

HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Application for Wood County WI Sesquicentennial Pioneer or Century Certificate

Instructions

The Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society (HOWGS) issues certificates to persons who are directly descended from Wood County Wisconsin Pioneer or Century Ancestors. Applicants must prove direct descent and prove that the ancestor settled in Wood County Wisconsin prior to the year 1856 in the case of Pioneer Ancestors, or prior to 1906 in the case of Century Ancestors. Applicants may apply for certificates to be issued to themselves or to other persons. The person to whom the certificate is issued need not currently live in Wisconsin.

The purpose of the Sesquicentennial Pioneer/Century Certificate Program is to recognize families with Wood County Wisconsin Roots, encourage people to undertake genealogical research, develop a database of information for researchers, and to improve the quality of genealogical research. This project is being initiated in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial Celebration of Wood County Wisconsin (1856 – 2006).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. A separate signed application is required for each certificate requested. More than one ancestor may be identified on a certificate, but a separate application is required for each ancestor claimed. Type or print all entries. Legibility is important. A signed authorization granting permission to publish and release data is required. Unsigned applications will be returned.
2. A complete application consists of the following:
 - a. An application form completed on BOTH sides. Only the current version of the form provided by HOWGS will be accepted. Applications submitted on other forms, including obsolete versions will be returned for resubmission on the proper form. We provide two copies with applications requested by mail so one may be used as a draft.
 - b. A Pedigree Chart showing the ancestral line(s) of the person to whom the certificate is to be issued. Identify that person as number 1 on the chart. Two copies of a HOWGS pedigree chart have been provided, however, any standard Pedigree (or Ancestral) Chart form, or a computer-generated form, on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper may be used.
 - c. Proof of settlement by the date claimed, and proof of direct descent. The guiding principles for proof are that it should permit reviewers to reach conclusions as to the validity of the claim without having to undertake additional research, and that sources should be specifically identified so that reviewers can locate and verify them if necessary. List the documents enclosed with the application in the space provided in the PROOF/REMARKS section on the second page of the application. Specific considerations related to forms of proof are presented below.
 - d. A check, payable to "HOWGS Certificate", for \$12.00 (US) for each certificate requested.
3. Send the completed application to: **HOWGS Certificate, P.O. Box 516, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-0516**
4. If more than one certificate based on the same ancestor is requested, proof of the ancestor's settlement in Wisconsin is required for only the first application. The remaining applications should be cross-referenced to it. Application form, pedigree chart and proof of descent are still required for each person for whom a certificate is requested.

5. An application based on a previously issued certificate does NOT require resubmission of the proof of settlement; just cite the previous certificate in the Proof Section. Pedigree Chart and proof of direct descent IS required.
6. Names and dates
 - a. Enter names of the person to whom the Certificate is to be issued and Ancestors EXACTLY as you want them to appear on the certificate.
 - b. Enter women's surnames in the order in which acquired, e.g., Sarah, the daughter of Frank Hanson, who married first Harold Thomas and second John Quill would be entered as Sarah Hanson Thomas Quill. Do not use parentheses.
 - c. Enter dates in day, month, year format, using three letter abbreviations for the month, e.g., 15 Jan 1855.
7. Forms of proof.
 - a. **Proof must be provided in the form of copies of documents establishing the fact claimed.** Such documents include Census, Land, Church, School, Naturalization (including Declarations of Intent), Probate and Vital Records. Copies must clearly identify the nature of the document, the agency or office which created it, the volume, page, sheet, line, etc. by which it may be located, and where it may be located. Bible records, county histories and published transcripts of records must include copies of the page(s) establishing the fact claimed and a copy of the title page including publisher and date.
 - 1) Abstracts of Records prepared and authenticated by the custodian thereof are acceptable in lieu of copies. An example would be an abstract of a church baptismal record.
 - 2) Other abstracts or summaries compiled from records are acceptable only if they clearly identify the person who did the abstract or compilation, the specific identification of the record on which the abstract or compilation is based, and the location of the original.
 - b. Photocopies of diaries, letters, business and other personal records may be submitted, but proof of authenticity must accompany them and the name and address of their current custodian must be stated. Do not submit original records, they cannot be returned.
 - c. County histories may be submitted (copies of appropriate pages and title pages are required). Some recent commemorative publications (usually issued in connection with a community or organization anniversary containing family histories submitted by modern family members are not acceptable.
 - d. Documents that infer rather than establish the fact being claimed require corroboration. Two such common documents are census records and naturalization records. It is a fact that census records often contain errors. Thus an 1860 Wood County population schedule enumerating a 4-year-old child born in Wisconsin does not prove that the family settled in Wood County in 1856. An 1870 Declaration of Intention from a Wood County court stating that the ancestor arrived at the port of New York in 1868 does not establish when he settled in Wood County only that he was present in Wood County on the date of the Declaration. In both such cases corroborating evidence should be submitted before inferred dates will be accepted.

