

Frequently Asked Questions on Preparing Applications

- Texas First Families
- Gone To Texas Pioneers
- West Texas Pioneers
- Descendants of Texas Ranger
- Greer County Pioneers



Who is eligible?

See page 6 and 7 of the application for the requirements for each program. The list of West Texas Pioneer counties is included below.

How long does it take to process an application?

We try to process applications within six to eight weeks. Sometimes delays are encountered due to other commitments of the program registrars and to postal delays. Applications are processed in a first come–first serve manner; receipt of many applications in a short period of time may also result in delays.

How do I apply?

1. Gather the documents that prove the family line from you back to the qualifying ancestor or the brother or sister of an ancestor:
 - For anyone who was born or died after birth and death certificates were mandated in the state of residence, provide a copy of the birth and/or death certificate, both if both exist.
 - For married couples provide a copy of the marriage certificate or record. If a woman remarries after her husband who is part of the lineage, include those later marriage records that prove her surname as included on her death record. This allows the registrar to confirm the same person is referenced in all documents.
 - When multiple marriages cause a surname to change, such as when some women change their surname to that of their husband, records of all marriages and divorces must be documented to prove the name changes. For divorce records it is not necessary to send the entire divorce decree. Only the page(s) indicating the jurisdiction, the judge's confirmation of the decree, and the woman's name(s) are needed.
2. Make photocopies of the documents to submit with your application. **DO NOT SUBMIT ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.**
 - If possible, copy documents onto letter size (8.5 x 11 inch) paper. Legal size (8.5 x 14 inch) paper can be used when necessary.
 - If possible, reduce the documents to fit on one page if the reduced size is still legible.
 - Ensure the edge of document text is inside the print range of the paper so edges are not cut off.
3. Write the source citation for each document in the margin of the document copy. If there is no blank space on the page write the citation on the back of the copy. The citation should include information needed to locate a copy of the record: the book volume and page number, date of the

record, or current record holder for an unpublished record.

Some examples of properly formatted citations used in scholarly genealogical journals today are:

- Angelina County, Texas, Marriage Book 1:56, Feliciano Acosta and Mary Pompa Montes, 14 August 1851; County Clerk's Office, Lufkin.
- John Doe Family Bible, 1836-1895; *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments; Together with the Apocrypha; Translated Out of the Original Tongues, and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised* (n.p.: Greenough and Stebbins, 1809).
- Juan Antonio Longoria land grant; Spanish Collection, box 48, folder 23; Texas General Land Office, Austin.

4. Where no official document or set of documents give evidence of a relationship or event, write an explanation of the places where you searched for the document(s) and why you believe the information to be true even with no documentary proof.
5. Print and complete the application forms. If you will be entering the data electronically save a copy of the form using a different name and enter data into that copy. This way you will still have a clean copy of the application if problems are encountered.

If you use Microsoft Word or a PDF reader that supports fillable forms, you can type the application data into the form then print the form. Adobe Acrobat Reader may allow data to be typed into the form but will not allow the data to be saved. This means if you exit the program all data entered will be lost. If you use another PDF reader, such as Foxit, Nitro, and some others, it may allow you to save the data and restart data entry later. To determine if your program allows data to be saved, enter a few lines of data in the file then save the file. Reopen the saved file. If you get a message indicating the file cannot be saved when you try to close it or if the data you entered is not in the file when it is reopened, then you can print the blank form and fill it in using a typewriter or a pen or pencil.

- Enter applicant's name as you wish it to appear on your certificate.
- Enter contact information. The address will be the place to which the certificate will be mailed if the application is accepted.
- Use the information in the documents gathered to complete the application (pages 1 through 5). These pages **MUST** be supplied for each applicant even if multiple applications are mailed together.
 - Do not include information for which no proof document is available. If no proof is known leave the field blank. Estimating a birth year based on age in census records is acceptable if the census records are included in the application packet.
 - Derivative information from printed or online indexes, abstracted records, transcribed records, and family histories are not accepted as proof. Those derivative sources can be used as clues for where to locate the original documents. For example, if a marriage is documented in a book of Polk County, Texas, Marriages, use the information in that book to order a copy of the original record from the county clerk.
 - Proof of the relationship link between parent and child **must** be provided for

each generation. If no birth or death record or Bible pages name a parent the link can be supported with indirect evidence such as a child in the census household of a presumed parent or named in a will, probate case, deed record or similar document. Where evidence is scant it may be necessary to write an essay explaining why you believe there is a parent-child link between two generations. This essay can be included in the documents for the appropriate generation as listed in the organization section below.

- In the section titled "Sources documents proving these facts" enter a brief description of the documents that prove the birth, marriage, death, and links between generations.

Abbreviations can be used. BC indicates birth certificate or record. DC indicates death certificate or record. MR indicates marriage record. CNS indicates a census record.

