



Research Committee Annual Report July 2003

Submitted by

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Projects</i>	3
<i>Noteworthy Accomplishments</i>	3
<i>DNA Committee Report</i>	4
What are We Trying to do With this PRA Study?.....	4
Now We Publish the Actual Numbers.....	5
<i>Websites</i>	5
<i>Mail List</i>	7
<i>Message Boards</i>	8
<i>BPIP (Bobby Pennington Indexing Project)</i>	8
<i>JFMF</i>	8
<i>Family Groups</i>	9
Group Leaders Report.....	10
<i>Future</i>	13

Introduction

*"As genealogists we work in the present, studying the past to share in the future. How we do it today will be tested by our descendants tomorrow."*¹

"Thank You" to all of the members of the Board for their help and support this past year. I believe we have made some very significant gains towards realizing our mission, goals and objectives and this would not have been possible without the Board's leadership.

The DNA Study has completed the Second Phase and we have obtained some very valuable information about our Family Groups and their progenitors. It is my opinion that within a few years, we will see the merger of several of our Family Groups based on the DNA Study and the more traditional genealogy research.

We have taken a major step to resolve some of the identified issues with the John French Master File (JFMF) and we hope to make the JFMF available to all PRA members by the end of this year. This was made possible by some hard work by our Assistant Research Directors Carmen Johnson and Rene'e Davis and our Group Leaders. Based on their recommendations, the Board approved a new purpose statement for the JFMF and approved placing the JFMF on a new website on www.MyFamily.com.

This report reflects the abilities and qualities of the members of the Research Committee. Without their skills, tireless efforts, dedication and concern for the PRA, none of our successes would have been achieved.

I want to mention the hard work and dedication by our Assistant Research Directors and the Chairman of the DNA Committee. The PRA is indeed fortunate to have such an outstanding Team.

- Carmen Johnson -- Responsible for the John French Master File (JFMF). Carmen is also the Group Leader for Group 7.
- Rene'e Davis -- Responsible for our Family Groups and Group Leaders. Rene'e is also the Group Leader for Group 9.
- Nick Penington – Chairman of the DNA Committee. Nick is also the Group Leader for Group 33.

Margaret E. Wood, our Obituary Database Editor is also recognized for her hard work and contribution. Since taking on this important job four years

¹ Quote from John Vincent Wylie, Professional Genealogist in an article written in *Everton's Genealogical Helper*, July/August 1998, page 223.

ago, she has entered hundreds of obituaries on the Ancestry.com Message Board. Many Pennington researchers have been helped by her efforts.

While this position is not part of the Research Committee, I believe Margaret's contribution is noteworthy and she continues to help the Pennington Research Association meet one of its' major goals.

Projects

The Research Committee has struggled all year with many problems which have, at times, prevented us from working on our projects as much as we wanted. Our major projects to work on this year and their status are:

- Maintain the PRA website – On-Going
- Continue to make changes to the John French Master File (JFMF) and develop a process to disseminate the data – On-Going.
- DNA Study – Phase Three in progress
- Pennington Pedigrees Indexing (BPIP) – On hold
- CD Project – On hold

These projects are listed by their priority. They were assigned these priorities based on discussions with the Board, the Research Committee and what I thought must be completed in order to accomplish our primary goals and objectives.

Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Communications with members and other researchers continued to improve. For the fourth year in a row there was an increase in the number of queries and general e-mail messages. We have placed on hold any attempt at holding on-line meetings with Group Leaders until after we get the new website for the JFMF working since it has a built in "chat" function that any person who joins may use. The technology no longer will be a problem but the timing of the "chats" will probably be the main obstacle. I hope we can take advantage of this technology as I see it as being a very valuable tool.
- Collection of genealogical information from new members and other researchers has improved. Since July 2002, I have collected seven (7) reports and/or gedcom files from new PRA members and six (6) reports and/or gedcom files from other Pennington researchers. The reports have been forwarded to the Editor of the Pedigrees to be published. All of the reports and/or gedcom files have been placed on the new website for the JFMF.

- Our main website (www.PenningtonResearch.org) continues to grow and improve. We have received a number of positive comments and suggestions to improve it. We continue to add new features and information to the website.
- We have successfully started a new website on www.MyFamily.com for the JFMF. I have placed Family History reports and/or gedcom files on the new website. We hope to have the new website available to Group Leaders by this Fall and to all PRA members by the end of this year.
- Hundreds of new and returning Pennington Research Association members were sent "Welcome to the Pennington Research Association" and "New Member Process" messages via e-mail or a letter by U.S. Postal Service. This follow up, combined with the new member material sent by our Membership Chair, Barbara Pennington, has been a tremendous success. I continually hear back from new members and in many cases some of them have become Family Group Leaders. This process has greatly enhanced our ability to reach out to new and returning members and has helped us meet our primary goal of providing value to our members.
- DNA Study – Phase Three is now underway and an updated Phase II report has been submitted by Nick Pennington, DNA Chairman.

