

Common Problems with SAR Applications

This is a list of common problems with applications received at the National Society. If these items are caught and corrected at the State and/or Chapter level, it will greatly reduce the number of pended applications and will result in a decrease in the processing time for all applications. Many of these items are covered in NSSAR Brochure 0912.

These are in no particular order.

1: Make sure the application is completed from the applicant's name all of the way through to his Patriot Ancestor and that the documentation is fully listed on the reverse side of the application.

2: Dates are to be in this format; "01 JAN 2010" Applications submitted in the 1/1/2010 or 1/1/10 format may be returned to the State Society for retyping. This requirement is listed on the application.

3: All known items, including that on the non-bloodline parent are to be listed on the application. If a parent is listed on a submitted document, that name and information must be listed on the application. Some Chapters and/or State Societies have interpreted the "bloodline descent" as an indicator that it is only necessary to provide information on the person through whom the applicant descends. This interpretation is not correct. It takes a mother and a father to produce a child and both of these are a part of the bloodline. Per the SAR application, the applicant must list "all names, dates and places known." Applications not fully completed/documented may be returned to the State Society for completion.

4: DAR / CAR applications must bear the stamp, "Record Copy" or "Duplicate." State copies of these applications are not acceptable.

5: The SAR policy on acceptability of applications from other Lineage Societies, is those MAY be accepted. Each such source is evaluated on the merit of the information provided on that application. SAR Staff are NOT required to automatically accept these applications and the applicant may be required to provide additional documentation. DAR/CAR applications must be fully documented to current SAR Standards. Applications which do not list the documentation used in the processing of the application are not considered fully documented. It is important to remember that documentation which was acceptable on an older application, may not be acceptable today. In the past, a book or family genealogy, may have been considered acceptable; while today, this source may NOT be acceptable. In this case, the applicant may be asked to provide additional documentation. Also in the past, family genealogies were accepted as proof of service. Actual "Record of the Day" proof of service is required.

6: New Member applications must contain ALL required signatures, ie: the applicant, State Secretary, State Registrar, and TWO sponsors. One person cannot sign as both the first and second line sponsor.

7: Census Records must be the full page copy of the actual census. Partial copies, abstracts, and published typed copies of census records are not acceptable. Cover pages from Ancestry.com and/or other sources are not acceptable. In order to conserve limited space it is acceptable to print these cover pages or enlargements of the family in question, on the back of the copy of the original record. If these items are submitted on separate pages, they are discarded.

8: Bible pages should be photocopies or photographs of the actual Bible with the title page. Relationships from Bible pages must be explicit. Typed and/or transcribed copies of Bibles must be notarized and must provide the source of the information. Information must be contemporary to the publication of the Bible. Information on a patriot from 1780 listed in a bible printed in 1990, may require additional documentation.

9: The use of census records should be supplemented with primary source documentation. Two common problems with using only census records are shown in the following examples:

A: Jane Doe age 29, is listed on the 1900 census with her husband John Doe. The next piece of documentation is an 1880 census with Jane Smith, age 9, listed with her father Charles Smith, through whom the application descends. It cannot be assumed that Jane Doe and Jane Smith are the same person. If the application descends through the wife, the applicant must prove her maiden name, and her connection to her husband and her parents.

B: James Smith supplies his 1943 birth registration showing his father as Thomas Smith, and his mother as Sally Jones. No information is given on the parents other than their names. This is common on Birth Registrations, or short form Birth Certificates. The next piece of documentation is a 1920 census showing a 6 year old Thomas Smith with his parents in Chicago. A check of the 1920 Census for Illinois finds 18 Thomas Smiths between the ages of 5 and 7. It cannot be determined, which of these Thomas Smiths are the correct person. Whenever possible, please request a long form Birth Certificate which gives not only the parents names, but also their age, and their place of birth. The paper trail should leave no doubt as to the accuracy of the information, and should exclude all other possibilities.

10: Annotated census records and annotated cemetery records are only acceptable for the information which is customarily contained in these records. If a cemetery record lists the wife's full name, the children's names and the parent's names, this is information not normally contained on a tombstone and is not acceptable unless an acceptable source for this extraneous information is provided. In these cases, it is preferable that a photo of the tombstone should be provided. Tombstones must be contemporary to the time period, ie, tombstones which are much newer than the time of death, may not be accepted. Information from sites such as Findagrave.com must provide a photo or list the source of the information. Annotated census records which contain family information not listed on the actual census record are not acceptable. Per # 7 above and the NSSAR Brochure 0912, only the full page copy of the actual census record are acceptable.

11: Per SAR 0912, LDS Ancestral File and or IGI records are not acceptable.

12: Abstracted records are not acceptable. Only a full, exact transcript of a document is acceptable. The County, State, Book and Page number should be provided.

13: Family information from websites are not acceptable. Ancestry.com, World Family Tree, Rootsweb.com, and similar sites with submitted family trees are not acceptable documentation.

14: Multiple copies of the same document should not be submitted. If you are using the same document for generations 3, 4, and 5, only one copy should be submitted.

15: Facts need to be proven only once. If you have supplied a death certificate, it is not necessary to supply a copy of the obituary, unless there is relevant information provided in the obituary which is not in the death certificate. If you have proven relationships and ages, it is not necessary to provide every census record on which this person appears. If the 1880 census contains the same information as the 1870 census, we do not need copies of both. This will save money on postage, and space in our archives room.

16: Properly annotated family histories MAY be accepted. Properly annotated means that sources are listed for the specific information used from that history that corresponds to the information on the SAR application. Each family history is evaluated on its own merit. At the least biographical information should be provided that tells more than just the dates and names. Items such as place of residence, occupation, and other personal information helps to illustrate that the author had personal knowledge, or did additional research on the family used on the application. Some genealogies may be perfectly acceptable for one portion of a family, but may be lacking for the area that covers the persons used on the SAR application.

17: Applicants should be informed that when using older SAR, DAR or CAR applications with no sources provided, which fall into the criteria of a "Grandfathered" application, that this will result in the closing of the line to any future applicants wishing to utilize this lineage. If you know when submitting an application that it is to be Grandfathered, a note should be included giving this authorization. To avoid Grandfathering the application, acceptable documentation should be provided keep the line open.

18: Names with initials. Documentation is often received which has a person listed only with initials. Another document may list the individual with their full name, ie, a person may be listed as J. W. on one document and William John on another document. If it is not plainly evident that these are one and the same person, SAR cannot assume these are the same person, and the applicant may be asked to provide additional information.

19: Death certificate of a remarried wife. If a death certificate is supplied for a wife who has remarried, documents must be supplied to account for the change of name from that supplied on the application.

20: Poorly printed documents. If a document that is small, blurry, or lightly printed, or so illegible in any way, that you must write in the pertinent information, it probably will not be accepted.

21: US and International Marriage Records at Ancestry.com is not an acceptable source. The source material for this database does not meet SAR criteria.