



Kent County Pioneer Certificates



Kent County, Michigan, Pioneer Certificates
Western Michigan Genealogical Society (WMGS)
C/O Grand Rapids Public Library, 111 Library St NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
<http://wmgs.org>

Eligibility:

To qualify for a Pioneer Certificate, an applicant must be directly descended from an ancestor who settled in Kent County as follows:

- Pioneers (Prior to 1841) Gold Seal
- Settlers (Prior to 1881) Silver Seal
- Early Family (Prior to 1921) Blue Seal

Each ancestor in the direct line must be proved. Anyone may apply. Applicants need not have ever been residents of Kent County. After proof of direct descent has been submitted and eligibility has been determined, we will mail the appropriate certificate. Separate certificates will be issued for each ancestor properly submitted. The fee for each application is \$10.

Purpose:

In cooperation with the Secchia Millennium Commission and to honor our pioneer forefathers, Western Michigan Genealogical Society, (WMGS), is promoting a Pioneer Certificate Program. Our threefold objects are as follows:

- 1) We hope to recognize pioneers and early residents who otherwise would go unnoticed in our county's history. Each builder and craftsperson brought us one step closer to the county we know today.
- 2) We encourage a basic knowledge of genealogical research by asking any direct descendant to put together their family history and apply for a certificate. We will provide easy instructions and help in researching early Kent County residents.
- 3) We know the recorded information will become a valuable addition to the history of early Kent County citizens providing a source of genealogical information for future research.

Linking oneself to the past is an excellent way of building family pride and self-esteem. We hope you will join in our effort to record and preserve our early Kent County history. Proudly display your Kent County Pioneer Millennium Centennial Certificate.

This entire contents of this package may be freely copied if you wish to give a copy to another researcher, or use it for yourself for multiple ancestors.

It can also be downloaded from our WWW site at <http://wmgs.org/>

Pioneer Certificate Instruction Sheet for Kent County Michigan

1. Please complete all parts of the application using **black ink** or **type**.
2. Please use **maiden names** where applicable and all given names of ancestors.
3. Dates should be written as **day month year** (Obituaries, example 1 Jan 2000)
4. If unsure of a date place a “?” behind that date.
5. Follow one direct line from the applicant to the ancestor.
6. Documented evidence connecting each generation must accompany the application. **Copies only**, please, as all items will become the property of WMGS.
7. Incorrect or incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for additions or corrections twice only. If resubmitted for a fourth time additional charge will be \$10.

Descent shall be proven by primary sources. In the few cases where this is not possible, secondary sources or preponderance of evidence may be accepted.

Send a check payable to WMGS for \$10 for each application (see additional certificates) for packet. This is a nonrefundable fee.

Acceptable Documentation:

Primary Sources:

Vital records (birth, death, or marriage)
Church, mortuary, cemetery records
Probate records
Land records
Tax records
Census records
Military records
Court reports (wills, deeds)
Official school records

Secondary Sources: (Inclusion of the following Secondary Sources is encouraged but may not be acceptable as proof of lineage.)

Bible records
Diaries
Journals
Private papers
Reminiscences
Newspaper clippings
Tombstone inscriptions
Published family histories
Published county histories
Published biographical records
City or county directories
Atlas or plat books
Unofficial school records

All proof documents, where possible, should show a complete source such as author, title, year of publication, page number, volume number, type of document, and or location of original document ... (example: for marriage Vol. II p 200 #301 Kent County Mi.)
A committee of WMGS members shall determine certificate eligibility. The committee decision shall be final.

Additional certificates for other family members

If brother & sisters of the applicant wish a certificate and apply in the same packet the cost will be \$ 5 for each additional certificate. Each must be on a separate sheet and prove relationship only to the applicant. If the applicant wishes to provide certificates to children or grandchildren the same situation occurs. Each must be on a separate sheet and with appropriate proof of relationship to the applicant. The cost is \$5 for each additional certificate. All must be sent together.

Additional Pioneer ancestors:

This would be an entirely new application and would cost \$10.

Note: Materials in this packet MAY be copied if you are applying for more than one ancestor.