DNA Committee Report

PENNINGTON DNA STUDY BEGINS TO SHOW HOW PRA FAMILY GROUPS ARE RELATED

Third Project Report, April 2003

By Nicholas Pennington, DNA Study Chairman
(Additional help from Alan Pennington, Family Group 6)

Edited by Gene Pennington, Research Director

(The Entire report is available at →
<http://www.penningtonresearch.org/rc/DNA/phasetwo-update.htm>)

What are We Trying to do With this PRA Study?

We are building a database of the DNA sequences of male Penningtons who have documented lineage within specific PRA Family Groups. We see now that some PRA Family Groups share a DNA sequence with other Family Groups, and hence we know their family trees have a common ancestor at some point in the past. Eventually we will be able to tell people who have no paper trail at all that they belong to a specific documented lineage because of their DNA analysis. We have already reached that point in a few cases and

any male with the surname is welcome to get tested and find out where they fit in.

Now We Publish the Actual Numbers

So far our male Pennington volunteers (sorry ladies, we need the Y-chromosome) represent 19 (PRA) Family Groups that participated in the Pennington DNA study. Early results of analyzing the Y-chromosome are very exciting. There are now 7 of the PRA's Family Groups that share a common ancestor some perhaps in the last 7 generations, some before that. Those Family Groups are 4, 5, 7, 14, 16, 30 and 31. There are however other distinct Pennington lineages and clusters that share a different common ancestor. Two other Groups, 6 and 23 appear to share a common ancestor and Groups 29, 19 and perhaps 9 appear to share a different common ancestor.

At the top of the accompanying table* you will see that two new tests of British Penningtons show that they are quite close to the largest Group, in fact one of them is only 1 marker different from Groups 5 & 14! ***NOTE:** **The table referred to in this report is available at →** **<http://www.penningtonresearch.org/rc/DNA/phasetwo-update.htm>**.

Recently PRA Group 16 tested one mutation away from Groups 30 and 31 on 12 markers. This suggests (so far) that this Group is also descended from Ephraim of NC (b1745).

I have realized that we need to draw diagrams** using all 25 markers for each cluster of related families which shows in a much clearer way how each cluster of Family Groups are related. Below** we show the first two that benefit from this approach. The main "super group" is one diagram, and Groups 6 and 23 are shown in the other. Cluster "A" consists of Groups 7, 30, & 31 and Cluster "B" is made up of Groups 5 and 14. The red numbers indicate where the mutations reside. I would say the only Groups that look related within 800 years are cluster "B", UK1, Rad1 and Rad2 (Rad are 2 individuals with the surname Radcliff(e) see below). At this stage, the data are not clarified further by carrying out this procedure for the other clusters.

** **NOTE: The diagram referred to in this report is available at →** **<http://www.penningtonresearch.org/rc/DNA/phasetwo-update.htm>**.

Websites

This year saw the launch of a new website designed for the JFMF. The new website was approved by the Board of Directors and was implemented in early 2003. The new website is located on www.MyFamily.com and will be

available for PRA members only. Only Family Group Leaders will be able to change/delete certain information on the new website. We hope to have the new website available to our Group Leaders by this Fall. We hope to make the new website available to our members by the end of 2003.

Both our websites are on a road to be very successful and they have helped us to meet a couple of our major goals.

We were very successful with our query and replies submitted to our website. We were able to save all queries submitted to us via the forms on our website and to post them on our website. Likewise, any replies were posted on our website.

We saved each month's queries and replies and made them available to the Editor of the Pedigrees who has published some of them in the last four issues of the Pedigrees. There are so many queries and replies that a limited number of queries and replies are published. We hope that as the Pedigrees becomes more consistent, the remaining queries and replies will eventually be published.

