



INFORMATION CIRCULAR

of the

GENERAL SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
General Society of Colonial Wars APRIL 22, 2003

The first Society of Colonial Wars was established in 1892, and became the General Society of Colonial Wars in 1893. The General Society is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It charters individual State Societies, and it is in one or more of the State Societies that an individual holds membership. The aggregate of the State Societies constitutes the General Society. At the present time there are Societies in the following States/Countries:

Alabama	Kentucky	North Carolina
British Isles	Louisiana	Ohio
California	Maine	Pennsylvania
Colorado	Maryland	Rhode Island
Connecticut	Massachusetts	South Carolina
Delaware	Michigan	Tennessee
District of Columbia	Mississippi	Texas
Florida	Missouri	Vermont
Georgia	New Hampshire	Virginia
Illinois	New Jersey	Wisconsin
Indiana	New York	

PURPOSES

The Preamble of the Articles of Incorporation of the General Society reads:

“WHEREAS, It is desirable that there should be adequate celebrations commemorative of the events of Colonial History which took place within the period beginning with the settlement of Jamestown, Va., May 13, 1607, and preceding the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775;

THEREFORE, The Society of Colonial Wars is instituted to perpetuate the memory of those events, and of the men who, in military, naval, and civil positions of high trust and responsibility, by their acts or counsel, assisted in the establishment, defense, and preservation of the American Colonies, and who were in truth founders of this Nation. To this end, it seeks to collect and preserve manuscripts, rolls, relics, and records; to hold

suitable commemorations, and to erect memorials relating to the American Colonial period; to inspire in its members the fraternal and patriotic spirit of their forefathers, and to inspire in the community respect and reverence for those whose public services made our freedom and unity possible.”

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Article II of the Bylaws provides:

“Any male above the age of eighteen years, of good moral character and reputation, shall be eligible to membership in the Society of Colonial Wars, provided he be lineally descended in the male or female line from an ancestor:

{1} Who served as a military or naval officer, or as a soldier, sailor, or marine, or as a privateers man, under authority of any of the Colonies which afterward formed the United States, or in the forces of Great Britain which participated with those of the said Colonies in any wars in which the said Colonies were engaged, or in which they enrolled men, during the period from the settlement of Jamestown, May 13, 1607, to the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775; or

{2} Who held office in any of the Colonies between the dates above mentioned, as:

- (a) Director General, Vice Director General, or member of the Council, or legislative body in the Colony the New Netherlands;
- (b) Governor, Lieutenant or Deputy Governor, Lord Proprietor, member of the King's or Governor's Council, or of the legislative body, in the Colony of New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Pennsylvania, or Delaware;
- (c) Lord Proprietor, Governor, Deputy Governor, or member of the council, or of the legislative body in Maryland, the Carolinas, or Georgia;
- (d) Governor, Deputy Governor, Governor's Assistant, or Commissioner to the United Colonies of New England, or member of the Council, body of Assistants, or legislative body, in any of the New England Colonies.
- (e) Justice, Judge, Justice of the Peace or other judicial officer.

No State Society shall adopt any rule of eligibility for membership other than that prescribed in this Article.

Membership in the Society shall not be held completed until the application papers relating thereto have been approved by the Registrar General.”

The following rules regulate the proof of eligibility and descent, and construe the foregoing Bylaw:

