



# National Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Genealogy Committee

Policies

17 April 2017

(Reflects changes through 4 March 2017)

# Introduction

The Genealogy Committee of the NSSAR is responsible for forming the genealogy policies of the organization. Policies are formed by official action of the Committee during its meetings. A policy becomes effective upon adoption and remains in effect until the policy has been completed or rescinded.

The Genealogy Committee works closely with the Genealogist General and the NSSAR Genealogy Staff in the administration of the policies.

This on-line document is updated each time policy changes are adopted by the Committee so users are encouraged to download updated copies frequently.

## NSSAR Constitution and Bylaws

The complete text of the Constitution and Bylaws of the NSSAR may be found in volume I of the SAR Handbook. The Handbook is on-line at <https://www.sar.org/node/2305>. Some important excerpts include:

**Constitution, Article III:** Any male shall be eligible for membership in the Society being a citizen of good repute in the community, is the lineal descendant of an ancestor who was at all times unfailing in loyalty to, and rendered active service in the cause of American Independence either as an officer, soldier, seaman, marine, militiaman or minuteman, in the armed forces of the Continental Congress of any one of the several Colonies or States, as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, as a member of a Committee of Safety or Correspondence, as a member of any Continental, Provincial, or Colonial Congress or Legislature, as a foreign national of, but not limited to, France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden or Switzerland who rendered service in the cause of American Independence or as a recognized patriot who performed actual service by overt acts of resistance to the authority of Great Britain, provided, however, that no person advocating the overthrow of the Government of the United States by use of force or violence shall be eligible for membership in the Society.

**Bylaw No. 1, Section 5:** Whenever an applicant for membership in the Society is a genetic (bloodline) relative of a present or former member of the Society whose application contains references to authorities or sources for the ancestor of that present or former member having been eligible as a Son of the American Revolution as provided in Article III of the Constitution, it shall only be necessary to establish applicant's relationship to present or former member and to include present or former member's National Number; provided that proofs satisfactory to the Genealogist General are on file at NSSAR Headquarters to establish the line of descent from the patriot ancestor to the present or former member.

As an exception to the above paragraph, close relatives of present or former member, limited to brothers, sons, grandsons, nephews and great nephews, may apply using only a copy of the present or former member's approved SAR membership application and acceptable documentation of his relationship to present or former member, even if one or more of present or former member's links back to the patriot ancestor are not documented sufficiently to satisfy current requirements. No additional proof may be required of the applicant provided the ancestor's patriotic service is not in question and is fully documented. If applicant does not provide acceptable new documentation for the links that are deficient, his application may be approved; but it will be annotated as "grandfathered." When the applicant's membership certificate is sent to him, he may be requested to submit additional information about deficient links.

Until and unless any such requested additional proofs are provided, an application annotated as "grandfathered" may not be used by third parties for either original applications or supplemental applications.

**Bylaw No. 9:** The Genealogist General shall examine all applications for membership in the Society and shall approve those applications found to be in accordance with the policies, criteria and procedures established by the Genealogy Committee and the provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws.

In the event there is an appeal of the Genealogist General's decision concerning an application for membership in the Society, the Genealogist General shall re-examine the application and then report his findings with evidence supporting his position to the President General within thirty (30) days from the time the appeal was submitted. The President General may, before rendering an opinion on the matter, seek advice and counsel of the Genealogy Committee. This committee shall respond to the President General within thirty (30) days from the date the matter was referred to them. The decision of the President General concerning the application shall then be communicated to the applicant and/or the member who appealed the decision of the Genealogist General

# Index to Policy

Acceptable Services	2.0000–2,5000
Application proofs	3.0000-3.9004
Administrative requirements	3.6000-3.9001, <b>6.0000-6.1003</b>
Children of the American Revolution	3.1000, 3.5002, 3.5003
Clergy	2.3002
Daughters of the American Revolution	3.1000, 3.5002, <b>3.5003</b>
DNA	5.4000
Expedited	6.4000
Family Histories	3.5004, 5.4000
Grandfathering applications	Bylaw 1, Sec. 5
Direct and Indirect proof	3.0000-3.500
Militia Fines	2.4001
Patriotic Service by Children Take As Prisoner	2.4003
Pended applications	<b>6.3000</b>
Prisoners of war	2.0000
Proof of Lineage and Vital Statistics	<b>5.2000</b>
<b>Residence of the Patriot Ancestor</b>	<b>5.5000</b>
Revolutionary Service Based on Payment of Taxes	2.3001, 2.4004
Supplemental ancestor requirements	6.1002b-6.20020

## Policy Number

2015-01

- Black—Unchanged from previous version.
- Red—changes from previous version

**1.0000 INTRODUCTION.** An applicant must prove his lineal descent from an ancestor who provided service to cause of American independence. The Genealogy Committee of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) is responsible for formulating policies to determine what constitutes acceptable Revolutionary Service and standards that must be met for proving lineal descent from and Revolutionary service of an ancestor.

**2.0000 ACCEPTABLE REVOLUTIONARY SERVICE.** Acceptable Revolutionary service includes service in the cause of the American Independence either in a military capacity, a civil capacity, or by other overt acts of resistance to the authority of Great Britain, including support for the Revolutionary governments. Service must have been rendered between 19 April 1775 and 26 November 1783 except as noted below.

**2.1000 Military Service.** Military service is service in the army, navy, or marines. Service can be at the Continental, provincial/state, or local level. Both active duty and inactive duty service is acceptable. Active duty service in the army includes service not only in the populated areas of the 13 original states, but also participation in such activities as the invasion of Quebec, service on the frontiers such as the Cherokee Expedition and the capture of Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and Cahokia and garrison duty at Ft. Laurens and Ft. McIntosh. In addition to service between 19 April 1775 and 26 November 1783, the following military service qualifies:

- Service at the Battle of Point Pleasant, 10 October 1774 (this day and location only).

**2.2000 Civil Service.** Civil Service is the conduct of public business other than military under government authority. Civil Service can be at the Continental, provincial/state, or the local government levels, but must be for a Revolutionary government and not an occupying British government. The service can be rendered in an elected or appointed capacity, with or without remuneration. Service must have been rendered between 19 April 1775 and 26 November 1783 except for earlier service in the Continental Congress or a provincial - convention as noted below.

