

Genealogy Basics – Tips and Advice on Submitting Register Reports

By Joe Petrie

BACKGROUND:

Recently, I searched the internet and my genealogy books for tips and advice on producing new and revised Modified Register Reports (henceforth reports). Why? I'd like to explore faster and more efficient ways to produce my reports. I believe that nearly all of my reports in cbgen.org/Records/Families need updating.

MY METHODOLOGY:

I use PAF 5.2 for my database. Also, I use PAF Companion to produce the Rich Text Format Modified Register Report which I edit using WORD. I spell check to correct spelling errors in my database. (More on PAF Later.)

For records with only States or Provinces, I try to pin-point locales.

Currently (and henceforth), when reviewing my Notes in the report, I focus on source(s). Whenever I find sources of oral history and web sites combined, I change the Notes format to divide oral history from the web site(s). For records with only oral history, I search for records from on-line databases like Ancestry Library, FamilySearch, AmericanAncestors, Novascotiagenealogy and other databases. For sites with many databases like Ancestry Library, I identify the specific database. (Remember that Ancestry and Ancestry Library have over 10 thousand databases and FamilySearch has over 2 thousand databases.) If I can't validate fields, I add a note indicating that I can't validate the information.

I complete the review by retrieving and updating PAF records to make the database consistent.

MY CONCERNS ABOUT MY MODIFIED REGISTER REPORTS

I am uncomfortable about some of the information in my reports. There are many examples, a few follow:

- Errors (especially typos);
- Oral history that I was unable to validate;
- Missing Maiden Surnames;
- Maiden Name errors;
- Missing individuals and missing families;
- Inclusion of living individuals;

Even though I am uncomfortable with my notes, I still plan to submit my reports to CBGHA. The existing reports are in cbgen.org/Records/Families. The new reports will have an as of date as part of the title,

MY CONCERNS - ORAL HISTORY THAT NEEDS VALIDATION:

I need to isolate oral history in my Notes. Previously, I had mixed oral history with results of internet searches. I am gradually changing the Notes format to uniquely identify oral history and Web Sites and thereby to eliminate the consolidation. Because I have many thousands of records, the workload is lengthy and tedious!. If I can't find an official image or can't validate the oral history to my satisfaction, I add a note to identify that it was not validated. For example, in Ancestry Public Member Trees there is a tree with a marriage record for my ancestor George Petrie in Scotland that I can't validate. Frankly, I believe that George and Isobel were married in Halifax before 1785. And I believe that he was Scottish and from Northern Ireland. None of my beliefs have been validated!

Sometimes, I did not add a Note with a source. I need to identify the Source. Attribution is a must. Recently, I found an O'Brien Massachusetts Marriage Record for a great uncle which differed from oral history. When I updated my database, I deleted the oral history item from my record and from my Notes.

Also, a researcher told me where one of my great, great grandmother and her siblings were born in Scotland. The researcher provided a location. Because I can't validate her information for that family, the locale in my latest database is Scotland, UK.

MY CONCERNS - MISSING MAIDEN SURNAMES:

At first, I left the Surname field blank. At one time, I considered entering UNKNOWN in the Surname field. A long time ago, I entered the husband's surname and added a note that the wife's maiden name was unknown. Whatever I do my goal is to be consistent.

MY CONCERNS - MAIDEN NAME ERRORS:

Initially, I considered information from a few genealogists "Gospel". I never validated it! I believe that I need to!

Using a piece of information from a technique provided by the lady who sent me DNA work, I found additional vital records for an O'Brien great grand uncle who moved from Bridgeport, Cape Breton, to Lawrence MA and then to Danbury CT. I found his marriage record in Lawrence MA. His wife's maiden name was on the record. According to US Census records, their oldest daughter was born in Massachusetts. I can't validate it using Massachusetts Birth Records.

The oral history for my great granduncle's wife was incorrect. I corrected it from a Massachusetts Marriage Register.

Also, using Connecticut US Census records, I added their children to my database. I have not found a birth record for their eldest daughter who was born in Massachusetts. I assume that the birth was attended to by a midwife. Often Massachusetts midwives did not record births. On-line Connecticut Birth records are not available.

Interestingly, in most available vital records for Connecticut, the family Surname is recorded as Obrien.

I was troubled by the number of Ancestry Public Member Trees with great granduncle's wife's incorrect maiden name. (Because I use Ancestry Library, I can only read Public Member Trees. I can't comment.) I sent a cousin, who subscribes to Ancestry, a Register Report for that family and asked him correct his records and to use the Comment software to ask others to correct their records.

