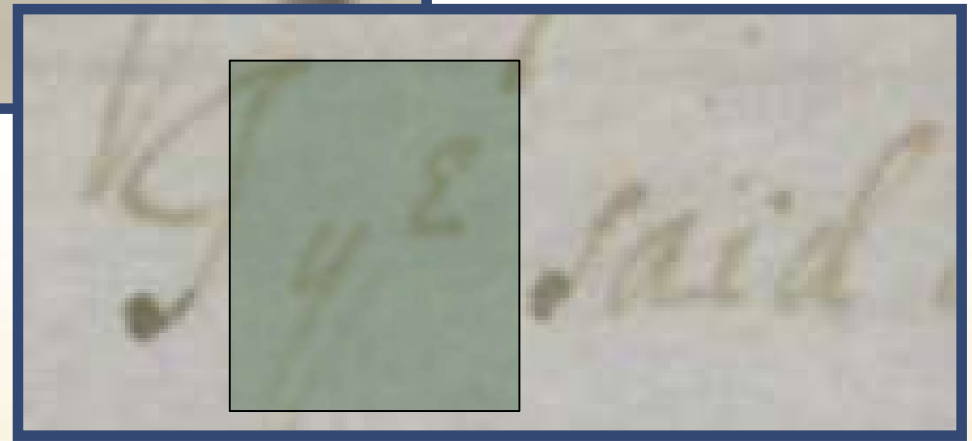
Please use “chat” feature to answer

How would you transcribe this?

