

Society of Civil War Families of Indiana

Rules of Evidence

1. The dates of service must be between 12 April 1861 [The Confederate firing on Fort Sumter] and 18 April 1865 [The surrender of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston to Union General William T. Sherman at Durham Station, NC.]
2. The nature and extent of the evidence submitted must be sufficient to show that the applicant is a direct descendant of the person who performed for the Union. Documentation must differentiate between any two persons of the same name.
3. Each document submitted, primary or secondary, must include a full citation with volume and page number [As: Marriage Records, Allen County, Indiana, Vol. 1, Page 33] Copies of vital records must be from the appropriate government agency.
4. In the absence of a vital record, two secondary proofs are required, as a newspaper entry, contemporary county history, or family Bible record.
5. Proof of Military Service must be from official sources, as enlistment, discharge, pension, or other government documents.
6. Documents, either alone or with other acceptable materials, must actually state the fact to be proved. Assumed relationships, unnamed individuals, and generic terms are not acceptable as proof.
7. Female ancestors must be identified by their maiden names, and, if married, their marriages proved. Each legal name change must be documented.
8. Tombstone photographs may be acceptable if the inscription is legible and the stone is contemporary with the inscription. Cemetery burial records and funeral home records are acceptable.
9. Bible records must include a photocopy of the title page, the publication date, and the current owner's name and address.
10. Secondary evidence used, such as census pages, newspaper articles, county histories, must include full citations. These materials must be used in supporting roles only and must be combined in ways to convincingly support the relationship being documented.
11. Documents presented in a foreign language must be accompanied by a full translation, certified as true by an impartial translator.
12. Old letters, diaries, or family records can only be accepted as documentation for the facts the writer could know first hand. The writer must be sufficiently identified.
13. Printed or manuscript genealogies, family group sheets and charts, personal pedigree charts, family reunion records and similar compiled materials will not be considered as documentation. Lineage papers from other patriotic or hereditary societies will not be considered as documentation.
14. The judgment of the SCWFI Evaluation Committee as regards sufficient and proper evidence will be final. The Committee will notify applicants regarding which relationships are insufficiently proven, and applicants will be allowed to correct errors and submit additional required documentation.