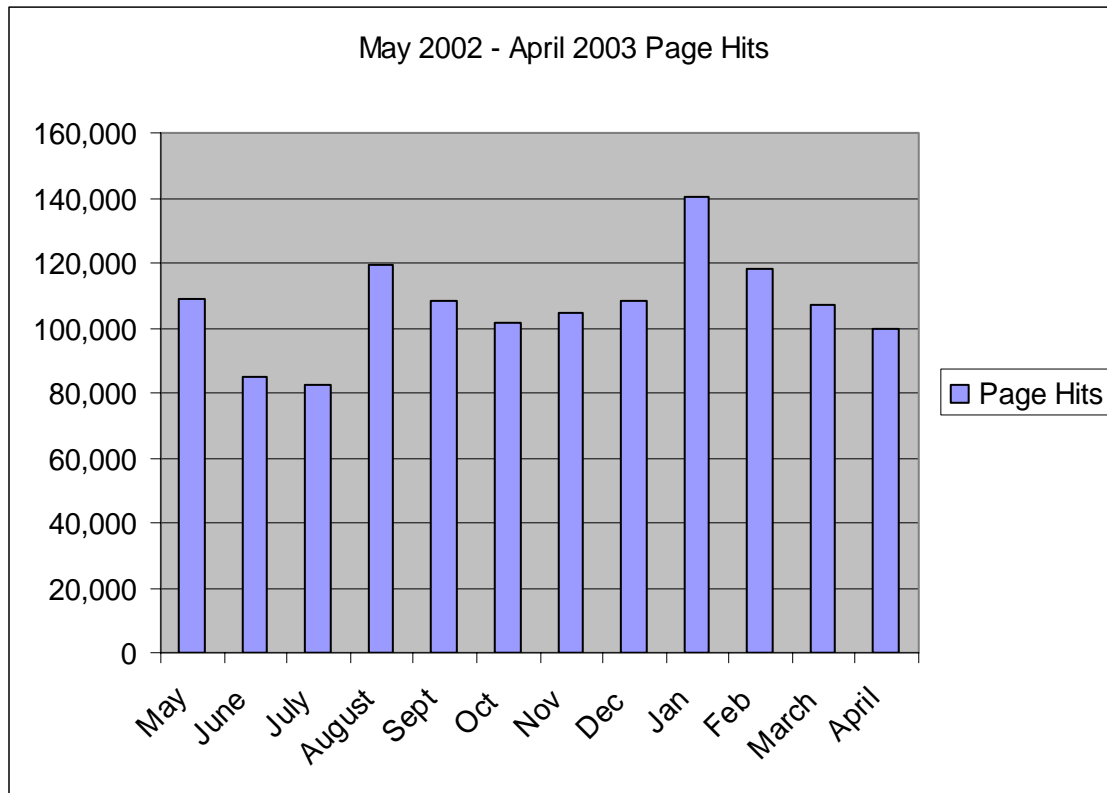
The Board approved a privacy statement for our website (www.PenningtonResearch.org) and a new policy for copyrights with will allow us to share information with members and researchers on our websites.

While we have implemented several ways to use our websites, we must continue to explore new ways to provide on-line access to the information the PRA has such as the Pedigree and Courier and their indexes. Each of these data sources has tremendous value to our members and other researchers.

Remember that the future of the website is limited only by our imagination.

Below is a chart summarizing the number of page hits our website has experienced between May 2002 and April 2003.

When reviewing these numbers, remember that these are PER MONTH! The website average is 106,962 page hits per month. That is, in my humble opinion, amazing.



Mail List

The Pennington Research Association's mail list is working, however, it is still a "quiet" mail list. I urge the Board, Staff and Research Committee members to make better use of our mail list. This mail list continues to be under utilized! I urge the Board, Staff and Research Committee members to set the example by using it more for communications and research exchanges.

As of May 17, 2003, there were 132 subscribers to PRA-L (normal mode) and 45 subscribers to PRA-D (digest mode) for a total of 177 subscribers.

The purpose of the PRA mail list is:

1. To provide information for researchers of the Pennington surname;
2. To provide general information such as announcements, research tips and resources and;
3. To provide an easy method for PRA members to communicate with each other;
4. A discussion list for research and;
5. To provide a source for queries and answers to queries for the editor of the Pedigrees should he/she choose to use them.

Message Boards

Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com

With the merger of Rootsweb.com, Ancestry.com, MyFamily.com and other companies, we saw the merger of all of the Pennington message boards into one easy to use message board covering all of the topics hosted by Ancestry.com. The topics include wills, pensions, queries, obituaries, births, cemeteries, census, deed, immigration, marriage, bible and biography. This board is operated by the PRA. Operation of this board has helped the PRA to meet its mission.

We began posting messages this year on Genealogy.com's surname message board. This is another busy genealogy surname message board. This board is not operated by the PRA and anybody can post to the message board.

I encourage the Board, Staff, Research Committee and all Pennington researchers to utilize both message boards to help with their research and communication with other Pennington researchers.

