

Pennington Research Association



**Pennington Research Association
Research Committee Annual Report
July 2000**

Submitted by

Gene Pennington, Research Director

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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

We will be electing a new Executive Board very soon and I would be remiss in my duties if I did not take a moment to acknowledge the outstanding work by our President, Ayvonne Roach. Without her encouragement, vision, concern, support, understanding and compassion, we would not have made it through these past two years.

I would also like to express my thanks to the other members of the Executive Board for their help and support these past two years. We have made tremendous gains towards realizing our mission, goals and objectives and this would not have been possible without the Board's leadership.

The Research Committee has been very busy. We reorganized with a new mission and with specific goals and objectives. We identified several major projects to work on this year and we have been almost 100 % successful in completing them.

We continued to work on perhaps the most significant project ever started by the PRA, the John French Master File (JFMF). This project was started by Ayvonne Roach and John French several years ago. Its stated purpose is to collect genealogical data from our members and other researchers to further the study of the Pennington surname.

Bobby Pennington continues his work on a second major project which will have a significant impact on the ability of the PRA to find submitted genealogical data, reports and articles to help with our research. This project is the scanning and indexing of the Pennington Pedigrees and the Cousins' Courier.

While devoting major efforts to those two projects, the Research Committee has continued to maintain a presence on the Internet, establish new standards for submitting queries, data and genealogical reports, and recruited several new Family Group Leaders, and continued to improve communication links with our members, the

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

Board and Family Groups. We have distributed parts of the John French Master File (JFMF) to those Family Group Leaders who have Internet access and have identified a process by which information can be collected, approved and entered into the JFMF.

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 especially want to recognize the outstanding contributions made by the Assistant Research Directors this year. The PRA is indeed fortunate to have such an outstanding Team.

- Bobby Pennington -- Responsible for the Pennington Pedigrees and Courier indexing project.
- Jim Pennington -- Responsible for the John French Master File (JFMF) and publishing our books.
- Steve Privett -- Web master and list master for the Pennington Surname mail list.
- John Alan Pennington -- Responsible for our Family Groups.
- Katherine Cochrane -- Responsible for printed and electronic publishing. Unfortunately, Katherine resigned in May, 2000.

I would like to recognize 3 of our Family Group Leaders for their outstanding work and the great examples they have set for other Group Leaders and their own groups.

They established mail lists for their group members, created web sites for their groups (complete with sources, evidence, census records and photographs), located original documents that support some or all of their group's genealogy and, in one case, provided a complete genealogy with supporting evidence and sources for their group where none existed before.

These exceptional Group Leaders are:

Carmen Johnson, Group 7
Shirley Erickson, Group 11
Ruth Voshell Stonesifer, Group 21

I would be terribly remiss if I did not mention the outstanding work by Margaret E. Wood, our Obituary Database Editor. Since taking on this

important job last year, she has entered over 400 obituaries on the GenConnect Board on the Internet.

While this position is not part of the Research Committee, I believe Margaret's contribution is remarkable and has helped the Pennington Research Association meet one of its' major goals.

Projects

1. Implement the approved process for making changes to the John French Master File (JFMF).
2. Groups -- (Recruitment of group leaders and improving communications within the groups).
3. Web site -- (Mailing Lists and GenConnect Boards).
4. Indexing -- (Pennington Pedigrees and Cousin's Courier).
5. Develop a 5 year strategic plan which will include a technology section.
6. Publication of a test CD containing genealogy reports and Gedcom files from the JFMF.

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

Goals and Objectives

I am happy to report that we have been very successful in meeting our goals and objectives. Some will always be "open" because they are always in progress. A few are still being worked on at this time and we expect to soon complete them.

All of the projects have been successfully implemented and in some cases completed.

Some noteworthy accomplishments:

- Improved communications with members and other researchers. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of queries and general e-mail messages I have received this year. I have been averaging about 5 queries per month which I post on the 3 mail lists with the author's approval. I have been averaging about 10 general e-mail messages per day from PRA members and other researchers. I think this increase is indicative of the success we have achieved in improving our communications with researchers and our members.
- The new process titled "Making Changes to the JFMF" has been implemented and is about 90% complete. The remaining task is for the approved data to be added and/or changed and/or deleted in the JFMF.
- All of our Group Leaders have done just an outstanding job but some of them excelled. They have established mail lists for their group members, created web sites for their group and actively posted messages to our mail lists. One Group Leader put together an entire genealogical history for her group where none existed before.
- The Pennington Research Association now operates all but one (1) of the newly created Pennington surname boards on GenConnect on the Internet. Now anybody can post a query or post information for wills, pensions, obituaries, bibles, etc. These have contributed significantly to our mission by allowing the posting, retention, and searching of Pennington genealogy

PRA Research Committee Annual Report - Projects, Goals & Objectives

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data on the Internet. Margaret Wood, our Obituary Database Editor, has added over 400 obituaries to the Obits board.

