

MUSKEGON COUNTY PIONEER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM



ELIGIBILITY:

To qualify for a Pioneer Certificate, the person must be directly descended (blood line only) from an ancestor who settled in Muskegon County, State of Michigan, on dates as follows:

“Pioneer Resident” category (Up To and Including 1889)

“Settler Resident” category (1890–1929)

Applicants must prove direct descent (blood line only) and prove that the ancestor settled in Muskegon County. Anyone may apply. You may apply for other family descendants (e.g., your child, grandchildren) at the same time for a reduced cost. You may do the research yourself or hire a professional (the Muskegon County Genealogical Society will do research at your request for a fee). Applicants need **not** be residents of Muskegon County nor members of Muskegon County Genealogical Society.

FEE:

\$10.00 (non-refundable) for you, payable to M. C. G. S.. Check or money order only, NO cash.

\$ 5.00 (non-refundable) for each family descendant submitted with your application, for the same Pioneer.

PURPOSE:

1. To honor and collect data on the pioneers, early residents, and families with Muskegon County roots and their descendants.
2. To encourage interest in basic genealogical research by asking direct descendants to assemble their family history and to apply for a certificate (a valuable source of information to your family).
3. To add to the history of Muskegon County and to provide to our library sources of genealogical information for future research.

HOW TO RECEIVE A PIONEER CERTIFICATE APPLICATION PACKET:

On Web Site

Read Program details and Instructions, then Print Application:

www.rootsweb.com/~mimcgs

In Person

Hackley Public Library
Lower Level
316 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440

By Mail—request a Muskegon County Pioneer Certificate Application packet from:

MCGS Pioneer Certificates
c/o Hackley Public Library
316 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440

Please include a long, business-size
self-addressed, stamped envelope

CERTIFICATION:

Both the residence of the Pioneer ancestor, as well as the descent to the applicant (each ancestor, each generation), must be proved by approved documentary evidence.

Eligibility shall be determined by a committee of the Muskegon County Genealogical Society, and their decision shall be final. Applications not approved will remain in pending file until proof is established.

Certification will be done after the completed application and proof of direct descent and residency have been submitted, the fee has been received, and eligibility has been determined. The certificates are presented yearly in October during Family History Month. The certificates are suitable for framing.

OWNERSHIP OF APPLICATIONS AND MATERIAL SUBMITTED AND PRIVACY:

All applications and verifying material submitted for the Pioneer Certificate shall become the property of MCGS, with all rights to display or publish. The application and supporting materials are available for reproduction and are accessible to the general public and to researchers. Names of Muskegon County Pioneers and their direct descendants may be published, on our website or otherwise, in the future.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING PIONEER CERTIFICATE APPLICATION

1. Complete an **Application** for each Pioneer for which you are applying.
2. List your complete line-of-descent from the Pioneer. Start with yourself as Generation 1; the Pioneer Ancestor will be the last generation
3. Fill out a **Family Group Sheet for each generation**, listing this couple and their children, starting with Generation 1 (you). Repeat for Generation 2, etc. Give as much information as you know.
4. Behind the Family Group Sheets for each generation, attach **event proof materials (COPIES ONLY**, clear and readable) for each event for each parent in that generation. Use primary proof documents if they exist; otherwise, use 2 or more secondary sources, per event. SEE Acceptable Sources of Proof below. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS**—they will not be returned, and will become the property of MCGS.
5. Include proof of the Pioneer’s date and place of residence in Muskegon County, and put it behind his Family Group Sheet, along with his or her birth, marriage, and death records.
6. Use all given names of ancestors. (e.g., Susan Mary Damaris RICE.) For nicknames, list as Susan Mary Damaris “Susie” RICE.
7. CAPITALIZE surnames. Women, use MAIDEN name. IF MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE, women need all marriage certificates to prove identity.
8. If married more than once, list the spouse who participates in the line of descent. Write in whether 1st, 2nd, etc. marriage
9. Date Format: Day/Month/Year (e. g., 4 July 1776). Put “?” after an unsure date or place.
10. Location Format: Fill in City or Township, County, State or Province, and Country for all place names, as named as of that date.
11. If a source contains an error, you may note the error, but **DO NOT ALTER** the document.
12. Cite source on back of proofs (e.g.: Muskegon Co., Mich. Marriages, vol. 2, p. 176, record no. 314).
13. If you are applying for your child or grandchild at the same time and for the same Pioneer, see below “Piggyback” instructions.
14. **Fees:** Non-refundable; \$10.00 for primary applicant, plus \$5.00 for each “piggyback” family group application.
15. **Payment Method:** Check or money order (**no cash**), payable to M.C.G.S
16. **Mail (1) Fee, (2) completed Application, and (3) Family Group Sheets with proofs of descent and residence, to:**