HOW TO BEGIN YOUR GENEALOGY

It is an interesting and fascinating experience to search out your ancestors and see in their lives the heritage and reflections of your past. Working out a family history through eight to twelve generations offers the best review of American history one may undertake. The correct way to gather your genealogy is to begin with yourself and your family.

There is an accepted genealogical style for writing your names and dates on charts. Surnames are written in capitals, followed by the first name, then the middle name. Example: JONES, Robert Lewis. Enclose nicknames in parenthesis. Always use the female's maiden name, never her married name. You will avoid a lot of confusion if you adhere strictly to this rule. Dates are recorded with the day first followed by the month, then the year in full. Example: 3 Mar 1969. Never use numbers to indicate months.

The primary tools for organizing and recording your data are the LINEAGE CHART and the FAMILY RECORD SHEET. The lineage chart will show your lineal or direct ancestry only. The family record sheets are for recording the members of the families; husband, wife, children and their biographical material along with references. Start with a lineage chart, also referred to as a pedigree, ancestral or generation chart. Record your full name, date and place of birth, date and place of marriage and to whom. Make sure each item is as complete as possible. Give the city or township as well as the county and state. (Remember that many states have counties and townships with the same names so be sure to record the state!)

There, the first generation is entered. Now, fill out the second generation, recording in the same way all the dates and locations for your parents. With each generation, you will be adding new surnames. Continue with your grandparents, and when you can go no farther from the information on hand, turn to the family record sheets.

Fill out one family record sheet for each family represented on your lineage chart. List all the children in the order of their birth. Give your reference or "proof". Add whatever biographical material you can. You can use the back of the sheet also for facts, family traditions, anecdotes and stories. These will add color and make interesting reading in your family history for future generations. The family record sheet should also be used for aunts, uncles and all those families you have information on but are not in your direct lineage. You may prefer to follow or search an adoptive line with reference made to that fact.

When you can go no farther from the information you have at hand, contact the older members of your family, by personal interview if possible. If you are unable to visit, write. Take notes on everything you are told. You can verify the correctness of it later from the clues they have given you. Three important questions are: 1) Is there another relative searching your family? 2) What family member or friend would have more information than the one you are writing or talking to? 3) Does any branch of the family have a family Bible, newspaper clippings, journals, diaries, scrapbooks or pictures you may want to have reproduced?

Don't neglect these contacts because time is of the essence and those older living kinfolk may give you information that you can not find elsewhere. Be prompt in recording your new data. Keep your notes for clues and reference. When family information seems to run dry, then begin exploring official county records, library collections, archives, historical or genealogical societies and consult one or more of the many good books on genealogy. Throughout your search, don't give up on finding the information, for it is the experience of most genealogists that records do exist somewhere.

FAMILY RECORD

No. _____

HUSBAND

Ref.

Born _____	Place _____		
Married _____	Place _____		
Died _____	Place _____		
Burial _____	Place _____		
Father _____	Mother _____		

WIFE

Born _____	Place _____		
Died _____	Place _____		
Burial _____	Place _____		
Father _____	Mother _____		

Other Marriages _____

BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL (Church, Military, Honors, Education, Occupations, Places lived, etc.)

	CHILDREN & SPOUSE		Da. Mo. Yr.	Town	County	State	Ref.
1	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
2	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
3	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
4	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
5	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
6	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
7	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					
8	-----	Birth					
		Marr.					
		Death					
		Burial					



Directions for Lineage Charts

Sometimes called a Pedigree, Ancestral, or Generation Chart, the chart will show one's lineal descent only. For recording members of the family, use our Family Record Sheets, which indicate the head of the family, wife, and children of the marriage.

Your first lineage chart is to be numbered 1 at the top. Your name and genealogical data is filled in on the line number 1, and that is your number. Your father is number 2, your mother is number 3. Your father's father is number 4, your mother's father is number 6, your mother's mother is number 7, etc. This keeps all of your father's ancestry above the middle of the chart, and your mother's ancestry below the middle.

