



Research Committee Annual Report July 2006

Submitted by

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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

Another year has come and gone and in looking back, I'm pleased with the way our Board and our members have continued to move forward. We had a small number of "bumps" along the way and many accomplishments.

We had several personnel changes caused by Rene'e Davis' resignation for health reasons and a few others who needed to "move on" and peruse other interests. We were very fortunate that when a call for help went out asking for volunteers to step in and take over the vacant jobs that we were able to fill most of the positions.

The Pennington Research Association members showed their strengths and character. They willingly accepted the challenges facing us and have worked very hard to help us meet our stated goals and objectives.

I cannot overstate how much I admire all of you. Words alone cannot tell you how very much I appreciate each and every one of you. I want to thank all of the members of the Board and our Officers for staying the course. We continue to make significant gains towards realizing our mission, goals and objectives and this would not have been possible without the Board's leadership and their efforts as well as those of our Officers.

The DNA Study has leveled off and we've not uncovered as many new findings as in year's past. There has not been any significant movement towards the merger of several of our Family Groups but several Group Leaders continue to work towards this goal.

I had also hoped to report some exciting results from our first major research project in this report but unfortunately, the genealogist we hired has not yet submitted his report. It is my hope that I'll have his report in time to report on the results at our reunion.

The PRA's Members only website still holds promise but for a number of reasons, it has not yet reached its full potential. It is my recommendation that we continue to operate the website for one more year before we make a decision about it's future.

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

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, the Chairman of the DNA Committee and our Obituary Database Editor. The PRA is blessed to have such an outstanding Team.

- Carmen Johnson -- Responsible for the John French Master File (JFMF) and our PRA Members only website on MyFamily.com. 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 and the Treasurer/CFO for the Pennington Research Association, Inc.
- Guye Pennington – Responsible for our Bobby Pennington Index Project
- Nick Pennington – Chairman of the DNA Committee. Nick is also the Group Leader for Group 33.
- Margaret E. Wood - Obituary Database Editor (Margaret has resigned from her position and has been replaced by Colleen Blizzard)

Projects

The Research Committee made progress this past year on each of our projects. The major projects we worked on this past year and their status are:

- Maintain and improve the PRA website – On-Going
- Bobby Pennington Index Project (BPIP) – This important project is well under way and the results of Guye Pennington's work will be reviewed at this year's Board meeting. See BPIP section for details.
- Pennington Pedigrees Indexing CD Project – This important project is nearing completion of a new phase and it will be reviewed at this year's Board meeting. See BPIP section for details.
- DNA Study – We've maintained the Study with no major new findings. We continue to add more volunteers and retesting for additional markers – On-Going
- Operate the PRA's Members only website and monitor how it is utilized by our Group Leaders and members. We added several new family trees, family history reports and reference material this past year. – On-Going

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

- We continued to work on the Bobby Pennington Index Project (BPIP) recently. Our new ARD responsible for the BPIP, Guye Pennington, has completed his work on the newest phase of this project. All of the Pedigrees and the Cousin's Couriers up through 2000 have now been either scanned and digitized or abstracts were typed and then digitized. The first ten (1) years of these publications have also been converted to Adobe Reader format (pdf) and have been placed on a CD. This CD will be presented to the Board for their review. See BPIP section for details.
- Communications with members and other researchers did improve and we will continue to work hard to focus on this important goal. For the seventh year in a row there was an increase in the number of queries and general e-mail messages. We did not try to hold on-line meetings with Group Leaders and members on the PRA's Members only website due to a lack of interest. I hope in the future we can take advantage of this technology as I still see it as being a very valuable tool.
- Collection and publication of genealogical information from new members and other researchers on our Member's only website continued at an acceptable rate. Since July 2005, I have collected 4 reports and/or gedcom files and other research material and several others were collected by the Group Leaders. All of the family history reports were forwarded to the Editor of the Pedigrees to be published, if I received the author's consent to publish. All of the reports and/or gedcom files have been placed on the PRA Members only website, if I received the author's consent to publish.
- 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 with the most notable being the acceptance of online credit/debit card payments. This year the average page hits per month was 151,748 (compared to last year's average of 158,459). In January, 2006, we set a new record for the number of page hits for a single month with 192,261 hits! Wow! The previous record was for March, 2005 with 190,318 page hits.
- We successfully operated our PRA Members only website on www.MyFamily.com. There are all types of family history reports, gedcom files, miscellaneous files and information on the new website. The website is available to all PRA members. Group Leaders can work directly on their Group's gedcom (Family Tree) and make

changes/additions/deletions on their file without having to go through our petition process as well as add their own gedcom and other genealogical material. We added the PRA's Obituary database to the website this year thanks to Margaret Woods and James Pennington. This was another major goal for the website and we have achieved it!

