

GENERAL INFORMATION



The **ASHTABULA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.**, OGS # 83 has established a continuing ANCESTOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM for the SETTLERS OF ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO, PRIOR TO 1971.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES: The purpose of the ANCESTOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM is to honor and preserve the memory and spirit of the men/women who settled or lived in Ashtabula County, Ohio prior to 1971; thereby creating a lasting remembrance of our forefathers, along with their commitment, courage, and contributions that shaped and developed our County.

To encourage the recording of family histories, providing a lasting memory for your descendants.

To provide a documented source of historical information for the use and education of the general public.

REQUIREMENTS: The ANCESTOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM is open to any person who can prove that they are directly descended from an individual who settled/lived in Ashtabula County, Ohio prior 1971.

Ashtabula County residence is NOT necessary, NOR is it necessary to be a member of the Ashtabula County Genealogical Society.

TO QUALIFY: Applicants must be able to prove blood line descent from each ancestor in their line.

ANCESTOR CERTIFICATES: Each of the five ANCESTOR CERTIFICATES is set up for a specific time period. The goal is to honor those particular people of that time period, along with their special culture, customs, etc.

The earliest date proven when your ancestor settled in Ashtabula County will determine which Certificate you will be entitled to receive. You may be entitled to receive more than one Certificate. Therefore, you may apply for more than one Certificate on several lines or for more than one family.

APPLICATION & INFORMATION FORMS: Applicants must complete the APPLICATION FORMS showing the line of descent from their Ashtabula County Ancestor, up to and including themselves.

COST OF CERTIFICATE: The Ancestor Certificate Application Fee of TEN DOLLARS (\$10.00) MUST BE SUBMITTED when submitting your completed APPLICATION FORM and your DOCUMENTATION (proof of descent).

To order additional Certificates for other descendants of the same ancestor, a fee of THREE DOLLARS (\$3.00) per Certificate will be necessary. However, these ancestors MUST BE PROVEN with the

original APPLICATION (i.e. to obtain a certificate for your son/daughter, you would need to prove his/her descent from you by a birth certificate or other Primary Evidence). List these additional names on the ANCESTOR CERTIFICATE CLASSIFICATIONS form. Proof material must be attached to the CLASSIFICATIONS form. The fee for additional certificates must be paid when submitting your Application Forms.

SUBMITTED MATERIAL: All verifying materials accompanying your completed APPLICATION AND LINEAGE FORMS should be copies of your documents. Please do not submit ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS!

ALL APPLICATION FORMS AND VERIFYING MATERIALS: The Forms and Materials will become the property of the Ashtabula County Genealogical Society. The data furnished will be a valuable addition to the history of Ashtabula County, and a source of information for the general public use.

INADEQUATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS: In the event of incomplete or missing forms or proofs, the applicant will be informed of what is required and encouraged to submit the missing or incomplete information. The ACGS will retain the application in an inactive status. Upon receipt of the data, the application will be reactivated. The application will be returned to the applicant if requested. Where the proofs are inadequate, the applicant will be notified of what is required. The ACGS will retain the application in an inactive status until the additional proof is received. The APPLICATION will then be reactivated.

CERTIFICATE ELIGIBILITY: Eligibility shall be determined by the committee appointed by the ACGS. The decision of the Committee shall be final. The Ancestor Certificate Application fees are not refundable.

TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WRITE TO:

Ashtabula County Genealogical Society, Inc. OGS #83
Geneva Public Library
860 Sherman Street
Geneva Ohio 44041

OR E-MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:

acgs@ashtabulagen.org

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION FORMS MAY BE DUPLICATED

DO NOT SEND MONEY when you request the Application Forms. Please send the Ancestor Certificate Application Fees with your COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS and your DOCUMENTATION MATERIAL when it is submitted to ACGS.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO PRESERVING YOUR HERITAGE!!

DOCUMENTATION OF ANCESTORS

Proofs are defined as the documentation provided to validate or prove the bloodline parent to child relationship of each generation, the earliest date the ancestor settled in Ashtabula County and the dates and places of the birth, marriage and death of each person in the lineage, if provided.