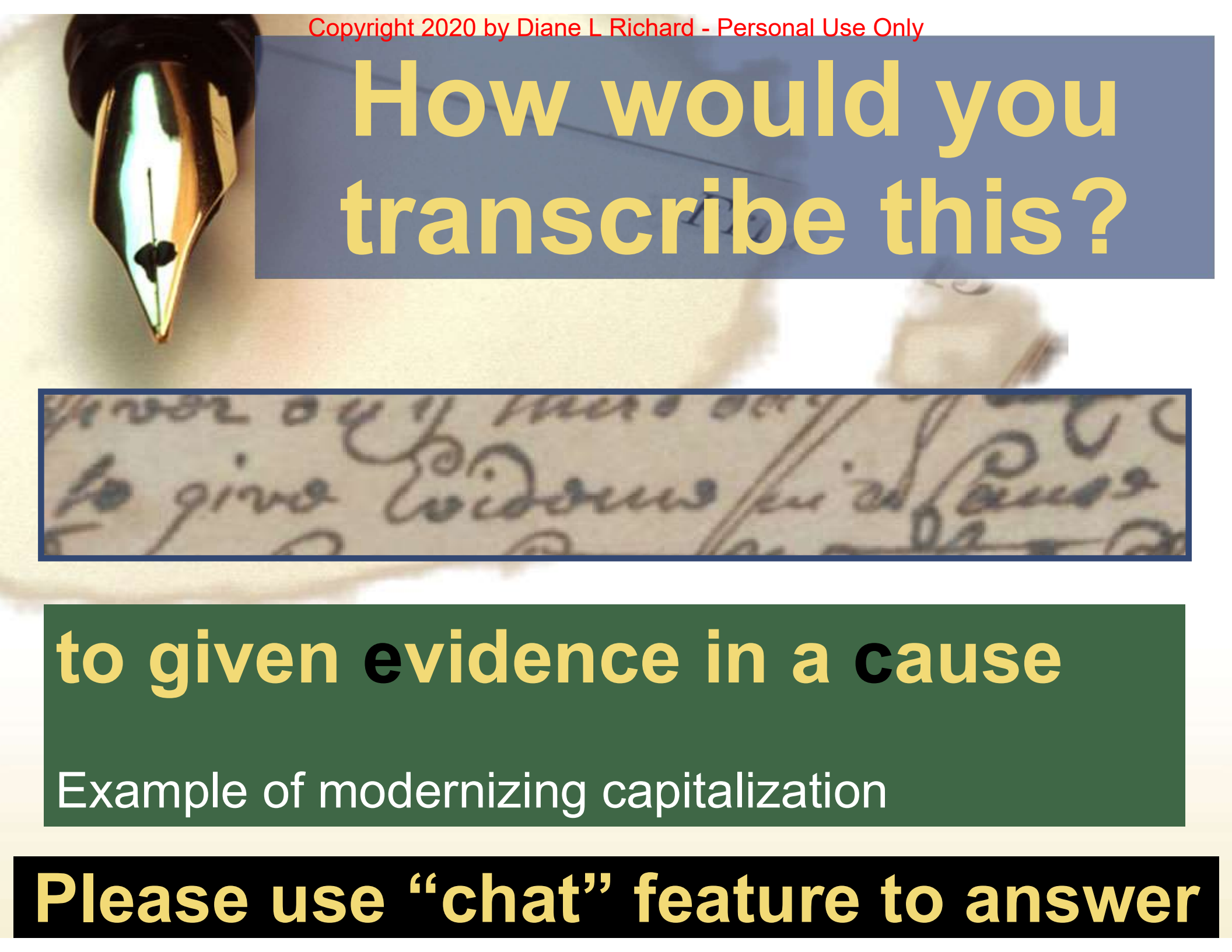


ye

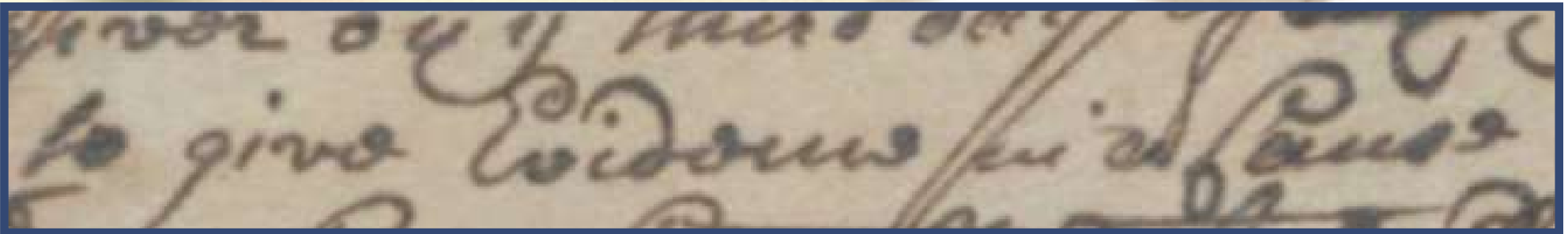
Examples of thorn



Please use "chat" feature to answer



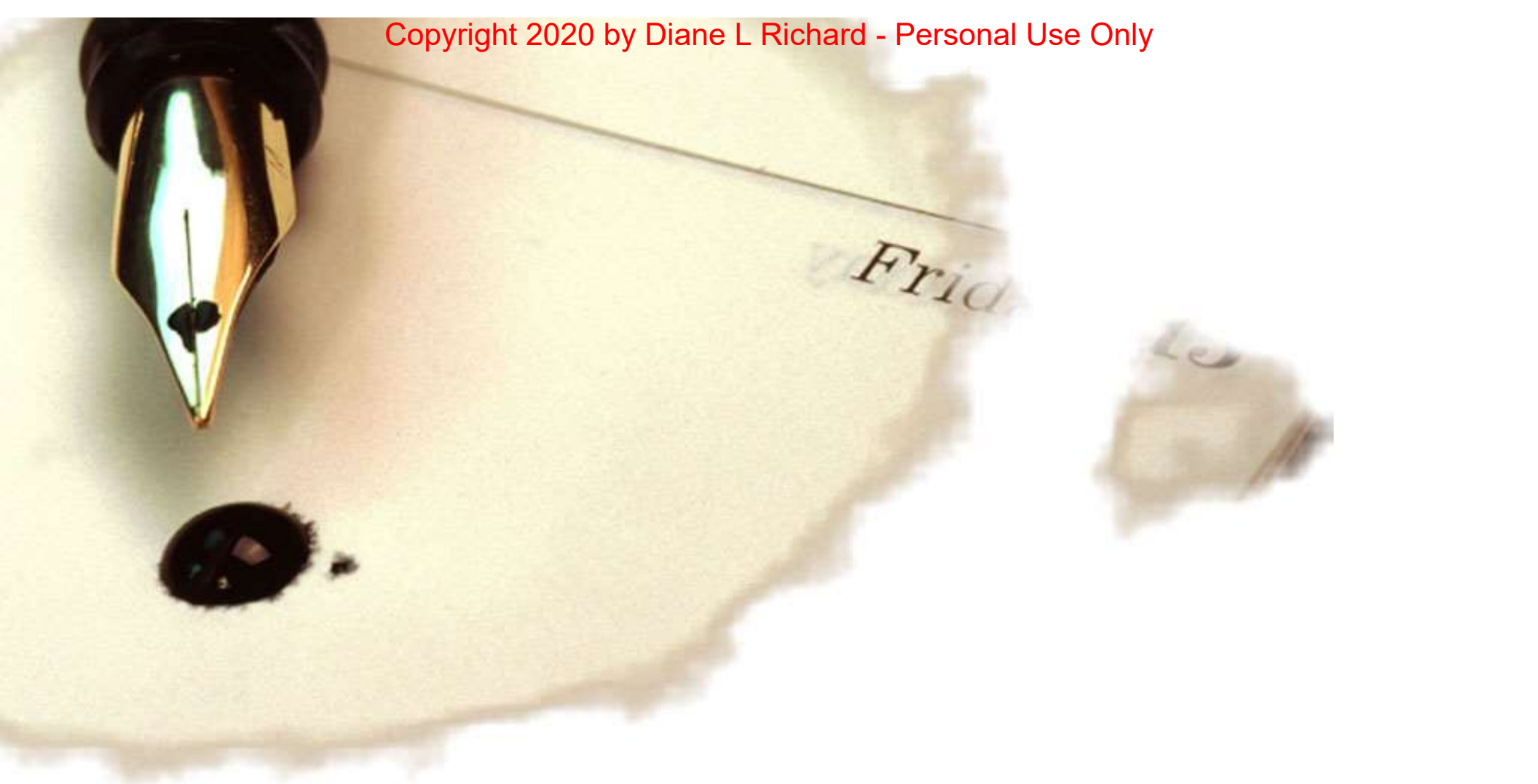
How would you transcribe this?



to given **evidence** in a **cause**

Example of modernizing capitalization

Please use “chat” feature to answer

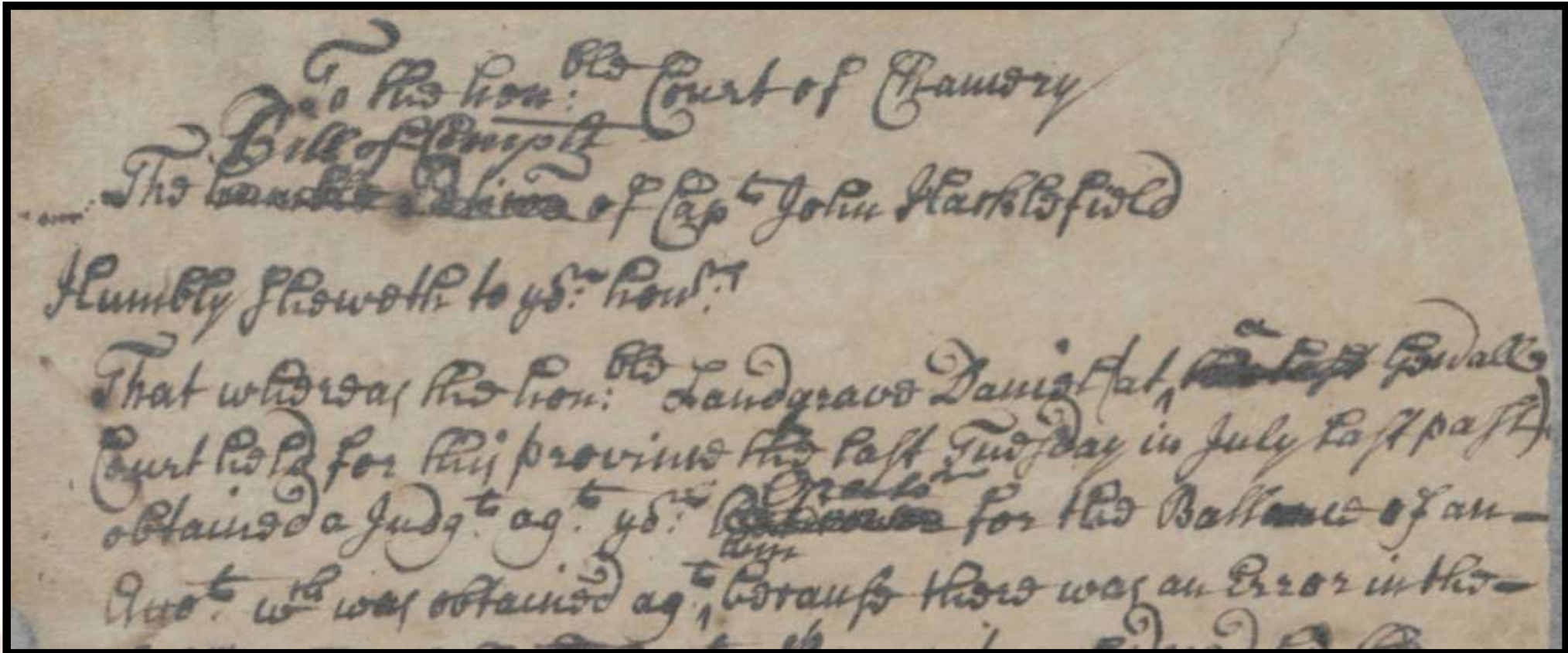


Transcription Practice Colonial Court Records (CCR)

