



# Roger Williams

## FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Incorporated January 30, 1906

### Application Guidelines

Hello!

We're glad you are interested in an application to the Roger Williams Family Association.

You likely already know that Roger Williams stood for religious freedom and liberty of conscience, and he was against using charters to take away land from Indians. After being banished from Massachusetts for these "new and dangerous opinions" he established Providence as a place for those seeking religious freedom.

Roger Williams preached love, tolerance, and acceptance of others. His legacy and his spirit still resonate and guide us today.

People who would like to apply as members of the Roger Williams Family Association are sometimes not quite sure how, especially with respect to goes on the application form and what is needed for documentation. The purpose of this document is to offer help with the application and suggestions for finding documentation.

There is a lot of information presented here that may answer questions you have and even some that you may not, please read through the entire document.

### Applying

The application form is available at:

<https://www.rogerwilliams.org/assets/files/Application-Membership.pdf>

and the procedure for applying is at:

<https://www.rogerwilliams.org/membership.html>

The first page of the application form asks for your name and other information such as address, e-mail, and type of membership desired; this is straightforward. However, the remaining pages ask about documenting the line you have from Roger Williams, and that is where people have the most questions. It is to there that these guidelines are directed.

## Guidelines

Before describing guidelines for what should be in an application package, it may be useful to know what should not.

- Simply listing generations or providing links to sites such as Ancestry.com is not acceptable, and
- In no case are unpublished manuscripts, memoirs, family chronicles, or personal recollections acceptable for documentation. While these may be cherished, they are too subjective to be used for sources of documentation.

Each generation on your application form needs to include the following:

1. The name of the descendant,
2. The information for dates and locations of birth, marriage, and death, with specific importance for the descendant,
3. Citation(s) to reference documentation, and
4. Separate page(s) with copies of documents comprising that documentation and matching the citations.

The earlier generations after Roger Williams have been extensively documented and the information for an application should be easy to find. Also, information tends to be more accessible for recent generations and possibly already be in a family's possession.

It may also be easier if you are already a member, or if a sibling, parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent have been. If so, please see the Appendix.

Regardless, often it is the generations that intervene between the earliest and most recent that require some digging to find documentation which can be time-consuming. This can take some work, but it's good to keep in mind that "The easier my application is to verify the easier it will be to approve."

## Documentation

Sources of documentation include publications and original documents, and as they are used most frequently each is described in turn.

Note that links to web sites can be used to confirm and support hard-copies you send.

Links to websites can be used in place of hard-copies only in certain cases – please see the section below for details.

## Publications

Several books can be considered as authoritative and should be preferred sources for documentation. The first is a series of books published by the Roger Williams Family Association. This series is the *Descendants of Roger Williams* and the individual books in it are:

Book I: The Waterman and Winsor Lines Through His Daughter Mercy Williams

Book II: The Hart Line Through His Daughter Freeborn Williams

Book III: The Sayles Line Through His Daughter Mary Williams

Book IV: Through His Son Joseph Williams

Book V: Through His Son Daniel Williams

This series has extensive coverage of the first generations from Roger Williams and can be considered authoritative sources. The books available in many Rhode Island libraries and through our website at <https://www.rogerwilliams.org/publications.html>.

Another preferred source is the two volumes of *Roger Williams of Providence*. These are also considered authoritative:

*Roger Williams of Providence* by Bertha Anthony and Harriet Weeden, 1949 and

*Roger Williams of Providence* Vol 2 by Bertha Anthony, 1966

The second volume updates and extends the first to cover descendants up to the time of publication in the mid 1960's. While still not 100% complete, people have been able to find their own names listed. These books are available in libraries, especially in Rhode Island, and they may also be available online.

Other publications to use as sources for documentation include the following:

Vital records are maintained at the state, county, and town level governments by various groups such as a state department of Health or town clerk offices can be contacted for them.

Universities such as Roger Williams University and historic commissions such as the Rhode Island Historical Society (<https://www.rihs.org/>) may have archives accessible in libraries, museums, and sometimes online.

Publications of vital records are often useful. One example is *Vital record of Rhode Island: 1636-1850* by James Arnold that was published in 1983. This is a series of books, each covering a different group of counties.

