

Instructions for Applying for First Families of the Tennessee Valley

Many families moved into the area now called the Tennessee Valley well before statehood, when it was still Indian Territory. In 1798 an act of Congress created the Mississippi Territory, which included all the area now in Alabama and Mississippi north of 31 degrees and south of 32 degrees, 28 minutes. Madison County became a county in 1809. Finally, during the war of 1812, Congress seized the Mobile District of West Florida and thus completed the Territory.

The act of March 3, 1817 created the Alabama territory, establishing its boundaries, making Mississippi Territorial law applicable, and making St. Stephens the new capital. Alabama grew so rapidly that there were only two sessions of the territorial legislature before statehood. President Monroe signed the bill for Alabama's admission as a state on December 14, 1819.

First Families is a project of the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society to find those persons who lived in the Tennessee Valley prior to December 14, 1819. Anyone applying for First Families of Tennessee Valley must be a member of the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society. If one of your ancestors qualifies, please submit your application.

There are two things you have to prove:

1. You must prove that before 14 December 1819, one of your ancestors lived in one of the nine counties of North Alabama in the Tennessee Valley. These are Colbert, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall and Morgan counties.

AND

2. You must prove that you are a direct lineal descendant of that ancestor, proving the bloodline in each and every generation.

Your ancestor didn't have to stay here indefinitely, but he or she had to have lived here before that date.

You apply by completing an application form available on the TVGS website or obtained by requesting one by mail, attaching documentation of proof and a non-refundable \$25 application fee per ancestor for First Families of the Tennessee Valley, which includes a certificate for each ancestor. A \$10 fee will be charged for each replacement/additional certificate. Make checks out to **TVGS-First Families**. Send package to: **Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1568, Huntsville, AL 35807 Att: First Families Registrar.**

When Filling Out Your Application Please Note These Requirements:

1. Names of all persons must be spelled out completely. Initials should not be used if the name is known. Use full maiden names of female ancestors without married surnames.
2. Birth and death dates and locations are to be proven for both spouses in each generation.
3. Proof of all marriages must be furnished.
4. Provide COPIES only of all documentation for each generation – *do not send originals*.
5. Do not send family group sheets, family stories, or other non-proof items. All documentation submitted must prove information on the application.

Some examples of documentation include:

Census Records 1850-1940 (including top of sheet showing date and place); Birth, Death, Marriage and Bible Records; (Bible Records should be contemporary to event, relationships should be explicitly stated. Certified transcripts or photocopies of the information and the title page must be sent.)

Military, Land and Estate Records

Wills;

Obituaries, Tombstone Inscriptions or Photographs;

Cemetery Records (include name and location).

6. Proof from printed material must have attached to the referenced pages, the title page of the publication showing volume, author,

- publisher, and date of publication. Statements based on family tradition and abstracts of existing documents are not acceptable.
7. *All documents must be legible.* If the information is difficult to read, please furnish a transcription.
 8. Each document must have a *complete citation written on the copy.*
 9. Please write *on the front of each document* the generation for which it is proof, and *underline* in red pen or pencil *only*, all the pertinent information.
 10. Put the name of the applicant on the back of each document. Send *only* documents pertaining to your lineage.
 11. *Sign* the application in space provided.

Check out our website (www.tvgs.org.) for names of those ancestors who have already been certified as First Families of the Tennessee Valley. If you need a membership application, please go to the website and submit membership dues along with your application for First Families.

Please join us in finding these early residents; we welcome your applications.

Karol Kapustka, Registrar