

WISCONSIN STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY APPLICATION FOR HOMESTEAD CERTIFICATE

Instructions

The Wisconsin State Genealogical Society issues certificates to persons who are directly or descended from ancestors that homesteaded land in Wisconsin. Applicants must prove direct descent or collateral descent and prove that ancestor homesteaded land in Wisconsin. Applicants may apply for certificates to be issued to themselves or to other persons. The person to whom the certificate is issued need not currently live in Wisconsin.

The purpose of the Homestead Certificate Program is to recognize families with Wisconsin roots, encourage people to undertake genealogical research, develop a database of information for researchers, and to improve the quality of genealogical research.

1. A separate signed application is required for each certificate requested. Only one homestead ancestor may be identified on a certificate (unless a couple was granted the homestead). Type or print all entries. Legibility is important. A signed authorization granting permission to publish and release data is required.
2. A complete application consists of the following:
 - a. **All pages of the application form must be completed and signed.** Only the current version of the form provided by WSGS will be accepted. Applications submitted on previous forms will be returned for resubmission on the proper form.
 - b. **A Pedigree Chart** showing the ancestral line(s) of the person to whom the certificate is to be issued. Identify that person as number 1 on the chart. Any standard pedigree or ancestral chart form, or a computer generated pedigree chart on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper may be used. A second form needs to be submitted when applying for a collateral line, showing the family where the collateral line occurs,
 - c. **Proof of homestead land granted in Wisconsin along with proof of direct descent or collateral descent.** This includes a copy of the original homestead application (if you have it) OR a copy of the original land grant certificate OR a copy of the land grant from the Bureau of Land Management.
 - d. **A check, payable to WSGS** for \$20 for WSGS members and \$25 for non-members.
3. If more than one certificate for the same homestead ancestor is requested, proof of the homestead ancestor's land grant is required for only the first such application. The remaining applications should be cross-referenced to it. Application form, pedigree chart, and proof of descent are still required for each person for whom a certificate is requested.

4. An application based on a previously issued Homestead Certificate does NOT require resubmission of the proof of land granted. Cite the previous certificate in the Proof section. Pedigree chart and proof of direct descent or collateral descent ARE required. Provide a copy of the original certificate with the completed application if possible.
5. Names and dates
 - a. Enter the names of the person to whom the certificate is to be issued and the homestead ancestor exactly as you want it to appear on the certificate.
 - b. Enter dates in day, month, year format. Use three-letter abbreviation for the month. List the four digits of the year.
6. Forms of proof
 - a. Proof must be provided in the form of copies of documents establishing each fact claimed. Such documents include Census, Land, Church, School, Naturalization and Declarations of Intent, Probate, and Vital Records. Copies must clearly identify the nature of the document, the agency or office that created it, the volume, page, sheet, line, etc and where it may be located. Bible records, county histories, military histories and published transcripts of records must include copies of the page (s) establishing the fact claimed and a copy of the title page including publisher and date.
 - 1) Abstracts of records prepared and authenticated by the custodian thereof are acceptable in lieu of copies. An example would be an abstract of a church baptismal record.
 - 2) Other abstracts or summaries compiled from records are acceptable only if they clearly identify the person who did the abstract or compilation, the specific identification of the record on which the abstract or compilation is based, and the location of the original.
 - b. Photocopies of diaries, letters, business, and other personal records may be submitted, but proof of authenticity must accompany them and the name and address of their current custodian must be stated. Do not submit original records, they cannot be returned.
 - c. Obituaries may be submitted to establish a fact claimed. The title of the newspaper and date need to be listed on the photocopy of the obituary and page #, if known.
 - d. County histories may be submitted but other forms of documentation are preferred. Copies of appropriate pages and title pages are required.

- e. Documents that infer rather than establish the fact claimed require corroboration. Two such common documents are census records and naturalization records. It is a fact that census records often contain errors. Thus an 1860 Milwaukee County population schedule enumerating a 14-year-old child born in Wisconsin does not prove that an individual settled in Milwaukee in 1846.
 - f. Published or unpublished genealogies, family histories, and family group sheets are generally not acceptable as proof. Instead, submit the documents or abstracts that were used as proof for them.
7. Make a copy of your complete application for your records.
 8. Send the completed application to: Homestead Certificate, WSGS, P.O. Box 5106, Madison, WI 53705-0106.