There are also books that have been published to detail the ancestry for a single family, typically listing descendants of an early settler such as Thomas Olney, John Lippitt, Arthur Fenner, or William Arnold. These should be used to supplement the books listed

above wherever possible. In no case are unpublished manuscripts, memoirs, family chronicles, or personal recollections acceptable.

Here is an example of how to use publications on an application. The example below shows the seventh generation from Roger Williams on an application form. The seventh-generation descendant is William Lippitt. Note that his dates of birth and death are included along with their locations. Also included is the date and location of his marriage to Eliza Seamans and her birth and death dates and locations.

7. Warren Lippitt, born at Providence, Rhode Island on 25 September 1786,

died at Providence, Rhode Island on 22 January 1850,

married at Providence, Rhode Island on 7 July 1811 to:

Eliza Seamans, born at Providence, Rhode Island on 20 February 1792,

died at Providence, Rhode Island on 7 April 1811. Their daughter was:

SOURCE(S) White, *Descendants of Roger Williams, Book 1*, 9, 166-167; Christopher C. Child and Maureen A. Taylor, *Descendants of John Lippitt of Providence and Warwick, Rhode Island*, 80-81, 91.

Note that this information is supported by two citations; multiple citations for each fact are not required but do provide a higher level of support.

Both citations in this example are for publications:

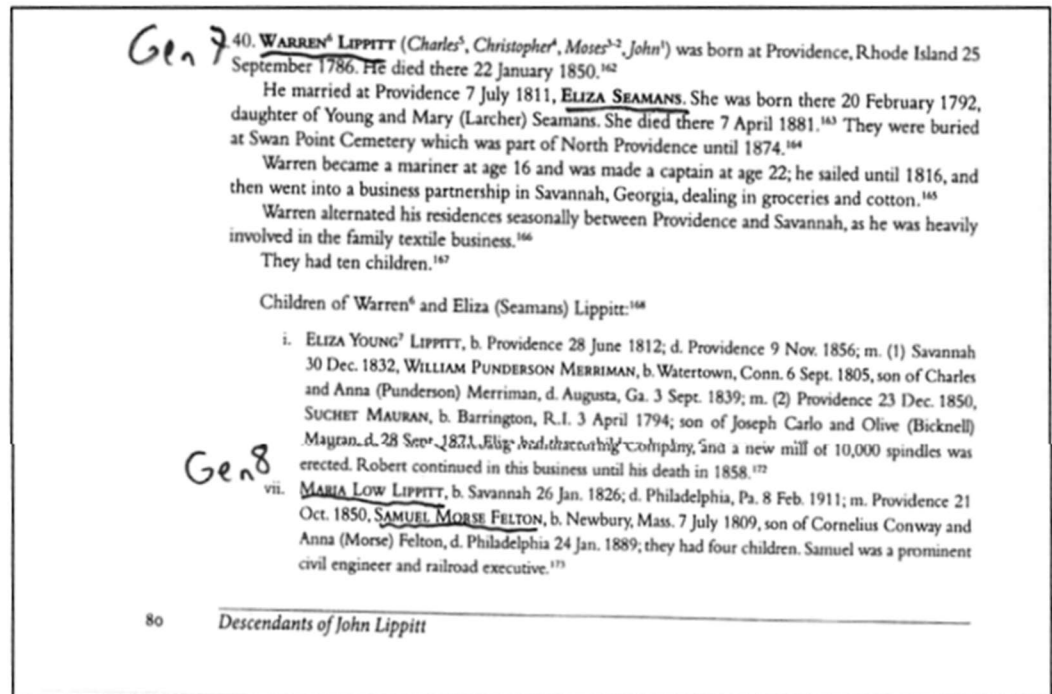
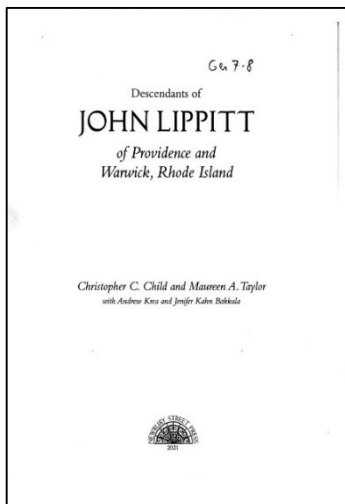
1. The first citation is to Book 1 published by the Roger Williams Family Association. The citation lists the author, Dorothy White, and the book title, *Descendants of Roger Williams Book 1*.  
Very importantly - the citation includes page numbers where the documentation can be found.
2. The second citation is to a book of genealogy named *Descendants of John Lippitt of Providence and Warwick, Rhode Island* and - again very importantly - the citation includes page numbers where the documentation can be found. Ideally the year of publication would also be included.