- All new and returning PRA 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 service, combined with the new member material sent by our Membership Chair, Carolyn Waters, continues to be a tremendous success. I receive positive comments regularly from new members and in some cases they 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 – We have completed all planned phases and we redesigned the website to make it easier to understand our study and to navigate the DNA related web pages.

DNA Committee Report

Progress Report for the DNA Study (June 2005-June 2006)

In the period 06/30/05 to the present date 13 Pen(n)ingtons have signed up for the DNA Study, which is about the rate that we have been gaining participants over the last couple of years, but one less than last year. The DNA bank account which is comprised principally of donation money from PRA members stands at \$183.30 (when all checks have cleared) as of 5-28-06. This year I would like to request that the amount be adjusted to \$500 so that the PRA can pay for good candidates for the test.

In this time period the PRA account has expended \$99 each for three members of the study totaling \$297 (the money was spent on a member of Groups 3 and it turns out 26). I feel that we learned something of value from these investments since we found out that a member of Group 3 is quite close (just two mutations away from Group 17 and both Groups are now represented by a single sequence). Also a Pennington with a lineage back to Azarias Pennington 1801 was placed in group 26.

A couple of years ago we set aside \$1000 from our DNA fund to pay for the first 12 markers of a 25 marker test for 10 Penningtons from the UK who had interesting lineages. This year the PRA expended \$99 to pay for the first 12 markers for another British "Pinnington" (UK 5). This individual paid for the remaining 13 markers to bring the sequence up to the required 25 markers.

The UK "Pinnington" was just two mutations out of 25 away from members of Groups 5 and 14. This appears to represent a pattern emerging as this is not the first time these Groups have matched a family that at some point in their family history spelt their name Pinnington. Note the interesting similarity between these members of the study and two individuals with the Radcliffe surname.

Of the five remaining individuals not yet discussed, whose results are back, we found that 2 of them fell into the large cluster of PRA Groups 4, 7, 20, 30 and 31. One Pennington had a good paper trail that helped us to identify the sequence that goes with the PRA Group (Group 7). Another found a close match 24/25 with the large group. Groups 8b, and 10 gained one DNA match each this year, and one individual had no close matches yet. We were lucky to have a member of the Genographic project contribute his 12 marker results to our study and he was clearly an I1a Haplogroup fairly close to Group 33.

There are still three individuals that are in the pipeline, one who spells his name Penington! His result just came back and it was a perfect match 25/25 with the large Group (4, 7, 20, 30 and 31). One individual was born a Pennington and changed his name after an adoption and one Mulcaster. The PRA is taking a risk with the final test the cost of which was \$150. There is a legend that the Mulcasters are descended from Benedict de Pen(n)ington who lived in the 11th Century a member of the Muncaster branch of Group 29 Penningtons. A close match with a Pennington would be suggestive of such a relationship. The surname Mulcaster is strongly localized to Cumberland in England the site of Muncaster castle.

Nicholas J. Penington Ph.D.
DNA study coordinator
PRA Group 33 leader.

Websites

We operated our PRA Members only website hosted by MyFamily.com for the entire year. The website is only moderately successful and we continue to work hard to be improve it. Likewise, our members should take more advantage of it's' features and we need to find ways to better inform them of all of it's' features and how to use them.

The website is located on www.MyFamily.com and is used by PRA members. Only Family Group Leaders are able to change/delete certain information on the website and some Group Leaders have posted material this year. We discussed the possibility of giving all PRA members the same access rights so they can add/change/delete information on the website just like the Group Leaders but decided not to implement this feature at this time.

I post new family history reports, family trees (gedcom files), news and other genealogical material on the website for our members to use in their research.

