



SCCHGS  
c/o Central Park Library  
2635 Homestead Road  
Santa Clara CA, 95051

## LINEAGE VERIFICATION Pioneer Certificate of Recognition

Applicant must provide photocopies of documents for all ancestors in the direct line as follows:

At least one piece of primary evidence or two pieces of independent secondary evidence verifying the direct line from the applicant to the original or early settler. Following are the details of this evidence requirement.

1. Primary evidence from vital statistics (birth, death, and marriage certificates), court or other government records (military, land records, deeds, wills, land warrants, naturalization records, tax list, guardianship, ward and trustees, and civil dockets), church records (birth and baptism, marriage, death membership-communicants), school records (enrollment and school census)
2. Secondary evidence such as census records, newspaper clippings, and obituaries (name of newspaper and date of publication are necessary), old letters(dated), Bible records(with title page and publication date) or other family records contemporary to the facts reported, contemporary County Histories(supported by primary evidence)are considered excellent secondary evidence.
3. Circumstantial evidence implied by facts of hearsay is not considered as proof unless backed up by primary or multiple pieces of independent secondary evidence.
4. Oral, written or published family traditions are *not* acceptable as proof of lineage.
5. Printed or manuscript genealogies, genealogical records, or genealogical compilations are *not* accepted as proof unless they are well documented and proved in themselves, or backed up by other acceptable proof. Family group sheets and unsupported information from an amateur or professional genealogist are considered in this context as genealogies and are *not* acceptable proof. If reliable sources are listed, proof must be from those sources directly.
6. Lineage papers from other patriotic and hereditary societies in themselves are *not* acceptable as proof.
7. Materials authored by the applicant, and/or his/her family, *cannot* be considered as proof.
8. Documents used as proof must, either by themselves or in conjunction with other acceptable documents, actually state the fact to be proved. If the document merely implies the fact, this is not considered proof. An example is the expression, "heirs" or "heirs-at-law" used in some estates. State laws on inheritance have changed many times through history, and what is true during one period may not be true at another. If these statements are to be used as proof of direct descent, the applicant must include, with his application, copies of the inheritance law of the state showing that at the year the proving document was dated, it was proof of descent "in the blood line" and must also include proof that the testator had at least one child.
9. Additional examples of implied evidence which are not acceptable as proof are:
  - o Census records which show the name of the head of the family only, with only numbers to represent the other residents by age grouping. Those unnamed persons are not proved as children or wife of the family head, or as residents, no matter how well they match with other records. Next door or close neighbors on a census record are not proved as related merely by their closeness on the census.

- A father is not proved as being in the area just because a child was born there. A birth proves only that the mother was certainly there on the birth date.
- Blood descent is not necessarily proved by owning the same land as an earlier owner by the same name, whether the land was received by inheritance or by purchase.
- Old letters, family records, etc. can be accepted as proof for only the facts the writer of the records of letter would logically know, *of his own knowledge*. They cannot be accepted as proof for facts the writer could have only obtained by hearsay from older generations or other sources. Identification of the writer and the date of the letter or record are a must. This same rule is true of county histories or other published biographies. The biography (who probably gave the biographer this information) must have been able to know the information of his own knowledge.
- Land transactions (deeds, warrants, grants, etc.) can only be accepted as evidence of settlement in Santa Clara County as of the appropriate date, if the record actually states that the individual was "of Santa Clara County", and was dated prior to that date.
- Proving female ancestors as settled in Santa Clara County as of the appropriate date must be as individuals by their maiden name.
- The ancestor(s) proved in Santa Clara County as of the appropriate date must be a direct line back from the applicant.
- Typed, hand-written or printed transcriptions of original documents must be certified as a "true copy" by a court official, librarian, notary public, etc. An applicant cannot certify his own copies.
- Photographs or "true copies" of tombstones inscriptions usually only prove birth and death dates. However, sometimes relationships are shown on the tombstone and are considered good proof as a secondary source.
- Married female applicants must include a copy of their marriage license, or record, to prove their married name.

#### Acceptance of Proof:

All documents will be reviewed by members of the Pioneer Certificate Chair and that Committee will have the final decision-making power as to the issuance of a Certificate of Recognition. If the Proof is not sufficient, the application and accompanying documents will be returned to the applicant with a statement as to why the application was rejected. The applicant will have one additional opportunity to complete the application appropriately at no additional charge. If the application is rejected a second time, it may not be submitted again without an additional research fee of \$10 for each additional submission.

#### Awarding of Certificates:

Certificates will be awarded to the Descendant or his/her appointed representative at the regular meeting of the Society immediately following the acceptance of the Descendant's lineage proof. This award ceremony may be photographed for use in Society publications.

All application documents and information will become the property of the Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society and may be used in future publications at the discretion of the Society. All documents and information will be available for research in the Heritage Pavilion of the Santa Clara Central Library EXCEPT **no information about living people will be used in publications or be available to library patrons**. This information includes but is not limited to age, birth, marriage, children, address, living relatives, and Family Group Sheets and Pedigree Charts.