- 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.

The remainders of the projects have specific sections devoted to them in this report.

Web Site

Our web site continues to be very successful and to help us meet one of our major goals. However, many believe it is time for a major change for our web site. This change impacts what is on the web site, how it functions and how it looks and feels to site visitors. For details of some of the changes being discussed, the reader is referred to the technology section in the 5 year strategic plan outline.

We must explore new ways to provide on-line access to the information the PRA has such as the Family Groups, the Pedigree and Courier indexes and perhaps even the JFMF. Each of these data sources has tremendous value to our members and other researchers. We need to find a method to make the data available on-line so it can not only be read, but that it can be updated by authorized members of the PRA.

As I said last year in my report, the future of the web site is limited only by our imagination. While we have not been 100% successful in implementing all of the features we had hoped, overall the site has been very successful.

Web Server Statistics

General Summary - Per Day

Low Side:

Average successful requests **per day**: 373

High Side:

General Summary

Average successful requests **per day**: 502

Mail Lists

We support 3 mail lists but only operate 2. The PRA Members only mail list and the PRA-L mail list on Rootsweb are operated by the Pennington Research Association. The Pennington-L mail list is operated by an individual.

One of the main reasons we created the 2 PRA operated mail lists was to provide information for the editors of the Pedigrees and Courier that could be published. A process was setup which allowed an editor to copy any of the information from either of the 2 mail lists operated by us and then obtains the author's consent to publish the material in the Pedigrees.

I am not sure if this is not being done with sufficient regularity to justify the work needed to maintain and operate the mailing lists. Perhaps we should rethink their purpose and how many we operate.

For example, we should consolidate the two mail lists we operate into just one mail list. We can make the remaining mail list a "modified" list (which means that only the list operator can add subscribers to the list and only subscribers can post messages), or we can make it an "open" list (which means anybody can subscribe to the list and can post a message to it).

Based on my experience operating the 2 PRA lists, I believe we should make the PRA-L mail list on Rootsweb our only list and open it to any person who wishes to subscribe to it. This will reduce the work load for me and help to eliminate some of the confusion about which list serves which purpose. Should we modify our mail lists as I have suggested, then the purpose of the remaining mail list on Rootsweb will be:

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 choose to use them.

Family Groups

We continue to make great strides thanks to an outstanding group of volunteer Family Group Leaders and to John Alan Pennington, one of our Assistant Research Directors. John is responsible for the supervision and direction of family groups and their leaders. I know he and I are very proud that we now have 22 Family Group Leaders!

John could not be here for our Executive Board meeting but his report and a proposal are listed below.

Annual Report
Family Groups

Pennington Research Association

John Alan Pennington
Assistant Research Director for Family Groups
July 2000

There are presently 30 active family groups in the Pennington Research Association. Of these, 22 have leaders. This is an increase of 8 new leaders since the 1999 Annual Report, decreasing the number of unfilled positions by half. Of the 22 leaders, only 2 do not have computers and email. One has a contact person with email who is charged with keeping the group leader up to date on family group activity; the other lives in England and is available for queries by mail.

Among our 22 family group leaders are a number who have proven to be extraordinary. They have done a large amount of work to improve the Pennington genealogy, including the design of web pages for their own family group. Several of these web pages also contain pictures. There are links to each of them at the PRA web site.

Probably the most significant development this year was implementation of the process for making documented changes to the John French Master Files. This process allows us to make orderly and more satisfactorily documented changes to the JFMF, which over time cannot fail to improve it. The first petitions using this process are now before the board.

I have three goals for the coming year for Family Groups:

- (1) Continuing recruitment of leaders for the family groups which do not presently have leaders.
 - (2) Encouragement of family group leaders to revise and update web pages where this is needed.
 - (3) Encouragement of family group leaders to continue submitting proposals for change to the JFMF.
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Proposal

Pennington Research Association

John Alan Pennington
July 2000

I propose:

1. that the PRA adopt a long term goal of utilizing DNA analysis to clarify genealogical relationships;
2. that a branch of the Research Committee be established to perform systematic DNA research;
3. that the Executive Board devise methods for funding this research on a continuing basis.

Comment:

The cost of Y chromosome analysis is low. A single analysis is approximately \$250. If the \$250 price remains valid, I suggest designating at least \$1000 a year for DNA research for the immediate future.

Although it is expected that the primary purpose of such research will be resolution of uncertainties regarding the relationships between family groups, research questions should not be formally limited to family group questions.

The number of analyses and the groups analyzed are the proper concerns of the research group. The findings from this research will probably have a multiplier effect. For example, if two family groups have already been linked by DNA analysis, a single additional analysis of a male from another family group that shows a matching Y

chromosome would be sufficient to link that family group to a common ancestor for all three groups.