Please use “chat” feature to answer

Transcriber Training

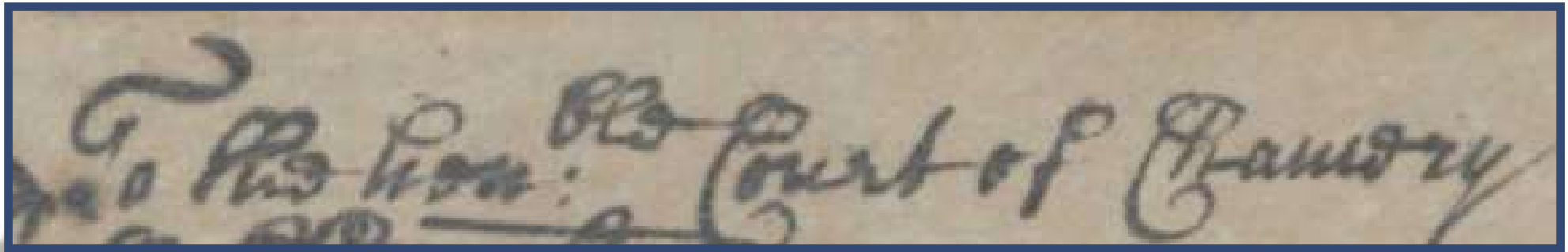
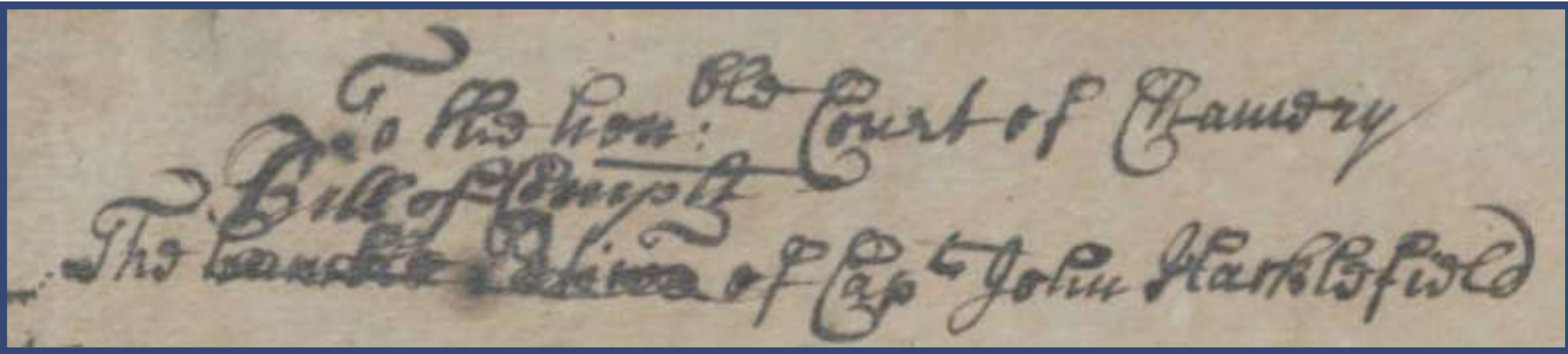
Real-Time Practice



