

# **Genealogy Basics – Use of Notes in Genealogy Software**

**By Joe Petrie**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The favorite article on what should be in Notes is in: Ancestral Findings

<https://ancestralfindings.com/genealogy-notes/>

I recommend that everyone follow the article's advice. It is brief, precise and concise. The sample that I will show follows the norm. For spouses who married into one of my collateral families, I include the parents in Notes. I do not add records for them. My Notes include obituaries and other items from Newspapers.

My notes are always positive.

## **BACKGROUND**

My first genealogy software was selected because it was recommended by a dear friend. I gradually learned about Genealogy Vitals i.e.: Date and Place of Birth, of Christening, of Marriage, of Death and of Burial.

When I had about 6000 records from 3 sources, I decided to convert to another software. I selected free PAF. The old software did not have Notes and GEDCOM import and export. PAF did! My eldest son produced software to load the records into the Personal Ancestral File (PAF). I am still adding and updating my Notes in PAF's original 6000 records.

Many of my notes mix sources. Gradually, I am separating the oral and web sites sources. In addition, when there is only an oral source, I try to validate the oral source using a variety of web sites like Novascotiagenealogy, Ancestry Library and FamilySearch.

Currently, I have over 31000 records. My progress on editing Notes is slower than planned. Very little has been done since I fell in March 2018. I fractured all the ribs on my left side. I was in a hospital for 8 days. I was in a rehab hospital for 3 weeks. I had a total of 6 groups of rehab physical therapy in the rehab hospital, at home and at various physical therapy locales. Climbing stairs is a safety issue. There were 7 stairs to get into the house. There were 11 stairs to get to the laundry. We moved from the house we lived in for 51 years into an apartment.

Also, a few months ago, my desktop and my laptop died in the same week. I bought replacements. The operating system for both is Windows 10. Learning the basics of Windows 10 was time-consuming.

Later, I started reviewing genealogy software for the Windows 10. I finally searched the Silicon Valley Genealogy Group web site (svcgg.org) and found that they had a link to the Parowan Software site. Parowan listed free PAF software (probably version 5.2). I downloaded it. It works on Windows 10. Also, the site listed tools which I have begun exploring.

Loading the 31000+ records was easy. I copied my latest PAF file. I opened it using the downloaded software. I tested it. Finally, when I was satisfied, I celebrated!

## **PAF'S STEPS TO ADD OR EDIT A NOTE**

- The user must add or edit an individual's record.
- The user must click on the Notes section for the record. The icon is a notebook and a pen symbol on the right side.
- The record's note section is displayed. The user can write whatever. I recommend writing the sources.
- The user must save the record and the Note.

# SAMPLE OF THE PAF INDIVIDUAL RECORD FOR MY PETRIE GRANDMOTHER

Personal Ancestral File - [C:\Users\joe-a\Downloads\joe1-7.paf]

File Edit Add View Search Tools Window Help

Family Podigree Individual

**Esther Cummings "Hester"**  
 10 Jul 1879 - Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada  
 27 Jun 1948 - Dominion, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

Marriage: 1900

Spouse  
 Edmund Ernest Petrie "Ed or Ned"  
 22 Jun 1872 - Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada  
 31 Jan 1948 - Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

Parents

John Cummings  
 \*21 Jul 1850 - St. John's Basilica, St. John's, Newfoundland  
 Abt 1881 - San Francisco, California, USA

Mary Ann Boutilier  
 12 Dec 1844 - Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada  
 21 May 1912 - Gardiner Mines, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

| Children                        | Born        | Parent Link | Ordinances |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 Charles Edward Petrie "Eddie" | 14 Oct 1902 |             |            |
| 2 Hazel Bertha Petrie           | 1 Dec 1903  |             | -          |
| 3 Leo Ignatius Petrie           | 12 May 1906 |             | -          |
| 4 Russell Petrie                | 12 Apr 1909 |             | -          |
| 5 Roy Petrie                    | 1 Jun 1913  |             | -          |
| 6 Dorothy Irene Petrie          | 28 Jun 1917 |             | -          |
| 7 Joan Teresa Petrie            | 9 Feb 1929  |             | -          |

For Help, press F1. Double-click on person you want to edit.

RIN: 176 MRIN: 108 IM: 1 C: 7 INUM

The next step is to select the display of the individual's vitals. (See the overlay on the right.)

Personal Ancestral File - [C:\Users\joe-a\Downloads\joe1-7.paf]

File Edit Add View Search Tools Window Help

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 21 May 1912 - Gardiner Mines, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

**Edit Individual**

**Esther Cummings "Hester"**

PERSONAL:  
 Full Name: [Esther /Cummings/ "Hester"]  
 Sex: Female

EVENTS:  
 Birth: 10 Jul 1879  
 Place: Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada s  
 Christening: 11 Jul 1879  
 Place: St. Anne's, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, C s  
 Death: 27 Jun 1948  
 Place: Dominion, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada s  
 Burial: 1948  
 Place: Immaculate Conception, Ocean Ave, Dominion, Cap s

LDS ORDINANCES:  
 Baptism:  
 Temple: s  
 Place if living: s  
 Endowment:  
 Temple: s  
 Sealing to Parents:  
 Temple: s

RIN: 176 MRIN: 108 IM: 1 C: 7 INUM

Save Cancel Options Help Individual Sources s = sources Last Changed: 6 Oct 2019

To add or edit a note, the user must select the Note icon. It is on the right under the help button.

After the note is written or edited, the user must save the Note and the individual's record.

The following note is positive because it explains how at age 7 I met my Grandmother Petrie.

