

## ***Guidelines for Evidence to Prove Your Lineage***

Your goal for completing your application worksheet is to provide documentation of all events that you list (both dates and places) and to conclusively link each generation in your line to the previous generation. Your worksheet should arrive with proof for the first 5 generations filled in for you. You should try to prove each generation with primary evidence wherever possible, turning to secondary evidence only when no primary evidence can be found.

Your generation, your parents and your grandparents must be completely documented with certificates if they can be found. This means not only the line carrier, but all spouses, especially if information on a second 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 with your packet. If you cannot get birth certificates for people born before they were required, then you must provide other adequate birth evidence.

The following are generally acknowledged as Primary Source Evidence

- Vital records of birth, marriage and death.
  - Note: if you are referencing MA vital records before 1850, you do not need to provide copies – the Society already has them. Please just reference 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.
  - Birth, marriage and death certificates should be the “long form,” i.e. showing the names of parents and any birth information provided at the time of death.
- Church records
- Bible records that prove relationships
- Marriage bonds and licenses (note: licenses do not prove a marriage)
- Deeds
- Probate records, 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.)

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

The following are examples of Secondary Source Evidence

- Social Security applications (SS5)
- County and town histories
- Family genealogies (published only)

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

- 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.
- 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)
- Affidavits (depending on the time period)

#### Examples of UNACCEPTABLE 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)
- 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 because the cost of publication in book form has simply become too expensive. Usually, this material is available via some Internet subscription, where the author receives some royalty or financial remuneration for the work. Older books that are part of the public domain may be available from a variety of Internet sites. 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 Unacceptable Sources section above will be considered on an individual basis. Scans of original 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 are NOT likely to be acceptable. The original source from which that information was transcribed or abstracted should be obtained and submitted as documentation.

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.

#### Notes on previous Mayflower Society Applications

If you have not done so already, you can 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 about 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.

### **Putting your packet together**

- You only need one copy of your application;
- Submit 2 copies of each piece of documentation (keep the originals in your own files); one copy will be sent to Plymouth and the second remain in the files of the Ohio Society;
- All the documents you submit will be scanned, so do not staple pages together. All documents should be letter or legal sized and single sided. Any document or photograph smaller than 8 ½ x 11 must be either photocopied on a letter sized piece of paper, or securely taped to one;
- Do not write on the front of your proofs; if needed, make any notes on post-it notes or other notes attached with paper clips;
- Note the generation number on the back of the documents in pencil;
- Do not enclose any documents in plastic sheet protectors or binders;
- Do not submit duplicates of documents if they support more than one generation - keep all pages of the document together and make a note on the back in pencil indicating the relevant generations;
- All documents must be legible - if we can't read it, you can't use it;
- Please do sort your documents by generation - you should have 2 complete packets of proofs;
- If you have a copy of a previous Mayflower Society application that parallels your line, please include one copy with your packet;
- Do not include any documents that you have not referenced

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

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