



Guidelines for Evidence to Prove Your Lineage

There are three goals for the documentation you need to gather for your application:

- One or more documents (birth, marriage, death, probate etc.) must name parents to link the line carrier in each generation to his/her parents;
- One or more documents for the marriage should show that it is the same person who is the child of the parents;
- Confirm the dates and places for each event for both line carriers and spouses.

We understand that this is not always possible but expect you to try your best to find adequate documentation.

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 **all other generations** 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 you are not sure where you should start, look for notes highlighted in yellow.

When you are gathering your documents, start with yourself and then work back to older generations. You will need your own birth certificate, and if you are married, your spouse's birth certificate and your marriage certificate. If you or your spouse has had multiple marriages, you will need the relevant documents for all of them.

Next, collect the documents for your parents. We need all applicable birth, marriage and death certificates. Then gather the same documents for your grandparents. When you get to ancestors who were born before civil registration began, a death certificate with birth date and names of parents will suffice.

Continue working back through the generations until you get back to the earliest generation that was documented on your worksheet when you received it. See below for details on acceptable documents.

Where do I find records: Family collections, State and County Vital Records Offices, Courthouses, libraries, churches, online websites such as www.FamilySearch.org (free), Ancestry.com (fee), Fold3.com (fee), AmericanAncestors.org (fee) or MyHeritage.com (fee). Many states have individual sites with digitized records. Use the Wiki on the FamilySearch site for clues to other sources of records and to determine when modern record keeping began for births, marriages and deaths. Those dates vary by state and type of record.

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 equivalent to modern certificates. You do not need to request to have certificates made from them as that can introduce transcription errors. The website www.vitalrec.com or the FamilySearch Wiki can provide information on when certificates were required and where to get them. DO NOT use the online ordering links on vitalrec.com, but you can find links to download paper order forms.

- All modern certificates should be civil, long form with the names of parents listed including mother's maiden name. We do understand that older records may not include parents or maiden names. Church marriage records rarely include names of parents so try to get the civil records. In Ohio, the Marriage Abstract is the ideal record as it includes parents and previous spouses.
- Birth certificates **must** list the names of the parents with mother's maiden name specified. A birth certification is not the same as a birth certificate. Certifications rarely have all the information we require. 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. We do know that there may be some blank events in the middle generations but try to get as much as you can.
- Documentation is required not only for the line carrier, but **all spouses**, particularly if information on another spouse is needed to document a woman's name change. We don't need birth or death for non-line spouses other than the applicant's generation but do need to document the marriage(s).
- 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 printout from the vital records office that states the restriction.
- We understand that certificates will not be available for events that occurred before civil registration began, and that some states are greatly restricting records. 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.

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

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 Society also has the CT vital records in the Barbour collection, so we do not need copies. Transcribed vital records in published journals or books that are otherwise not available are acceptable.
 - 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

Note: The Society will accept birth information from a death record when no birth record exists (born too early).

records, include a photocopy of the entire page as well as a screen shot of the relevant record. We know they may not list parents.

- Social Security applications (SS5)
- 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 microfilm 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.

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.

The following are examples of Secondary Source Evidence

- County and town histories
- Well sourced journal articles (e.g. NEHGR, TAG, etc.)
- Family genealogies (published only). Older genealogies that do not include source citations are worth much less than well sourced books or journal articles.
- Federal and state census records (Note: if they do not list 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 legible gravestone inscriptions (images must be either printed on or attached to an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper and include the cemetery name and location)
- Affidavits (depending on the time period)

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

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 including text from Find-a-Grave memorials
- 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).

BEWARE OF ONLINE FAMILY TREES! There are thousands out there that depict Mayflower links, but many are full of errors. There are also many good ones but always verify the information.

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 are 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 digitized microfilm to find the original images. The site is free. Other subscription sites with excellent collections of digitized records include Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com and AmericanAncestors.org. If you do not have your own subscription, check to see if your local library does. Printouts of digitized original records are acceptable.

DNA

As of this writing (March 2020), the only DNA evidence the Mayflower Society accepts is Y-DNA, and then only to show a family link for a single generation without an acceptable paper trail. The main vendor for Y-DNA tests is FamilyTreeDNA. Only men have Y-DNA so if you are a female applicant, you will need a male member of your immediate birth family to test. The male must carry the same surname as the ancestor you are trying to prove. The documentation we want is the actual Y-DNA test results themselves. We want at least a 37 marker test, more if possible with only very close matches.

Autosomal DNA is a great clue, but we cannot use it as proof at the present time. If you have autosomal matches in your Mayflower lines, use them as clues. Contact your matches to see if they have documents that can help you. Please DO NOT send copies of your match connections with your documentation. They will just fill my recycle bin.

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 many 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 Deputy Historian or Historian for assistance.

Ann Gulbransen, Historian
2234 S. Medina Line Road
Wadsworth, OH 44281
historian@ohiomayflower.org

Terri Brown Deputy Historian
2079 Vincent Drive
Brunswick, OH 44212-4162
deputyhistorian@ohiomayflower.org

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

Marcia McCartt
Cape Coral, Florida
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!**