Illinois Mayflower Society – Application Process and Instructions

When a Preliminary Application is received, it will be assigned to a volunteer State Historian who will assist you in compiling the full application and proofs. The Historian will first send the Preliminary Application to the General Mayflower Society in Plymouth, which will provide the information from other applications that they have already approved.

A "starter" application will then be filled in by the State Historian with the information already known to the Society from the published Mayflower Family series (the "Silver Books") showing the family down through five or more generations and from previously approved applications. In nearly all cases it will show generations 1-5 are already proven (and usually the birth of the sixth); there may be other applicants who have proven more generations.

Please be aware that the General Society standards of proof have changed in recent years. Some older applications may not meet the current standards of proof and additional documentation may be required. This means that even though you may have a grandparent or other relative that is already a member of the Mayflower Society, some of the generations MAY require additional documentation if the original proofs submitted do not meet current standards of proof.

Note the following instructions from the Plymouth verifiers:

 "Review has Three Goals:

1. One or more documents (birth, marriage or death records, etc) must name parents in a way that connects each generation to the next.

2. One or more documents must show that it is the same person at the marriage who is listed as a child of the parents*.

3. Places and dates are supported in the documents."

*They require something at the time of the marriage that shows that the parents of the line carrier marrying are the same as the child born. In Illinois in recent years the document is **not** the marriage license/certificate itself, but the marriage license **application**. This is a county document, available from the county offices. Many older applications were submitted with marriage certificates showing only the Bride and Groom's names, but to meet current standards of proof these older marriage certificates would require either another document that also names parents, or the "Long Form" certificate (or application) that names parents.

The proofs you will ultimately be expected to provide can be summarized as follows:

- Documentation which shows the link between parents and child for each generation showing that each line carrier (the direct descendant of a Mayflower Passenger) in a succeeding generation is the biological child of the line carrier in the previous generation and not just someone of the same name.

- Documented proof of each major life event (birth, marriage, death) of each line carrier and his/her spouse in each generation not deemed already proved by Plymouth.

- For all generations where it is reasonably possible based on place and date, you will be required to submit "long form" (that means naming parents) vital records for each birth, marriage and death which has occurred for the line carriers and their spouses. This will always include the

three most recent generations (yourself, your parents, and your grandparents) but is not limited to them.

- **Note that indexes are not vital records (although they tell you a record exists). To the extent possible, these must be the actual state, town or county long form records themselves.** However, records do not have to be certified, those indicating "For Genealogical Purposes Only" (or similar) are adequate.

- All these vital records (other than divorce) should show the parentage. Note that for marriages, depending on the state, the part naming parents may be in the application and/or license rather than the marriage certificate itself.

- Marriage/divorce records are required for all marriages of the line carriers in the last 3 generations (including yourself), and for female spouses where required to follow name changes. These records MUST include the document that names parents, if any.

- If possible, it is helpful also to provide copies of the 1900 census for the generations/families enumerated at that time.

While these instructions may seem onerous, the important thing is to obtain the necessary documents to adequately prove every generation in the line. When the full application and proofs go to Plymouth, we want it to be as complete as possible and in their required format, so it has the best likelihood of being approved. The verifiers in Plymouth recognize that, especially with older records, some documents will be incomplete or not available at all. In these cases, your historian can work with you so that you provide the best documentation available to you (see http://www.illinoismayflower.com/genealogy-research.html for acceptable sources). Generations that are connected using secondary sources or circumstantial evidence MAY still be approved, but will generally require more than one corroborating document, and/or an Analysis.

Once all this is gathered, you will need to send the completed application and one set of the proofs you have collected (preferably via DropBox and sorted/saved by generation, please, per instructions for digital files below) to your Historian. You can complete the dates and locations for each generation in the application, your Historian will complete document codes for each proof document according to General Society formatting standards based on the proof documents you submit.

The Mayflower Society is now processing all applications and proofs digitally. The preferred format for nearly all proof documents is to download them individually as .jpeg files (NOT .pdf). However, some historians may prefer to work with paper documents and convert them; please work with the individual historian assigned to you for document submittal and format.

Follow the steps below for digital submission of your proofs:

- Submit your documents as digital files. Any document you download from an online repository such as Ancestry or FamilySearch should already be in a digital format. Choose .jpeg as your format, not .pdf. You need to actually download your documents, not print them or take screenshots.

- Text documents (e.g. application, proof arguments, etc) should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Images of all other documents should be .jpeg files.