A brief examination of our "site members" shows that while we have about 160 "registered" members on the MyFamily.com website, about 125 have not visited since April, 2006. This is not a good sign, in my opinion, for the site and indicates that our "site members" are not utilizing the site as much as it should be used (in my opinion). A tremendous amount of time is devoted to making the site function and it does cost money.

I still do not have an explanation as to why many of our Group Leaders do not seem to be adding/changing anything to the Family Trees and/or files. There are some Group Leaders who are contributing to the website but the majority of our Group Leaders do not appear to have worked on their Family Trees and/or added anything to the file cabinet section. I have asked our new ARD responsible for Family Groups and Group Leaders, Melinda Pennington, to work with Carmen Johnson on this problem and see if they can find a solution.

This trend troubles me very much since the 2 main purposes for creating the new website was to give our members direct access to the JFMF and to allow the Group Leaders to work directly on their Family Trees and to easily add reports, communicate with their Group members, etc.

I know that last year I said that if the trend continued I would recommend to the Board that we no longer support the PRA Members only website hosted by MyFamily.com. The amount of time, effort and expense it takes to operate this website may not be worth it when we have such a low participation rate.

After three (3) years now of operating the website on MyFamily.com, I am recommending that we give the site one more year to demonstrate it is worth the time and money it takes to operate it. I will work with Carmen and Melinda on this issue and I will make a recommendation next year.

We still receive many queries submitted to our main website. We save all queries submitted to us via the forms on our website and post them on our website. Likewise, any replies are posted on our website.

We save each month's queries and replies and made them available to the Editor of the Pedigrees who publishes them in the Pedigrees.

A big problem surfaced last year with our mail server on Interland for PenningtonResearch.org. We had created many e-mail "alias" addresses for our Board, Officers and some Chair positions. However, those addresses were "harvested" by web "crawlers" or "spiders" and have been used to send out viruses to thousands of others. We had to remove all but one or two of

the e-mail "alias" addresses but now our e-mail server has been used extensively in what is known as a "Phishing" scams.

I continue to work hard to minimize the problems but this is going to be a long drawn out fight. I'll keep the Board informed of my progress. I will continue to withhold any new e-mail "alias" addresses.

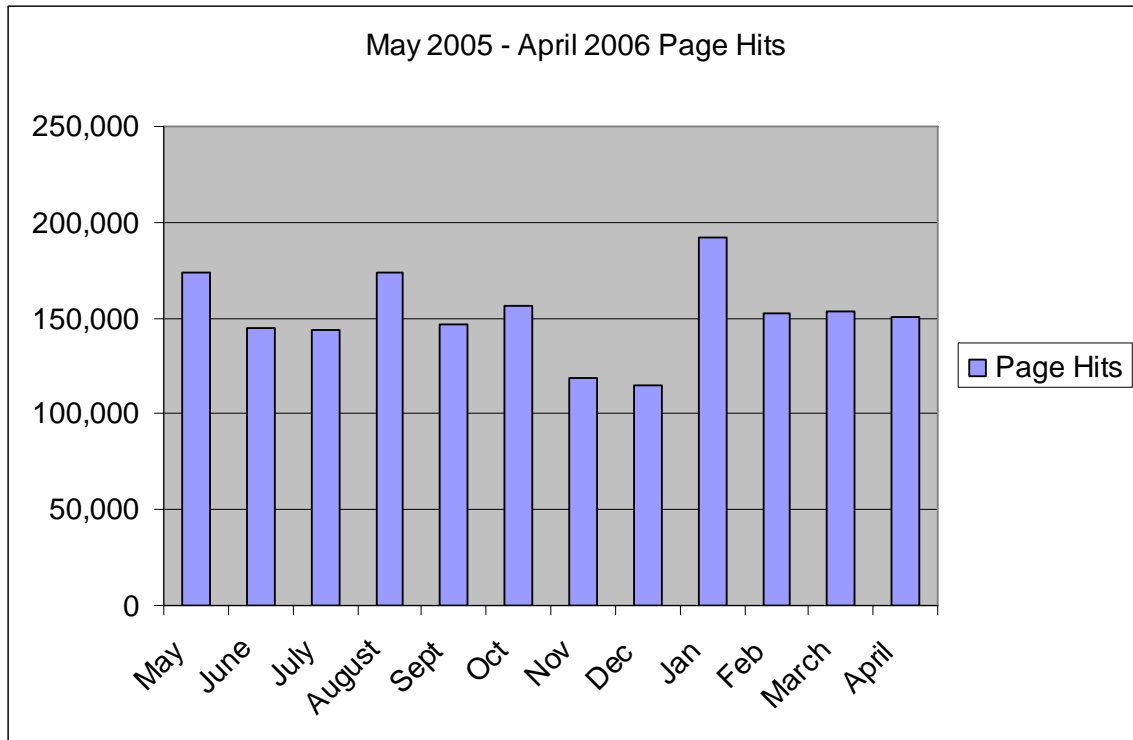
While we have implemented several ways to use our websites, we must continue to explore new ways to provide on-line access to the information the PRA has such as the Pedigree and Courier and their indexes. Each of these data sources has tremendous value to our members and other researchers.