M. C. G. S. Pioneer Certificate Program
c/o Hackley Public Library
316 W. Webster Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49440
17. Incorrect or incomplete applications cannot be processed. You will be notified if you need to provide corrections or additions. To speed things up, please provide your E-mail, if you have one.
18. Applications that are not approved will remain “Pending.” You may reactivate your application without further application fees if in the future you provide the additional documents needed for approval.
19. Applications with the most current version must be used. If you have submitted a prior version, we will be pleased to mail you an updated one.
20. Applications may be submitted at any time and will be processed throughout the year. Certificates are presented during October for applications received by June 30 (and approved).
21. Don’t hesitate to submit your Pioneer because you are searching for proof of an earlier residency date. Certificates and your Pioneer may be upgraded to an earlier year of residency and associated category, at no charge, upon submission of documentary proof and approval by the MGS committee.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR:
“PIGGYBACK” INSTRUCTIONS
AND
ACCEPTABLE SOURCES OF PROOF**

HONOR YOUR FAMILY AND SAVE—“PIGGYBACK”—APPLY IN FAMILY GROUPS

“Piggyback” Your Application with Ones for Your Children and Grandchildren:

When you apply for your child and/or grandchild *at the same time* that you apply for yourself, as descendant of one specific Pioneer, the additional fee is only \$5.00 for each “piggyback” descendant.

YOU ARE THE PRIMARY APPLICANT.

Fill out the application for yourself, one application per Pioneer. Put your name after “Name of Descendant to be inscribed on certificate.” Put the name of your “Piggyback” Descendant(s) after “Name of Piggyback Descendants to be inscribed on certificate.” The “Primary Applicant Mail Name” is you and your address.

Your application must contain the proofs of all the events for you, your ancestors and your “piggyback” descendants. All supporting documents supplied by you will be in your file. All piggyback certificates will have the same basic number as yours. All certificates, including the “piggyback” certificates for your child and/or grandchild, will be mailed to you, the primary applicant.

Fill out the Lineage Chart starting with you as Generation 1 and ending with the Pioneer; then sign it. Complete a Family Group Sheet for Generation 1 (you) and put event proof documents for this couple (applicable birth, marriage, death) behind the Family Group Sheet. Repeat for each generation. When you come to the Pioneer generation, also submit proof of residence in Muskegon County and date.

Child or grandchild “piggyback” descendants need only prove their relationship to you (submit applicable birth, marriage certificates). Please also prepare a Family Group Sheet showing the piggyback person as a child—this is very helpful when, for example, the applicant is applying for himself/herself along with two children and eight grandchildren at the same time! ☺ (This helps solve the question “Who’s who?”)

Remember, if married more than once, women need *all* marriage certificates to prove their identity.

ACCEPTABLE SOURCES OF PROOF

Because these records are used as a genealogical resource by other researchers, all descent and residency shall be proven using **primary** sources. At least one primary source should prove each event. For the few people where no primary source exists, secondary sources may be accepted, in which case, submit two or more secondary sources for each such event. **Please include proofs for spouses also.**

Primary sources are original records made at the time that the event occurred (e.g., marriage, census, etc.). In the few cases where that is not possible, two or more secondary sources for each event, or preponderance of evidence may be accepted. **Secondary sources are those made at a date later than the event or from secondhand knowledge.** Thus, a death record is a primary source for a deceased’s death date and place, but it’s a secondary source for the deceased’s birth date and place.

Primary Sources:

Birth, death, marriage records
Bible records (include date published page)
Church, mortuary, cemetery records**
Probate records
Land records, tax records
Census records (federal, state)
Military records (federal, state)
Court records (wills, deeds)
Official school records
**records, not books published by gen. societies

Secondary Sources:

Obituaries, dated
Newspaper clippings, dated
Diaries, journal, reminiscences
Tombstone inscriptions
Published family histories or genealogies (some)
Published county histories
Published biographical records
City or county directories
Atlas or Plat books
Unofficial school records