

Guidelines for Evidence to Prove Your Lineage



Your goal for completing your application worksheet is to provide documentation of all events that you list (names, dates and places) and to conclusively link the line carrier in each generation to his/her parents. Your worksheet should arrive with proof for the first 5 generations filled in for you – more if we have found other parallel lines. You do not need to provide any additional documentation for these generations unless we let you know that we need more. You should try to prove **every other generation** with primary evidence wherever possible, **turning to secondary evidence only when no primary evidence can be found**. If any of the generations we have filled in on your worksheet is proved with only secondary sources, we expect that you will try to find primary documentation to improve the record. If there is ambiguity about where you should start, look for notes highlighted in yellow.

REQUIREMENTS

- All applicable birth, marriage and death certificates for both the line carrier and spouse(s) are required back to when civil registration began where the events occurred. Many localities kept earlier records at the local level. These early ledger style records are required too if you find them. You do not need to request certificates made from them as that can introduce transcription errors. The website www.vitalrec.com or the FamilySearch Wiki can provide information for you on when certificates were required and where to get them. DO NOT use their online ordering, but you can find links to download paper order forms there.
- All modern certificates should be civil, long form with the names of parents listed. We do understand that older records may not include parents.
- Birth certificates must list the names of the parents with mother's maiden name specified. We do understand that older birth records may not include maiden name.
- ALL generations on the application must be documented. You do not need to provide copies of the citations we have provided to you.
- Documentation is required not only for the line carrier, but all spouses, especially if information on another spouse is needed to document a woman's name change.
- If you have tried to get a certificate and have been notified that none can be found, please include copies of that letter or email with your packet.
- If you know that a certificate you need has been restricted, please include a print out that states the restriction.
- We understand that certificates will not be available for events that occurred before they were required, and that some states are greatly restricting records because of fears of identity theft. If you cannot get vital records, then you must provide other adequate evidence for the events you record.
- All events should be proved with primary documentation if at all possible. If primary documentation cannot be found, you may use secondary sources, but you need multiple secondary sources to link the line carriers.
- We do not require certified copies. Photocopies of your originals are preferred.

The following are generally acknowledged as Primary Source Evidence

- Vital records of birth, marriage and death (can be digitized).
 - Note: if you are referencing MA vital records before 1850, you do not need to provide copies – the Society already has them. Please just cite the volume and page number of the original document. If you only have access to an index such as those provided by NEHGS or Ancestry.com, please just reference the location (e.g. Kingston VR) and let the Society find the volume and page. The same is true for CT vital records in the Barbour collection.

You should provide photocopies of your original documents, and should have primary documentation for your generation, your parents and grand-parents at a minimum.

Note: The Society will accept birth information from a death record when no birth record exists.

- Birth, marriage and death certificates must be the "long form," i.e. showing the names of parents and any birth information provided at the time of death. For older, ledger style records, include a photocopy of the entire page.
- Church records
- Bible records that prove relationships, recorded as the events occurred
- Marriage bonds and licenses (note: licenses do not prove a marriage – you need the marriage certificate or marriage return)
- Deeds
- Probate records, wills, guardianships or orphan's court records
- Military and pension records
- Cemetery and mortician records (usually for deaths only)
- Contemporary family letters and diaries (contemporary, in this context means contemporary with the time of the event, not contemporary with the time of application to the Society).
- If you find an event in an index online, you need to make every attempt to get a copy of the original document. Indices on FamilySearch and Ancestry will often give you the film number and sometimes tell you the image number you need. You will find that most of the original microfilms have been digitized at FamilySearch.org. Check our blog for instructions on looking for films in the FamilySearch catalog.