It should be emphasized that DNA research does not replace traditional genealogy. However, it is a powerful tool that seems likely to resolve some of our most vexing questions and to clarify the relationships between the various branches of the Pennington family.

DNA in Genealogy

John Alan Pennington

DNA can show us some neat stuff. Recent Y chromosome analysis showed us that male descendants of Sally Hemmings, Thomas Jefferson's beautiful slave, (that is, descendants of her son Eston Hemmings), share a common male ancestor with descendants of Jefferson's uncle. Descendants of the uncle were used for the analysis because there are no living male Thomas Jefferson descendants. The most likely reason for the Y chromosome match between Jefferson descendants and Hemmings descendants is that Thomas Jefferson fathered children with Sally Hemmings, as has been long suspected.

There are several such interesting studies, but my favorite concerns Cheddar Man.

In 1903 a 9,000-year-old skeleton (which makes him 9,097 years old now, doesn't it?) was found near the English village of Cheddar (it's the cheese), not far from Bristol in southwest England. By and by, DNA analysis came along, and soon it was found that Cheddar Man's remains were in good enough condition that mitochondrial DNA (indicating female ancestry) could be "expressed". A local high school teacher, Adrian Targett, decided it would be a really great science project for his students to analyze some local DNA and compare it to Cheddar Man. So he and his students analyzed chromosome material from twenty-one students and villagers in their midst. To Targett's astonishment, the one person who was shown to have descended from an ancestor common to Cheddar Man turned out to be himself. He and Cheddar Man share a common female ancestor from about 10,000 years ago. What a great thought: ten thousand years of Targetts living in one place, starting as hunter-gatherers, culminating in a science teacher living less than a half mile from where Cheddar Man was found.

In the first case, the Y chromosome was analyzed, showing paternal descent. In the second, mitochondrial DNA was analyzed, indicating maternal descent. Family associations like ours, which follow the paternal line of descent, are usually interested in the Y chromosome. This article explains some hows and whys.

How do they know that?

The most significant type of genetic study for genealogical purposes is possible because of an important characteristic of the 23rd pair of genes, which, like the other 22 pairs, is present in every cell of every human. That all-important trait is that the pair has two different types of gene called X and Y. The gene in females consists of two X's. Males have an X and a Y. *Every cell in every male contains genetic material on the Y chromosome that is identical to his father's Y chromosome. Therefore, it is also identical to his grandfather's, and all the men in his line of descent.*

All of the millions upon millions of instructions in the genetic code are derived from arrangements of only four basic chemicals called nucleotides, A, T, C, and G, after the first letters of their chemical names, which combine in certain specific ways. All the possible combinations of these alphabetical elements are found many millions of times in each of the 23 pairs of chromosomes, which are like a very long closed zipper, twisted and folded. These determine our entire genetic inheritance. But only the 23rd gene has X and Y, and the Y is found only in males.

Suppose we analyzed the Y chromosomes of two men, and found that they are the same. What does that mean? It means that they share a common male ancestor. But how far back is this ancestor? One generation, a hundred?

Passage of each of the Y chromosome's 60-million pairs is not always 100% accurate. Very rarely, an error creeps in. The fact that such mutations do occur when the Y chromosome is passed to the next generation is a fortunate thing for someone studying them. The reason is that we know about how often mutations occur and therefore, based on the number of mutations found, we can make fairly accurate estimates about how long ago a common ancestor lived. The more differences found between Y chromosomes of two males, the further back their common ancestor.

This factor is especially important in scientific studies that take in long periods of time such as thousands or millions of years. In the study of

genealogy involving only several hundred or a thousand years it is more important for the opposite reason: generally speaking, many generations must pass before there will be a lot of Y chromosome differences in a line of male descendants, and therefore we know that *two men who share almost all Y chromosome pairings descend from a recent common ancestor from recent times, whereas two men with dissimilar Y chromosomes do not.*

Dragging out the DNA

If you have ever seen a cell under a microscope you know how utterly tiny they are. How on earth can scientists “get at” the tiny part of a cell that is the genetic material, let alone one tiny part of that, the Y chromosome, let alone some small segment of the Y chromosome?

Getting the material for analysis isn’t so hard. As every follower of sensational murder cases knows, a tiny speck of blood or a strand of hair will do. For less dramatic studies a swab of a few cells from the inside of the cheek is enough.

The way scientists get to the DNA is to break down the cell walls chemically, then bathe the freed DNA in chemicals called “primers” that bind only to the parts they want to study, along with the individual nucleotides (the A, T, C, and G we saw earlier). The mixture is heated and cooled many times, which allows the DNA to replicate itself, to “express”, millions of times. The resulting DNA fragments are placed in a gel, subjected to an electric charge, and finally appear as spots on a photographic film. Voila! DNA analysis.

