

Rules of Evidence

The nature and extent of the evidence submitted 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.

All documents must include a full citation of 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 bibliographic 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 as: **c 1810**. Dates calculated from censuses must have **cal** written after the date.
 3. Evidence from vital statistics, courthouse or other government records, and church records are usually considered excellent proof. Other evidence such as Bible records, diaries or letters, censuses, newspaper clippings, county histories and family records contemporary to the facts 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 a 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 as 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 Stark County, Ohio.
13. Photographs of tombstones are acceptable 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 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 organizations 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 FFSCO committee 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 database information are not acceptable.
- The Social Security Death Index and similar government 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 proved by owning the same land as an earlier owner by the same name.
- Census proximity does not prove relationship.