BPIP (Bobby Pennington Indexing Project)

This very important project is on hold because we have not located a volunteer yet to manage it. I have been able to recover and then to scan many of the previous issues of the Pedigrees and then to save them in Adobe Acrobat format (pdf) which is a very time consuming process. I have also scanned several issues of the original "Pennington Lending Files" that were the very first publications of the Pennington Research Association.

JFMM

We developed and implemented some major changes on how we will work with the John French Master File (JFMM). The Research Committee proposed significant changes to the JFMM and they were approved by the Board. The two changes are:

- A new purpose statement: The JFMM is a working database for research purposes -- not a database that we will try to keep as up to date and as accurate as possible.
- The JFMM will be placed on the MyFamily.com website and made available to PRA members only.

We now have a plan that will, in my opinion, help us to resolve some of the major concerns with the JFMM that have been identified in the past. The most important features are the ability for our Group Leaders to add gedcom files directly to the website and to modify them once posted.

Additional Features are:

- The website will allow a member to search any of the gedcom files
- The website will allow a member to print Family History reports.
- The website has a built in "chat" feature that will allow members to have "chats" at any time with each other on the Internet.
- The website will contain digital images of genealogical material such as deeds, wills, census records, Family History reports and photographs.
- The website has a calendar for us to post important events
- The website has a "News" section where we can post important news

The Group Leaders will be asked if they want to participate in the new website. If they reply "Yes" they will be sent an invitation to join the new website along with instructions. Should a problem develop or if they do not participate in the new website, they will be notified and if they do not modify their behavior, they will be removed as a website member.

PRA Members will be asked if they want to participate in the new website. If they reply "Yes" they will be sent an invitation to join the new website along with instructions. Once a member's membership terminates (does not pay dues, etc.), they will be removed as a member of the new website.

The Board recently passed a new policy concerning copyrights and a new disclaimer statement that will allow us to meet our mission, goals and objectives.

The Board is working on a new privacy policy at the time this report is being prepared.

Family Groups

Rene'e Davis, Group Leader for Group 9, has been our Assistant Research Director (ARD) responsible for Family Groups for more than a year now. Rene'e continues to work very hard to establish communications with all of the Group Leaders and to stimulate discussions on a wide range of topics concerning Family Groups.

She has been successful with her efforts with many of the Group Leaders and she is to be congratulated on her accomplishments.

We continue to see some "detachment" from the PRA by some of our Group Leaders. There are a few Group Leaders who do not respond to e-mail messages and/or phone calls or contribute any research to the JFMF or share information with other researchers.

I hope that with the continued support of the Board and the active and interested Group Leaders we will see some viable solutions.

With the recent results of the DNA Study, I believe that we can expect to see merges of some of our Family Groups in the near future.

Group Leaders Report

By Rene'e Davis, Assistant Research Director for Family Groups

The performance of our Group Leaders has been better compared to last year at this time. The change on the mailing list (adjustment of the return reply back to the mailing list) has proved to be beneficial and has increased the activity on the mailing list, thanks to Gene Pennington.

The lack of activity from our Group Leaders, as well as me, the ARD responsible for our Group Leaders, could have a number of reasons i.e. health, Iraq War, work, personal and the traditional summer vacation season with family. All of which should be temporary situations with the exception of the hard working. Yes, we still have Group Leaders making a living and doing a very good job balancing it with the PRA activities. As a whole, our Group Leaders are headed in the right direction with a healthy attitude.

The involvement of our Group Leaders on the mailing list has increased. It is possible that our leaders are contacting the other members personally instead of using the list. I hope to re-emphasize the benefits of using the PRA mailing list. After all, our purpose is to find and share our family information with as many people as possible. The mailing list is the perfect tool for the task. I might also mention, I continue to find members that have not subscribed to the PRA mailing list and they are pleased to learn about it. Again, follow-up by our Group Leaders is essential to insure the quality of benefits to our members.

In the area of policy, suggestion and feedback on issues facing our organization, our Group Leaders are participating more readily with their knowledge and opinions. This has proved to be beneficial for everyone involved. We have a number of novice and seasoned leaders/researchers among us. This melting pot has shown that the expertise of the seasoned researcher compliment the common sense of our "rookies". A winning combination for the PRA.

As ARD for Family Groups, this past year has proved that communication and follow-up with my Group Leaders is essential to maintain a teamwork atmosphere. Our Group Leaders are essential to the growth and welfare of the PRA. I (we) have to take care of them, make their jobs more enjoyable and reduce the work. With their participation, the Research Committee has been able to move forward on the JFMF issue and begin work on the new website. This proves my point, that teamwork can accomplish a great deal

when everyone works toward a common goal. My hope is this trend will continue.

