

MUSKEGON COUNTY PIONEER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

ELIGIBILITY, FEE, PURPOSE, CERTIFICATION, APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS, SOURCES

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, by and within the following dates:

- “Pioneer Resident” category (Up To and including 1889)
- “Settler Resident” category (1890–1929)

Applicants must prove two things:

- (1) They are a direct descendent (blood line only) of the Pioneer ancestor, and
- (2) The Pioneer ancestor settled in Muskegon County by any of the dates listed above.

Anyone may apply. Applicants do **not** need to be residents of Muskegon County or members of the Muskegon County Genealogical Society. You may do the research yourself, or hire the Muskegon County Genealogical Society or a professional genealogist to prepare your paperwork and proof documents.

APPLICATION FEE: \$10.00 (non-refundable), payable to MCGS. Check or money order only, NO cash.

PURPOSE:

1. To honor the pioneers, early residents, and families with Muskegon County roots.
2. To encourage interest in genealogical research (a valuable source of information to your family).
3. To add to the history of Muskegon County.

HOW TO RECEIVE A PIONEER CERTIFICATE APPLICATION PACKET - 3 WAYS:

On our Web Site

Read Program details and Instructions, Print Application:
www.genealogymuskegon.org

In Person

Hackley Public Library
Torrent House
315 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208

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

MCGS Pioneer Certificates
c/o HPL - Torrent House
315 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon MI 49440-1208

Please include a long, business-size 10
self-addressed, stamped envelope

CERTIFICATION:

Both the residence of the Pioneer ancestor, as well as the descent from the Pioneer 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 as been determined. 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. You agree to this by submitting your application—you must sign and date the application.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE PIONEER CERTIFICATE APPLICATION:

1. Complete an **Application** for each Pioneer for which you are applying.
2. YOU are the Primary Applicant and also the Generation 1 person.
3. List your complete line-of-descent starting with yourself as Generation 1, your parents as Generation 2, etc., until you reach your Pioneer Ancestor, who will be the last generation.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Include proof of the Pioneer's date and place of residence in Muskegon County, and put it behind the Family Group Sheet, along with his or her birth, marriage, and death records.
7. Use all given names of ancestors. (e.g., Susan Mary Damaris RICE.) For nicknames, list as Susan Mary Damaris "Susie" RICE.
8. CAPITALIZE surnames. Women, use MAIDEN name. IF MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE, women need all marriage certificates to prove identity.
9. If married more than once, list the spouse who participates in the line of descent. Write in whether 1st, 2nd, etc. marriage.
10. Date Format: Day/Month/Year (e. g., 4 July 1776). Put "?" after an unsure date or place.
11. Location Format: Fill in City or Township, County, State or Province, and Country for all place names, as named as of that date.
12. If a source contains an error, you may note the error, but **DO NOT ALTER** the document.
13. Cite source on back of proofs (e.g.: Muskegon Co., Mich. Marriages, vol. 2, p. 176, record no. 314).
14. **Sign and Date the application.**
15. **Fees:** Non-refundable; \$10.00 for each applicant, each Pioneer.
16. **Payment Method:** Check or money order (**no cash**), payable to MCGS. USD\$ funds only.
17. **Mail** (1) Fee, (2) completed Application, and (3) Family Group Sheets with proofs of descent and residence, to:

MCGS Pioneer Certificate Program
C/O Hackley Public Library—Torrent House
315 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
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 MCGS committee.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ACCEPTABLE SOURCES OF PROOF

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