**2.2001 Civil Service Exclusions.** Persons in the following positions are not considered to perform a civil service that qualifies as a Revolutionary service:

- fiduciaries, such as bondsmen for marriages;
- executors and administrators of estates, conservators, guardians, and those appointed to similar positions; and
- witnesses.

In certain states, serving in some of the above positions required swearing or affirming allegiance and may provide evidence that can be used in an indirect proof of Patriotic Service. A witness can qualify for Patriotic Service if his or her testimony supports the government against activity against it, such as the sale of arms to the enemy.

**2.2002** Examples of **Civil Service at the different levels of government** include:

**2.2002a Continental Service.**

- Membership in the Continental Congress, including the first Continental Congress held in September and October, 1774. Membership in Congresses subsequent to 26 November 1783 is post-Revolutionary and not in support of American independence.
- Diplomatic service for the Continental Congress.

**2.2002b Provincial or State Service.**

- Membership in a provincial or state legislature. Provincial congresses and conventions held in defiance of a royal authority as early as 19 April 1774, one year before the Battles of Lexington and Concord are acceptable.
- Governorship of a state. Royal governors of colonies are not acceptable.
- Holding any position elected or appointed by a provincial or state executive or legislature, such as a tobacco inspector, paymaster, messenger, state land office employee, or state tax commissioner.

**2.2002c Local Service.**

- Membership in a county, township, city or town governing body.
- Any position elected or appointed by a local government's executive or governing body, or elected by the people. Town treasurers, tax collectors, constables, surveyors of county boundaries, road crew members, harbor masters, and jurors are examples. Juries are not limited to grand and petit juries, but also include juries to render such services as appraising estates, laying off a widow's dower, or assessing the impact of erecting a mill dam.

**2.2002d Other Civil Service.** Participation in the formation of a Revolutionary government, such as signing the Cumberland Compact of 13 May 1780 or serving as a delegate to the Vermont Constitutional Convention of 1777.

**2.3000 Patriotic Service.** Patriotic Service is service rendered to the cause of American independence that is not in a military or civil capacity. In essence, it covers contributions that are neither Military Service nor Civil Service. Patriotic Service can be either by material support or by word. It can be with or without remuneration. Service must have been rendered between 19 April 1775 and 26 November 1783 except as noted below.

**2.3001 Patriotic service by material support** can take the form of providing goods or supplies, money, or labor. Examples include:

- Serving on committees made necessary by the violation of colonial rights by England or the War, such as committees of safety, observation, inspection, and correspondence. Service on such committees as early as 19 April 1774 is acceptable.
- Furnishing a substitute for military service.
- Rendering aid to wounded or sick soldiers, sailors, or marines.
- Manufacturing or repairing munitions, including gunsmiths and workers in arms factories or gunpowder mills.
- Providing storage or transportation for public property.
- Furnishing supplies.
- Donating or loaning money to support the War.

- Paying taxes to support the War or to address a request of the Continental Congress, provided that no penalty fee was assessed. (See the section below regarding Revolutionary Service based on payment of taxes.)
- Owning or serving on a vessel sailing under a letter or commission of marque and reprisal issued by the Continental Congress or a provincial or state government in rebellion against Great Britain.
- Defending the frontiers and forts to provide protection against British or Indian attack between 19 April 1775 and 26 November 1783 in support of the Continental, provincial or state, or county governments in revolution against Great Britain. Defenders include:
  - Combatants regardless of age or gender.
  - Males 12 and over who manned forts, blockhouses, and stations on the frontier.
  - Providing support to defenders, regardless of age or gender. This includes providing supplies and intelligence. The women at Bryan Station who fetched water when within range of the Indians provided support. Record of the specific support provided is required. For example, merely assuming the wife cooked for the husband is not sufficient.
  - Scouts and members of rescue parties.
  - Messengers between settlements.
  - Guides.
  - Armed escorts for civilian parties.
  - Indian allies of the patriots who performed an overt act.
- Participants in the Boston Tea Party on 16 December 1773 (this day only) and the taking of gunpowder and munitions from Ft. William and Mary, 14 & 15 December 1774 (these two days only).
- Conduct or activity that resulted in being taken prisoner of war by the British authorities or their Indian allies. (See section below regarding children who were taken as prisoners.)
- Service performed by French nationals within the 13 states and surrounding waters in support of the American cause.
- Any member of the Army or of a Spanish colonial militia who served, as shown by contemporary rosters, in a presidio or garrison in the Spanish territories, bounded within the area now included in the present day United States of America, and which presidio or garrison is shown to have provided military or material support, such as a contribution of the donativo or participation in the cattle drive, to the cause of American Independence, may be considered to have performed qualifying military service in support of the Patriot cause. Any member of the Spanish Army, Navy, or militia who served in support of Galvez, in the Gulf of Mexico, from Texas to Florida, along the Mississippi River, or were members of the Louisiana Infantry Regiment between December 24, 1776 and November 26, 1783, may be considered to have performed qualifying military service in support of the Patriot cause. Any resident of the Spanish territories bounded within the area now included in the present day contiguous United States of America, who provided material aid or contributed to the donativo requested by King Carlos III in 1780 to fund Spanish involvement in the war effort, may be considered to have performed qualifying patriotic service. Other activities will be considered on a case by case basis.

**2.3002 Patriotic service by word** can be either by writing or speaking. Examples include:

- Pledging to Articles of Association or similar documents, such as the Edenton Resolves and the Fincastle Resolutions. These documents include those proclaiming the unacceptability of British violations of constitutional rights of the colonists, resolving to boycott trade with Great Britain, or declaring intent to abstain from consuming imports from Great Britain. This service is acceptable as early as 19 April 1774.
- Swearing or affirming allegiance or fidelity to the revolutionary governments, or declaring independence from Great Britain, such as signing the Declaration of Independence, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, or the Albemarle Declaration of Independence.