- If there is not enough space in any field for the data you need to enter, use the blank page 6 to add numbered notes. Mark the place on the application where the information applies as “See note 1” etc. using the appropriate note number.
6. Once the forms are completed carefully proofread the data and make any necessary corrections.
 7. Assemble the application packet then mail it to the address given above:
 - Organize the documents in the same order as the generations in the Line of Descent Chart:
 - Application forms, Line of Descent Chart with Proof of Descent
 - Generation One – applicant – applicant’s birth certificate; if married, applicant’s spouse’s birth certificate, and applicant’s marriage record
 - Generation Two – applicant’s parents – birth certificates for both parents, marriage record, death certificates if the parents are no longer living
 - and so on to and including the generation of the qualifying ancestor
 - “Ancestor’s Proof of Qualifying Service or Residence”
 - Qualification – a copy of the documents that prove the ancestor or collateral relative qualifies the applicant for a certificate
 - Write applicant’s name and the generation number on the back of each document. This allows documents to be regrouped properly if inadvertently separated.
 - If any documents contain social security numbers, please black out that portion of the document being careful not to obscure other information.

What format should be used for dates?

- The best format to use when entering dates is “day month year” as in 5 May 1842.
- Any format with numbers separated by slashes should **not** be used.

What things should NOT be done?

- Do not staple pages together. If necessary, use paper clips to group pages.
- Do not use highlighters or any form of stickers to bring attention to sections of a document. If necessary, a colored pen or pencil can be used to underline or draw an arrow to a particular word or phrase as long as the text of the document is not obscured except as stated above for social security numbers.

Do I need multiple copies of each document when several applications are submitted for the same qualifying ancestor?

- Pages 1 through 5 must be submitted for each applicant and for each certificate for the applicant.
- Only one copy of a document needs to be submitted when multiple applications shipped together reference the same document.
- When a document is included in only one application make a note so indicating on the other applications. For example, “BC for John Doe included in app for Jane Smith” to indicate one copy of the birth certificate for John Doe is in the application packet for Jane Smith and also proves the birth of John Doe needed for the current applicant.

Do I need document copies when another relative has already qualified for a certificate?

- Document copies should be included even if the lineage is the same as that used in an approved application. As applications are processed, they are periodically shipped to our archival facility and may not be available to the program registrar.

How do I obtain copies of original marriage, birth, and death records?

Record copies can be ordered from many of the repositories listed below. Some of these locations have online indexes and databases to allow you to search for an ancestor's record. Some will require a visit to the office to search for records. Local and genealogical libraries also have many records on microfilm.

- The date when each state mandated recording all births and deaths varies. Most southern states did not mandate recording until the early 20th century. For Texas, 1903 is the year in which the state mandated all births and deaths be recorded. An earlier law required recording births and death from 1873 to 1876. In the early years there was not 100% compliance with the law. This means sometimes a birth or death record that should exist cannot be found, but you should always look for the record in one of the following places:
 - FamilySearch online index – <http://beta.familysearch.org/> or <http://familysearch.org/>
 - Online Searchable Death Indexes – <http://www.deathindexes.com/>
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Where to Write for Vital Records – <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>
 - Texas Department of Health Services, Texas Vital Statistics – <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/default.shtm>
 - Other state's departments of health
 - County Clerk's offices – search for „texas “county clerks” „, without the single quotes or see <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/cclerks.shtml>
- Marriage records can be found at:
 - County Clerk's offices – search for „texas “county clerks” „, without the single quotes or see <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/cclerks.shtml>
 - State departments of health, sometimes and for some years
- Proof of residence or service to the Republic of Texas can be found at:
 - Texas State Library and Archives Commission – <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/>
 - Texas General Land Office – <http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/the-collection/land-grants/index.html> or other pages at the site <http://www.glo.texas.gov/>
- Proof of service to the Texas Rangers can be found at:
 - Texas Rangers Hall of Fame and Museum – <http://www.texasranger.org/>
 - Texas State Library and Archives Commission – <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/>
- Proof of residence in Texas at a Qualifying Time:
 - County deed books at county clerk offices – search for „texas “county clerks” „, without the single quotes or see

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/cclerks.shtml>

- Texas General Land Office – <http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/the-collection/land-grants/index.html> or other pages at the site <http://www.glo.texas.gov/>
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission – <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/>

Where are genealogical libraries that may have records needed?

- Dallas Public Library.
- Clayton Library for Genealogical Research, Houston.
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
- Many local and county libraries have local history and genealogical collections.
- Family History Library in Salt Lake City / <http://www.familysearch.org>

What if I need help proving my lineage and finding documents?

