04 April 2019   Rev. 1   George S. Thomas, PhD

Subject: Using Book Reference on SAR Applications

A word about using book references on applications. This can be a challenging topic, since there are only general guidelines for what are acceptable and unacceptable book references.   SAR says they evaluate each book on a case-by-case basis.

There are two pages included with this paper from the SAR Application Manual.

Page 41 is an example of an acceptable book, you can see all the source information is provided. But, keep in mind some genealogists may want copies of the source documents too.

Also, attached is page 43 from the manual, showing an unacceptable book reference.   There is no source information provided. These, unfortunately, tend to be the more common book types we find. More often than not, they are written by a layman or a family member, not a professional genealogist.

The Application Manual gives these black and white examples, but there is a gray area.   The page of the book shown on page 43, by itself is clearly unacceptable as proof. However, there are cases when it might be accepted.   Several factors are considered, as follows.

1. Read the Introduction/Preface of the book. See if it states something like, "The author diligently researched all available sources of documents in assembling this book. He visited county courthouses, libraries, churches, cemeteries, and newspapers archives to obtain original documents, such as birth, marriage, death, adoption, probate, land and other records. Family bibles and personal letters were reviewed, and direct interviews with family members were conducted." Sometimes a statement like this will satisfy a reviewer to accept the book, even without specific source information. If there is no statement about how the information was sourced, using genealogical-like methods, then it likely won't be accepted and should not be submitted.

2. Another factor is the time frame the book was written. If it was done contemporary with the general time frame the people mentioned in the book lived, there is a higher probability of acceptance. For example, if a book was written in 1860 about people that lived from say 1775 - 1850, then it has a higher likelihood of being accurate. If it was written in 1995 about the same time frame, it can be assumed much of the information was found on the Internet, and probably not all based on actual documentation and would not be acceptable.

3. If a book is accepted as proof on a <u>modern</u> DAR/SAR/CAR RC application as a supporting document, it has a high probability of acceptance.   You should provide a copy of the RCs as a backup document with any application you submit to make a compelling case for acceptance by the VASSAR Registrar.

4. Also, consider that a book, while unacceptable as a primary source document, may have value for use in a proof. This is where multiple documents, individually not directly usable, may be grouped to provide a compelling argument.

When using a book reference, you need to provide a copy of the title page, introduction/preface if appropriate, and pages referenced. Also, you need to specify where the book may be found, providing an Internet link or contact information of who has it.

5. It is always advised to submit any book reference that you want to use on a new application to the VASSAR Registrar for evaluation before submitting the application, particularly where the book is essential to proving lineage or the Patriot's service.

Provide book documents just as they would be submitted with the application. The documentation should include, as noted in 4 above, the title page, introduction/preface if appropriate, and pages referenced. Also, you need to specify where the book may be found, providing an Internet link or contact information of who has it.   Redline and mark the generations appropriately. Underline content to qualify the book (if needed) and only the specific information you are using on the application.

Please contact me if you need an example of a book reference in final form for submission.