- Clergy or other recognized leaders of any religion qualify Patriotic Service by performing overt acts of resistance to the authority of Great Britain which could only be performed by religious leaders. These acts include:
  - serving as a civilian chaplain who openly ministered to, or otherwise supported, the officers, soldiers, seamen, marines, militiamen or minutemen of any one of the several Colonies or States;
  - supporting the American cause from the pulpit or in published writings during the Revolution.
 Other services unique to religious leaders can be considered on a case by case basis. A religious leader does not qualify for patriotic service simply because ministered to spiritual needs of a patriot or because he was a leader in a particular faith or local church during the American Revolution, even if he came from an area or was affiliated with a church known to be populated by people who were aligned with the American cause. Note: Any religious leader could also have performed a Military, Civil, or Patriotic Service the same as any citizen who was not a religious leader. Those holding the position of chaplain in the armed forces performed Military Service.
- Petitioners recognizing the authority of revolutionary governments, Continental, provincial/state, or local. Petitions on any subject can be accepted. This includes, but is not limited to, petitions on military processes, locations of county boundaries, and the relationship between church and state. However, petitions of British sympathizers recognizing the power, but not the authority, of the revolutionary governments are excluded.
- Being established as a friend of the cause at the time of the Revolution. For example, Virginia's 1777 commission to address claims arising from the burning of Norfolk and Portsmouth identified a number of people as friends of the cause.

## **2.4000 Special cases of service.**

### **2.4001 Militia fines.**

1. The payment of a fine in itself shall not be considered evidence of service.
2. A militia fine, whether or not there is record payment, shall be considered as evidence of service if the record shows that
  - (a) the soldier must have been on duty in order to commit the offense for which the fine was imposed, and
  - (b) the offense was not one that SAR deems so great that it amounts to disloyalty or an egregious failure of duty, i.e., of sufficient gravity to flag previous service as no longer qualifying a descendant for SAR membership.
3. Prior service that is acceptable on its own merits shall not be disqualified by a subsequent militia fine where the offense for which the fine was imposed cannot be determined.
4. Appearing as a defendant in a court-martial for desertion shall not be deemed return to service if the defendant is found guilty.
5. Records regarding the exoneration of a fine may be considered on a case by case basis.

### **2.4002 Desertion, Missed Muster, Absence Without Leave.**

Soldiers who are listed as having deserted, having missed a muster, or having been absent without leave shall not be considered to be qualifying patriot ancestors, unless evidence exists that such soldiers rendered qualifying military or patriotic service for the American cause after the date of the desertion, missed muster or absence. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, a muster roll or pay stub dated after the earlier desertion, missed muster or absence. Evidence of subsequent military or patriotic service may also include a state or federal pension or bounty land warrant, given for service rendered during the Revolution. In some cases, a soldier may have rendered good and long service, but may miss a muster or be reported as deserted or absent without leave late in the Revolution, such as sometime after the Siege of Yorktown, or even after the Treaty of Paris. In such cases, the application can be approved if the circumstances of the soldier's absence from service are not deemed serious, such as:



- if the soldier had rendered good and long service throughout much of the Revolution, but missed a single muster after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown;
- if the soldier served in the military or naval forces of France or Spain in support of the American cause, and deserted the French or Spanish military so as to remain in the United States; or
- if there is sufficient and compelling evidence that the soldier remained loyal to the American cause, even though he was absent from service.

Prior non-military service by members of religious denominations whose doctrine forbade the bearing of arms shall not be disallowed for failure to perform military service.

**2.4003 Patriotic Service by Children.** Persons aged 12 and over are considered to be adults for purposes of determining Revolutionary service. Whether a child performed an act of overt resistance to qualify for Revolutionary service must be considered on a case by case basis. Factors considered can include: the age of the child, nature of the activity, and, whether the child understood the purpose or consequences of the activity.

#### **2.4004 Payment of Taxes**

**2.4004a Qualifying Taxes.** Payment of a tax to a state or a local jurisdiction during the Revolution shall be deemed Patriotic Service by virtue of providing material aid if:

1. a) The title and/or authorizing language of the tax addresses a request of the Continental Congress, whether or not the request was explicitly attributed to the Congress, or  
b) the title and/or authorizing language for the tax gives as the purpose the support of the War and/or achieving independence; and,
2. The taxpayer was not charged a penalty rate or fee imposed for breaking the law and/or the taxpayer was not on record for having broken a law entailing a penalty such as a higher rate, penalty fee, fine, or seizure of property.

Amendments to laws are to be considered in determining whether a tax meets conditions 1 and 2 of this section.

**2.4004b Excluded taxes.** Payment of a tax or fee to a state or local jurisdiction shall not be deemed Patriotic Service if:

1. The title and/or authorizing language for the tax gives only general purposes or specific purposes not meeting the conditions stated in Section 1 a), even if all or part of the revenue was subsequently appropriated to address a request of the Continental Congress, support the War, or achieve independence; or
2. The payment was a fee for a license or specific governmental service, even if called a tax. This includes, but is not limited to, marriage licenses, writs, and the inspection or storage of commodities.

#### **2.4004c The burden of proof is on the applicant.**

1. A record such as a tax assessment roll, payment list, or a receipt is required. Evidence merely that a person had a legal obligation to pay a tax is not sufficient to establish service; and,
2. The record must include evidence identifying the tax law under which the tax was levied, normally including the title page or certifications of officials from a tax list; and,
3. Evidence that the statute or ordinance authorizing the tax meets the conditions specified in Section 2.4004a Part 1 a) above is required.

**2.5000** In all cases, **activity disloyal** to the American cause of Independence **disqualifies service prior to the act of disloyalty** as acceptable for membership in the SAR.

**3.0000 ACCEPTABLE PROOFS--GENERAL.** Genealogical conclusions as stated on applications for membership in the SAR, including conclusions about Revolutionary service, are expected to meet the Genealogical Proof Standard. On this standard, acceptable genealogical conclusions are based on

- a reasonably exhaustive search of available evidence
- compilation of complete and accurate source citations
- an analysis and correlation of the collected evidence
- resolution of any conflicting evidence
- presentation of a soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.

**3.1000 Source citations** must be provided for all documents submitted as evidence for service, lineage, and dates and places of birth, death, and marriage. They are listed in the sections of the application with the headings “References” and must provide sufficient detail for identifying and locating each document. For images of original documents downloaded from the internet and for which a conventional citation is available, such as a citation for a federal census records, the conventional citation is sufficient. For other copies downloaded from the internet, the citation should identify the name of the website and a sufficient name or description of the document so that a web search would be likely to locate the document if it remains posted in the future. The internet address (URL) should be provided with the documentation, but should not on the application because internet addresses are sometimes very long and/or change. If an SAR, DAR, or C.A.R. application is cited, the organization, number, and ancestor must be stated, e.g. SAR #000000 on John Doe.