Let's now transcribe the upper section – line by line

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice

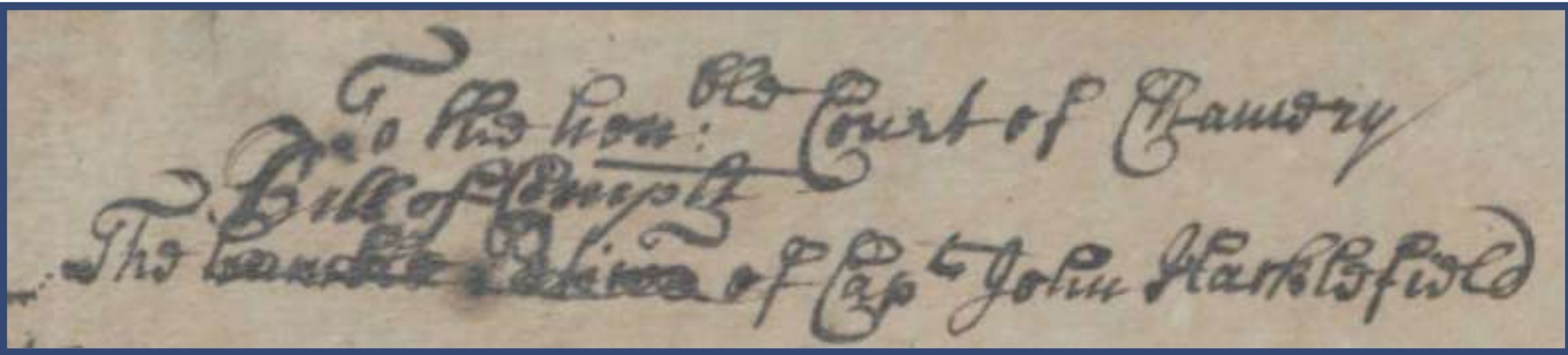


To the honorable Court of Chancery

To the hon?ble Court of Chancery

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice

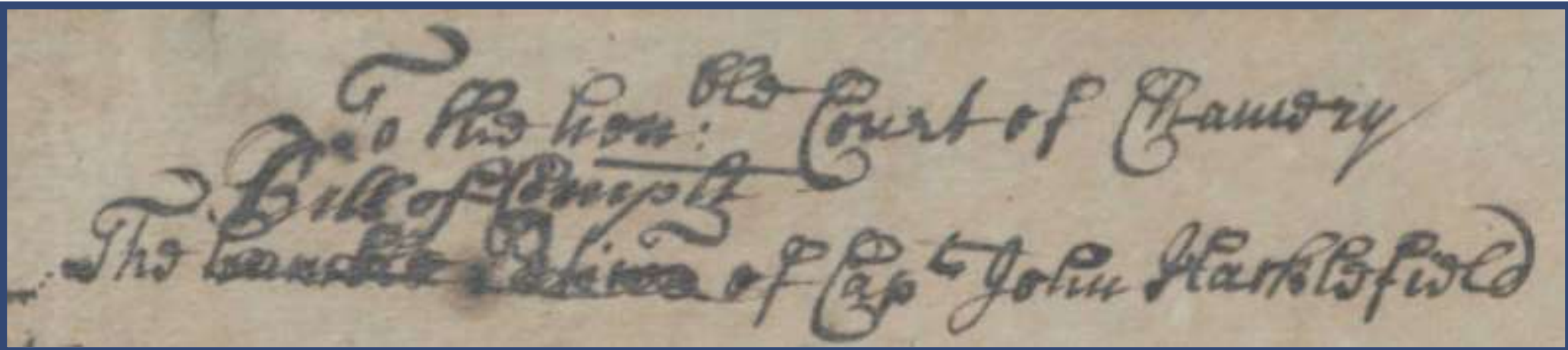


Bill of Compl[ain]t

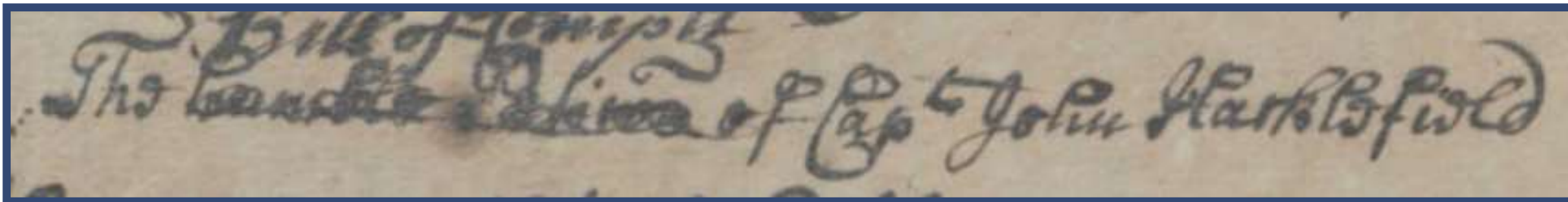
Bill of Compl

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



To the Hon^{ble} Court of Chancery
Bill of Complaint
The humble Petition of Cap^t John Harklefield



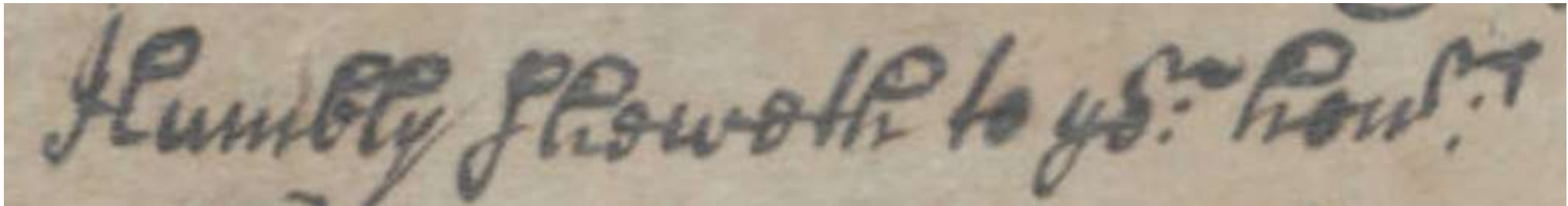
Bill of Complaint
The humble Petition of Cap^t John Harklefield

The Humble Petition of Captain John Harklefield

The [illegible] of Cap^t John Harklefield

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



Humbly Showeth to your honors

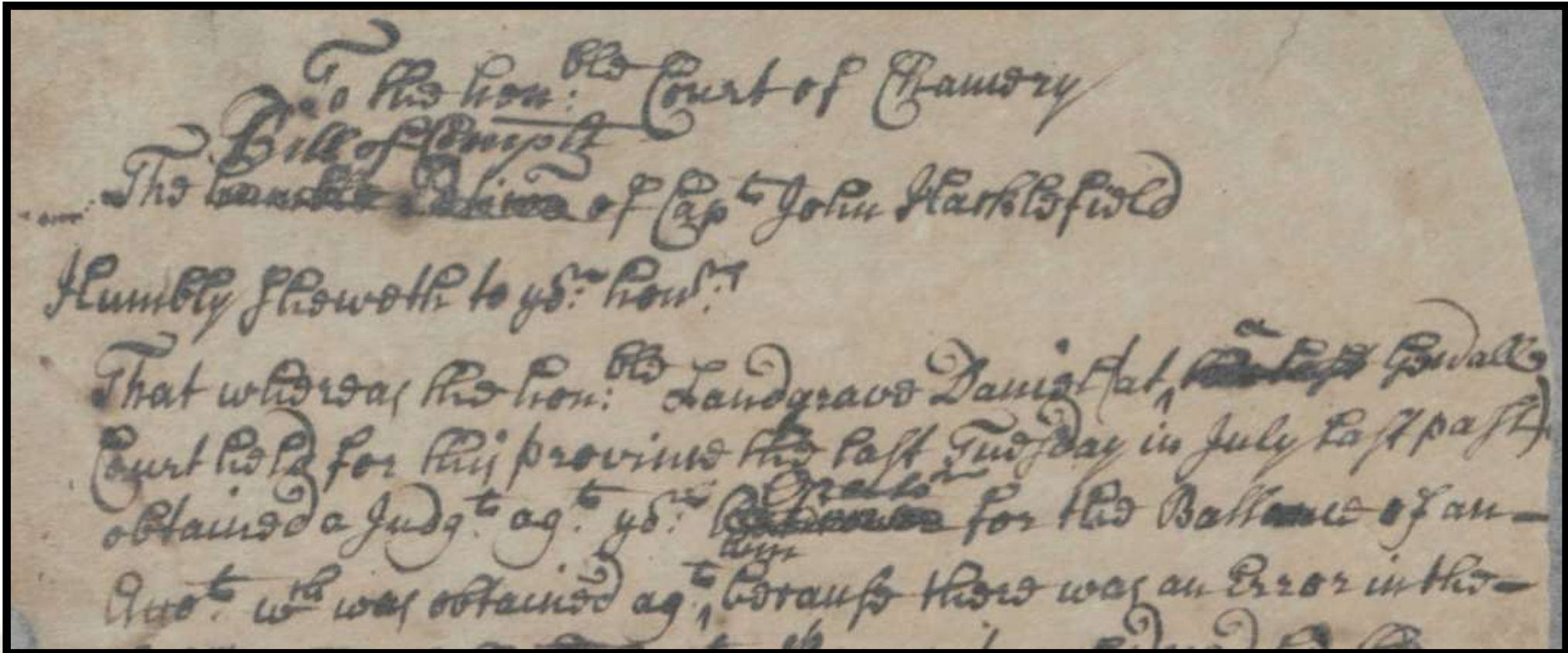
Humbly Showeth to yo?r hon?rs

Judgment call on Showeth ...

