

## **Information about Canadian citizenship for war brides and their children:**

### *War brides*

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947, the first Canadian citizenship legislation came into force. Under the *Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1947, women automatically became Canadian citizens if they met the following two conditions:

- 1) They were admitted to Canada for permanent residence before 1947; and
- 2) Their husbands met one of the following criteria: born in Canada, naturalized in Canada, or born in a Commonwealth country and lived in Canada for at least five years immediately before the marriage.

Women who received citizenship automatically on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947 because they met the two conditions above need to obtain a certificate of Canadian citizenship to prove they are Canadian citizens in order to receive certain benefits and entitlements from government departments or agencies. For example, to apply for a Canadian passport all individuals born outside Canada (including war brides) must have a citizenship certificate to prove they are citizens. Information on how to apply for a citizenship certificate (proof of citizenship) is provided below.

### *Children of war brides – born in wedlock*

Children of service men and war brides automatically became Canadian citizens on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947. The children received Canadian citizenship because they were born in wedlock to a father who, at the time of birth, met one of the following criteria: born in Canada, naturalized in Canada or born in a Commonwealth country and lived in Canada for at least five years immediately before the birth of the child. Unlike war brides, the children of service men and war brides do not have to provide proof they were admitted to Canada for permanent residence when they apply for a citizenship certificate (proof of citizenship).

### *Children of war brides – born out of wedlock*

Children born before their parents were married were admitted to Canada as permanent residents. They did not automatically become citizens and had to apply to become Canadian citizens. In many cases, the parents applied for their children to become citizens. In other cases, the children applied for citizenship themselves when they became adults. These children would have been issued a citizenship certificate at the time they became citizens. If they did not obtain citizenship, it is likely they are still permanent residents today and can immediately apply for citizenship through the naturalization process (applying for grant of citizenship).

## *Remedies for people living in Canada who are neither permanent residents nor Canadian citizens*

It is very unlikely that a war bride or a child of a war bride who lives in Canada is neither a permanent resident nor a Canadian citizen. However, to address these rare instances, CIC has a policy to help regularize the status of people who are not permanent residents or Canadian citizens, but were admitted to Canada under the assumption that they were legally entitled to enter and remain in Canada. More information about this policy can be found here:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/manuals-guides/english/om/2002/cp/cp02-09e.html>.

### **Questions about citizenship status**

If a person is not certain whether or not he or she is a citizen, it is recommended that the person apply for a citizenship certificate (proof of citizenship). If records show, or if the information and documentation provided confirm that the person is a citizen, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will send the person a new citizenship certificate. If records show the person is not a Canadian citizen, CIC will send a letter explaining the steps needed in order to obtain Canadian citizenship. For more information, please contact the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Call Centre at 1-888-242-2100 (toll-free).

### **How to obtain a citizenship certificate (proof of citizenship):**

Information about applying for a citizenship certificate (proof of Canadian citizenship) can be found on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website here:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizen/certificate-info.html>

The application form for a citizenship certificate can be downloaded here:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/certif.html>

### **Documents required for war brides:**

Women who arrived in Canada before 1947 and received citizenship automatically on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1947 because they were married to a Canadian citizen need the following documents when applying for a certificate of Canadian citizenship:

- birth certificate (issued by government authorities in country of birth)
- marriage certificate
- husband's Canadian birth certificate, certificate of naturalization or citizenship certificate, or birth certificate from a Commonwealth country
- proof of admission to Canada as a landed immigrant (immigration document or passport used when originally entering Canada). If you do not have proof of admission, you can download an application here:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/certcopy.html>.

- two pieces of personal identification, such as a driver's licence and a health insurance card
- other documents, such as marriage certificate and or legal name change certificate (if applicable).
- **all documents must be originals or certified copies.**

#### **Documents required for children of war brides:**

- birth certificate showing father's name and child's name (issued by government authorities in country of birth)
- parents' marriage certificate
- father's Canadian birth certificate, certificate of naturalization or citizenship certificate, or birth certificate from a Commonwealth country
- two pieces of your personal identification, such as a driver's licence and a health insurance card
- other documents, such as your marriage certificate and or legal name change certificate (if applicable).
- **all documents must be originals or certified copies.**

Completed applications should be mailed to the address shown in the application guide along with the appropriate fees, signed photographs, and supporting documents. Envelopes should be clearly marked "War bride" or "War bride child" to ensure appropriate handling of the application. CIC will contact you if more information is needed to process your application.

**For information on obtaining foreign documents such as foreign birth or marriage certificates, contact the embassy of the relevant country.**

Some useful links for obtaining foreign birth certificates and marriage certificates:

- England:  
<http://www.gro.gov.uk>  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/familyhistory/gallery1/civil.htm>
- France:  
[www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr)  
<http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers>
- Netherlands:  
[www.government.nl](http://www.government.nl)  
[www.nationaalarchief.nl](http://www.nationaalarchief.nl)