NOTE: One's own number is always 1. Every father's number is double that of his child, and every wife's number is her husband's number plus 1. All men's names carry even numbers (except when they are number 1), and all women's names carry odd numbers. A woman's married name should NEVER be used on a lineage chart. Always use her maiden name or leave the space open.

To extend beyond the limits of Chart 1, use unnumbered lineage charts as continuation sheets. Each person in the fourth generation (numbers 8 through 15) will need a sheet on which to continue his or her lineage. Place his/her number on the top as Chart No. __, then place the same number on the line to the farthest left, where number 1 was located on your first chart. Proceed with his/her data, that of the father and mother, etc.

NOTE: Again, every father's number is double that of his child, and every wife's number is that of her husband plus one.

Western Michigan Genealogical Society encourages all persons, members and non-members, to submit generation charts to us to be placed in our file located in the Grand Rapids Public Library, Genealogy (Michigan) Room. Do not wait until the day your charts are complete, but file at once all the data you have on hand so it will be available to researchers who may be working on a similar family line.

All researchers may use our Generation Chart File. Additional or more complete charts may be sent in at any time.

All material submitted will become the property of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society and may be used in future publications by the Society – both printed and electronic. This does not prohibit you from publishing your own data if you should desire.

Please send your lineage charts to:

WMGS Surname Index
C/O Grand Rapids Public Library
111 Library St NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

FOUR-GENERATION LINEAGE CHART

(Numbered Sample)

Chart No. _____

Name of Compiler _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

eMail: _____

Date: _____

b = born
m = married
d = died
p = place

2 Your Father

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

4 Your Father's Father

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

5 Your Father's Mother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

1 Your details go here

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

3 Your Mother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

6 Your Mother's Father

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

7 Your Mother's Mother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

8 Your Great Grandfather

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

9 Your Great Grandmother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

10 Your Great Grandfather

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

11 Your Great Grandmother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

12 Your Great Grandfather

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

13 Your Great Grandmother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

14 Your Great Grandfather

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

15 Your Great Grandmother

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

How this Works:

You are #1

All males are even numbers (unless they are #1)

All females are odd numbers

Each father's number is double the child's number

Each mother's number is double the child's number + 1

Your spouse would have a separate set of 4 generation charts.

Most genealogy programs will generate this type of chart. WMGS will accept computer generated charts.

FOUR-GENERATION LINEAGE CHART

(Numbered)

Chart No. _____

Name of Compiler _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

eMail: _____

Date: _____

b = born
m = married
d = died
p = place

8

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

9

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

10

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

11

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

12

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

13

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

14

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

15

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

4

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

5

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

2

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

1

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

6

b.
pb.
m.
pm.
d.
pd.

3

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

7

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

(spouse of #1)

b.
pb.
d.
pd.

BOOKS ON RESEARCH

Directory of Family Associations* by Elizabeth P. Bentley; Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD.

Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* by Elizabeth Shown Mills; 1997, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD

International Vital Records Handbook* by Thomas J. Kemp; 2001, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD

The Genealogist's Address Book (4th ed.)* by Elizabeth P. Bentley; 1999, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD

The Handybook (9th ed.)* – 1999, Everton Publishers, Inc., Logan, UT

Researcher's Guide to Genealogy* by Val Greenwood; Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD

The Source edited by Loretto Dennis Szucs & Sandra Hargreaves Luebking; Ancestry, Inc., Orem, UT

98 Ancestry Library* (a CD containing 7 of Ancestry's basic research books); Ancestry, Inc., Orem, UT

First Steps in Genealogy* by Desmond Walls Allen; 1998, F&W Publishing, Inc., Cincinnati, OH

Unpuzzling Your Past* by Emily A. Croom; F&W Publishing, Inc., Cincinnati, OH

American Census Handbook* by Jay Kemp; Scholarly Resources, Inc., Wilmington, DE

Note: The books with an asterisk () after the title can be purchased from the WMGS Sales Table at each monthly meeting.*

USEFUL ADDRESSES FOR RESEARCH

Grand Rapids Public Library
111 Library St.
(Temporarily located at 1100 Hynes Ave. S.W.)
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3268
www.grapids.lib.mi.us

Family History Center
Church of Jesus Christ of LDS
2780 Leonard NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
www.familysearch.com