Author writes almost identical versions of letters o & e; familiarity with author and this word suggests this spelling

Transcriber Training

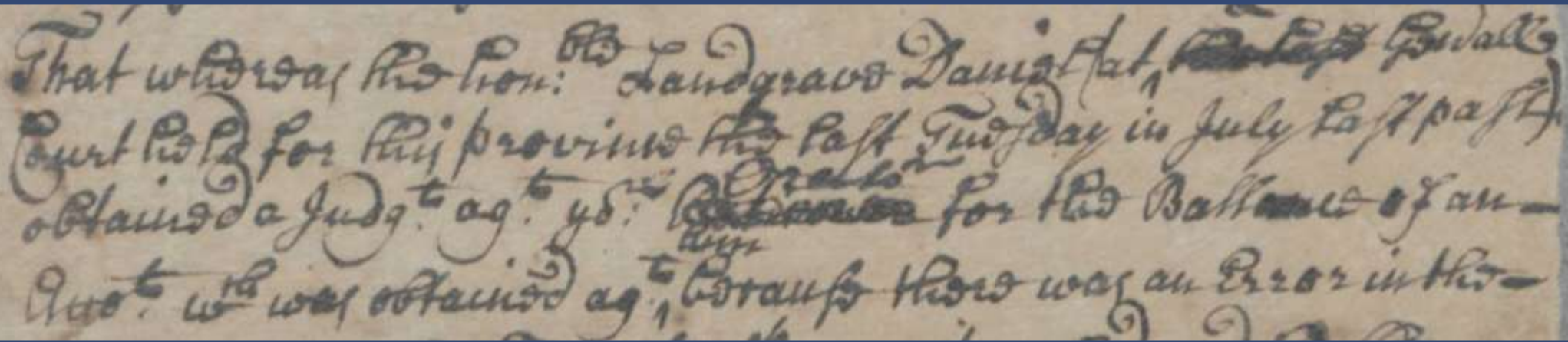
Real-Time Practice



Let's now transcribe the lower section – blank by blank

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



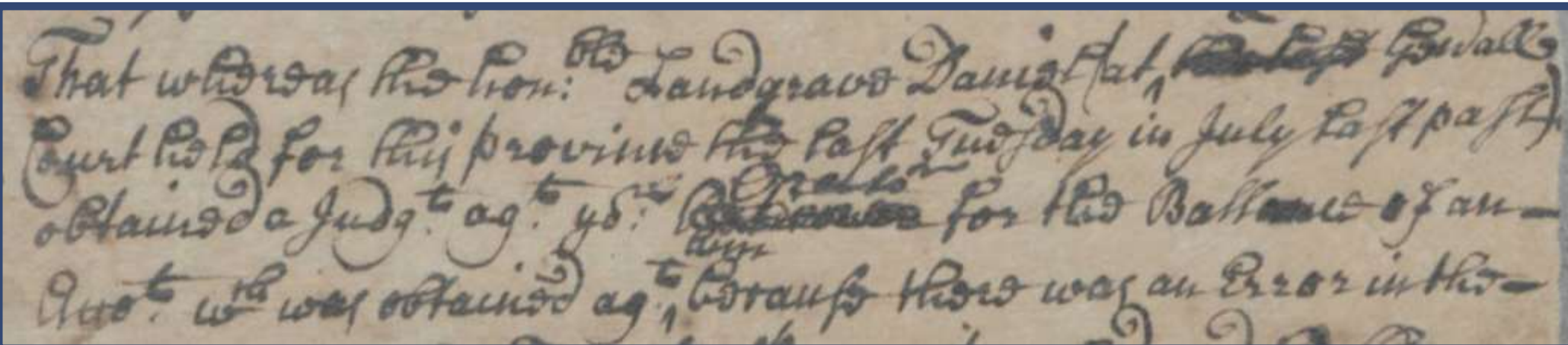
That which was the hon: Landgravo Danigat, ~~the~~ Court
Court hold for this province the last Tuesday in July last past
obtained a Judg^t ag^t yd: ~~for~~ ^{Order} for the Ballance of an
Act. wh^{ch} was obtained ag^t because there was an Error in the



Take a moment and just look

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [blank1] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x] [crossed out word] Gen[er]all

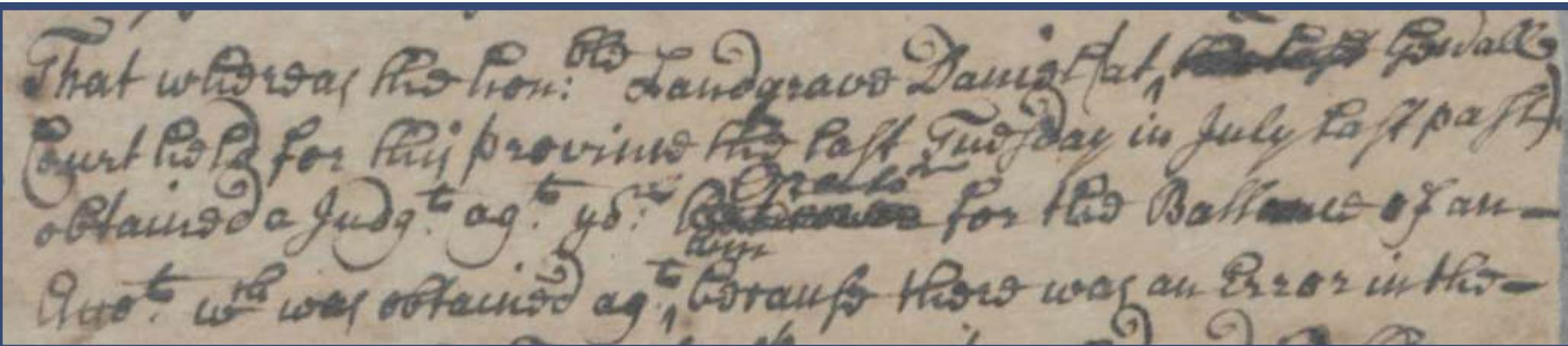
Court held for this province this [blank2] Tuesday in July [blank2] past

obtained a [blank3] [blank 4] [blank 5] [blank 6] for the Ballance of an –

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [blank 4] ^[him] because there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

