

Early-Poindexters-in-America Research Committee

23. ANNUAL REPORT

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Contacts and Activities, Mar 2001–Feb 2002

1. We have upgraded and reformatted all EPARC reports, 1987 through 2001, and submitted them for our website. They will be online by the end of February.

2. We have begun the EPARC review and certification process, as long promised in our reports. We hope to have the review panel selected, and the procedures well underway, shortly after the reunion in June. Several nominees have already agreed to serve.

3. We are getting numerous responses and inquiries *re* our EPARC portion of the PDA website. Selected individual items are included here, without note of web origin.

4. En route to our PDA Natchez reunion, we visited the Mississippi State Library in Jackson, and renewed our contact with Michael Hennen, Curator of Manuscripts. Several years ago, we had obtained from the Library two major microfilms of personal letters of Governor George Poindexter, and searched them for genealogical clues. This time, we wanted to extend the search to lesser archives. Mr. Hennen directed us to the entire scope of Governor George items. We again found nothing of great relevance to our problems with the George-1/Thomas-1 linkage.

5. At the reunion, Jeanette Tolley mentioned a book published in 1919 which has possibly significant information on the link between Governor George Poindexter and George Benskin Poindexter. This might verify and quantify the link between George-1 and Thomas-1, regarding which we were seeking clues in the Governor George papers.

6. Don Poindexter (Texas) discovered two source publications of which we were unaware. First is the recently compiled *Virginia Gazette Index*, an entree to this early Williamsburg publication. Second is *Genealogical Abstracts from 18th-Century Virginia Newspapers*, comprising notices of births, marriages, deaths, etc, from 18th century Virginia. There were some Poindexter entries. We hope to explore further.

7. Nan Overton West told us of publication of *The Overtons: 700 Years*, her own monumental family history effort. Recall that Mary Overton is a long-debated possibility as wife of George-2. Nan considerately told us that there is no critical analysis of this issue in her book, which is, in any event, sold-out. Nonetheless, it should be interesting reading; and I have sometimes found much value in information from ancillary lines. She will run off photocopies at cost for anyone interested (which we may well become.)

8. Jamie Poindexter noted on the web about 50 Poindexter entries from the Swem Library (main library of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg). We checked

immediately, and found the info totally different from what I found in an on-site visit a few years ago. Though not of immediate value, the emergence of this new material suggests that deeper search of the Swem archives should be made.

9. Jamie also recalled that Gloucestershire may be pertinent to George-1 Poindexter.
10. Wayne Campbell offered to do some research at the Mormon genealogical library in Salt Lake City. We suggested seeking of Gloucestershire records regarding George-1, possibly his marriage, or a birth of a child.
11. Bill Sneed submitted a lineage starting at John Sneed, who married Susanna Poindexter, daughter of Thomas-1 Poindexter. Jamie asked him if he had researched the parentage of Thomas-1. There has been no reply as yet.
12. Stella Marie Poindexter Rohde contacted us regarding George-1 Poindexter issues.
13. Shawn Potter submitted a tentative lineage from Henry VIII to Elizabeth Effard, mother of George-1. There seems to be only one weak linkage in this very nice line, that associated with Sara Caumont and her father Pierre. He includes much material pertinent to this link, unfortunately in French, which will impede my own understanding. Perhaps some knowledgeable PDAer can interpret for us.
14. Sally Knight of the *Societe Jersiaise* let us know that, unhappily, she is unaware of any CDROM of Jersey vital records under preparation. Pity.
15. Elaine Grendell contacted several PDAers regarding *Pendexter* of early 18th-century New England. EPARC does not study Pendexters, except incidentally.
16. Richard Kajma, organizer of our 2003 Reunion in Salt Lake City, offered to do research in the Mormon library. We suggested, again, Gloucestershire, and getting hard copies of records pertinent to George-1 or Thomas-1 in the Jersey land registry.
17. Patsy Shrewsbury Griffin sent a record of extensive Shrewsbury lineages.
18. Rowan Fairgrove saw our website, and notified us of an imminent trip to Jersey. He offered to do some research for us. I suggested possibilities in the Jersey archives.
19. We received, as usual, several inquiries regarding the inquirer's own linkages later than 1750. We referred these people to Ron for his *Newsletter* column.

EPARC Operations

Review and Certification Panel. In the next few months, we will select and activate our EPARC review and certification panel, as oft mentioned in prior reports. Reviewers will be diverse in their thinking, but with demonstrated motivation to be rigorous. Influence by the coordinator will be minimized. They will study the evidence on key

persons and linkages in the our early-Poindexters-in-America era, review extant analyses, optionally construct hypothetical new models, and assess which model is the best supported by the available evidence. This model will then become the “official” PDA genealogy for the persons encompassed.

Most emphatically, this “official” model is defined as the *consensual best possible model based on the evidence available at the time*. It is not certified as being incontestably “correct,” in the absolute sense. Nor will it be engraved in stone for all time; rather, it will be the kickoff point for further research.

Weighting of Genealogical Evidence. We are all accustomed to seeking of the “right” genealogical models; but in a rigorous view, there is really no such thing. Even the accepted proofs are based on common assent regarding the acceptability of the underlying evidence, not on some unknowable absolute truth. All evidence has a weight, or probability of being true. One never knows, for example, if a child cited in a will might be adopted without any record, the child having been given the family surname out of supposed kindness (and in modern times, given a phony birth certificate—ugh!).

Another common flaw in evidence is the gratuitous transcription. Often a supposedly original handwritten record, ideally made by a witness, at the time and on-site *re* the events documented, turns out to be a copy, made at a later time and in another place, and by someone else. County clerk records are usually like this. Parish records are usually copies. Supposedly sacrosanct family Bible records are the worst of all, often seeming to have been written years and decades after the events described. All these *ex-post-facto* records are the more error-prone as the delay increases.

We have had problems of this sort in our EPARC studies. The best we know how to do is a compromise of the evidence. If different sources are not too far apart in essentials, we adopt blended or averaged data, even though one or the other or neither may be exactly correct. If hopelessly discordant, we adopt whichever is in best agreement with most other evidence, but note the difficulty in our report.

Another troublesome type of evidence is the rumor or the incomplete item. We eagerly urge that all evidence be reported, even if repetitive or incomplete; imperfect data are better than none, and may suggest new ideas or new places to search. Yet these items can be frustrating, so near and yet so far, as it were. Examples are: “Jim Crawford noticed a solid proof of the parentage of Thomas-1 Poindexter in a Clough family history” (no bibliographic info on the book, nor where it was located, nor any clues as to the nature of the proof); “shortly before he died last year, my uncle Gary Poindexter had just learned the real surname of George-1’s wife Susanna” (no written records nor verbal info on how or where he got this information). It is speculative to assign a weighted value to evidence which was ancillary to the finder’s own research, or which came to a Poindexter who didn’t appreciate it enough to write down the particulars.

Ed Poindexter
6284 Stofer Road
Chelsea, Michigan 48118

Phone: 734-433-9648
Fax: 734-433-9649
Email: epindex@tm.net