## MY NOTES ON GRANDMOTER PETRIE'S PAF RECORD

Sources: Joe Petrie and Charles Buchanan

Web Sites: FamilySearch, Nova Scotia, Antigonish Catholic Diocese, 1823-1905; Ancestry, Border Crossing Record and Canada Censuses; Novascotiagenealogy; and Automated Census of Canada. In the baptism record, her given name is recorded as Ester. In the Census of 1881, my grandmother was identified as Kate Cummings, age 1. In the Census of 1891, she is identified as Ester born in Newfoundland. (Her father was born in Newfoundland.) In the automated censuses of 1901 and 1911, she is enumerated as Hester. Her death record identifies her as Esther. One of her nieces said that in her family she was called Aunt Het.

My great grandfather Richard Petrie in the 1890s started to built a series of houses for his children on his farm land that overlooked Lingan Bay. Three of the houses were finished before he passed away in 1893. Michael, Mary and my grandparents eventually lived in the houses. Michael, Mary and my grandparents also helped to raise their Petrie siblings who still lived on the farm after their mother passed away a few years after their father. The house remained in the family until grandfather's siblings Uncle Jack and Aunt Mary passed on.

My grandparents sold their Lingan house about 1910 and moved into Dominion to a house they built on 11 Dominion street. (The vacant land where the house stood became part of Aunt Dot's property at 21 Dominion St.)

Her last US border crossing record was dated April 28, 1925. She stayed to work as a domestic. In the mid 1920's into the early 1930's, grandmother lived in Brookline MA in an apartment with my father, Russell, Roy, and Dorothy. (Except for a trip in 1925, Grandfather remained in Dominion.) She was not enumerated in the US Census of 1930 because she returned to Dominion each summer with Russell, Roy and Dorothy. One September, Russell stayed and worked as a miner in Glace Bay.

My Dad moved when he and my mother were married. Soon after they were married, Hazel moved in with my parents after she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease and was unable to support herself. After Hazel died, grandmother moved back to Dominion with Roy and Dorothy. My parents escorted the casket home.

Because we lived so far from Dominion, our contact with our grandparents was spotty at best! Grandmother did not accompany Grandfather to Dedham to celebrate Dad's citizenship. On our trip to Dominion in 1946, I was climbing a tree in their yard when grandmother kicked me out of the yard. (I suspect that she was almost blind from cataracts - because in her pictures she usually wore dark tinted glasses and because she was scarcely seen in public.) I suspect that when she kicked me out of the tree she really did not know that I was her grandson. Later she invited me to see her. I was taken by Aunt Dot to visit in the parlor. That parlor was a special room in my grandparent's house, used only for special guests, celebrations, and wakes! I never saw grandmother again.

Grandmother died of pancreatic cancer in 1948.

Joe Petrie

### SUMMARY

Notes are important. They provide an audit trail. Please remember to be positive.

Joseph F. Petrie

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

[joe-apg@norwoodlight.com](mailto:joe-apg@norwoodlight.com)

Joseph F. Petrie

AB (Economics and Business – St. Anselm College, 1962)

MA (Economics – Boston College, 1967)

Graduate Assistant to the Department Chairman, (Economics – Boston College, 1962 – 1963)

Graduate Assistant, Catholic Economic Review (Boston College, 1962 – 1963)

Teaching Fellow, (Economics – Boston College, 1963 – 1965)

Doctoral Program, (Economics – Boston College, 1963 – 1967)

Adjunct Teaching: UMass Boston, Boston, MA; Fisher College, Attleboro, MA and MassBay Community College, Wellesley, MA. At MassBay, the President and Dean allowed me to called: Adjunct Professor of Computer Science

Student at other Colleges: (Special Student, Stonehill College). Northeastern University (Federal Government Sponsored MPA Program), and Newbury College (Norwood Campus)

Founding Member, Friends of Irish Research (FIR), Brockton, MA

Faculty, Friends of Irish Research School of Irish Genealogy, Brockton, MA

Member, Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA), Sydney, NS

Member, Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL), St John's, NL

Member, Association of Professional Genealogists (APG), Wheat Ridge, CO

Member, New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), Boston, MA

Member, Ireland Reaching Out, Loughrea, Galway, Ireland

Volunteer Research Correspondent, Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA)

Member, Friends of Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA

Resident Genealogy Volunteer, Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA

Genealogy Volunteer, History Department, St Anselm College, Manchester NH

Genealogy Volunteer, Fiske Library, Wrentham MA

Genealogy Volunteer, Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Irish Fest, 2016 and 2017, Canton MA

Genealogy Volunteer, Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Genealogy Library, for the Friends of Irish Research

Genealogy Volunteer, American French Genealogical Society, Woonsocket, RI

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. (Please see [friendsofirishresearch.org](http://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.

Membership in Ireland Reaching Out ([irelandxo.com](http://irelandxo.com)) is free. It has an Electronic Magazine named XO Chronicles ([irelandxo.com/irelandxo/history-and-genealogy](http://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 ancestors. My relatives are: John Cummings (Thurles Parish, Tipperary, Newfoundland and Lingan, Cape Breton Island); Patrick Tobin (Gowran Parish, Kilkenny and Newfoundland); and Judith Keefe (Gowran Parish, Kilkenny and Newfoundland). My wife's relatives are; John McGrath (Ballyphilip, Kilcockan, Kockanore, Waterford and Massachusetts); Helena O'Brien (Fermoy, Youghal, Cork, Boston); Peter Connolly (Kilcummin, Galway, Boston) and Mary A (Nee) Connolly (Kilcummin, Galway, Boston).