Remember that the futures of the websites are limited only by our imagination.

Below is a chart summarizing the number of page hits our website has experienced between May 2005 and April 2006.

We hit a new record of 192,261 page hits in January 2006. That's an incredible achievement when you think of how far we've come since we started our website.

When reviewing these numbers, remember that these are PER MONTH! The website average is 151,748 page hits per month as compared to an average of 158,459 for the same time period last year.



Mail List

The Pennington Research Association's mail list was not as active in 2006 as it was in previous years. We must continue our quest to make better use of our mail list. This is another example of how the PRA provides tools and methods to help our members but they are not used very much. I told the Board last year I would report this year my recommendation as to whether or not to drop the mail list from those things the PRA operates. Even though the activity was less that it was last year, I think we should keep the list working and continue to monitor the list.

The Board, Officers, Staff and Research Committee members should set the example by using the mail list more for communications and research exchanges.

As of May 28, 2006, there were 121 subscribers to PRA-L (normal mode) and 49 subscribers to PRA-D (digest mode) for a total of 170 subscribers. This is 19 less than last year.

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

In addition to the mailing lists, genealogy message boards continue to play a major role in genealogy research. We have seen continued growth on the Pennington message boards hosted by Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com.

On Ancestry.com, the boards include wills, pensions, queries, obituaries, births, cemeteries, census, deed, immigration, marriage, bible and biography. This board is operated by the PRA and Margaret Woods (and now Colleen Blizard), Obituary Database Editor, posts to this board when information is sent to her. Operation of this board has helped the PRA to meet its mission.

On Genealogy.com's surname message board several messages have been posted by PRA members. This is a 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, Officers, 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 has really moved forward thanks to our new ARD responsible for the BPIP, Guye Pennington.

Specific goals for the BPIP are:

- Scan the remaining Pedigrees issues from where Bobby Pennington left off through 2004
- Create indexes for each of those new scanned issues
- Update the BPIP index database through 2004
- Update the BPIP program software (and install instructions) and explore the option of converting the database to MS Access and build other search capabilities using MS Access rather than dBase version 5.0 that BPIP now uses.
- Convert all MS Word files of the Pedigrees and Couriers through 2004 to Adobe Acrobat format (pdf)

- Create a CD which will contain the BPIP program, installation instructions and Adobe Reader format (pdf) copies of all of the Pedigrees and Couriers through 2004
- Place the BPIP program, installation instructions and Adobe Reader format (pdf) copies of all of the Pedigrees and Couriers through 2004 on the PRA's members only website.

Status Update on BPIP

The Bobby Pennington Index Project has made slow but deliberate progress over the course of the last year. There were a few historical issues of Pennington Pedigrees from the 1970s that had not been scanned in, and these issues were located and subsequently prepared in a format compatible with the rest of the project. Interns were originally asked to perform this task, but a lack of quality craftsmanship necessitated hiring of outside parties to complete the challenge; Guye Pennington personally paid for a little over half of this cost.

When complete, all Pennington Pedigree and Pennington Cousin Courier issues slated for release in the first disc were read over and evaluated for grammar, spelling, and syntax errors. When these issues were originally scanned using optical read technology, it appears there was sometimes misclassification of words or syntax by the computer which needed remedy. Though Guye Pennington will certainly not affirm that all errors have been removed by the current form of the BPIP (after all, there are literally thousands of pages), there are now materially less mistakes in the issues than there were previously.