The situation isn’t nearly so simple as I have presented it, but thank goodness it isn’t necessary to study all 60-million of the pairs on the Y chromosome. In actual practice we need only to analyze a few specific segments that we can zero in on.

What can we “prove”?

If we find two men whose DNA analysis of the significant parts of their Y chromosome is exactly the same, then we have solid scientific “proof” of their common ancestry, right?

Not quite. What we have demonstrated is a high probability that they share a common ancestor, and that’s not quite the same as “proof”. We can no more “prove” their relationship by these means than we can by traditional genealogical means, official paper documents.

But official documents are solid “proof”, aren’t they? Probably, but possibly not. They too are only “probably” true. Suppose, for example, that someone bribed the court clerk two centuries ago, and he recorded not a newborn’s actual father, but instead substituted another man’s name. We can certainly imagine plenty of reasons that someone might have wanted to do this.

How confident are we that the paper record we have found is not fudged? Usually we’re pretty confident that the official court record is true and accurate. Maybe we are willing to say that we believe that the chances that this record is incorrect are less than one in a thousand. Science expresses confidence in exactly the same way. But the scientist does not base her estimate on gut feeling or common sense. Instead, she expresses it in terms of how likely it is that the findings vary from a mathematical estimate of the truth. In the above case the scientist says that the probability her findings are due to chance is less than one in 1000, written as $p < 0.001$. DNA analysis usually has a much higher level of confidence than that.

Wouldn’t it be nice if we could do away with all this wishy-washy stuff and just say we have “proof”. Well, some do say this, but strictly speaking they are wrong. The landscapes of history, science, and our own personal lives are littered with the relics of ideas that we believed were absolute bedrock, unshakeable, utterly true—only later we learned they were not. For example, DNA showed that Thor Heyerdahl was wrong when he “proved” that native South Americans came by “Kon Tiki” raft from Polynesia. Present day Native Americans are genetically related to Mongolian peoples, not Polynesians.

Probability is the best we can do, but probability is quite enough to “prove” most of the theories of science, as well as many important things in our ordinary lives, including our genealogical lineage.

DNA and Pennington Cousins

To reiterate, what we can demonstrate with DNA analysis of the Y chromosome is the probability that two males share a common male ancestor. This will likely prove very useful in sorting out the thirty branches of Penningtons, none of which we have managed to attach to a trunk yet. With DNA analysis, we ought to be able to show how all of these family groups are related.

We should not expect that they all connect to good old Gamel de Penintone, from whom the Lords Muncaster descended. Maybe none connect with Gamel. Remember, Gamel invented his surname from the

name of the Pennington village, and so did just about everyone else in the village, apparently. Even well before the Norman Conquest there was already a merry genetic mix of peoples in England. Scandinavian peoples, Celtic peoples, Angles, Saxons, Romans, various Continental peoples... We'll likely have to go a back into the misty prehistorical era to find a common ancestor for all of today's Penningtons.

But with DNA we can probably make up for some of the missing paper documents, and that will allow us to say with assurance that certain family groups share a common ancestor, whereas other family groups share a different common ancestor.

Take my family group, Family Group 4, the descendants of Ephriam Pennington (V), born about 1720. Most researchers believe that my Ephriam is the son of Ephriam Pennington (IV, b. about 1689, m. Joanna Davis, b. about 1693), who is descended from the Ephriam (I) found first at New Haven Colony about 1640, the progenitor of PRA Family Group 1. There is a good bit of circumstantial evidence for this relationship, but no document has yet appeared to "prove" it. Enter DNA.

Suppose we had Y chromosome DNA analysis done on two males, one of whom we were pretty sure descended from the younger Ephriam—me, for example—and a male we were pretty sure descended from the Ephriam of Group 1. What should we expect if it were true that the younger Ephriam was descended from the older Ephriam? We should expect that the Y chromosomes of the PRA members tested would match in every significant detail except for the small number of mutations that might occur over a period of 360 years. If this should turn out to be true, we could say with a very high degree of probability that Group 4 is actually part of Group 1. This probability, in fact, would be so high that this "proof" would be considerably stronger than if we had found Ephriam V's birth certificate showing Ephriam and Joanna as the parents. Note, however, that we haven't shown who the 1720 Ephriam's parents were, only that group 4 and group 1 descendants have a common ancestor.

Unexpected Findings

It's easy to be casual about DNA findings as they relate to family groups. But we may not always be so sanguine. Suppose, for example, that I had my DNA "done" along with that of my brothers. And suppose I discovered that I did not share the Y chromosome of my brothers. My father is not who I have assumed he was for over sixty years. How would I feel about that?

