



Hamilton County Genealogical Society

Rules and Application Procedures

Membership Requirements and General Information

1. Applicants must be current members of the Hamilton County Genealogical Society.
2. Applicants must prove that their ancestor(s) resided in Hamilton County, Ohio during the time period specified for each lineage group:
 - First Families - before 31 December 1820
 - Settlers and Builders – from 1 January 1821 and 31 December 1860
 - Century Families – from 1 January 1861 and 100 years from the date of application
3. Only blood lines are eligible. Adoptive lines are not eligible.
4. Non-marriage of the parents is not grounds for denial.
5. A \$30.00 application fee must accompany the application. This fee is non-refundable.
6. There is no fee for supplemental applications. A supplemental application is one submitted by a person who has already been accepted by the lineage society to which the additional application is sent.
7. Applicants who are not accepted during the year in which they apply will have their applications filed at the Hamilton County Genealogical Society headquarters for a five-year period. Applicants have five years in which to submit sufficient documentation for acceptance. After this five-year period, applicants will be notified that they have six months in which to complete their applications. If additional proof documents are not submitted and the applications are not approved in that six-month period, the applications will be discarded.
8. This application and accompanying documents become the property of the Hamilton County Genealogical Society.
9. Applications will not be reviewed without this certification signature.

Application Procedures

1. Please use dark blue or black ink when filling out applications by hand. Applicants may download a PDF file of the application from the HCGS web site. This PDF file may be filled in on a computer, then printed and mailed with its accompanying proof documentation.
2. Submit the completed application(s) with photocopies of proof documents. Do not send original documents as they will not be returned. Photocopies should be 8 ½ x 11 whenever possible.
3. All photocopies submitted must be legible or must be accompanied by a transcription certified as a True Copy by a third party not related to the applicant, preferably a librarian or court official. A True Copy certification means that a third party has viewed the original and the transcription and finds them to be identical.
4. When a photocopy is not possible, applicants may substitute a typed, hand-printed, or written transcription of documents. Transcriptions must be certified as True Copies.
5. Only one photocopy of any document is necessary even though that document may be used as proof for more than one event, more than one generation, or more than one applicant. If you are submitting applications for multiple family members, HCGS only needs one photocopy of documentation for common ancestors. Multiple photocopies of the same document will be discarded due to storage limitations.
6. If you are submitting a supplemental application, do not duplicate the documents that were included with your original application. Including a photocopy of pertinent pages of that application is helpful.
7. Fill out the application blanks using the proof documents that will accompany the application. Do not write any information on the application for which you do not have appropriate evidence. If you do not have proof, leave that specific application space blank. It is not necessary to fill every space.
8. Because all applications will be stored in legal size archival file folders and will be microfilmed or digitized for use by future researchers, please follow these directions for preparing proof documents:
 - Do not use highlighter, staples, tape of any kind, white-out products, gummed labels, sheet protectors, or binders.
 - To indicate specific evidence in difficult-to-read document photocopies, use a red pen or pencil to mark an arrow in the margin of the document or use a blue, non-photocopying pencil to underline. These pencils are available at hobby and art supply stores.
 - Print, type or computer print your full name on the back of each piece of evidence. Do not use gummed address labels.
9. Organize your proof documents by generation before beginning to number them. Number each piece of evidence in the upper right-hand corner according to its corresponding number on the Documentation Record Sheet. You may substitute a numbered list of proof documents produced on a computer or typewriter instead of using the Documentation Record Sheet provided.
10. All females must be identified by their maiden names in order to be approved. Exceptions are made only in the case of African Americans and Native Americans, and only when such ethnicity and lack of surname is proved.

11. Married applicants must include a photocopy of their marriage record and their spouse's birth (and death, if applicable) record(s). Each legal name change must be documented when necessary.
12. Information for additional ancestral lines may be included on additional applications or on the extra un-numbered generation application sections provided at the end of each application. The application may be photocopied.
13. If an ancestor has been previously proved by another individual, the applicant may submit proof only to the nearest common ancestor. A citation to the name and number of the appropriate lineage society member must be included. Including a photocopy of pertinent pages of that application is helpful.
14. Only one lineage society pin will be issued to each approved member. Supplemental ancestors will be added to the original certificate if the member returns the certificate to HCGS. New certificates or replacement pins may be purchased for a \$5 fee each.
15. Please submit a pedigree chart showing all lines submitted in this application.
16. The chair recommends that you keep photocopies of your application and all accompanying documents.
17. Deadline for applications is 31 August of each year.
18. The final application approval decision rests with the chair. Please remember that all HCGS chairs and committee members volunteer their time to HCGS.

Rules of Evidence

The rules of evidence applying to membership in each of the Lineage Groups follow the standards by which all proof is judged. There are no exceptions.

