

Please Do's and Please Do Not's: Preparing Your Documents for Plymouth

Welcome! The Virginia Mayflower Society is pleased that you desire to join our Society. The Historian Team is here to assist you and collaborate with you to submit the most complete application possible. Once you begin the process an Assistant Historian ("Assistant") will be assigned to collaborate with you on the preparation of your application and documentation.

While gathering the required documents, there are several "do's" and "do not's" that will help your Assistant prepare the most complete and accurate application possible. Following these will expedite the review and verification process at Plymouth, saving you time and headache.

Please review these guidelines and be sure to ask your Assistant if you have any questions. Attention to detail at this stage will pay off for everyone involved in the process!

Application Please Do's

1. Please seek out "long-form" vital records. Long form is the most comprehensive version of a vital record, typically a copy of the original certificate of register entry. These records identify parents on records for a birth event and on marriage and death events if they were recorded. If the locality did not ask for parents' names on any of the forms (ex. application, license, certificate), the long-form version typically includes other helpful identifying information such as age and birth date or birth place. **Note:** you do not need certified vital records. Records that are for informational or genealogical purposes only are acceptable and may cost less.

2. For ancestors who lived when a vital record should have been created, you will be asked to provide that document regardless of how many generations back they are from you.

a. If the vital record cannot be found, request a letter from the agency stating that no record could be found and submit that (referred to as an NRF).

b. In this case, you may use other types of documents such as family bibles and census, Church, or probate records to fill in holes. Your Society Historian can help you determine documentation that is likely to be accepted.

c. Many of these types of records will suffice to document your ancestor, but acceptability is confirmed only by the staff genealogists at the General Society. When submitting documentation to your Assistant, group the documents by generation, unless the source is a single publication that covers multiple generations.

*Your Assistant will guide you to the best way to share your documents, preferably digitally.

Application Please Do Not's

1. Please do not use a highlighter to identify your ancestor on a document.

2. Please do not underline information on the document. Your Assistant will code the documents to signal to the reviewing genealogist what the record is intended to prove and for whom.

3. Please do not try to correct information on a document. If a name is misspelled or you believe clarification is required, submit an explanation as a separate letter, leaving the document untouched.

4. Please only submit relevant records. The reviewing genealogists at Plymouth are looking for the fewest number of documents that best detail the birth, marriage, or death. Additional paperwork that does not offer new information only slows the review process.

a. If you have a birth certificate that provides the name, date, location of the birth and the parents' names, please do not also submit a baptismal record, a passport, a military document and census record. The complete birth certificate is sufficient.

5. Please do not group documents together and scan them onto a single page.

6. Please do not submit a cell phone picture of the document as these are often difficult to read and are low in DPI.