- Some organizations offer free help:
 - A researcher's list at your local library or genealogical society
 - Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness – <http://www.raogk.org/>
 - An experienced friend
- Some professional genealogists offer lineage society preparation services. Some places to look for professional assistance or experienced researchers are:
 - Association of Professional Genealogists
 - International association – <http://apgen.org/>
 - Lone Star Chapter – <http://lonestarapg.com/>
 - Board for Certification of Genealogists – <http://www.bcgcertification.org/>
 - East Texas Genealogical Society Researcher's List – <http://www.etgs.org/research.html>
 - Texas State Library list of researchers for hire – <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/researchers.html>

What counties qualify for a West Texas Pioneer certificate?

- Andrews, Archer, Armstrong
- Bailey, Bandera, Baylor, Blanco, Borden, Brewster, Briscoe, Brown, Burnet
- Callahan, Carson, Castro, Childress, Clay, Cochran, Coke, Coleman, Collingsworth, Comanche, Concho, Coryell, Cottle, Crane, Crockett, Crosby, Culberson
- Dallam, Dawson, Deaf Smith, Dickens, Dimmit, Donley
- Eastland, Ector, Edwards, El Paso, Erath
- Fisher, Floyd, Foard, Frio
- Gaines, Garza, Gillespie, Glasscock, Gray
- Hale, Hall, Hamilton, Hansford, Hardeman, Hartley, Haskell, Hemphill, Hockley, Howard, Hudspeth, Hutchinson

- Irion
- Jack, Jeff Davis, Jones
- Kendall, Kent, Kerr, Kimble, King, Kinney, Knox
- La Salle, Lamb, Lampasas, Lipscomb, Llano, Loving, Lubbock, Lynn
- Martin, Mason, Maverick, McCulloch, Medina, Menard, Midland, Mills, Mitchell, Moore, Motley
- Nolan
- Ochiltree, Oldham
- Palo Pinto, Parmer, Pecos, Potter, Presidio
- Randall, Reagan, Real, Reeves, Roberts, Runnels
- San Saba, Schleicher, Scurry, Shackelford, Sherman, Stephens, Sterling, Stonewall, Sutton, Swisher
- Taylor, Terrell, Terry, Throckmorton, Tom Green
- Upton, Uvalde
- Val Verde
- Ward, Webb, Wheeler, Wichita, Wilbarger, Winkler
- Yoakum, Young
- Zapata, Zavala

Where can I find resources on Greer County?

One resource that everyone should have bookmarked as a favorite site on the internet for Texas information is "Handbook of Texas Online" at www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/index.html. The handbook has an extensive article about the history of Greer County compiled by Webb L. Moore which can be viewed at www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/GG/hcg81.html.

The Handbook article also lists several sources that were used. The first is an article by Berlin B. Chapman, "The Claim of Texas to Greer County," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 53 (July 1949). Another article is by Grant Foreman, "Red River and the Spanish Boundary in the Supreme Court," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 2 (March 1924). The third is by Webb L. Moore, *The Greer County Question* (San Marcos, Texas: Press of the San Marcos Record, 1939). The fourth reference is to compilation by John and Henry Sayles, comps., *Early Laws of Texas* (St. Louis: Gilbert, 1891). The final reference is to the court case as shown by *United States Supreme Court Reports, Oklahoma vs. Texas* (Vols. 272, 281).

Other resources include the TXGenWeb site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgreer/> and the OKGenWeb site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~okgreer/otgreer.htm>. Each site has a history of the area and listings of historical resources. The TXGenWeb Archives project site at www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/tx/greer/greertoc.htm has a few files. The OKGenWeb Archives has many files located at www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/ok/greer/greer.html. Two other sources with extensive notes are located on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greer_County,_Texas and on the freepage part of rootsweb at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~swokla/greer/greer.html>.

A Greer County mailing list was started on rootsweb for anyone with a genealogical interest in Greer County, Texas, a defunct Texas county, that existed from 1860 to 1896 in the Indian Territory. Greer County was comprised of all of present day Greer, Jackson and Harmon Counties in Oklahoma and parts of present day Beckham County, Oklahoma, and Lipscomb, Hemphill, Wheeler, Collingsworth and Childress Counties in Texas. For questions about this list, contact the list administrator at TX-GREER-admin@rootsweb.com. To subscribe or join the TX-GREER-L, send an e-mail to TX-GREER-L-request@rootsweb.com or TX-GREER-D-request@rootsweb.com with the single word subscribe in the message subject and body. Anybody may join and send e-mails to the list that are resent to anyone who is a member of the list or saved in the public archives for anyone to browse. The list administrator may also add you to the list.

A resource in addition to the mailing list is the Ancestry Bulletin Board that can be found at <http://boards.ancestry.com/localities.northam.usa.states.texas.counties.greer/mb.ashx>. Questions can be posted that can be later answered. You can later browse these at any time.

In the 1860 US census, Greer County area residents were found in the Young County, Texas census enumeration.