After constructive guidance from a marketing member of the PRA, it was decided that the BPIP should be broken down into a few disks. This allows release of the disks over time, allowing members to pick and choose the eras of most interest for them. It also creates a recurring income stream for the BPIP project instead of simply a one-time release.

The first release will consist of all PP and PCC issues from the late 1960s through the end of the 1970s. Subsequent releases (beginning in first quarter of 2007) will contain all 1980s issues and the next all 1990s issues. All documents are in a PDF format, which is downloadable for free on the Internet. As such, all PRA members with access to the Internet can easily view the CD. Adobe Acrobat (maker of the PDFs) contains a valuable search function, so purchasers can easily look for their favorite (or not so favorite!) ancestor.

Recommended price point is \$20 per CD-ROM, but this is at the discretion of the Board. Guye Pennington has volunteered to burn these CDs on his computer, an act intended to keep costs reasonable and maximize PRA profit.

Guye Pennington welcomes any additional questions about the project.

JFMF

Carmen Johnson, Group Leader for Group 7, is our Assistant Research Director (ARD) responsible for the JFMF and our member's only website hosted by MyFamily.com. Carmen has worked very hard to establish communications with all of our members to help them obtain access to the website and to understand how to utilize all its' functions.

She has been successful with her efforts and she is to be congratulated on her accomplishments.

We continued forward with the major changes implemented in 2003 on how we work with the John French Master File (JFMF) after they were approved by the Board. The two changes are:

- A new purpose statement: The JFMF 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 JFMF will be placed on the MyFamily.com website and made available to PRA members only.

Our member's only website has been in operation for three (3) years now and while it has helped us to resolve some of the major concerns with the JFMF that have been identified in the past, I have doubts about it's success. 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 but not many of them are using this feature nor are they posting material to the website for their Group members.

Additional Features are:

- The website allows a member to search any of the gedcom files
- The website allows a member to print Family History reports.
- The website has a built in "chat" feature that allows members to have "chats" at any time with each other on the Internet.
- The website contains 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 post important news

I pointed out last year that it is very important that our Group Leaders participate frequently on this website. This year we did see good participation by some Group Leaders, but over all the Group Leader's participation has not been as high as we had hoped. Some of our Group Leaders are active on the website but the lack of postings by most of the

Group Leaders leaves us with the impression that they are not interested. The majority do not use the many features available for them to share genealogical information and to communicate with their Group members.

Despite our best intentions, and the specific direction from the Board to "fix" the problem for the past four (4) years, we have not yet found a total solution to this problem.

To ensure the Group Leader's participation, the Board, for the past four (4) years agreed that should a problem develop or if the Group Leaders do not participate, the Group Leaders will be notified of their lack of participation and asked to get more involved and be more active.

This year several "Guests" and "Users" (Group Leaders) were removed as authorized "Guests" or "Users" from the PRA member's only website on MyFamily.com because they were not active for several months the later part of 2005 or early 2006 (total of six (6) months of inactivity). We sent e-mail messages to all our members (and Group Leaders) informing them they would be removed as "Users" or "Guests" if they did not login to the website or renew their 2006 PRA membership. We also posted the announcement on the PRA-L mail list.

Carmen and I have discussed this problem several times over the years and despite our best efforts, we have not devised a successful solution to the problem. I have asked our new ARD responsible for our Family Groups and Group Leader, Melinda Pennington, to contact the Group Leaders who are not living up to our expectations and to ask them to change or inform them they will be removed as a Group Leader.

JFMF Report

By Carmen Johnson, Assistant Research Director for JFMF

At my count, we currently have about 158 members who are on the MyFamily.com site. All those who have chosen not to join have been contacted and offered an invitation.

There has been some activity from some of the User Group Leaders which is normal. Melinda Pennington of Group 6 has proven to be an active member who has posted a great deal of information.

I know that many members are using the site for their research. They are taking the opportunity to check the information in the JFMF file and their own family group files. Most have logged on at least once in the last four months. Most of the activity seems to take place in the Fall and Winter which is understandable.

I have received many email messages from members querying as to how to navigate the website and view the info. There is still some frustration on many that they cannot post to the website. That may be an issue that needs to be approached again.