Some researchers suggest that about five percent of births fall in this, umm, "unexpected" category. Personally, although I would find such information astonishing, I would not be unduly upset. For another person, such information might be a personal calamity that destroyed their very sense of self, calling into question every element of family life they had accepted as given, and maybe even such things as their parent's legal will and an inheritance.

Obviously, then, one should not enter a DNA study without recognizing that there are possible risks that accompany the potentially enormous rewards. For this reason, no participant should ever be identified by name, and the participant himself must be the one to publicly reveal the results of his analysis if he so chooses.

Trunking the Pennington Tree

A well organized initial analysis of the Y chromosome of a relatively few PRA members could clarify relationships between family groups that have stumped us all for decades. But a DNA study does not take the place of traditional scholarly genealogy. The questions of each individual's exact place must still be answered by the careful genealogical scholarship the PRA is already known for. In fact, the validity of DNA findings depends directly on the quality of the traditional genealogical that has gone before.

What we are likely to find, of course, is not a Pennington tree, but a grove of trees, the roots of which are found beneath the village of Pennington and Muncaster Castle. Regardless of how it all came out, and where we as individuals found ourselves in this grove, it seems unlikely any of us would ever cease referring to Muncaster as "our" castle.

PRA Indexing

By: Bobby E. Pennington
Charleston, SC
On-Line Group Leader, Group VI
Ass't Research Director Scanning/Indexing Project
<http://www.members.home.net/bobpenn1/>

A web site has been established for PRA Group VI and is an on-going development. It is mutually linked with the main web site of PRA. In the planning stages are a "Photo Album" and the addition of a four or five generation downloadable Group VI GEDCOM file (partial).

Many new descendants have been added to the Group VI GEDCOM since last updated to the JFMF. Most were added between the time of John French's death and the approval of the PRA procedure to "petition" for additions. We have lost track of the many changes and when they occurred. We may need to completely replace the Group VI GEDCOM in the JFMF. We urgently need a "savvy" person to assist with the on-line Group Leader functions or the PP indexing, as it seems impossible to muster the time required to perform all the work needed - and still have time for family.

As a result of this lack of time, the Pennington Pedigrees indexing project has been progressing painfully slow. One person has volunteered to help (Lynn Ready) but some time will be required to get her "up to speed." The status of the Pedigrees and Courier indexing follows:

PENNINGTON PEDIGREES SCANNING AND INDEXING PROJECT Apr-2000

	SCANNED	PROOFED	*INDEXED	MERGED
Complete	63	59	42	42
Incomplete	2	6	23	23
Total	65	65	65	65

*Note: The Pedigrees "PROOFED" percentage is shown as 95% because no matter how many times the scanning is proof-read, it seems there are still SOME scan errors.

PENNINGTON COUSINS' COURIER
INDEXING PROJECT STATUS Apr-2000

	SCANNED	PROOFED	*INDEXED	MERGED
Complete	55	55	55	55
Incomplete	2	2	2	2
Total	57	57	57	57

****NOTE:** The August 1999 issue of the Courier will be the last issue since the Courier has now been combined with Pennington Pedigrees.

JFMF

The John French Master File (JFMF) continues to pose a number of major hurdles for the Research Committee. Of all the projects undertaken by our Research Committee, this one has the potential to be of the most value to our members and researchers.

Report to the Research Director:
The Pennington Research Association
April 27, 2000

Subject: The John French Master file (JFMF)

During the last 12 months, the files listed below were extracted from the JFMF and delivered to the PRA Members noted in each case. I know that you are aware of the information contained in the files, but, for the record I will briefly describe it here. Each file is a self extracting compressed collection of two or more normal computer files. The numbered file (i.e. 02-1zip.exe) contains three files, one is a standard gedcom that allows the user to import all the data for that group into any standard Genealogy program. Two is the same information in a word processor readable format, exactly the same as is printed and sold for our group books. Three is in the same word processor format and contains your message explaining the use of this information. The file named xlink-1.exe, contains a gedcom file of all persons in the JFMF that are NOT included in a numbered group. It also includes the same explanation file described as number three. All the files were sent to the recipients as attachments to an e-mail message explaining their use..

