

SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

INSTRUCTIONS

The typical genealogical society application requires a lineage followed by documentation keyed to generation number. This is true for the Society of Colonial Wars. **In EVERY generation beginning with that of the applicant, documentation is required for all facts – names, dates and places of birth, marriage, and death for both husband and wife, and qualifying service.**

- The starting place is, of course, with generation #1 – yourself. This will require a copy of your birth certificate. If applicable, you also will need to supply a copy of your wife's birth certificate and your marriage certificate. Birth certificates must be the "long form" with date and place of birth and the names of parents, not the "short form" without parents' names.
- Often official birth, marriage and death certificates also can be obtained for the next three or four generations. If copies of the certificates are not at hand, they usually can be ordered from the places where your ancestors lived (town clerk, or county or state vital records offices). The charges for these certificates vary. You can find the addresses and procedures for obtaining these records on the Internet, or from your local library. If your ancestors were from New England, your search may be relatively simple, since vital records for many New England towns up to 1850 have been published and are acceptable proof. The Newberry Library has most of these volumes.
- As primary proof becomes harder to find for earlier generations, evidence may be drawn from other sources (family Bibles, church records, newspaper obituaries, probate records, cemetery records and gravestone photos, land deeds, military records, regional and family histories, etc.). However, if an official vital record is available, it should be submitted, rather than less reliable secondary or derivative sources.
- The Internet can be useful for genealogy research, but much material online is not documented and may have been copied (mistakes and all) from unreliable sources. Undocumented lineages, trees, or group sheets found on the Internet, such as in public trees at Ancestry.com, are not acceptable proof. Abstracts or summaries of records from Internet databases, or prepared by people who reviewed but did not copy the original records, generally are not acceptable proof. Images from original records should be submitted if available.
- To document the connections between one generation and the next, it is desirable to locate probate records for the estates of your ancestors. Wills

may name heirs, or if an ancestor died intestate, letters of administration or account records may provide evidence of family relationships.

- Census records also can be helpful, particularly for years from 1850 to 1940, which provide details about all members of the family, not just heads of household. The 1900 U.S. census lists months and years of birth. Copies submitted must include the full page from the actual census record, not just an abstract from Ancestry.com.
- Information about burials at FindaGrave.com and similar websites are acceptable only for information that appears on the photo of a gravestone that was obviously from the relevant time period (rather than a recent memorial stone). Family linkages that do not appear on the stone will not be accepted without authoritative proof.
- Newspaper obituaries and articles must show the masthead, date, and page on which the article appears. Newspaper items are not always in themselves sufficient and may require supporting evidence.
- Published family genealogies may be acceptable proof, but generally only if they cite original records and primary source material. Otherwise, such books may be a helpful guide to locate authoritative sources. When proof submitted is from published books, include a copy of the title page with date of publication.
- Lineage papers and applications from other hereditary societies (SAR, DAR, etc.) are not acceptable proof, although they may provide leads for further research.
- If the service of your qualifying ancestor has already been approved by the Society, the page number in the Index of Ancestors can be used as proof. We can look this up for you. Otherwise, proof of service must come from an official source, such as a roster of soldiers, or a county or town history, transcriptions or records from state archives, etc.
- The Newberry Library in Chicago has one of the best collections of family history materials in the country. FamilySearch.org offers free access to many records online, with regional “family history centers” where microfilm and other resources can be borrowed from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. The Winnetka Library has a small but significant collection. And finally you can always hire a professional genealogist to do the work for you, and we can help you to find someone. Remember, half of the fun is in the chase. Good Luck!

When you have gathered all the documentation, fill out the application form:

- Remember that all names, dates, and places on the application form must be proved with authoritative documentation. Do not enter approximate dates. Leave blank if not clearly documented. Approximate dates and possible conclusions can be included as notes in the “Proof” section for each generation.
- Your name should be in **CAPS** and also the names of your ancestors through which are tracing your ancestry. This makes clear the line of descent (and helps the genealogist to follow the trail).
- Dates should be formatted on the application as day, month (3-letter abbreviation, capitalized), and year. For example: 01 JAN 1995.
- State names can be abbreviated.
- Include information about multiple marriages (if applicable) in the “Proof” section for each generation.

Print the application form **in duplicate** on 8-1/2 x 11 acid-free paper, obtain signatures of your sponsors, have your signature notarized, and submit both applications with **two copies** of the supporting documentation:

- Use 8-1/2 x 11 paper, unless an oversized document cannot be reduced in size to be readable.
- Each supporting proof should be clearly marked in the margin with the generation number to which it applies.
- Underline pertinent information in **red**, to assist the reviewing genealogist, such as names, dates, and other important facts in the records.
- Please do NOT use staples (since the records may eventually be scanned), but paper clips or binder clips may be used if needed to keep certain documents together.
- Proof documents must be legible. If an image is fuzzy or printed too small it may not be acceptable. If needed, an enlargement of the relevant area may be submitted on a separate page.

Send the application and proofs, with a check for the Final Application Fee of \$150 (payable to the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Illinois), to the Registrar:

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(Revised March 2017)