Basic Rules of Evidence Documents used as Sources for Proofs

1. **PRIMARY (ORIGINAL)** Evidence Sources are defined as contemporary and/or governmental records made at the time of the event by the parties involved. Primary (Original) Sources are generally considered to be more reliable than Secondary (Derivative) Sources, and hence, are preferred. Primary (Original) Sources are usually considered acceptable as proofs validating the relationship from one generation to another in the lineage and the earliest date the ancestor settled/lived in Ashtabula County. However, the committee reserves the right to make the final judgment as to the classification of the source.
2. **SECONDARY (DERIVATIVE)** Evidence Sources are defined as any record in print that is not a Primary (Original) Evidence Source or a Circumstantial Evidence Source. The reliability of Secondary Sources is influenced by the degree of processing it has undergone. Secondary Sources may be one or several steps removed from the original document. The purpose of a record and the motivation of its creators may also affect its truthfulness. Secondary Sources are not acceptable as proof on their own but may be used in conjunction with a primary source or other secondary sources to cinch an otherwise unproven connection. The Committee will be the sole judge of the value of each secondary source.
3. **CIRCUMSTANTIAL** Evidence Sources are defined as records containing hearsay or implied facts without showing or referencing the original source of the information. These records are not considered acceptable as Proofs unless backed up by a Primary or Secondary Source. Oral, handwritten or published family stories or traditions are not accepted as proofs but may serve as Supplementary Sources. Family Group Sheets, Family Tree Charts, LDS IGI or Family Search Records, Data obtained from commercially developed data bases on CDs and other electronic formats and Internet Abstracts are unreliable and are not acceptable as proofs without additional sources to back them up unless well documented by footnotes showing the original source of the information.

Specific Rules of Validation Documents

The rules of validation documents (proofs) are listed below are standards by which all certificate applicants shall be judged.

1. Documents used as proofs must actually state (not imply) the fact to be proven.
2. The documentation submitted as proof(s) shall be sufficient to validate that the applicant is directly descended from the ancestor listed on the APPLICATION. The child to parent relationship for each step (generation) from the applicant to the ancestor must be proven. Proof may not be omitted for any step (generation)
3. Documentation must be submitted as proof of the earliest proven date that the ancestor settled or lived in Ashtabula County. Land or Tax records are acceptable only if they specify the individual was a resident of Ashtabula County because many early landowners and speculators never lived in Ashtabula County or Ohio.

4. ALL PROOF DOCUMENTS MUST SHOW A COMPLETE SOURCE. For published records, include a photocopies of the title page and pages cited to show the author, title, date of publication, volume number, page numbers, type of document (deed, will, Bible, etc.) entry number, if applicable, and location of source for each proof. For Vital Records, e.g. Marriage record, Marriage Record, Ashtabula County Probate Court, Vol. M, pg 37, # 1360.
5. Typed or hand-copies of an original document may be used IF certified as “TRUE COPIES” by a courthouse official, librarian or other official, with the certifier’s signature and title.
6. Documents written or printed in a foreign language must be accompanied by a translation into English. The translation must be certified as a “True Translation” by the translator, who must not be the applicant or a family member.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

The rule upon which most proofs are to be judged is: “A record created at (or very near) the time the event occurred, by or about the person(s) it occurred to is considered Primary Evidence. All other evidence is Secondary Evidence. Examples of Primary and Secondary Evidence considered by the ACGS are delineated in this Handbook

One Primary Source or two or more independently created Secondary Sources are required as Proofs for each child-to-parent relationship and for the earliest proven date that the ancestor settled or lived in Ashtabula County. The ACGS has the final judgment as to the classification of the source.

FURTHER COMMENTS ABOUT SPECIFIC DOCUMENTATION:

BIBLE RECORDS: Bible records are not listed on the “Examples of Primary Sources” except under “miscellaneous”; however, they are listed on the Examples of Secondary Proof.” This was done because of the great variances in the Bible records. Thus ACGS encourages the applicant to find a better source or to augment the bible record. The classification of Bible records as Primary or Secondary Evidence takes a lot of judgment. First of all, the date of publication must be known. If the applicant did not submit proof of the date of publication, then the submitted Bible Record is Secondary Evidence because it is not known if the entries were made at or near the time of the event. If the applicant did submit proof of the date of publication, then one must determine if the entries predate or postdate the publication date. All entries that predate the publication date must be Secondary Evidence because they weren’t recorded at or near the time of the event. All entries that postdate the publication date may be primary evidence. Bible entries written with different pens and or different inks, by one or more hands, showing a deterioration of the hand over the years can be the most valuable as the entries were probably entered by a family member(s) at or near the time of the event and hence, can be considered Primary Evidence. On the other hand if the entries are all in the same ink and penmanship, this is an indication that the entries were made in one sitting and are Secondary Evidence The Registrar is free to make the determination. If the determination is challenged, the Registrar may resort to the decision of the Certification Committee.

CENSUS RECORDS: Census records between 1850 and prior to 1880 are considered Secondary Evidence for relationships. However, census records may be considered Primary Evidence for the relationships explicitly delineated in the 1880 and later censuses. All census records are considered Primary Evidence for Residency for those explicitly named.