- e. Published or unpublished genealogies and family histories and family group sheets are generally not acceptable as proof. Instead, submit the documents (or abstracts) that were used as proof for them.

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING WOOD COUNTY SESQUICENTENNIAL PIONEER / CENTURY CERTIFICATE APPLICATIONS

The HOWGS may return Pioneer/Century Certificate Applications to the applicant for corrections or additional information. This tip sheet is intended to help identify and head-off the most common problems.

READING THE INSTRUCTIONS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION AND FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS is just as important.

Here are some tips that we hope will make the instructions crystal clear and the submission of an application easier:

1. Complete the application form legibly and completely. Print or type. Complete both sides.
2. Note that the authorization granting HOWGS permission to publish and release data submitted must be signed for the application to be processed.
3. Enter dates in standard genealogical format, for example 12 Feb 1901. Put the day first, then the month. Do not use numerals for the month, use three-letter abbreviations. Use all four digits for the year.
4. Each application form must have a Pedigree Chart attached to it. The starting individual (no. 1) for the Pedigree chart must be the person to whom the certificate is to be issued as identified on the application form. The chart should extend at least through the generation that includes the Pioneer/Century Ancestor (as identified on the application form) from whom descent is claimed. Make the chart as complete as possible. Use continuation sheets if necessary.
5. Immediately after the Pedigree Chart attach your evidence to show when and where the Pioneer/Century Ancestor settled in Wisconsin. Normally this will be one document; perhaps a census schedule or a marriage record, or a deed. Acceptable forms of proof are discussed in the instructions.
6. Next, attach the evidence to establish each link in the chain of descent. Start with the Pioneer/Century Ancestor and attach the document(s) that shows that he or she was the parent of the next person in the chain. Do the same thing for each generation in the chain of descent: for example, if James Wood, the Pioneer Ancestor was the gr-gr-grandfather of Jacob Thompson, the person to whom the certificate is to be issued, you should provide something to link James to whichever son or daughter of his was Jacob's gr-grandparent, and then something to link that gr-grandparent to the grandparent, next to the parent and finally to Jacob. Read the instructions to see what is considered acceptable proof.

7. When you have provided the evidence for date and place of settlement and evidence for each link in the chain of descent stop there. Do not submit extraneous materials that only confuse the issue. Do not submit Family Group Sheets, they do not prove anything. Do not submit books, pamphlets, or genealogies compiles by you, a relative or a professional genealogist, regardless of how well documented they may be.
8. When you have direct evidence, most of what you submit will consist of only one document for each fact or link to be proved. When the evidence is indirect or inferred you must provide corroboration.
9. Evaluate your entire submission before sending it in. Be as objective as possible.
10. Be sure that every document you submit is properly labeled as to what it is, where it came from and where the original can be found. In almost all cases you will be submitting copies. Be sure they are legible. Try to keep them to 8 ½ x 11 inches in size. Do not send us things you want returned, your application and supporting documentation will become part of a permanent genealogical database created by the HOWGS.
11. When submitting a set of applications for certificates to be issued to more than one person (e.g., for yourself and your children) based on the same ancestor, you do not have to provide copies of all the evidence with every application. Enclose a complete set of evidence for one application (the one for yourself in our example), and then provide only the additional evidence to complete the chain of descent for each of the remaining applications (in our example that would be a birth certificate or other such evidence for each of the children).
12. The last tip: **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS!**