**3.2000 Genealogical Proof Arguments.** A detailed, written explanation of the evidence and reasoning used to reach a conclusion (a genealogical proof argument), is often necessary when there is

- conflicting evidence
- there is an identity problem, or
- the conclusion is not explicit in the evidence (indirect evidence)

Genealogical proof arguments should be provided with the documentation rather than entered on the application. Genealogical proof arguments are unnecessary when the conclusion is stated explicitly in uncontested evidence. Documents to which genealogical proof arguments refer must be listed in the appropriate section of the application with the headings “References:” or “Proof of Service.”

**3.2001 Conflicting evidence.** If conflicting evidence is found regarding the service of a patriot or lineage from the applicant to the patriot, the applicant must present the conflicting evidence and provide a written explanation of how to resolve the conflict. Resolution of conflicts for dates and places of birth, death, and marriage is recommended and desired, and in some cases resolution is necessary to demonstrate that the lineage or service is correct.

**3.2002 Resolving identity problems.** Questions of identity problems can arise if an ancestor

- can be confused with another person with the same or similar name, e.g. two men named John Doe resided in the same county during the time period when the ancestor of the next generation was born;
- went by different names during his or her lifetime, e.g., sometimes went by a middle name or initials. This is an especially important and common in the case of a woman in the line of descent from the ancestor who went by her maiden name until married and then by her married name;
- resided in different areas at different times of his or her lifetime, e.g., is found in Halifax County, Virginia, when serving in the Revolution, but Warren County, Kentucky when he died.

If a question of identity arises, the applicant must present evidence of the problem and evidence to resolve it. Even if the application is accepted without mention of an identity problem, resolution of the problem may prevent closing the line or service should the problem arise in the future. An explanation of how the evidence resolves a potential identity problem is often necessary and should be provided with the documentation.

For a woman whose married and maiden names are known, evidence such a marriage record, birth or death record, or will of a parent often resolves identity without the need of a genealogical proof argument. Use common nicknames, such as “Polly” for “Mary,” usually does not give rise to an identity problem.

**3.2003 Direct and Indirect Evidence.** Evidence can be either direct or indirect.

**3.2003a Direct evidence** states explicitly the conclusion to be proven. A written explanation of the reasoning that led from the evidence to the conclusion is usually unnecessary.

**3.2003b Indirect evidence** does not explicitly state the conclusion to be proven. Proofs using indirect evidence often rely on circumstantial evidence, process of elimination, or deductive reasoning from information provided in separate documents, or a combination. A written explanation of the reasoning that led from the evidence to the conclusion is often needed and should be submitted with the documentation.

**3.4000 Requirements for other explanations.** If additional narrative is needed, it should also be provided with the documentation. For example, establishing that the author was in a position to have personal knowledge or the provenance of a document may be appropriate. In such cases a statement of the purpose of the additional documents is necessary, and in some cases a genealogical proof argument may also be appropriate.

### **3.5000 Strength of Proofs.**

**3.5001 Only information for which a proof is given is to be stated on the application.** If a proof is found to be insufficient, the reviewing staff genealogist will bracket the claim on the application.

**3.5002 Documents admissible in evidence** are those that can be considered in reaching a conclusion about service, lineage, or dates and places of birth, death, and marriage. In essence, admissible documents must trace information back to an acceptable source, either a person in a position to have knowledge of the facts presented or an institution such as a government body or church that kept records. Information from SAR, DAR and C.A.R. official copies is also admissible if the application is more than twenty years old and the applicant was in a position to have personal knowledge of that information. See sections 4.5000 and 5.4000 for details about admissible documents for service and lineage respectively, as there are some differences. Ideally, an admissible document by an author who did not have personal knowledge or an institution not keeping records at the time of the event will cite source(s) explicitly. In some cases, a publication will not identify the source of information explicitly, but the source can none the less be determined. For example, the source of information in biographical reviews published in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was typically the subject of the review being submitted.

### **3.5003 Acceptability of DAR and C.A.R Applications.**

- Official record or chapter copies of applications for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) or the Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) approved after January 1, 1985, shall be accepted as evidence of corresponding service, lineage and related facts on SAR applications. Official copies of DAR or C.A.R. applications approved before 1 January 1985 shall be accepted as evidence with respect to corresponding facts that have been individually marked as verified on the DAR or

**C.A.R. applications.** This shall not apply with respect to portions of approved DAR or C.A.R. applications determined to be incorrect by the DAR, C.A.R., or the SAR Genealogist General. Official record and chapter copies have verification marks made by the reviewing DAR or C.A.R. genealogist.

- SAR applications that are supported by a previously approved SAR application which, in turn, was supported by a DAR application approved prior to 1 January 1985, may require additional evidence for approval. However, they may be approved under the “Grandfathering” Bylaw if the applicant qualifies for that consideration and does not provide the additional evidence needed.
- Information from short form DAR and C.A.R. applications shall be accepted only for those generations listed and verified on those short forms.
- Approved applications of other lineage societies are not accepted as evidence of service, lineage, and related facts.

**3.5004 Documents Inadmissible in Evidence.** Documents that state beliefs or conclusions, but for which acceptable sources of the information cannot be determined, cannot be considered as evidence for establishing Revolutionary service, lineage or dates and places of birth, death, and marriage. Such documents include, but are not limited to:

- Newspaper accounts published well after lifetimes of the persons or events that are subjects of the account, unless sources that are admissible can be determined.
- Information added to transcripts or abstracts of vital records or tombstone inscriptions. This includes narrative added to or in lieu of posted tombstone photographs.
- Published accounts, including family histories, local histories, biographical dictionaries, and newspaper articles which are not contemporary with the persons or events being reported, unless sources that are admissible can be determined. This includes, but is not limited to, accounts which relate family tradition or conclusions without presentation or citation of admissible evidence.
- Undocumented family trees and Genealogical Data Communications (GEDCOMS).
- Compilations of vital statistics drawing from inadmissible sources, such as the International Genealogical Index (IGI) and the U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900.
- Pages printed from the SAR Patriot and Grave Search and DAR Genealogical Research System and similar summaries.
- Unpublished transcriptions or abstracts of wills or other legal documents posted online.
- Unsupported information from prior applications.