The following are examples of Secondary Source Evidence

- Social Security applications (SS5)
- County and town histories
- Family genealogies (published only)
- Federal and state census records (Note: if they do not show family relationships, two sequential census records should be submitted whenever possible and will only be considered circumstantial evidence.) Census images must be legible. If the relevant names are very small, please provide an enlargement of the pertinent part of the page in addition to the scan of the full page. Census reports should always be printed full page including the header, column headings, and all enumerated households.
- Newspaper obituaries
- Newspaper marriage accounts
- Photos or photocopies of the photos of gravestone inscriptions (images must be either printed on or attached to an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper and should include the cemetery name and location)
- Affidavits (depending on the time period)

A single secondary source will be judged as inadequate documentation for a link between line carriers, particularly for a new line for the Society.

For published histories and genealogies, include the title page and any page that you reference. You do not need to provide intervening pages. Please include every page that covers your family.

Examples of INADMISSIBLE sources

- Mayflower Index Numbers, DAR Patriot Indexes or Indexes to any other lineage papers (including State Society Mayflower Lineage Books)
- International Genealogical Index (IGI)
- Copies of lineage papers that have been submitted to any other lineage societies
- Genealogical Compendiums such as "Virkus"
- Family group sheets and pedigree charts
- Information from family web pages on the Internet
- Many other Internet sources
- Who's Who (may be considered when no other source of information is available)
- Social Registers

- Social Security Death Index (SSDI) or other index records (may be considered if the state where the event occurred has restricted certificates)
- Unpublished handwritten, typescript or computer generated genealogical compilations

Internet Sources

More and more genealogical information is being published on the Internet. Entire books are currently being published online. Older books that are part of the public domain may be available from a variety of Internet sites such as Google Books, Internet Archive and FamilySearch.org. Other information may be available in transcription or abstract form (e.g. gravestone records or family Bibles).

All Internet sources except those explicitly excluded in the Inadmissible Sources section above will be considered on an individual basis. Scans of original vital records, census pages or scans of the original pages of a published book would be acceptable. Material that has been abstracted or transcribed from otherwise available sources is NOT likely to be acceptable. The original source from which that information was transcribed or abstracted should be obtained and submitted as documentation. This includes marriage and death indices where the original document is available online or from a Vital Records office. If there is an index, there is an original record!

Acceptable Internet sources include FamilySearch.org where there are millions of digitized records. Many collections are indexed and have images on the site. Others will require you to browse a scanned microfilm to find the original images. The site is free. Other subscription sites with excellent collections of records include Ancestry.com and AmericanAncestors.org.

Notes on previous Mayflower Society Applications

As part of preparing your worksheet, we will request copies of applications that have been previously submitted to the Society of Mayflower Descendants if your lineage parallels another member's family. You may even have a copy of an application from a member of your immediate family. Please note that any application submitted before about 1987, or numbered before 53,500 is on an old-style form. Please expect to re-prove most events on these older applications as there is most likely little or no documentation in the files in Plymouth. If you have questions about what you need to re-prove, please contact the Historian.

For ongoing updates on documentation and other topics for applicants, check out our blog at <http://ohiomayflower.blogspot.com/>. You can subscribe to email notifications so you know whenever a new article is posted.

If you have any questions or problems collecting the evidence that you need to prove your lineage, please contact either the Assistant Historian or Historian for assistance.

Ann Gulbransen, Historian
2234 S. Medina Line Road
Wadsworth, OH 44281
OHMayflowerHistorian@gmail.com

Lee Martin, Deputy Historian
3575 Edwards Road South
Greenwich, OH 44837-9417
buckeyemayflower@gmail.com

Do you need help with your research? Here are some professional genealogists available for hire.

Marcia McCartt
707 Alcala Ave.
Lehigh Acres, Florida, 33936
513-539-7406
Blakatgal@aol.com

Kim MacDonald
Canton, OH
deeprtsgen@gmail.com

Dana Palmer, CG
Lebanon, OH
palmer@fioptics.com

Diane Runyan
Worthington, OH
Lineagelinks.com

**Remember, all documents need to say what you are trying to prove!
If we can't read it, we can't use it!**