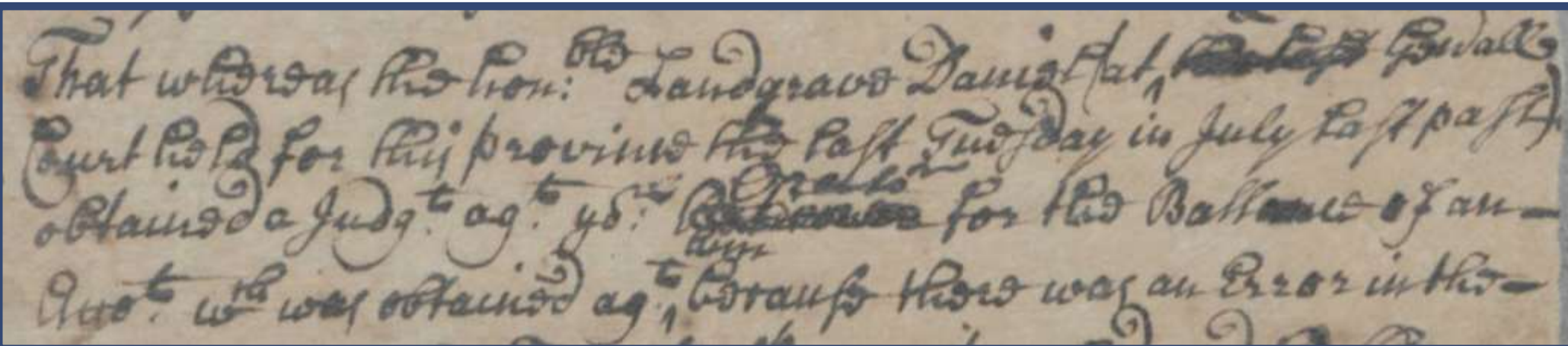
Court held for this province this [blank2] Tuesday in July
[blank2] past

obtained a [blank3] [blank 4] [blank 5] [blank 6] for the
ballance of an --

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [blank 4] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

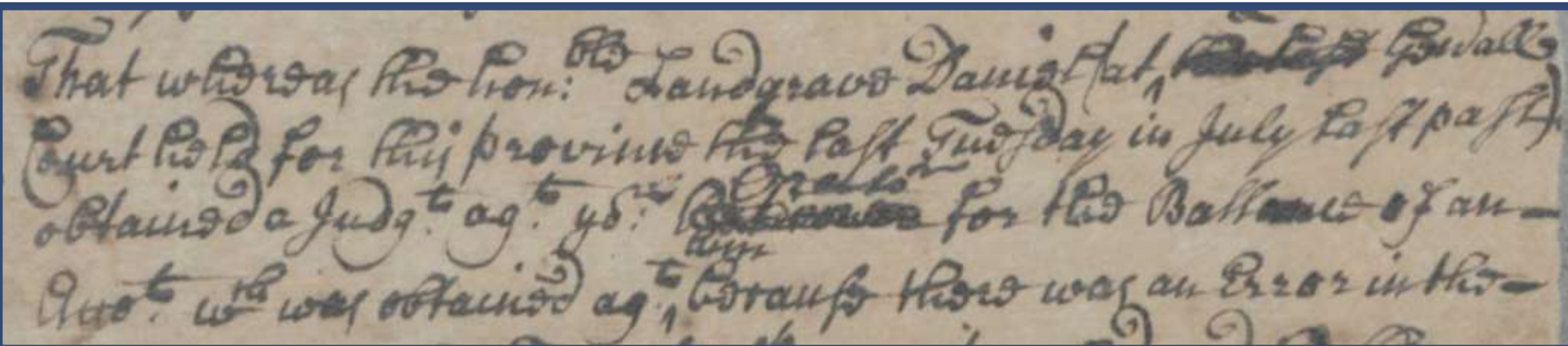
Court held for this province this [[last]] Tuesday in July [[last]]
past

obtained a [blank3] [blank 4] [blank 5] [blank 6] for the
ballance of an –

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [blank 4] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

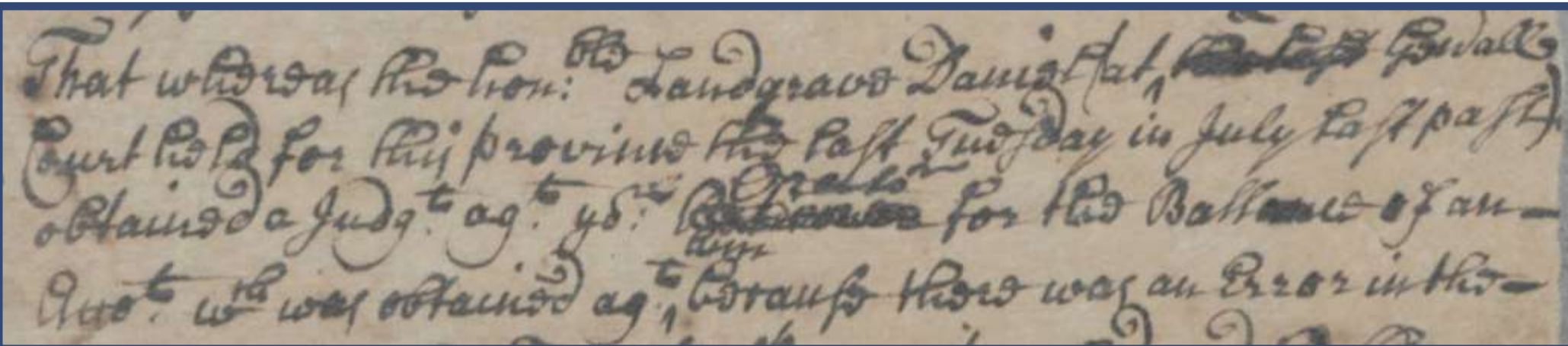
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [[judgment] [blank 4] [blank 5] [blank 6] for the
ballance of an –

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [blank 4] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

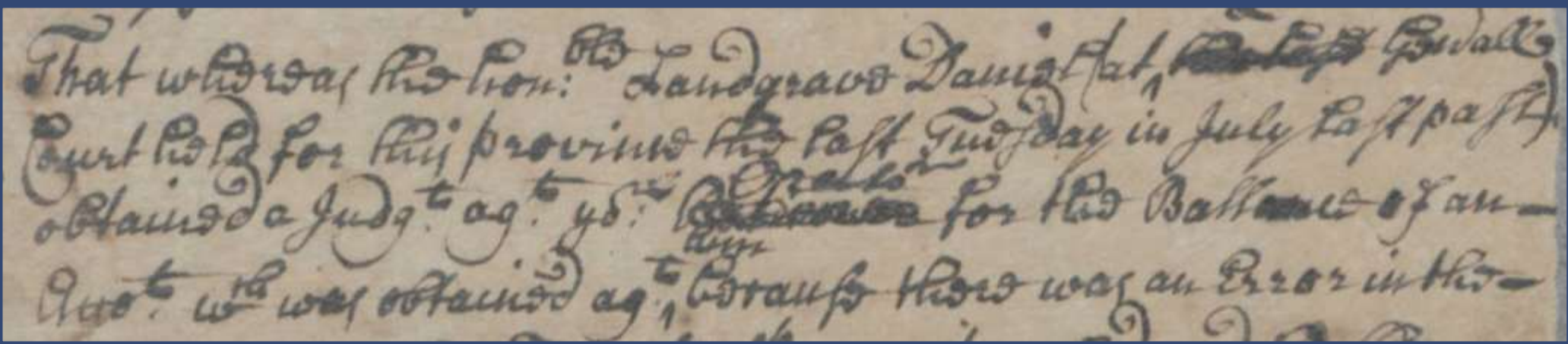
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [blank 5] [blank 6] for the
ballance of an --