MY CONCERNS - MISSING INDIVIDUALS AND MISSING FAMILIES:

The Danbury Connecticut Obrien family was truly an example of a family that I knew about, searched for but never found. I'll take responsibility for never finding them. I always searched for O'Brien and not for Obrien. I should have used the same technique that I use for my wife's Connolly family in Galway. I search for other spellings of the Connolly name: Connelly, Conneely and Conley. I have been told that there are over 20 other Connolly spellings.

Using Nova Scotia Vital records and other web sites provided by the lady who sent me the DNA work, I found vital records for New York and New Jersey O'Brien family members. They were truly missing families.

For people who lived in Nova Scotia, I mostly gather from: Novascotiagenealogy, Ancestry Library, FamilySearch, AmericanAncestors, obituary and cbgen cemetery databases.. One amazing database is the Antigonish Catholic Diocese database that was initially in FamilySearch and is now available in Ancestry. I gathered 6000+ baptism, marriage and death information from it.

One night, I received a phone call from a Petrie cousin who claimed that I made an error in his mother's family. There was an extra person. I searched my database and read my notes. The child belonged there. A short time later he called me again to tell me a story. He was a youngster when he went with his mother to a cemetery in Cape Breton where his mother created a grave marker using cement and rocks for a brother who died in infancy. That uncle was his extra person.

When my mother immigrated to the United States, she went to Glace Bay, NS her birth to get a birth certificate. Her birth was not recorded. She got her baptism record at St Anne's and filed a Delayed Birth Application for Loretta Elizabeth Tobin. . She was 22 years old in 1926 when she filed it. Her baptism name was Elizabeth Loretta Tobin, not Loretta Elizabeth Tobin. After she was naturalized, she changed her legal name to Ethel Tobin Petrie. Please note that Ancestry has linked 5 versions of her given names.

MY CONCERNS - INCLUSION OF LIVING INDIVIDUALS;

It happened! A second cousin told me about incomplete information for her living first cousin that was in one of my reports.

I plan to examine all Year of Birth information for all individuals in the last generation of the report. If anyone was born after 1906, I will drop that generation.

WHAT REPORTS ARE IN PROCESS?:

There are two report revisions in process: Petrie and O'Brien. Both have new individuals and new families. Both have corrections, principally to Notes for oral history. As usual, both reports will be cut off in the early 1900s. (Note that I send complete reports to individuals that are related – on request.)

Final note about the Revised O'Brien Report: It is unique for me because it contains a new family identified from Family Tree DNA. The research was sent by a lady who is not an O'Brien. Essentially, the lady is a researcher who had information about an O'Brien cousin of mine specifically an O'Brien who had married into one of her families.

For background: I was shocked because the lady had access to my DNA results before I was notified that my DNA results were available. (I never received a notification because someone at Family Tree DNA entered a typo in my Email address.) It happens!

ADVICE:

Please note that I believe that researchers should publish their research. When I give seminars, I remind attendees that genealogy reports should be submitted to help genealogists, researchers and family historians. Unfortunately, some researchers take their research to the grave. For the most part, fruits of their labor are lost! Share your research. Believe me, there will be others who will find it useful. For CBGHA Members, submit your reports in PDF format. I save my input to CBGHA in WORD 97 and in PDF formats.

For some cousins who have genealogy software, I send a copy of my database as a GEDCOM. In addition, I have sent copies of the database to CBGHA. For others, I send instructions on downloading PAF from the [Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group](#) .

When I had 3 PCs, I bought 3 copies of PAF Companion from Progeny Genealogy in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

PAF supposedly is dead. For users, it is simply unsupported. Amazingly, in a webinar, the New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS) included PAF 5.2 as software that was still used and available.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at:

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Please note that Friends of Irish Research is the repository for my published genealogy articles in the *Newfoundland Ancestor*; and in *EZINE*, the electronic magazine of the Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association. (See friendsofirishresearch.org specifically, the Tabs for Publications and Joe's Free Web Sites.) Also, please note that I am the author of the Genealogy Basics Series.

Ireland Reaching Out (irelandxo.com) has an Electronic Magazine named XO Chronicles (irelandxo.com/irelandxo/history-and-genealogy). One of the three XO Chronicles Series is XO People. XO People focus on the Irish Diaspora (people who immigrated and never returned permanently). XO People has seven of my XO People articles about our relatives. My relatives are: John Cummings (Thurles Parish); Patrick Tobin (Gowran Parish); and Judith Keeffe (Gowran Parish). My wife's relatives are; John McGrath (Kilcoskan, Galway); Helena O'Brien (YoughaLCork); Peter Connolly (Kilcummin; Galway) and Mary A (Nee) Connolly (Kilcummin, Galway).