<u>Group</u>	<u>Distribution</u> <u>File, date, and person</u>
1	
2	[02-1zip.exe,15may99] [xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Judith Pennington
3	
4	[04-1zip.exe,12may99] [xlink-1.zip, 09jun99] to John Alan Pennington,
4	[04-1zip.exe], [xlink-1.exe], [4-1.pdf] 12jan00, to Hal H. Pennington
5	[05-1zip.exe, 15may99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Jeanne Thomas
6	[06-1zip.exe,06jun99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Bobby Pennington,
7	[07-1zip.exe, 23may99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Carmen Johnson
8	[08-1zip.exe, 23may99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Rod Pennington

9 [09-1zip.exe,15may99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Barbara Aguilar,
9 [09-1zip.exe,31mar00][xlink-1.exe,31mar00] to John Orr Pennington
10 [10-1zip.exe, 05jun99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Steve Privett,
11 [11-1zip.exe, 28aug99][xlink-1.exe, 28aug99] to Shirley Erickson
12 [12-1zip.exe, 12jan00][xlink-1.exe, 12jan00] to Barb Temple
14 [14-1zip.exe, 21Apr00][xlink-1.exe, 21Apr00] to Ralph L. Pennington, Jr.
16 [16-1zip.exe, 8may99][xlink-1.exe, 08-jun99] to Mike Pennington
17 [17-1zip.exe,06jun99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Rick Crume,
18
19 [19-1zip.exe, 13jan00][xlink-1.exe, 13jan00] to Deb Britner
20
21 [xlink-1.exe, 13jan00] to Ruth Stonesifer
22
23 [23-1zip.exe, 12may1999][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Viola Ell,
24
25
26 [26-1zip.exe,06jun99][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Ric Blake,
27
28 [28-1zip.exe, 12may1999][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Paul A. Pennington,
29 [29-1zip.exe, 12may1999][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Joanne E. Pennington,
30 [30-1ablzip.exe, 26may1999][xlink-1.exe, 08jun99] to Martha Mourning,
30 [30-1abrzip.exe, 26may1999] to Martha Mourning,
31
32 [xlink-1.exe, 22jun99][32-1zip.exe, 08Aug99] to William J Pennington
32 [32-1zip.exe, 12jan00][xlink-1.exe, 12jan00] to Barb Temple

I feel obligated to mention the many problems I had over last year with both my old and also my new computers. Some of these were actual hardware problems; my own mishandling of the data and lack of the necessary time and knowledge caused three or more situations I would have rather avoided. The bad side of this was that I lost some entries I had made in the JFMF when I transferred the backup files between my local hard drives, and I'm not sure which ones they are. My investigation of this problem has convinced me the data was initially lost in May of last year before or about the same time I begin sending data to the Group Leaders. That was when I installed a new 4 gig hard drive replacing one of 545 Mb. The good side is that I still have the data on paper and will be sending it to you for distribution. Another good side is that you took over the CD production job and produced a CD far superior to what I could have done in the best of circumstance.

Your fabulous CD has set me thinking about what the next steps ought to be.

First, your test CD 2000-2 is a vast improvement over sending out the group information via e-mail attachment. I don't know how you want to handle their making and distribution, either you doing it, or me, someone else, or a committee. It should be done and the current e-mail attachment method discontinued or held as an alternate. However, I still prefer another solution for updating the JFMF over all these.

Second, the same CD or another with or without the GEDCOM files might be sold to PRA Members only at a price like \$20.00, this would give being a Group Leader some small payback.

Third, I think that some form of CD could be laundered through the RootsWeb cleaners and sold to the public at large. It should be priced high enough to make PRA membership a preferable option. Maybe \$100.00.

Fourth, the Pennington Obituary database might be added to the CD. It may grow too large, but until then the exposure would help it to grow.

Fifth, The same CD could replace the book printing project. Writing my report for that enterprise prompted me to think of some of these. Service to our non-computer members would not be entirely given up if they were to buy a CD and ask a friend to print it or take it to their

local library and print it themselves. I'm thinking this would put the printing task on the person requiring it and give the people who paid for a computer some benefit.

Sixth, Could we check with a lawyer and see if one CD with ALL the data on it be copyrighted and then given away or sold leaving off the parts not appropriate for the particular user? It might save a lot of work, money, and still safely avoid having to copyright a myriad of CD's.

Seventh, Should we start a project to come up with a CD containing all the Pennington Pedigrees, adding the new ones each year until it's full, then splitting it into two CDs. I don't think we would want to make this CD available to members at a different dues option because dropping the number of PP's printed will soon make them more expensive per copy. That is unless we discontinue printing them altogether some day.

Eighth, This is an old idea like many of those above. Can a project be looked at to enable the group leaders to post their own data directly to our website? It might be better and faster than using CD's for this operation. However, if we intend to sell data, posting it on the website would have to be limited in some fashion. Steve's agreement to providing each Group Leader a place to post their info on the PRA's website essentially destroys any market for the same information. I would place solving this development as one of the highest priorities.

I won't be able to return your evaluation of test CD 2000-2 request until sometime next week, I think you already can tell I loved it.

Respectfully Submitted by:
S/ James D. Pennington
Assistant Research Director
Pennington Research Association

Electronic Publication

The Board last year approved a "Test CD" project. We have concluded most of the project. The remaining portions are for me to present this report to you and to ask the Board for direction.