Detroit Public Library
Burton Historical Collection
5201 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
www.detroit.lib.mi.us/burton

Allen County Public Librry
900 Webster St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46801
www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/whoweare.html

Michigan Department of Community Health
320 South Walnut St.
Lansing, MI 48913
www.mdmh.state.mi.us/

Library of MI/MI State Archives
717 W. Allegan St.
Lansing, MI 48909-7507
www.libofmich.lib.mi.us

University of Michigan
Bentley Historical Library
1150 Beal Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2113
www.umich.edu/~bhl/index.htm

The Newberry Library
60 W. Walton St.
Chicago, IL 60610-3305
www.newberry.org/nl/newberryhome.html

A Convenient Filing System For Genealogical Reference Items

It has been my experience that there is a great need for some orderly, easy-to-use and maintain system for keeping genealogical reference materials. Five years ago I was about to sink for the third time, like a non-swimmer, under a flood of letters, vital records, newspaper clippings, notes from church or census records, certificates, etc. At that time I began to develop and use the system herein described. I am sure it will continue to evolve, but it now serves me well in the following ways:

1. I know, from a short code number, how to locate each item of proof in my generation and family charts within seconds.
2. From my Surname Summary Lists, I can quickly locate any name(s) which I may run across in my searching.
3. I know from just the code number that there is evidence; either primary or secondary, for use in proof. Scanning the approximate summary list will show whether the reference is a primary or secondary source.
4. By periodically reviewing these Summary Lists, I can review all the known facts without needing to handle many documents or cards.

Elements of the System

The File Folder contains material pertaining to one surname. Each item therein is numbered with the file code and a number in order of accession for the document, as for example, Jones: JO1, JO2, etc. The folder itself bears only the designated JO-Jones. These folders are kept in a file cabinet and may be inter-filed with other material if you so choose.

The Surname Summary Sheet This abstracts the contents of a given folder. The Summary Sheets are most conveniently stored alphabetically in a separate 3-ring binder. A security copy or carbon could be filed as an index sheet in the appropriate file folder.

Setting Up the System

Here is how the system works. We will begin with someone who has not yet organized his material.

Listing. The first item at hand or located, for example, may be a birth certificate for great-grandfather George Albert Jones. Start with a typewritten (it really pays to type!) Surname Summary List headed JO-Jones and make the following entry:

JO1 Kent County, Michigan, birth record #1234, Jones, George Albert, born 31 Aug. 1867; parents William Jones and Elmira Stevens.

The second item may be a newspaper obituary of another Jones relative and entered as:

JO2 Grand Rapids Press, 10 June 1875, obituary of Agnes Jones who died 9 June 1875. Services from St. Mark's and burial at Oakhill Cemetery.

The third item might be a record copied from a family Bible:

JO3 Family Bible owned by Mrs. Mae Scarvill 123 Evans St., Greenville, Michigan. Lists the following names with birth, marriage, and death dates:
Alonzo Jones b. 13 Aug. 1850, m. 1870, d. 1890
Mary Jones b. 1854, m. 1870, etc.

If the researcher is also interested in the Stevens name mentioned in JO1, he would begin a Surname Summary Sheet for Stevens headed ST-Stevens, and item 1 might read:

ST1 Elmira Stevens mentioned as mother of George Albert Jones on his birth certificate.
Filed in JO-Jones file as JO1.

The item itself would then not need to be duplicated in the ST-Stevens file folder. Thus as each new surname of interest is added to the genealogist's area of search, he begins a new Surname Summary List. A three-letter code designation may be used in place of assigned JO for Jones. He might use JH for Johnson references instead of going to a 3-letter code. If there is any expectation of later confusion from 2-letter codes, it would be well to start with the 3-letter code system. Changing an already established code system becomes increasingly difficult as files grow.

Marking and Filing. Next the document itself should be marked for identification. For instance, the birth certificate for George Albert Jones should be marked in the upper right-hand corner with JO1 and filed in the JO-Jones file in numerical sequence.