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [against] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

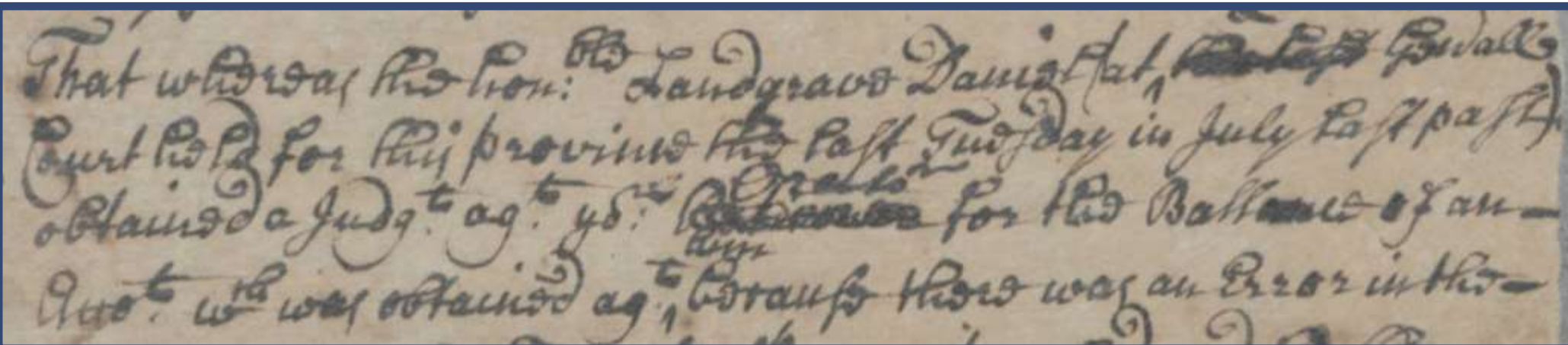
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [your] [blank 6] for the
ballance of an --

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [against] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

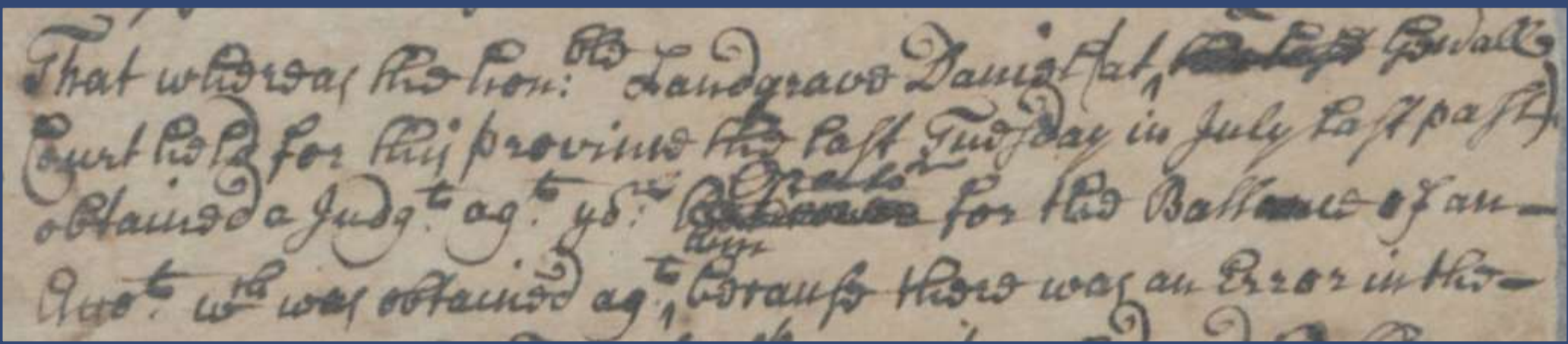
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [your] [orator or [illegible]] for
the ballance of an -

[blank 7] [blank 8] was obtained [against] ^[him] because
there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

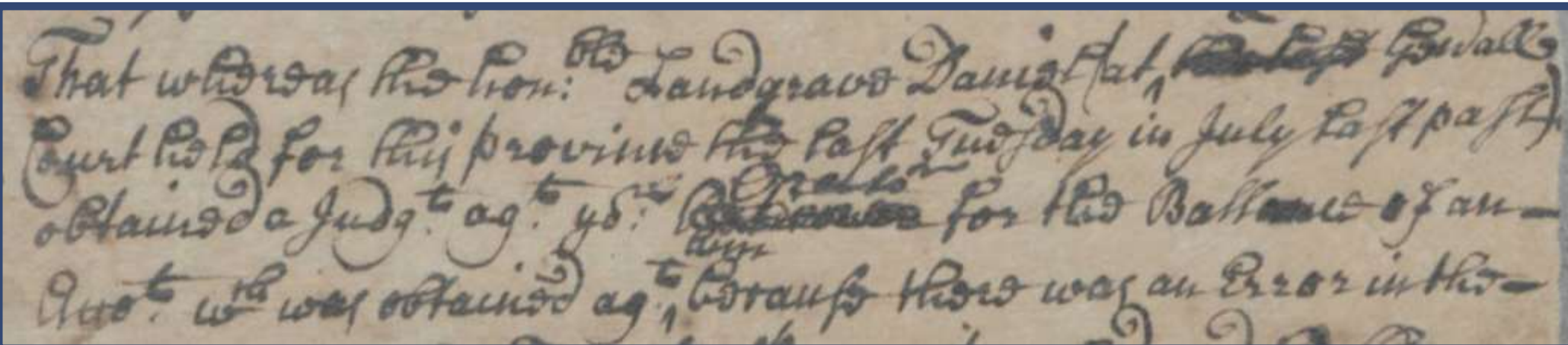
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [your] [orator or [illegible]] for
the ballance of an -

[A^{mt} amount] [blank 8] was obtained [against] ^[him]
because there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