**3.5005 Evidence is judged for accuracy and reliability.** Evidence can be admissible, yet not accepted as credible or of sufficient strength.

**3.5006 Conclusions must be clear and convincing or stronger,** not merely probable or more likely than not. However, they do not need to be beyond a reasonable doubt.

### **3.6000 Names, places, and dates on the application.**

#### **3.6001 Names.**

**3.6001a Nicknames** should be entered only if important in identifying an ancestor. When entered, they are to be in quotation marks, e.g., “Bud.” Entry of common nicknames, such as "Polly" or "Mary," is unnecessary.

### 3.6001b Women.

- The **maiden name** is stated if proven. If it is not proven, “-?-” should be entered.
- The **surname of her husband** as shown on the application is **not stated as a woman’s surname** unless that was also her maiden name.
- If a woman is **widowed or divorced at the time of her marriage** to an ancestor and her previous married name is proven, her name is preceded by “Mrs.” on the application and the surname of her previous husband is stated, and if her maiden name is also proven, it is stated in parentheses, e.g., Mrs. Rachel (Doe) Roe.

**3.6002 Dates** must be stated in the format of day, month year, e.g. 26 Nov 1783. Months can be abbreviated using the standard English abbreviations. It is preferable to write the first nine days of the month with a leading zero, e.g., 09 Nov 1783 or to indent the day so it lines up with the second digit of two digit days.

**3.6003 States** can be abbreviated with the two letter postal abbreviations.

**3.7000 Unnecessary duplication of documentation should be avoided.** The applicant should not submit different documents that provide evidence for the same facts unless conflicting evidence is being resolved. For example, do not submit both the 1860 and 1870 census records to show that an ancestor was born in North Carolina unless there is also evidence for a different state of birth.

**3.8000 Foreign Languages.** An application must be in English. Documentation in a language other than English must be accompanied by an accurate English translation of the pertinent facts. If the foreign language document is in an archaic handwritten style, with the text not easily recognizable, a transcription of the pertinent portion of the document, including any diacritic marks (e.g. umlauts, accents, etc.) is also required.

### 3.9000 Documentation usability.

**3.9001 Photocopies and photographs of documents** are acceptable. Copies of images of original documents should be submitted when available. They are preferable to transcripts, and transcripts are preferable to abstracts. If documents are accessible to the applicant but copies of images are not available, certification of an unpublished transcript and an explanation of why images are not available is required. In general, certification of copies of original records is not necessary.

**3.9002 Entire pages.** Copies of entire pages are required. An enlargement of part of a page may be submitted in addition to a copy of the entire page if needed for legibility.

**3.9003 Title pages and publication date.** Copies of the title page of published books must be provided, and the date of publication provided.

**3.9004 Underline in red.** Applicants should underline in red the information in a document that provides evidence for what is being proven. As an alternative, the information can be indicated by a line in red in the margin.

### 4.0000 ACCEPTABLE PROOFS SPECIFIC TO REVOLUTIONARY SERVICE.

**4.1000 Statements of service.** The name of the patriot ancestor and his or her service(s) must be entered in the spaces in statement of application for membership at the beginning of the application, and the date of service may be stated. Services not proven should not be stated.

**4.1001** For **military service(s)**, the company and regiment or battalion should be stated to the extent that the information is available. For example, Private, Captain John Doe's Company, Col. Richard Roe's Regiment, Northampton County, Pennsylvania Militia, 1779-1780.

**4.1002** For **civil service(s)**, the nature of the service and governing body to which the service was rendered should be stated, for example, petit juror, Shenandoah County, Virginia, November Term 1782.

**4.1003** For **patriotic service(s)**, the nature of the service and its location should be stated, for example, Provided Wheat to the State of Maryland, Charles County, 28 December 1782.

**4.2000 Proof of a single Revolutionary service is sufficient.** Applicants are encouraged to identify and prove additional services.

**4.3000 The name of the ancestor must be listed on a document proving Revolutionary service.** If only part of a name is listed, it is often necessary to prove the rest of the name in order to establish that the ancestor was in fact the person who performed the Revolutionary service. It cannot be concluded that an ancestor performed service merely because there was a legal obligation to do so or most in the community did so.

**4.4000 Indirect Evidence in Proof of Service.** Proofs of service using indirect evidence often take two forms. An explanation of how the evidence leads to the conclusion is usually necessary.

**4.4001 Direct evidence of a particular Revolutionary service is not extant, but records listed the ancestor which required the ancestor to have performed that service name the ancestor.** For example, taking the oath of allegiance was required to qualify for a North Carolina state land entries during the Revolution, but a list of those to whom the land office officials administered the oath is not extant. Record of a land entry and the statute requiring the oath for the land entry is indirect evidence of service.

**4.4002 A partial name of a specific person is given in a record that establishes service, but other records can be used to establish the full name and to show that the person named on the record for service is the same as the person on the record(s) that establish the rest of the name.** For example, if a record lists the Rev. Doe, other records can be used to establish that there was only one clergyman named "Doe" in the area at the time of the service and his given name was "John."

**4.5000 Admissible documents for proof of service** trace information about the Revolutionary service back to a person living at the time of the service and in a position to have knowledge of the service, or a governmental source keeping records at the time. They can also be considered as evidence against service, as in the case of a muster roll failing to bear the name of a man who is alleged to have served in the unit or designation of a soldier as a deserter. Three types of admissible documents can be used for proving service.

**4.5001 Contemporary sources created between 1775 and 1783 are admissible.** These include, but not limited to:

- muster rolls, pay rolls, and class rolls;
- records and journals of the Continental Congress;
- state and local records naming local soldiers or those who signed oaths of allegiance, were elected officials, committee members, served on juries, provided material aid, or performed other types of qualifying service;
- newspaper articles or broadsides;
- letters or other correspondence.

**4.5002 Official records and accounts of persons living at the time of service and in a position to have knowledge of the service produced later that confirm service are admissible.** These include, but not limited to:

- federal and state pension records, including records of rejected pensions, although the reason for the rejections shall be weighed in assessing the credibility of the evidence;
- bounty land records;
- final payment vouchers;
- state public claims records;
- compiled military service records;
- officially published compilations such as the Pennsylvania Archives series, and other reliable compilations
- listing Revolutionary War service;
- memoirs or other accounts by persons living at the time of the service and in a position to have knowledge of it.