We had some delays caused by computer problems and personal time commitments. We finally started working on the project around October, 1999. Here are some summary pieces of information:

Estimated Hours: 200 (These are my hours and do not include any hours by Jim Pennington)
Expenses: \$750 (*This does not include expenses paid by me for equipment, software, supplies and mailing expenses)

*The initial expenses were estimated to be between \$1,500 and \$3,000. This includes the software needed to convert the data into a format readable by any computer, the purchase of a device to write the data to a CD and the production cost for 200 to 500 CDs. We only produced 50 of the CDs.

General Information:

First, I have changed my opinion as to whether or not we should publish a CD or for that matter, publish anything either in print or electronically.

Why? Simple. An action was taken in June, 2000 that established a precedent for the Pennington Research Association with regards to publishing information. This decision resulted in the destruction of the Test CDs which took hundreds of hours of time and cost several hundred dollars to produce.

Now whenever somebody wants the Pennington Research Association to change information that they may, or may not, have submitted to us for publication, we have to not only notify members of the changes (which is reasonable) BUT now we have to destroy the publication if the submitter makes such a request.

Not only that, but because we have established a precedent by destroying published information, I believe we could be held

responsible for NOT destroying any published information once the submitter has made a request to us to change the information.

A very important question for the Board is why should the Pennington Research Association and its' volunteers spend hundreds of hours and spend funds to publish something when it may be destroyed?

Personally, I am not willing to spend my time on such a project knowing there is a chance it will be destroyed. This is especially true when the root problem lies not with the Pennington Research Association but with an error made by a person who voluntarily submitted genealogical data to the Pennington Research Association knowing full well the data would be published.

That said, please find the rest of my report below.

This was just a "Test" CD. All of the feedback was positive and several suggestions were made to improve it should the Board approve the publication of another CD.

For example, it was suggested we include all of the JFMF in a "For Sale" CD. However, as you recall, there has been quite a bit of discussion and concern expressed about selling the valuable information in the JFMF and making ALL of it available (even to our membership). This is a critical issue that needs to be voted on and approved by the Board BEFORE we make a "For Sale" CD.

Many delays caused the entire process to take much longer than anybody predicted. Since we are all volunteers, we just can't rely on any type of production schedule. In this case, volunteers faltered due to their own personal work loads. Then my own schedule caused another delay for a couple of months.

I think we have a much better understanding of the process and have some of the "glitches" worked out now. I learned that in order to create the genealogical reports and the Gedcom files for just the 18 or so groups that are on the CD, it took many more hours than I had anticipated. To do all 30 groups it will obviously take much longer.

Remember that there are several steps necessary AFTER the reports and Gedcom files have been created. You need time to organize all the material, create draft versions of the documents and files, proof read them, and then create a final version of everything. Then you have to create a "master" copy of what will be on the CD. Then you

have to create a "master CD" that will be used to create the finished product.

Bottom line is this: If we are going to publish a CD, we need to publish just one (1) each year rather than the two (2) that we had previously discussed. We need to give plenty of lead time between the start of the collection process (making changes to JFMF) and the time we want to start producing the CD. Then we need plenty of time between the start and finish of the publishing so we have time to advertise (if we decide to sell them) to our members and to mail them out.

Remember also that EACH Family Group Leader was sent their own Group's Gedcom file AND the "unconnected" Group file from the JFMF so they do had quite a bit of information. In discussions with Jim and John Pennington, we felt that with the information on the "Test" CD, the Group Leaders would be in excellent shape.

Plus, on the CD they were all given the Petitions for Change to the JFMF along with reports and Gedcom files from new PRA members and non-PRA members who want to add their genealogy information to the JFMF. That is quite a bit of information to review, comment on and submit a report back to me.

If the Board can successfully resolve the publication issues, such as copyrights and changes, I see great potential in using this format to distribute information and genealogy data to our members.

Think of the potential if you had a CD that contains the JFMF, the PRA Index program AND an electronic copy of ALL of our Pedigrees and Couriers! Now, add to it an index and electronic copies of ALL of the books and papers in our Research Library! Wow!

One thing to consider here is exactly how we are going to advertise a "For Sale" CD, handle the production and the mailing. We need to talk with Flo on this subject. I think there are two (2) things we can count on if we decide to sell a CD.

1. The "For Sale" CD will be of invaluable help to members of the PRA. It will go a long way to help us accomplish our Mission.
2. The sale of the CD will create a substantial revenue stream for the PRA.

Expenses and Revenue:

It cost about \$6 per CD to make, insert into the cardboard sleeves and to mail it. If we sell it for \$10 and sell 400, that equals about \$4,000 against an expense of about \$2,400 which nets \$1,600. If we sell the CD for \$15 each, we net another \$5 per CD.