Each citation needs to have a copy of the matching document(s) included in the application package with the exception of the Roger Williams Family Association books.

A URL with a link to a source document can be used only if the following conditions are met:

1. All URLs need to link directly to the source document. Links leading to information behind paywalls are not acceptable, and URLs must lead directly to a source document without the need for logging into a site or for entering search terms.
2. An electronic copy of the application that contains the URLs included must be e-mailed to the Registrar as either a Word document or a pdf file. Before e-mailing it, please check the links in the document by clicking on them to be sure they lead to the correct source documents.

For the source documents for the example above, copies of pages from a book on Lippitt descendants would be included with the application for documentation. A copy of the title page from that book is included; this may be especially important if the citation isn't complete.



It is also important to show the generation number in the documentation. Referring to the application form above, Warren Lippitt is listed be a 7<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of Roger Williams. The copy of the book page clearly indicates this.

The application form lists Warren Lippitt's date and location of birth, date and location of death, and the same information for his wife Eliza Seamans. It also lists the date and location of their marriage. These are again clearly indicated on the book page copy.

The application form also shows Maria Low Lippitt as the daughter of Warren Lippitt in the 8<sup>th</sup> generation from Roger Williams. This, and the other information on the form, is clearly indicated on the copy of the same book page and so is well-documented.

Most important is that every citation on an application form has copies of documentation, and that each piece of documentation clearly indicates where the citation is located on the application with a generation number.

### Original Documents

Documentation not found in publications might be found from original documents. These can include official birth, marriage, and death certificates. Some may already be in possession of the family.

They may also be available in vital records maintained at state, county, and town-level governments. You may be able to contact state departments of Health, town clerk offices, or other agencies for these documents to get official copies.

Census data can help establish relationships and years of birth and may fill more than recent gaps since the US census was conducted since 1790.

Websites such as Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.com may have original documents that can be downloaded for your application.

Please make sure all copies are readable! The print on some documents, such as some census pages, can be small so may need to be enlarged; remember that if it can't be read then it can't be evaluated.

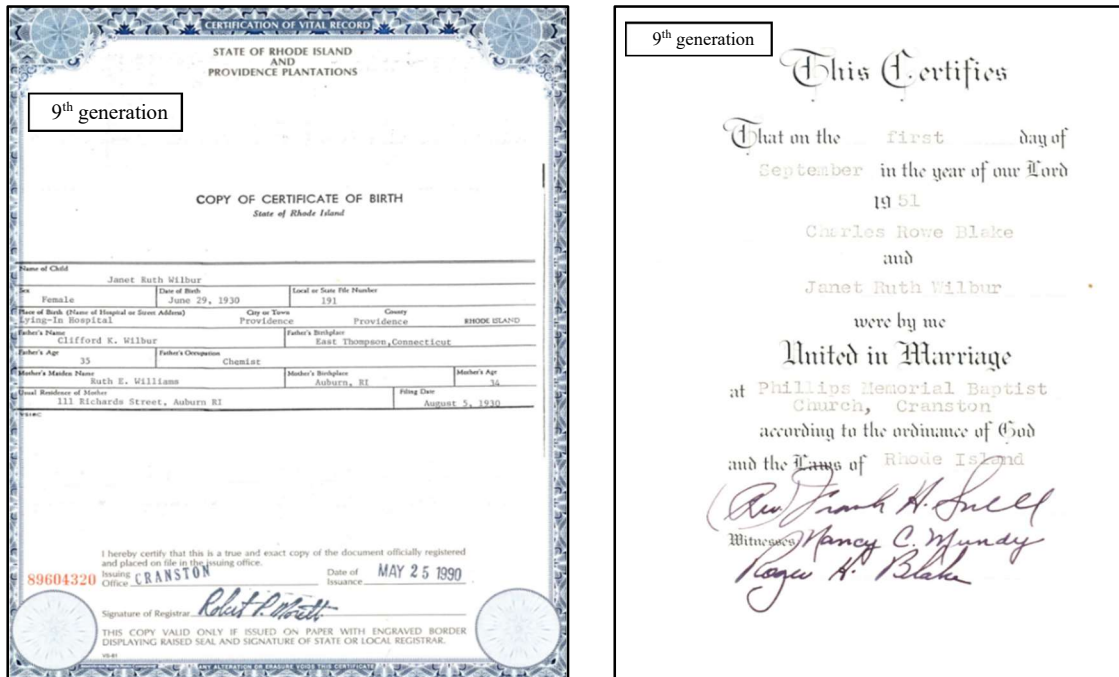
As with publications, original documents need to have the Source indicated on the application form, but for these only the type of original document is needed since a copy of it is included in the package.