**4.5003 Publications are admissible which**

- quote or abstract records of the first two types, or
- provide information from a credible witnesses living at the time of the service.

## **5.0000 ACCEPTABLE PROOFS SPECIFIC TO LINEAGE AND VITAL STATISTICS.**

**5.1000 Statement of lineage and vital statistics.** Names and the dates and places of birth, death and marriage of ancestors are to be stated on the application for membership in the section entitled, “Statement of Bloodline to Patriot Ancestor” if and only if they are proven.

### **5.2000 Proof of Lineage and Vital Statistics.**

**5.2001 Proof of Lineage Required for All Generations.** Proof of lineage for all generations from the applicant to the patriot ancestor through the bloodline is required. Ordinarily the parent-child relationship must be proven between each successive pair of generations in the lineage. In rare cases, the name of an ancestor may be missing when the relationship between a grandparent and grandchild is proven. For example, a grandfather John Doe could make a bequest in this will to “my granddaughter Jane Row, wife of Richard,” with no mention of the son or daughter who is the parent of Jane.

**5.2002 Information for Both Spouses.** Proof of names and dates and places of birth, death, and marriage for both spouses for each generation is requested and encouraged. This information may be necessary to distinguish the ancestor from another person of the same or similar name.

~~**5.2003 Children of applicant.** The names and the dates and places of birth of the children of the applicant are optional, but requested and encouraged. Names should be listed with given, middle, and surname and married name for daughters, if applicable. If space is insufficient, the common surname of the applicant can be omitted as the surname of the child. Information regarding the applicant’s children will no longer be collected.~~

**5.2003 Other Spouses of Ancestors.** Some ancestors were married more than once. Even if a spouse is not an ancestor of the applicant and there is no place on the application for information about that spouse, the applicant is encouraged to submit evidence of the name of the spouse, and dates and places of birth, death, and especially marriage. This may prevent confusion about identity and correct line of descent in the future.

**5.3000 Indirect Evidence in Proof of Lineage.** Proofs of lineage using indirect evidence often take three forms, or a combination of the three. An explanation of how the evidence leads to the conclusion is usually necessary. The three forms are:

**5.3001** How **circumstantial evidence** supports the relationship claimed. For example, the surname of the ancestor matches the man claimed to be the father and there are a number of interactions between the two men that often are found when there is a close family relationship, including the man claimed to be the father posted bond for the marriage of the ancestor, and the ancestor was appointed administrator of the estate of the man claimed to be the father, .....

**5.3002** How evidence eliminates or makes highly unlikely possible parent-child relationships (**process of elimination**). For example, only two families of the surname were in the county in 1840, but only one had a child the right age and gender to be the ancestor.

**5.3003** How **deductive reasoning from multiple documents** establishes the conclusion. For example, John was the father of Lon, and Lon was the brother of Ron. Therefore, John was the father of Ron.

**5.4000 Admissible Evidence for Proof of Lineage.** Lineage and dates and places of birth, death, and marriage must be proven by providing documentation that traces the source of information back to a person who had personal knowledge of the relationship or event, or an institutional source keeping records at the time, such as a government, church, or funeral home. Personal knowledge does not require that a person have been an eye-witness. For example, an ancestor did not remember his or her own birth, but usually had personal knowledge of the identity of his parents and siblings. Admissible sources can include, but are not limited to:

- **Government records**, such as vital records, probate records, land records, sworn testimony.
- **Church records**, including birth, baptism, death, marriage, and burial records. Pages which identify the clergy officiating at or recording the event should be included.
- **Other institutional records**, such as records of hospitals, funeral homes, cemeteries, and other institutions contemporary with the event.
- **Newspaper accounts** that are contemporary with persons, relationships, and events reported, including obituaries, wedding announcements, birth notices, articles that are derived from personal knowledge or admissible sources can be determined. The name, location, and date of the newspaper must be provided, preferably with a copy of a page bearing that information in addition to a copy of the page bearing the pertinent information.
- **Family records**, including Bibles and letters containing names, relationships, and dates of births, deaths, and marriages, provided that the author was in a position to have knowledge of the information in question. Copies of original records provide stronger evidence than transcripts or abstracts. For records from Bibles or other books, the title page bearing the date of publication should be provided. All pages of a letter or a record of relationships and dates and places of birth, death, and marriage should be provided, even those which pertain to people not the ancestors of the applicant. If information is available, the applicant should provide evidence and a written analysis as part of the documentation of who wrote the record, when it was written, and the provenance the original record.
- **Tombstone inscriptions.** Copies of inscriptions from tombstones erected in the time period of the death of the ancestor, with notation of the name and location of the cemetery, shall be accepted as evidence. Readable photographs are strongly preferred to transcriptions and abstracts.



- **Affidavits** of people having personal knowledge of relationships or dates and places of birth, death, and marriage, or which provide such information and identify the sources who had such personal knowledge. Affidavits should not be submitted by an applicant to prove information about himself unless that information is unavailable in other admissible records, such as a discrepancy between the name of the applicant and a birth father in cases of adoption when records are sealed. In such cases written details about the unavailability are required and should be included in the sworn statement.
- **Published books** that provide transcripts, abstracts, summaries or quotations of the above records, or information personally known to the author are admissible as evidence. The applicant is to provide a copy of the title page and date of publication, and any pages with pertinent information about sources, and headings that are relevant to understanding the evidence such as the title of a list that is transcribed. However, an applicant must submit copies of the source material rather than pages from a book that he or a member of his immediate family authored. In some cases, some parts of a document may be admissible while other parts are not.
- **DNA** evidence can only be used as one element of a genealogical proof argument that includes additional conventional proof of the lineage. Neither autosomal nor Y-DNA tests alone prove a descent from a specific individual. A DNA test can show with high probability that two individuals are related, but fail to determine whether the father was a particular individual, a sibling of that individual, or a cousin.

**5.5000 Residence of the Patriot Ancestor.** Bylaw 1, Section 1 requires the application to set forth the name, residence, and services of the ancestor from whom the applicant claims eligibility. Information about residence is important in ensuring that the ancestor of the applicant and the patriot are in fact the same person. When only one person of a name is found in an area where the patriot served and the ancestor resided, a separate proof of the identity of the ancestor with the patriot is usually unnecessary.