I personally think the sale price of the CD should reflect the value of the information contained on it along with any cost to produce it along with handling and shipping costs. I think a price range between \$20 - \$30 per CD is reasonable.

As we add more to the CD (copies of the Pedigrees and/or the Research Library), the cost of the CD should go up accordingly. Of course, there is a down side to this. The sale of actual paper copies of these items will decrease since they will be available on the CD. However, given the convenience and electronic searching capabilities of a CD, it will make the CD the better choice and one which gives more value to our members who have a computer.

Board, Staff and Family Group Leader Comments:

It has been suggested that genealogical data on living persons should not be included in the CD or the files without their written permission (a humongous, if not impossible task). All that should be privatized or deleted.

Note: We did address this issue at last year's meeting and approved a policy on privacy which addresses this concern. However, we certainly can reevaluate the existing policy and make any modifications if the Board wishes to do so.

One Group Leader suggested that the CD be put out for sale to all members (and others possibly). She added that there are many guidelines in the marketplace for price. It could be updated and resold on an annual or semi-annual basis. Updates are usually a bit cheaper (just a thought). The member added that the CDs give us many possibilities, as she has discussed before.

One Assistant Research Director who uses a MAC computer could read the files but could not use the PRA Index program since it was written for PC computers only. He suggested we write the program so it can be used on both formats.

He added that the reports look good, and should be useful in PDF and that the CD itself looks gorgeous.

He added a suggestion that in future editions the group numbers start with 01 so that they will be in order on the index.

Another person said they think the PRA should sell a CD to members, probably for something like \$10. But it should be platform independent. He commented that it wouldn't do Mac users a bit of good as it stands.

Note: Most of the CD is platform independent, however, the PRA Index program will only work on a PC. It is unknown how much it will cost us to have somebody write it so it would be platform independent. Bobby Pennington, the creator of the program, has discussed this with some of our Mac members and I don't believe he is willing to spend the extra time to write a Mac version.

Another person said that the CD should have the entire JFMF on it, all the family groups plus the "unattached". An index to the PP is truly useful only if you have all the journals at hand, and few people do. He has only the last three years. What would be useful to him is the articles themselves. Much of the other stuff in the PP is unimportant, but, for example, he would like to know what some of the better genealogists in the group have to say about Gamel, since he is working on a web page for FG-27. The PDF format is great, because it can be searched.

A Group Leader said that she did finally have time to read the test CD. It was fabulous. She didn't know how it could be improved on except for automatic installation. She had to wait for her son to give her a little help in installation. She added that I should not take this literally but that she just needed to learn more about using her computer and that she is very proud of the CD.

Another Group Leader said that he thinks the CD looks great and he can tell that a lot of work went in to it. He offered some feedback for the questions I asked about the CD. They are:

1. Was the CD of any value to you? If yes, how? If no, why?

Yes, primarily because it gathers into one location numerous pieces of information critical for understanding the operational structure and mission of the PRA.

2. Was it organized so it was easy to navigate?
3. Was it organized so it was easy to find information?

Yes to both.

4. Was it formatted correctly?

No problems.

5. What would you like to see removed from the CD?
6. What would you like to see added to the CD?

I think it would be good if there was a section where Group Leaders could comment on the status of research in their group and on the overall validity of information found in the JFMF.

7. Should the Pennington Research Association sell this CD? If yes, should it be sold to Pennington Research Association >members only or to any researcher?
8. If sold, what do you think would be a reasonable price?

If it is sold, the price should be high enough to cover production and mailing costs. To be honest, though, I don't see where it would be that useful to people other than PRA officers or Group Leaders. On the other hand I don't see any reason to keep it out of the hands of who'd ever want it, for whatever reason.

Future

Up until a few days ago, I truly believed the future of the Pennington Research Association was very bright. We knew there would be challenges to face and obstacles to overcome.

However, with the recent precedent set by destroying published material, I am truly concerned about our ability to meet our goal of becoming the best source of genealogical information in the world on the Pennington family.

Hopefully we will successfully resolve this and other issues at our Board meeting.

What makes this precedent so disastrous for the Pennington Research Association is that our new found use of the Internet and the use of technology may well be hampered, if not stopped entirely.

I have said several times before that we have a responsibility to continue to publish our material in printed and electronic format so that libraries, research facilities and all of us can continue to enjoy the information and fellowship offered by the Pennington Research Association.

We should continue to explore new ways of making our information available on-line through the Internet. This poses a number of significant challenges. Security of the data, the ability to make it available to members only, the cost to provide this service and how to make it available for updating by Family Group Leaders. All of these challenges, and others yet to be identified, need to be carefully examined.

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. When we take steps backward, we detract from our purpose and our mission.

I encourage the new Board members to renew their commitment to our vision, our mission and our goals. Without that commitment, we will grow weak and die.