- The preference for multi-page documents (Family Genealogies, town histories, published research papers) is to download or scan each page as a .jpeg file. All books must include a copy of the title page. If you have some documents as .pdf and do not have software to convert them,

or cannot save as individual .jpegs send the as-is and we will do the conversion; however, this will delay the process.

- .jpeg files should be large enough to fill a letter size piece of paper and high enough resolution to zoom in to read the detail.

- Please scan paper documents instead of photographing them. A scanner will hold your documents flat. A photograph of a folded document will be hard to read as it will not all be in focus, and it is too easy to have the edges of the document cut off. Please know that blurry or illegible documents will not be accepted. If you do not own a scanner, you can take your documents to an office supply store or local library to get them scanned. If you are unable to get digital copies of the paper documents you collect, please work with your Historian for file formatting and submitting. We can scan paper documents and convert .pdf files.

- Name your digital files with the first character(s) being the generation the document applies to and then a brief description, e.g. 9 Birth cert John or 8 marriage. We will tweak all the names. Ind ividual pages of a multi-page document saved as .jpeg can be saved as "Title"1, "Title"2, "Title"3, etc. (with an abbreviation for the Title, such as SmithGen for "Genealogy of the Smith Family").

- Your Historian can invite you to share a DropBox folder specific to your application. If you have a large number of documents to submit, you can upload all your electronic files to the shared DropBox folder. You do not need a DropBox account to upload files, you can upload them via the DropBox web link.

- If you only have a few documents to send or want to send multiple messages, you can attach them to email messages. Make sure they are attachments and not embedded into your email.

- If you cannot access DropBox and have more than 10 documents to send, you can also send them in an email as a zip file attachment (if your computer does not have the ability to save as zip files you can use a free service like WeTransfer [wetransfer.com]. You will need an account, but it is free). You can also save all your documents to a thumb drive and mail the thumb drive. All documents are transmitted securely to Plymouth using DropBox.

Please do not send the proof piecemeal, as it makes it much harder to keep track of what has been submitted and what's missing. Unless there is a question about a proof item itself, please wait until you have it all before sending it. Send only duplicates, as nothing you send will get returned to you. In some cases, there may be multiple media (electronic and hard copy) and multiple modes of transmission (DropBox, email attachments and zip files, regular mail hard copies and thumb drive), and we will work with that, but to the extent you can compile it all together in one format will simplify the process.

Highlighted items will not be accepted. There is no need to underline, but for items that carry more than one person's single event (e.g. books, census records, Bibles) an arrow in the margin to show where the information is can be helpful (but is not necessarily required, we can also insert arrows designating the individuals when needed). You can put a red arrow on the paper document and scan it or insert a red arrow into a .jpeg file using an editing program such as MS Paint or Irfanview.

For gravestone photos you must include information as to the cemetery name & location. Find-A-Grave photographs are acceptable for documenting dates and places of burial, as long as the gravestone is legible, and the burial location is documented. The Find-A-Grave memorial page can be downloaded as documentation of the cemetery location. However, Find-A-Grave entries are NOT acceptable for documenting generational or marriage connections. Gravestones with inscriptions reading "wife of…" or

"son/daughter of…" are helpful but will often require additional documentation unless full names, including maiden name, are inscribed.

For newspaper articles it is preferred to download the full page (that includes the newspaper name, date, and location) as long as the referenced article is still legible when the image is enlarged. However, if only the article is excerpted it is fine to hand write the newspaper name, date, and location on the page(s) before they are scanned in or insert a text box with the information at the bottom of the page using editing software.

In general, the less you mark up the attachments, the better. Do feel free to add an explanatory page if a document doesn't speak for itself. Analyses are welcomed if the proofs do not explicitly state relationships.

 If the same items refer to more than one generation, please send only one file. The same applies to pages from books – send only one copy, with all parts of the same book together, and placed in the highest number generation it supports.

Your application for the General Society in Plymouth will be finalized together with your volunteer Historian. Applicant's signatures are no longer required on the application, so once you and your Historian are satisfied that the full application is as complete as possible it will be sent to Plymouth. They do the final review and (we hope) approval. Although your volunteer State Historian may have approved and forwarded your application, the General Society verifiers in Plymouth make the final determination of approval.

You will have two years from the receipt of the starter application to complete your application. That sounds like a lot of time, but it can slip by quickly.

If you have any questions on the process or proof requirements, please do not hesitate to ask your Historian. Their role is to help you and to "de-mystify" the process as much as possible.