1. The correctness of statements as to eligibility and pedigree must be proved by reference to original sources or to authoritative works containing quotations from or references to such sources and by certified or sworn copies of records and documents in conformity with these rules.
2. Public or family tradition alone will not be accepted as proof.
3. Public records must be proved by duly certified or sworn copies. Documents not public records must be proved by sworn copies or facsimile reproductions.
4. References to records or printed books must clearly indicate the citation and give title or description, and volume and page, and the edition if there is more than one.
5. Where eligibility is claimed based upon military service, it is necessary to show membership in an organized military unit. Service cannot be presumed because of military titles used in Probate or Registry Records or on Tombstones or the like. Claims based on alleged service in the Plymouth Companies, so-called, of 1643, will not be accepted merely because the ancestor's name appears on the lists given in the Plymouth Records, Pierce's Colonial Lists, Bodge, etc., as such lists are merely lists of men between the ages of sixteen and sixty able to do military duty, and not rosters organized Military Companies. It is not sufficient to show that an ancestor was "killed by the Indians;" it is incumbent on the applicant to show that the ancestor was qualified under the eligibility clauses of the Constitution.
6. Where a claim is based on service in the British Forces, applicant must show that the British unit participated with the forces of the Colonies in military duties or that the Colonies raised troops to take part in the war in which the British troops engaged. It is not sufficient to show only that the ancestor was in the British military or naval service.
7. The expression "Governor's Council of New Jersey" is to be construed to include those persons associated, with the Governor in the government of the Province or Colony as a Council. Membership in the Council of Proprietors does not constitute eligibility.
8. The terms "Governor," "Lieutenant Governor" and "Deputy Governor," are to be construed to include only the Officers with those titles of the thirteen colonies that united to form the United States and not officials of settlements or portions of colonies, such as Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard, that had local officers sometimes called by, these names.
9. The term "Lord Proprietor" is to be construed to apply to such Proprietors as William Penn and Lord Baltimore, who were equivalent to Governors in the Charter and Royal Colonies, and not to the Patrons or Lords of the Manor, so-called in New York, or other colonies. The term Lord Proprietor in New Jersey is to be construed to include all those persons who were proprietors until the surrender of the right of

government to the Crown in 1702.

10. The term “Commissioner” is to be construed to apply only to Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England, and does not include Indian or other Commissioners appointed in New York and other colonies.

11. The expression “Legislative Body” includes only a body having authority to make laws and does not include Conventions or other bodies having power only to protest or remonstrate. The Twelve Men, the Eight Men, and the Nine Men of New Amsterdam will not be accepted as qualifying ancestors.

PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Normally an applicant will seek membership in the Society in the State of his residence. But there is no prohibition against his joining another State Society. Application blanks in duplicate will be issued by the State Secretary upon the request of a member of the society. Application blanks are not issued by the Secretary General.

Both application blanks must be completed and signed and acknowledged before a notary. They must bear the endorsement of two members of the State society as sponsors of the applicant. One copy is destined for the records of the Registrar General. Information as to dues, examination charges and initiation fees may be obtained from State Secretaries.

An applicant may not enter the Society upon more than one qualifying ancestor, and a qualifying ancestor may be used for admission by any number of descendants.

SUPPLEMENTALS

After election to membership the Society welcomes supplemental claims of descent. Forms are available from State Secretaries and Registrars. The same detailed genealogy and record of services are required as in the original application. Supplementals also must be filed in duplicate. Two or more ancestors may be submitted upon one supplemental form, provided the filing and examination charges are paid for each ancestor. But if one ancestor is rejected, the supplemental must be rewritten to show only the services of the accepted ancestor(s).

PARAPHERNALIA AND CERTIFICATES OF MEMBERSHIP

General Society lapel rosettes, four-in-hand ties and bow ties are available from Central Office of the General Society. The Central Office can also supply applications for handsome Certificates of Membership. Other paraphernalia, including the badge of the Society, State Officers’ neck ribbons, General Officers’ sashes, blazer patches, War Service Medals, Governors’ emblems and the *Centennial History* of the Society are provided, to the extent available, by the Treasurer General.

THE GRANT PROGRAM

In addition to its direct grants for purposes set forth in its Articles of Incorporation, each year the General Society provides a fund which is allocated among the State Societies to supplement grants made by them for the purposes consistent with the General Society's purposes expressed in its Articles. This fund is allocated based on a formula adopted by the General Society.

THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS COLLECTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

The General Society of Colonial Wars Collection at the University of Baltimore was established in 1988 to preserve and make available the historically significant records created by the Society and to build a resource collection on the Colonial Period in America. An endowment fund has been established in the University of Baltimore Educational Foundation to support this collection and contributions are welcomed. Included in the Collection are:

Yearbooks	Minutes
Muster Rolls	Honor Rolls
State Reports	Registers
State Histories	Supplements
State Publications	Committee Reports
Gazettes Speeches	Paraphernalia

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