#### **5.5001. Residence of the Patriot.**

**5.5001a.** The location of where the service originated is *prima facie* evidence of the residence of the patriot. Examples include the location where a soldier enlisted or was drafted, the state, county, or town in which a civil official served, the county or district in which the patriot provided supplies, and the county in which a patriot was taxed in support of the American Revolution.

**5.5001b.** Specific evidence that a patriot resided in a location other than where the service originated can rebut evidence for the residence of the patriot. Examples include pension testimony about residence and enlistment, taxable property ownership in locations other than residence, and evidence of business or travel that could result in taking the oath of allegiance where the patriot did not reside.

**5.5001c.** Both direct and indirect evidence are admissible in determining residence of a patriot. Examples of direct evidence include pension testimony and the locality specifically identified for the record, such as a court minute book for a particular county for jury service. Examples of indirect evidence include determining the residence of other soldiers in a company, determining the geographic authority of an official certifying or witnessing the claim of a patriot, and determining the residence of others named on a qualifying list.

#### **5.5002. Residence of the Ancestor.**

**5.5002a.** The location where an ancestor was found during the Revolution is *prima facie* evidence of the residence of the ancestor. Examples include recorded court activity involving other family members, land transactions involving other family members, and church membership with other family members.

**5.5002b.** Specific evidence that an ancestor resided in a location other than where he or she is found during the Revolution can rebut evidence for the residence of the ancestor. Examples include pension testimony about residence or a deed of gift to a child naming a county of residence other than the one in which the property was located.

**5.5002c.** Both direct and indirect evidence are admissible in determining residence of an ancestor. Examples of direct evidence would include that baptismal record of a child born during the Revolution and a will signed during the Revolution naming the children. Sometimes there is no direct evidence of residence of the ancestor during the Revolution. Examples of indirect evidence include residence before or after the Revolution.

**5.0003. Linking the ancestor to records that do not prove service.**

**5.5003a.** Evidence of residence of a person of the same name as the ancestor alone is not sufficient to determine residence of the ancestor. For example, suppose there is a record of church attendance by John Doe, there is record of militia service by John Doe, and the ancestor is John Doe. Is the church record for the militia man, the ancestor, or for yet another man of the name? Additional evidence such as attendance by other family members or proximity of residence of other family members can provide indirect evidence that the person named in a record is in fact the ancestor.

**5.5003b.** In the case of an ancestor who migrated after the Revolution, additional evidence that the person in fact moved should be provided. Direct evidence includes pension testimony, correspondence, and bequests of property where the ancestor resided during the Revolution. The purchase of property about the time the ancestor appeared in a new location and sale of property about the time the name disappears from the old location is an example of indirect evidence of a migration. The residence of other family members or neighbors showing evidence of the same migration is another. Census records showing that children or grandchildren of the patriot moved to a new state after birth can provide valuable indirect evidence. A proof summary or argument supporting such contentions regarding a patriot's identity may be necessary.

**5.5004. Identity of the Patriot with the Ancestor.**

**5.5004a.** If the residence of the patriot and the residence of the ancestor during the Revolution are the same and there is no evidence of more than one person of the same name in the location during the time of the Revolution, then *prima facie* the patriot and the ancestor are the same person.

**5.5004b.** If there is more than one person of a name residing in a location and all performed the same service at the same time or performed services at the same time that were mutually exclusive, then *prima facie* all of those persons performed Revolutionary service. For example, if a reasonably exhaustive examination of the records establishes that three people of the same name resided in a particular area and three people of the name took the oath of allegiance, then one can reasonably conclude that all three took the oath of allegiance. If two men of the same name resided in a particular area and one was away from the area performing military duty at the same time another was serving on a jury in the county, then *prima facie* both performed Revolutionary service even if it cannot be determined which man performed which service.

**5.5004c.** If more than one person of a name resides in a location where a patriot of the same name resided and not all were patriots, evidence must be provided to indicate which person performed the service. For example, if the patriot is identified as "Sr." and the ancestor is determined to be the senior person of that name, the service can be attributed to the ancestor. If the service was military service and one of the two men in the area was elderly and the other of prime military age, in the absence of other information the service can be attributed to the younger man.

**5.5004d.** In some cases the location where the service originated cannot be determined with precision. This is usually true for Continental army units well after they were originally organized, when they had received replacement soldiers and had been consolidated with other regiments. Even in these cases there is *prima facie* evidence of the state from which service originated. If there is more than one person of the name of the soldier in the state, evidence that others in the same unit were also from the same area as the ancestor shall be considered *prima facie* evidence that the ancestor performed the service.

## **6.0000 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS.**

### **6.1000 Application Form and Documentation.**

**6.1001 Application Paper and Printing.** Applications must be typed or computer-printed with black print using forms authorized by SAR no earlier than 1990. Paper applications must be printed on both sides and printed on official, SAR-watermarked, bond paper such that page 2 is on the back of the same sheet as page 1, and if a fourth page is required is it on the back of the sheet with page 3. For applications using forms approved prior to 2016, additional pages may be used for citation of sources if space within the form is insufficient. These pages are part of the application and SAR-watermarked bond paper must be used. Nothing may be attached to the paper application form by staple, glue, tape, pin, thread, or other means.

### **6.1002 Signatures.**

**6.1002a Signature of applicant.** Signature by an applicant, or on behalf of an applicant by a person over 18 (adult), is required for all applications.

- An applicant over 18 is to sign his application, new or supplemental, unless he is incapacitated, in which case another adult can sign on his behalf.
- An applicant under 18 may sign his application or a parent or guardian may sign on his behalf. If an applicant is too young to understand the significance of this signature, then a parent or guardian should co-sign the application or sign on the applicant's behalf.
- A memorial application is to be signed by an adult for the deceased applicant.

The Genealogist General has the authority to permit an adult other than an applicant, parent, or guardian to sign on behalf of an applicant.

### **6.1002b Signatures of approving members and officers.**

- New member applications must be signed by a sponsor and co-sponsor who are members in good standing, and by all state officers for whom there is a signature space on the application before submission to the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.
- Supplemental applications must be signed by the state registrar. Signatures of no other officers are required for supplemental applications.
- Approved applications must bear the signature of the Genealogist General or his designated member of the SAR Genealogy Staff, signifying his approval as required by Bylaw No. 9.

Should someone be acting for a particular officer, the Executive Director of the Sons of the American Revolution must be notified.