Noting on Charts and Group Sheets. The same JO1 code number can then be written next to the birth date and place on the generation chart and family group sheet. When several conflicting or unresolved dates or places are so identified it is easier to resolve the problem by thus keeping track of these sources.

Underlining. By underlining each name in the Surname Summary Lists it is easy to scan all references when a new given name is uncovered. Those who prefer to enter names in capital letters, as is commonly done in genealogical literature, will find that also makes the names easily seen on scanning. It is a simple matter to periodically review all references to a surname in light of new discoveries. Perhaps this fact and the time one saves are the most important benefits to the genealogist.

The reader will notice that I have underscored several code numbers, for instance, JO1 and ST1. I do this to emphasize all code numbers that reference to hard evidence. Thus when I glance at a family sheet or generation chart I know which items are backed by hard evidence and which ones are merely clues.

Miscellaneous Materials. Some information (Bibles and other artifacts) can't be placed in the file folders, but I still need to refer to them in the family work book by a short code number. In this case I note their locations in the Surname Summary List. The items can also be tagged inconspicuously with code index numbers.

A good system of information preservation and retrieval must be flexible enough to serve many different people. I believe these methods are basically flexible and should prove compatible with most genealogical record systems if used consistently and accurately and are kept within clear guidelines.

Prepared by:
Curt Bradley, CG

Note: Please inform your family of the VALUE of your materials. If you detect a lack of interest on their part, instruct your family to donate your work and notes to ANY historical or genealogical group upon your death. Smaller groups are most receptive to these materials. Your hours of research will be helpful to other researchers.

APPLICATION FOR KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN, PIONEER CERTIFICATE

In order to determine eligibility for receiving a certificate, both the residence of the Pioneer ancestor in Kent County, Michigan, as well as the descent to the applicant must be documented. Fill in the following form to the best of your ability and provide the necessary proof.

- Instructions:
1. Start with yourself (applicant) as the first generation.
 2. The last generation will be the Pioneer ancestor and spouse.
 3. Fill in City, County, State for all place names.
 4. Use Maiden names only for all women.
 5. Use the following form for dates: Day/ Month/ Year, such as 12 January 1874.

Pioneer Ancestor: _____

Date and Place of Pioneer settlement in Kent County, Michigan: _____

Proof of above: _____

Email-----

Applicant name: _____ **Address:** _____

City, State, Zip _____ **Phone:** _____

1.) I, _____ was born on (date) _____

City, County, State: _____

Proof of above: _____

Who do we contact in case of questions?-----

2.) **Child of:** _____ **Spouse:** _____

Birth date/place: _____ **Birth date/place:** _____

Marriage date: _____ **Place of marriage:** _____

Death date/place: _____ **Death date/place:** _____

Proof of above: _____

3.) **Child of:** _____ **Spouse:** _____

Birth date/place: _____ **Birth date/place:** _____

Marriage date: _____ **Place of marriage:** _____

Death date/place: _____ **Death date/place:** _____

Proof of above: _____

4.) Child of: _____ Spouse: _____
Birth date/place: _____ Birth date/place: _____
Marriage date: _____ Place of marriage: _____
Death date/place: _____ Death date/place: _____
Proof of above: _____

5.) Child of: _____ Spouse: _____
Birth date/place: _____ Birth date/place: _____
Marriage date: _____ Place of marriage: _____
Death date/place: _____ Death date/place: _____
Proof of above: _____

6.) Child of: _____ Spouse: _____
Birth date/place: _____ Birth date/place: _____
Marriage date: _____ Place of marriage: _____
Death date/place: _____ Death date/place: _____
Proof of above: _____

7.) Child of: _____ Spouse: _____
Birth date/place: _____ Birth date/place: _____
Marriage date: _____ Place of marriage: _____
Death date/place: _____ Death date/place: _____
Proof of above: _____

If you need more generations to complete your descent, please attach another sheet of paper. In addition, you are invited to submit further information about your pioneer family including Family Record Sheets and Lineage charts. All material submitted will become the property of the West Michigan Genealogical Society and may be used in future publications. This does not prohibit you from publishing your own data if you should desire. Please read and sign below:

I affirm that the statements in this document are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: _____ **Date of signature:** _____