I still believe that the MyFamily site is a valuable part of membership to the PRA and can become something even more valuable. The more we encourage others to utilize this tool, the better.

I recommend that we issue a challenge to the Group Leaders to communicate with their members and post their members information on the website. I know that Gene and I both are contacted to post information for a member, even though they have a Group Leader. I don't know if this is something that needs to be done through our ARD – Family Groups (Melinda Pennington), or if I need to make a push. We need more involvement by the Group Leaders to make the MyFamily site successful.

Family Groups

Rene'e Davis resigned as our Assistant Research Director (ARD) responsible for Family Groups. Our new ARD is Melinda Pennington. Melinda and I have discussed her responsibilities and I know she will 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.

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 PRA Member's only website 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 more activity by the Group Leaders.

With our DNA Study results and some much focused research by some Group Leaders, I hope we will see some movement towards the merger of some of our Family Groups in the future. I had hoped we would see some mergers this year, but those have not yet come forward.

Group Leaders Reports

Group 6 - Melinda Pennington, Group Leader

1. Melinda took over the new Group Leader responsibilities at the end of October, 2005.
2. She contacted all current Group 6 members (that had email addresses) of the PRA first part of 2006.

3. She created a new webpage for Group 6 which includes the PRA6 ged.com and all photos & documents available.
4. She is working with Joan Mickelberry, Jim Hall, Nancy Markey, and Wanda Parker to obtain all Civil War CSA & Union pension records for all Group 6 members (these are being scanned and placed on the new webpage). This is also a sharing of costs between all the names given.
5. She has ordered all the MO death certificates for Group 6. Some are up on the webpage. Some are still on order with the State of MO. This is ongoing. The Costs are being paid by Melinda.
6. Working with Wanda Pennington Parker and Joan Mickelberry we have ordered all the Moniteau Co. MO marriage records for Group 6. These have just been received this past week. Scanning has been completed but marriage records are not yet uploaded to new website. We have also ordered some of the Carroll Co., MO marriage records but not all. The 3 of us have shared these costs.
7. Working with June Stanley, MO Historical Society and Joan Mickelberry of photo digital photo's of tombstones in the State of Missouri. This is an ongoing project.
8. Working with Nancy Markey of photo digital photo's of tombstones, court records, photographs from local Pennington's in the State of Alabama, Lamar Co. This is an ongoing project. Nancy is paying for these costs.
9. Reviewing all Pennington articles from the Lamar Co. Links quarterly with the assistance of Jim Hall. Subscription is being paid by Jim Hall.
10. In February, 2006 the Group 6 gedcom was uploaded to MyFamily.com.
11. Melinda created two 3 ring binders of original or copies of original documents of the Group's birth, marriage and death certificates.
12. Melinda is organizing the WW 1 Draft registration cards for Group 6. Some are posted to our website. This is an ongoing project. Information is downloaded from ancestry.com. Melinda is paying for this subscription.
13. She is updating the census as she finds them up to 1930 from ancestry.com. Melinda is paying for this subscription.
14. Melinda is in contact with Group 23 Group Leader, Vi Ell via telephone, at least once a month. Attempting to get our Group's connected with proof, etc.
15. Melinda would like to order all the death certificates for the AL Pennington's at \$3 ea. We are still talking about this project. It may happen in 2007 though.

Group 5 - Jeanne Thomas, Group Leader

We had a major event in 2005 with the DAR marking dedication ceremony in Coles Co., IL for Rev. Charles & Cassandra (Swartzlander) Pennington on September 24, 2005.

There have been several people new to genealogy that has contacted me about their Pennington ancestry and I have encouraged them to join PRA.

We continue to search for more records regarding Rev. Charles parentage.

Group 19 - Shaunta Knibb, Group Leader

This is a small group within the PRA and is not particularly active. We are, however, still trying to find the parents of Richard and Eleanor Pennington. Richard is the earliest known Pennington of Group 19. I am in contact with PRA members and non-PRA members related to this line of Penningtons and am considering proposing a volunteer research project wherein different people could volunteer to review records of a defined area since the task of researching the area of New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland is daunting for one person.

It is believed that Richard Pennington may have come from this general 4-state area to what is now known as West Virginia.