The following is an example of providing copies of original documents as documentation in an application. In this example the applicant is in the 9th generation of Roger Williams, which is the last generation listed on the form and so both date of death and name of offspring are left blank.

9. Janet Wilbur born at Providence, RI on Jun 29, 1930,  
died at - on -,  
married at Cranston, RI on Sep 1, 1951 to:  
Charles Blake, born at Westerly, RI on Mar 19, 1927,  
died at Hanover, NH on Jul 11, 1985. Their            (son/dtr) was:  
SOURCES: Birth certificate, marriage certificate.

The items mentioned on the line for SOURCES are “Birth certificate, marriage certificate” and a copy of each is included with the application package.

Here are the copies of original documents used for this example:



Note that the generation number these documents are for on the application – in this case, the 9th – is indicated on each copy.

As noted earlier, URL's linking to source documents on the web can be used as long as:

1. All URLs need to link directly to the source document. Links leading to information behind paywalls are not acceptable, and URLs must lead directly to a source document without the need for logging into a site or for entering search terms.
2. An electronic copy of the application that contains the URLs included must be e-mailed to the Registrar as either as a Word document or a pdf file. Before e-mailing the document, please check all of the links by clicking on them to make sure they lead to the correct source documents.

## Summary

This document is intended to help in preparing an application for membership, please review it thoroughly. Before sending an application, please check that:

- ❑ The application is completely filled-in, with all information on the form for each generation included from Roger Williams to the applicant.
- ❑ All source documents meet the criteria described here and included in the reference for each generation on the application form.
- ❑ Hard copies of all source documents each with the generation number clearly indicated are included.
- ❑ URL's must lead directly to source documents and need to be in an electronic copy of the application sent to the Registrar in addition to the hard copy.

The guidelines outlined here are answers to some most frequently asked questions about what should be on an application form and what documentation should be included in an application package. These guidelines are not meant to be exacting specifications, nor are they meant to be onerous. Instead, they are intended to show what a completed application should have in order to help verify descendency from Roger Williams.

Individual situations and family histories vary, and if you have questions please get in touch with our Registrar; the current contact information can be found at <https://www.rogerwilliams.org/officers-directors.html>.

The Roger Williams Family Association was formed to honor and preserve the memory of Roger Williams and to promote communication among his descendants. Today there are thousands of RWFA members across the United States and in countries around the world. We hold a series of events during the year which includes talks by authors, presentations by experts, tours of historic sites, and holiday celebrations. A tour of England to follow in the steps of Roger Williams is on the drawing board.

We look forward to your application and hope that you will join us!



## Appendix – Family members

Is there someone in your family who is already a member of the Roger Williams Family Association? It may be a sibling, parent, or grandparent, and many members would like to include their children as members, often as gifts.

The documentation on a previously approved is still valid. Someone descended from a previously approved member can start their application by copying the information for relevant generations from that previously approved application. If you do not have a copy of that original application for someone you believe was a member, then please contact the Registrar ( <https://www.rogerwilliams.org/officers-directors.html>) to see if it is available in the archives.

Documentation is still required for the applicant and any generations intervening between the applicant and member in the original application; the guidelines outlined in this document apply for these.

There needs to be a separate application for each person applying, and for each there needs to be a copy of the original application that was previously approved.