

# How to Prepare Your Mayflower Application

I am so pleased you want to prove your lineage to a Mayflower Pilgrim. The below information will guide you through the process and explain the types of documentation needed to prove your lineage and enable your application to be verified by the Historian General in Plymouth.

When filling out the worksheet, begin with the Pilgrim.

If you have obtained a Preliminary Review from Plymouth informing you that your lineage has been proved to a certain ancestor, please include a copy of the PR in the packet you send me. For those generations already proved, simply enter the names on the worksheet, and I will fill in the dates, places, and references. For all others, please enter all information. Please note that information must always be provided for the spouse, as he or she is an important part of each generation.

Documentation not provided in a previously approved application (regardless of when it was approved) may be required when a new application is submitted on that same line. This is quite common as older applications (even 15 years ago) often failed to meet the Genealogical Proof Standards (GPS) of today. This means new applicants must find better proof. If that happens, I will let you know what we must do.

## What is Documentation?

Documentation is a record made at, or close to, the time of the event, i.e., a birth or marriage or death certificate. It is evidence of the event. Although a death certificate often includes the date of birth, we usually can't use it as proof of the birth because the death record was generated many years after the event and the date was provided by someone who was not present at the time of the birth. A birth certificate generated by the doctor and reported to the county or state at the time of the birth is a primary source. The date and place of birth in a death certificate is a secondary source, which means the information didn't come from anyone present at the birth.

## So, what are primary sources, secondary sources, and unacceptable sources?

**Primary sources are:**

- Copies of vital records such as birth, marriage, and death certificates issued by civil authorities. NOTE: You MUST provide birth, death and marriage certificates for you and your spouse (if any), for your parents, grandparents, and if available for your great grandparents. Birth, deaths, or marriages that have occurred since 1900 will generally have a civil record.
- Newspaper marriage accounts if published within a few days of marriage.
- Cemetery record if created at the time; photo of the gravestone; newspaper obituaries.  
**Please note:** ONLY use the gravestone photograph from *FindAGrave.com* is accepted, **not** the accompanying genealogical information.
- Federal census schedules from 1850 through 1940 and state censuses where available. But, census records cannot substitute for a 1900 and after civil record unless the civil record is not available and the applicant has a letter from the department or agency verifying this.
- Probate records, wills, guardianships and Orphan Courts records, land records, deeds, and tax lists.
- Pension and military records.
- Copies of Bible pages contemporary to the event you are documenting, diaries, family letters, day books, or journals.

Using pertinent primary sources generally guarantees approval.

## Secondary Sources Are:

- Books of vital records issued by municipalities.
- County or town histories.
- Family genealogies.
- Affidavits (dependent on time period).
- Newspaper obits or marriage accounts with information of events occurring in the past.

All secondary sources used must include a copy of the pertinent page and the title page of the book. Lineage largely dependent upon secondary sources may or may not be acceptable; however, we may use secondary to supplement the primary source material.

## Sources Useful Only as Clues

The following are examples of sources that won't suffice as proof; however, you may find these items useful as clues.

- Mayflower Index Numbers, DAR Patriot Indexes, or Indexes to any other Lineage papers (including State Society Mayflower Lineage Books). Copies of lineage papers that have been submitted to any other lineage societies.
- International Genealogical Index (IGI).
- Genealogical Compendiums, such as Virkus.
- Family Group sheets and Pedigree Charts.
- *Who's Who* (unless no other source of information is available, in which case it will be *considered*).
- Social Registers.
- Social Security Death Index (SSDI).
- Unpublished handwritten, typescript or computer-generated genealogical compilations.
- **Indexes (often found on *Ancestry.com*) are not acceptable.** However, indexes usually lead the researcher to the source ... and you must follow the trail and order the document.
- Information from online family web pages or family trees. *Ancestry.com* (or any other website) family trees are **NOT** acceptable.

## What to Do and What Not to Do:

**Please make certain that the copies of your documents are legible.** If I can't read a record, then neither can the verifiers. Copies of census records are the worst offenders. When copying census records, please use the feature enabling you to save the record to your computer and then print it. If it is still difficult to read, enlarge the portion pertaining to your family and print that on the reverse side. When printing material from *Ancestry.com* or *Find A Grave*, **please, please** do not send pages with advertisements.

### **Please Do Not:**

Use colored highlighter or otherwise alter the documents. Writing on them may void their value. I can't emphasize this enough! We can't correct a civil document. Please do NOT label documents as 'Evidence #1' or Exhibit #1, etc.

Staple or insert papers in a binder. They will have to be removed for processing.

Never send original documents. Make copies as materials are not returned. Copy small pieces of paper onto 8 1/2" x 11" sheets to be standard with other pages.

**Please Do:**

Arrange the documents in the order they appear on the worksheet.

If you have been married more than once, please include documentation for all marriages. If your ancestors had been married more than once, name all spouses, but document only the marriage dealing with your ancestors.

Send your worksheet and document by regular First Class mail to:

**Joan Hunter, Historian  
Oregon Society of Mayflower Descendants  
1069 Piper Sonoma St.  
Eugene, OR 97404**

I will type your application and mail the first page to you to sign. At that time, you will need to send a check for \$125 to our state treasurer. I will provide the name and address.

Once your application is approved, Plymouth will email me, and I will immediately send you an email announcing that you are now member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants and the Oregon Society of Mayflower Descendants. Shortly thereafter, I will mail you a certificate, welcoming letter, and, if desired, will email you a copy of your approved application.

Please do understand that you do not become a member for life. Like all lineage societies, one is a member as long as one pays their annual dues. Currently, the Oregon Society of Mayflower Descendants annual dues are \$30.00, half of which goes to the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.