Our Group Leaders have responded to my group mailings with positive results from at least half of the Leaders. This is a welcomed increase from the previous one or two responding when I first took the position of ARD. The group mailings consisted of updating our members listed with no Family Group; discussion on the JFMF and how to proceed and most importantly, following up on the monthly queries posted to the website which had been neglected. Some of our Leaders had no idea the queries were listed on our website. I think we may have gained a few new members from this follow-up activity.

In the past year we have received a few complaints from our members on their Group Leaders such as failure to respond. I believe that in both cases it was an issue of incorrect or change of email address that was not forwarded to the PRA. These complaints were satisfied in a short amount of time.

Below are just "some" activities by our Group Leaders in recent months. To list all activities by all Group Leaders might prove to be challenging and somewhat boring for the reader.

#1 - Barrie Petty continues to do a wonderful job both in her Family Group and the Pedigree. Currently, she is working on finding a person in her family group to participate in the DNA testing. Barrie is hopeful.

#6 - Paul L. Pennington has maintained his father's legacy very well. He also has updated and added to the Group 6 website for his Family Group.

#7 - Carmen Johnson continues to update her website for the Family Group and more importantly communicates on the mailing list to that fact. She has been a huge contributor on the JFMF for the benefit of the PRA and its members.

#8 - Sue Webb and Rod Pennington - Both Group Leaders have maintained communication with me and are hoping to work more on their PRA research.

#9 - My Group (Rene'e Davis) has added a new member to our family. I have followed up with her on how she is related to our Family Group and introduced her to the others. I think she is pleased to find her family roots.

#11 - Shirley Erickson and Al Matthews have been working together in this Family Group to get the first 3 generations completed.

#16 - Mike Pennington has been posting to the mailing list more often this year. He has contributed many times to our discussions in a positive manner.

#19 - Shaunta Knibb was published in PP 34-2, the will of John Bennett, the father-in-law to Richard Pennington of this Family Group. Shaunta has always given positive feedback in our discussions.

#21 - Ruth Stonesifer has been working on connected families in this Family Group. She continues to maintain a very good website for her Family Group.

#23 - Viola Ell was successful in getting a volunteer from her Group to participate in our DNA Study. The results have added some interesting questions about a possible connection between Group 23 and Group 6.

#26 - Ric Blake and Lois Tonoff have been working together in this Family and last word they were making good progress in the lineage.

#27 - Sidney Gravestone was published in PP #34-2 and continues to keep the PRA informed on the documentation of this Family Group of England.

#28 - Paul Pennington has been more active on the PRA list as well. He also responded very well to the 'call on the web queries'.

#31 - Jim Pennington was published in PP# 34-2 regarding the DNA and documentation that could result in merging of Family Groups 7, 30 and 31. Very interesting reading. Jim continues to work obtaining sources in the family file.

#32 – Bill Pennington was published in PP #34-2, "The Search of Samuel Pennington's Father". Good work on the 174 years in his family.

#33 - Nick Penington is an asset to the PRA. Not only to his Family Group but our DNA Project. He communicates very well to the PRA list and brings new information to the PRA as well as the Pennington mailing list.

As ARD for Family Groups, I am proud to be part of this Research Committee. Our Group Leaders have proven there is no task to large for them i.e. JFMF. Last year at this time, we had very few ideas on how to master its problems associated with it. Our Research Committee pooled our thoughts and ideas together as a team. My gratitude goes to each and every one of them for getting involved and allowing the PRA to move forward. It is my hope that once the new website is up and running the interest in the PRA will perk up.

I must add our Research Director, Gene Pennington continues to be an inspiration to all of us. Without his expertise and guidance, I doubt that we (PRA) would be as successful as we have been. His dedication to our organization is phenomenal. He has proved there is no mountain to high for him to tackle.

Future

I believe that we have one significant issue facing the Research Committee this next year – the apathy by some of our Group Leaders. This issue has been identified in previous reports and it is my hope that with the implementation of the new website on MyFamily.com, we will see resolution of this problem.

I continue to believe the future of the Pennington Research Association is very bright. We have identified some of the challenges and we have worked very hard to overcome them.

We must continue to explore new ways of making our information available in printed and electronic media and on the Internet.

The purpose of an association such as the Pennington Research Association is to foster the exchange of genealogical information and to embrace others in our extended family.

I encourage the Board members to renew their commitment to our vision, our mission and our goals.