Additionally, former Group 19 Leader Debbie Britner previously published on the Internet her research concerning a possible connection between the Minnes family in Indiana and Mary, the daughter of Richard Pennington. A recent internet query from a non-PRA rootsweb list as well as Debbie's past research leads me to believe that this Minnes family may have spent time in La Porte County, Indiana. As a result, I am going to conduct some research in that area to see if I can uncover any additional information to support a connection to the Penningtons of West Virginia. It is my hope that such research in this area and others and the resulting contact with additional descendants of Richard Pennington may provide us with clues as to his parents or other rich genealogical information.

Groups 30 & 31 – James W. Pennington, Group Leader

During the past year I have continued to serve as the PRA Group 31 and interim Group 30 Leader.

There has been minimal activity within Group 31 during the last year. Attempts to make contact with current PRA Group 31 members have not been successful. However, there have been contacts with non-PRA members researching Group 31 families and through the PRA we have been able to provide assistance with their research. In this area history has continued to repeat itself, once information is provided the individuals seem to move on and are not interested in any further contact.

As the interim leader for Group 30 I spent a good deal of time trying to become more familiar with this group and revisiting information which has been posted in the past.

Contact was made with several Group 30 members and a good deal of new information has been developed. I believe we have extended some of this family line with good information and hope to continue this process.

The main problem within Group 30 is the Abel and Abraham listed as the progenitors of the group. There is very little information anywhere that I have been able to locate on Abraham and virtually no information which suggests where the theory that they may have been brothers originated. Furthermore, I continue to doubt the accuracy of the information regarding the family and wives of the Group 30 Abel Pennington. It is apparent that this Abel left Kentucky for Indiana and remained in Indiana until his death. A list of specific items has been established for research purposes regarding this Abel during the Richmond, Indiana Annual Meeting.

I believe it would greatly benefit the PRA if we could identify a male descendant of the Group 30 Able who would be willing to participate in the DNA Study. I thought we possibly located such an individual at the Portland Meeting, but the follow-up contact to try and arrange the testing did not occur to the best of my knowledge.

Finally, it is virtually impossible to prove or disprove the links between Groups 30 & 31 and the other North Carolina Pennington families without expanding into Group 7. I have been working with Carmen recently and I believe we are having a very positive exchange. I plan to continue this exchange during the upcoming year and certainly look forward to any information we may receive from the North Carolina Researcher currently under contract with the PRA.

PRA Obituary Database Information

by Margaret E. Wood, PRA Obituary Database Editor

From 05-17-2005 to 05-08-2006, 42 obituaries have been added to the Obituary Data Base, which brings the total to 735. During the year 2005, 52 obits were added and that is about the number added each year.

The obits are still coming in by regular mail and on-line. Most are from newspapers; many are current, but some are from a year to many years past. There is no standard organization for them or what information is given. Some newspapers are using new ways of presenting them. I had one this week that has a picture of the deceased, his name, birth and death dates and nothing else but a poem, obviously written by a son or daughter. The sender did provide the newspaper name, city, state and date, which I think helps researchers. Some obits are now more like feature stories about the life and interests of the deceased, often quite long. I have limited the length

to one page in the Data Base, but note where the whole article can be found. We do get some obits that are written by a family member.

I like the idea of including the obits in the My Family site, even though I don't know much about that site yet. Also, I have made paper copies of all of the Data Base obits and they make three large volumes. I wonder if they could find a home in Indiana in the archives there. (Please note that the Obit files have been added to the PRA Member's only website now)

I have enjoyed doing this job most of the time and think obits are valuable because they are the only thing written about the lives of most people, and, too, I just like life stories. However, I am ready to resign and hope someone will carry on the Data Base. Happy Reunion!

Future

Despite major efforts by the Pennington Research Association Board and many dedicated volunteers, one significant issue continues to challenge the Research Committee this next year – the apathy by some of our Group Leaders. I believed that with the implementation of the new website on MyFamily.com, we would see some resolution of this problem but it continues.

Neither of our Assistant Research Directors nor myself have any specific recommendations at this time. We will continue to encourage the Group Leaders to participate and to help find ways to resolve any concerns they identify. However, it is important that the Group Leaders work themselves to be an integral part of the Pennington Research Association. It is only with their help that we can meet our mission, goals and objectives.

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.