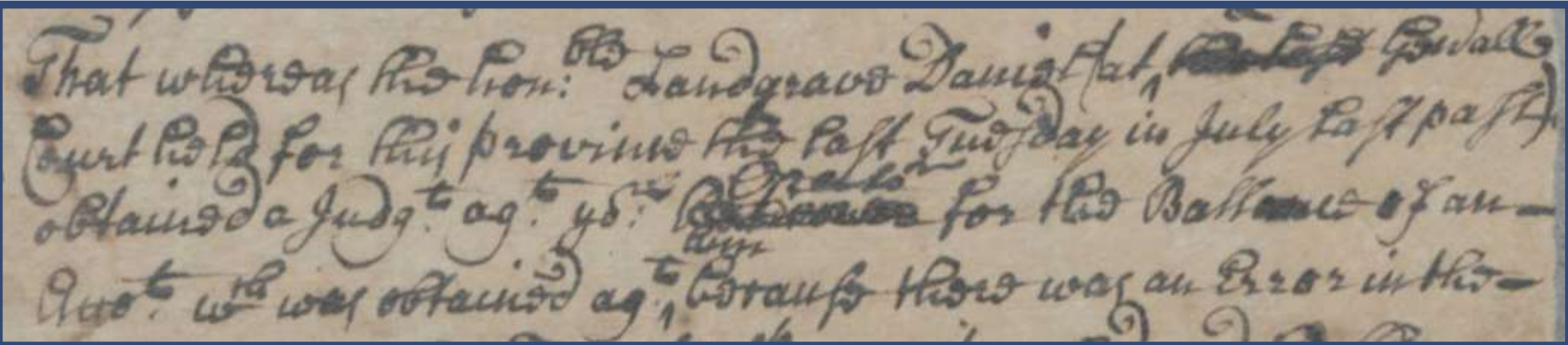
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [your] [orator or [illegible]] for
the ballance of an --

[A^{mt} [amount]] [which] was obtained [against] ^[him]
because there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Real-Time Practice



That [who was] the honorable Landgrave Davis ?at ^[x]
[crossed out word] Gen[er]all

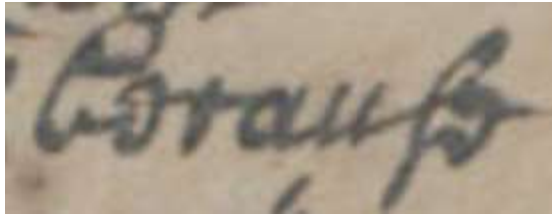
Court held for this province this [last] Tuesday in July [last]
past

obtained a [judgment] [against] [your] [orator or [illegible]] for
the Ballance of an –

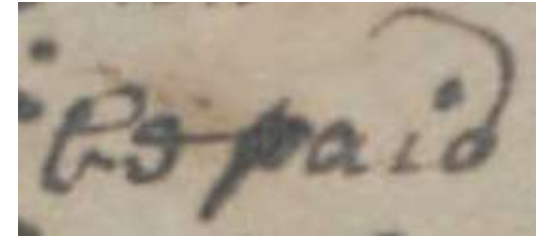
[A?ot [amount]] [which] was obtained [against] ^[him]
because there was an Error in the --

Transcriber Training

Practice

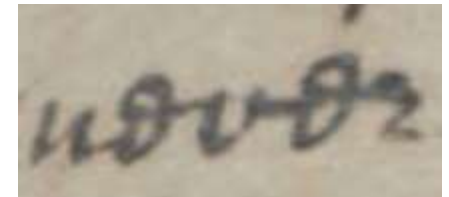


1st letter a "b"
based on "be paid"

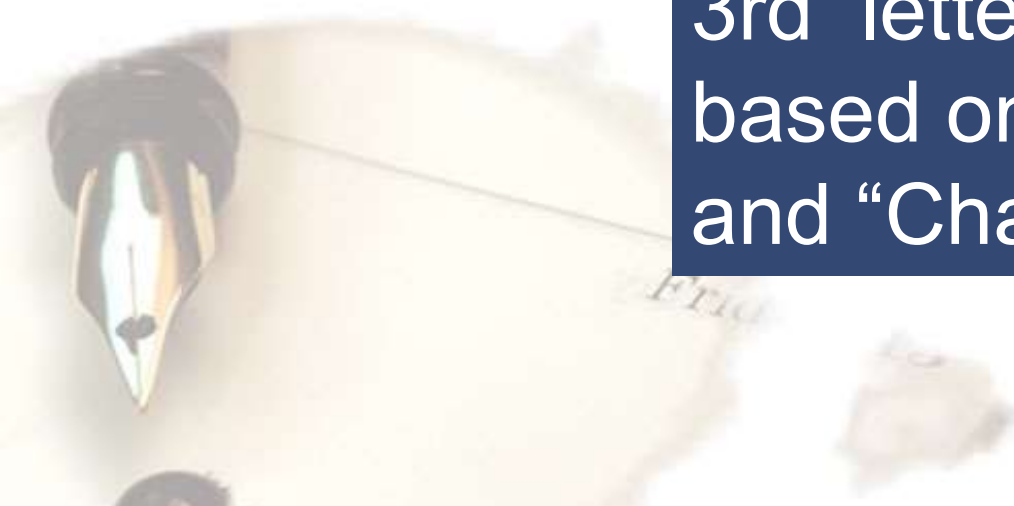
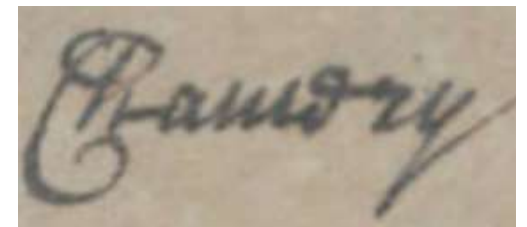
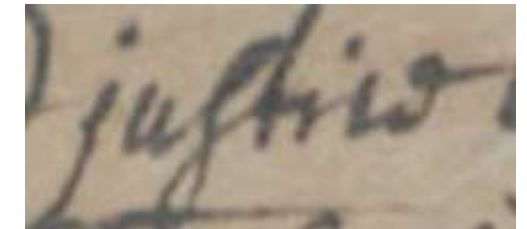


because

2nd & 7th letters an
"e" based on
"never"

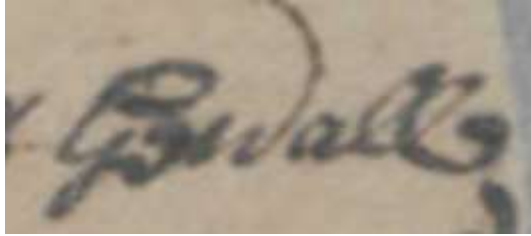


3rd letter a "c"
based on "justice"
and "Chancery"

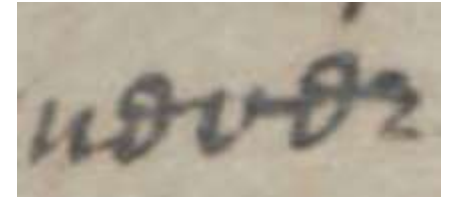


Transcriber Training

Practice



2nd letter an “e”
based on “never”



Gen[er]all

Ornate tail on “n”

Appears to have
left off “er”