The nature and extent of the evidence submitted as proof in all applications shall be sufficient to prove that the applicant is directly descended from the ancestor(s) named in the application, and shall be sufficient to differentiate between any two persons of the same name residing in the same area at the same time.

Documents used as proof, either alone or in conjunction with other acceptable documents, must state the fact to be proved. Inferred proof is not acceptable. See # 19 below for examples.

All documents must include a full citation to the original source. Citations should be written on the front of the photocopy (or *True Copy* transcription), or you may include a photocopy of the title page showing all bibliographic information.

- Give state, county, volume and page for all court documents.
- Give all bibliographical information for published works.
- Give all identifying information for military records such as packet number, microfilm roll number or other necessary information.
- Family Bible pages must be accompanied by a photocopy (or *True Copy* transcription) of the Bible's title page and any section showing the publication date of the Bible. Bibles must be contemporary with the information they prove. Please list the current owner of the Bible.
- In some cases, family records were kept in other ways. Old family papers may be accepted if the provenance of the papers is stated. *Provenance* is defined as evidence of the history of the ownership of a particular item.
- Census photocopies should show, or have written in, all necessary finding information.
- Photographs must be identified, preferably on the back side.

1. Documentation must be provided for each date, place or name written on the application.
2. Dates should be written in day, month and year format, i.e. *12 May 2006*. Dates may be estimated using censuses or tombstones. If estimating a date (*circa*), write it like this: *c 1810*. Dates calculated (e.g. from censuses or tombstones) must have *cal* written after the date.
3. Evidence from vital statistics, courthouse or other government records, and church records usually is considered excellent proof. Other evidence such as Bible records, diaries or letters, censuses, newspaper clippings, county histories and family records contemporary to the facts reported are considered as corroborating evidence.
4. Oral, written, or published family traditions may be in error and cannot be accepted as evidence.
5. Printed or manuscript genealogies, genealogical records or compilations, family group sheets and charts, family reunion records and similar material are not considered proof unless the document is contemporary with the information being proved and is supported by other evidence.
6. Old letters or family records can be accepted as proof for only the facts that the writer could logically know as contemporary knowledge. Identification of the writer and the document date is necessary as is a statement of the document's provenance.
7. Unsupported information from an amateur or professional genealogist is not acceptable, including such records printed in genealogical, historical, or similar publications. Scholarly journal articles that are supported by citations to acceptable documentation may be acceptable.
8. Published or manuscript material authored by the applicant or his family will not by itself be accepted as proof but may be included with other qualifying proof.
9. A marriage license is not acceptable proof for a marriage; it only proves intent. If no marriage return or record exists, write the word *Lic* after the license date on the application.

10. Pre-1880 censuses cannot be used as sole proof of relationship.
11. Pre-1850 censuses cannot be used as sole proof of residence for anyone other than the head of household.
12. Land or real estate tax records are acceptable only if they specify that the individual was a resident of Ohio.

13. Photographs of tombstones are acceptable for proof of birth and death dates and for relationships actually stated on the stone. Include the name and location of the cemetery in which the tombstone is found. Most published compilations of tombstone readings are acceptable. Tombstone photographs must be transcribed when they are difficult to read. Tombstones must be contemporary in style with the ancestor's death date.
14. Documents written or printed in a foreign language must be accompanied by a translation into English and the translation certified as a *True Translation* by the translator (a third party; not the applicant or his/her family member).
15. Lineage applications, accepted or unaccepted, from other patriotic or hereditary societies are not considered proof.
16. E-mail is not considered proof.
17. Information taken from Internet resources must be acceptable evidence in its original form. The original source and the URL must be fully cited. Examples:
 - Images of actual documents and records that are available on-line are acceptable but must include the original document citation and also the URL citation.
 - Transcriptions and abstractions from web sites such as Heritage Quest, Ancestry, and many genealogical organization sites are considered acceptable evidence but must have the original source fully cited as well as the URL citation. Web site information will be judged on an individual basis by the individual lineage society chair(s) as to the credibility of the data presented.
 - The IGI may be used as a finding aid to original records. Every attempt must be made to obtain the original record rather than to use the IGI citation as proof.
 - Ancestral File (and similar undocumented genealogical databases) information is not acceptable.
 - The Social Security Death Index (and similar documented or governmental indexes) may be acceptable.
18. DNA evidence and supporting documentation will be handled on an individual basis.
19. Examples of implied proof which are not acceptable are:
 - Unnamed individuals specified in court records as *heirs* or *heirs-at-law* unless it is known that applicable laws at the time included only bloodline descendants.
 - A father is not proved as being in an area just because his child was born there. The birth only proves the mother and child were there.
 - Blood descent is not necessarily proved by owning the same land as an earlier owner by the same name.
 - Census proximity does not prove relationship.