**6.1003 Supporting documentation** must be submitted on paper and should be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" or 8 1/2" x 14" white paper. Documentation must not be stapled, glued, taped, pinned, etc. All documentation must be legible for the information being introduced as evidence.

**6.2000 Supplemental Application for Same Patriot Ancestor.** A supplemental application demonstrating an additional line of descent from a patriot ancestor previously proven for the applicant but through a different lineage is acceptable. The application fee for a supplemental application proving an additional line of descent from a previously approved patriot ancestor is the same as any other supplemental application fee.

**6.3000 Pended Applications.** If the SAR genealogy staff determines that the lineage or service stated in an application falls short of being proven, or if there is a serious administrative problem with the application such as dates entered in to form 10/10/1900, staff will pend the application and that state point of contact will be notified that the problem(s) must be resolved before the application can be approved.

**6.3001 Priority in queue.** If documentation to address the problem(s) is received within 45 calendar days of the notification that the application has been pended, the application will be reviewed as if it were the next application in queue for that staff genealogist. If material is received after this period, it will be queued as if it were a newly received application.

**6.3002 Expiration of Pended Applications.**

**6.3002a** Pended applications will remain on file for three years, at which time they will expire and will no longer be considered unless an extension has been granted by the Genealogist General or an appeal is in process.

**6.3002b** Expired applications cannot be resubmitted without payment of an additional application fee.

**6.3002c** Expired applications and supporting documentation can be returned to the state society at the state society's expense, held for pickup by the state, or shredded, as the state directs. If a state does not provide direction for the disposition, the application and supporting documentation will be shredded after the next Leadership Meeting or Congress.

**6.3002d** An applicant has the right to transfer a pended application to another patriot ancestor. For new member applications, two transfers for an application are permitted without payment of an additional application fee. For supplemental applications, one transfer for an application is permitted without payment of an additional supplemental fee. No transfer is permitted for any application that has been pended for over three years, even if an extension has been granted.

**6.4000 Expediting Processing.**

**6.4001** An applicant, sponsor, state registrar, state secretary, or state president has the right to request immediate processing of an application in writing to the Executive Director, Genealogist General, and/or Chairman of the Genealogy Committee. Email requests are considered as written requests.

**6.4002** Authorization of a request for expedited processing requires the written approval by a sufficient number of members from the following group: Executive Director, Genealogist General, and Chairman of the Genealogy Committee. The number of members required for approval is:

- One member, for active duty military applicants currently serving in a war zone or facing imminent deployment to a war zone;
- One member, for applicants who are nearing the end of their lives (in hospice care, extreme advanced age, etc.);
- Two members for applicants of very high social or governmental status, such as governors, ambassadors, etc.;

- Three members for all other cases.

**6.4003** A decision must be rendered as soon as possible and the requesting agent must be notified as soon as possible after the decision is rendered.

**6.5000 Appeals of Adverse Decisions.** Adverse decisions concerning applications can be appealed. These decisions are:

- pending an application;
- denying that a particular service of the patriot has been proven;
- denying that a particular name on the application has been proven, usually a spouse not in the bloodline of descent from the patriot to the applicant; and
- denying that a date or place of birth, death, or marriage has been proven.

**6.5001 When and How an Appeal Can Be Made.** An appeal of a decision or decisions can be made after application is pended, provided the application has not expired. An appeal of a decision or decisions can be made on any approved application within 45 days of either its approval or the completion of the review of a decision of a reviewing genealogist by the Genealogist General. An appeal is made in writing to the Genealogist General with a copy to the reviewing staff genealogist. Writing includes email. The staff genealogist who made the decision will provide copies of the application, relevant documentation and genealogical proof arguments, and relevant correspondence to the Genealogist General, notifying the person making the appeal of what documents have been provided to ensure completeness.

There are two kinds of appeal: a request for review of decisions of the Genealogy Department Staff by the Genealogist General, and an appeal to the President General of a decision of the Genealogist General under Bylaw No. 9. The Genealogist General will inform the President General of any appeal to him.

**6.5002 Review of Adverse Decisions by Genealogy Staff.** A state registrar has the right to request that the Genealogist General review an adverse decision or decisions made by the Genealogy Department staff under authority delegated to it by the Genealogist General. The request must provide:

- a specific description of the particular adverse decision or decisions being appealed;
- a specific description of any disagreement about the interpretation applicable policies.

The reviews can be as simple as a request to resolve an interpretation of policy or as complicated as the evaluation of indirect evidence, accompanying proof arguments, and correspondence with the reviewing genealogist. A review does not prevent the subsequent appeal of the decision of the Genealogist General to the President General.

**6.5003 Appeals to the President General.** An applicant, state registrar, state genealogist, or state president has the right to appeal an adverse decision of the Genealogist General under the provisions of Bylaw No. 9. The appeal should include:

- a statement that the appeal is being made to the President General under Bylaw No. 9;
- the ACN of the application, the name of the applicant, and if a supplemental application, the applicant's SAR National Number;
- the name of the staff genealogist responsible for the decision(s);
- a specific description of the particular adverse decision or decisions being appealed;
- a specific description of any disagreement about the interpretation applicable policies;

- a brief account of the steps that have been taken to address any further information pertaining the adverse decision that was requested by the reviewing genealogist; and
- a brief summary of why the decision(s) should be overturned is invited, especially if the correspondence also addressed issues that have been resolved or the proof argument evolved over time.

The Genealogist General will re-examine the application with respect to the decision or decisions being appealed. If the Genealogist General decides in favor of the applicant, he resolves the appeal by reporting his decision to the President General, the person making the appeal, and the reviewing Genealogist. Otherwise, he shall report his finding with evidence to the President General in accord with Bylaw No. 9.

**6.5004 Information Excluded from an Appeal.** An appeal is NOT to include:

- documentation and correspondence irrelevant to the decision(s) being appealed; and
- information and arguments not previously submitted to the reviewing genealogist. If new information is discovered after an appeal has been filed, it should be submitted to the Genealogist General, reviewing genealogist, and the person filing the appeal for consideration.

It is important that any documentation or genealogical proof arguments be evaluated by the reviewing genealogist before the appeal is made.

**6.5005 Further Research by the Genealogist General.** The Genealogist General has the right to conduct further research as part of the appeal process.