NOT ALL DATA ON PRIMARY SOURCES IS PRIMARY EVIDENCE: An example is the death record. Certainly, the death record is primary evidence for the death date and death place. However, the classification of the data provided by the informant (the decedent’s birth date, State of birth, citizenship, Origin or Descent, occupation, address, parents names, etc.) depends, in part, on the knowledge of the informant. If the informant was the surviving spouse, it is logical that he or she would have first hand knowledge of the address, occupation, and identity of the decedent. However, it is unlikely that the spouse was present at the birth and hence, only has hearsay knowledge of the birth date, birth place, citizenship and Origin or Descent. If the informant knew the decedents parents personally then the parent’s names and relationship can be considered primary evidence. If the informant was a clerk or nurse in a hospital or nursing home, then all the data provided by this informant is probably hearsay evidence.

Another example is the voting record of a person with a common name. The Registrar needs to make the determination if the person on the voting record is the same person on the application. Feel free to ask for supplementary information to augment the prime evidence if that prime evidence is arguable.

Land or Tax records are acceptable for the proof of the earliest proven date that the ancestor settled in Ashtabula County only if the record specifies that the individual was a resident of Ashtabula County because many early landowners were speculators and never lived in Ashtabula County or Ohio.

EXAMPLES OF PRIMARY SOURCES FOR PROOFS

<u>RECORD TYPE</u>	<u>LOCATION OF RECORD</u>
BIRTH/DEATH RECORDS	Ashtabula County birth/death records 1867-1908 are located in the Probate Court. After 1908, births/deaths in Ashtabula, Conneaut and Ashtabula County are kept in their respective Health Departments.
MARRIAGE RECORDS	Marriage records are located in the Probate Court. Begin about 1811.
WILLS, ESTATES GUARDIANSHIPS	Located in the Probate Court. Begin about 1800.
LAND RECORDS, DEEDS MORTGAGES, LIENS, WAR VETERANS	Located in the Recorder's Office in the Courthouse. Begin about 1800. Plat maps begin about 1820.
TAX RECORDS	Located in the Ashtabula County Courthouse. Begin about 1800.
CHURCH RECORDS	Contain birth, marriage, death and funeral information.
CEMETERY RECORDS	Found in the location of the Cemeteries and/or City/Township Clerk's Office.
VOTING RECORDS	Begin about 1800. Some at the Western Reserve Historical Society, the ACGS & Ohio Historical Society
COURT RECORDS	Civil and Naturalization records in Probate Court. Criminal Records in the County Clerk's Office
MORTUARY RECORDS	Individual Funeral Homes.
FEDERAL CENSUS RECORDS	Begin 1820 Ashtabula County on microfilm at the ACGS genealogical collection in the Geneva Library.
STATE/LOCAL CENSUS	Begin about 1800 at the Western Reserve Historical Library, Cleveland, the Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio Genealogical Society, Mansfield, as well as other local and area genealogical collections.
MISCELLANEOUS	Undisputable School records; first-hand diaries and journals; SOME Bible records.
If local records are not available:	
Ohio Records since 1908	OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH Office of Vital Statistics
In Person:	Revenue Room, 1 st Floor 246 North High Street Columbus, OH 43215-0098
By Mail:	Revenue Room 246 North High Street PO Box 15098 Columbus, Ohio 43215-0098
URL:	http://www.odh.state.us

EXAMPLES OF SECONDARY SOURCES FOR PROOFS

RECORD TYPE

LOCATION OF RECORD

BIBLE RECORDS:	Include a photocopy of the page showing the publisher, date of publication and actual pages showing name, dates and events.
OBITUARIES:	Name location and date of newspaper. Most libraries have copies of local newspapers.
NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS	Name, location and date of newspaper. May include anniversaries, marriage, birth and death notices, biographical, awards, etc.
FAMILY HISTORIES, PUBLISHED GENEALOGIES, COUNTY AND BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORIES:	Include a photocopy of the page(s) showing the title, publisher, date of publication and the actual pages showing name, date and events.
CITY/COUNTY DIRECTORIES:	Same as above.
PERSONAL PAPERS:	Letters, diaries, journals, family reunion records and manuscripts. Include source and dates.
TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS:	Photographs or transcriptions from the stone and location of stones and/or source. ACGS genealogical collection in the Geneva Library has some tombstone inscriptions for Ashtabula County
FEDERAL CENSUS RECORDS beginning in 1850 and prior to 1880	Ashtabula County Censuses on microfilm at the ACGS genealogical collection in the Geneva Library
STATE/LOCAL CENSUS	Begin about 1800 at the Western Reserve Historical Library, Cleveland, the Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, the Ohio Genealogical Society, Mansfield, as well as at other local and area genealogical collections.

~ PLEASE REMEMBER ~

A STATEMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY TRUE JUST BECAUSE IT IS IN PRINT!