

## BEGINNINGS

by Pat Bristley

How do we start the journey into who we are – where we came from? How do we count the hours spent researching in musty old books in courthouses, or sitting in libraries reading until our eyes smart, and we cannot read another page? Who has not felt the surge of joy when, after going up and down the rows of a large cemetery, we finally find that one gravestone we were looking for; one that bears the birth and death dates, and even sometimes a poem or some lovely tombstone carving; that gives us information about an ancestor; information that we did not know before? Who does not treasure those fellow researchers we have met along the way, and the lasting friendships we have made, sometimes with people we have never even met, but only exchanged letters, e-mails or telephone calls with? Who is not saddened when we find that someone back there, who is connected to us, had a tragic experience or a short life? That is only a part of the journey we all take, when we set out to discover our roots.

For each of us it begins in our own special way. But for me the starting point was when my son was studying *Numbers* in the *Bible* when he was in seminary. He started thinking about all those “begats” and I think he realized he had a multitude of “begats” in his own life. It was then he asked me if I could research our family. *Well why not?* I thought, and so the journey began.

As for deciding to research all the Brandenburgs that came to middle American in the first half of the eighteenth century, that came about in the following manner. I had originally gone to Frederick County, Maryland, to research my ancestors, but while there I kept finding records about other Brandenburgs that were not in my direct line.

*Oh well, I thought, As long as I am here anyway, I might as well get copies of those records, too. I might want them some day.*” Little did I know!

When I returned home and told my husband about all the records I found for “other Brandenburgs,” he replied, “Well, since you just retired, why don’t you research them all?” So I did!

However, it really started long before that, probably from the day I was born into that special family, I call mine. And that family included my maternal grandparents, and my grandfather Franks’ siblings, all of whom lived in Clyde, Ohio.

I remember my mother telling me that my older sister was very jealous when I was born. She had been an only child before I came on the scene. When friends came to see the new baby, there was Peggy in bed with Mom (Peggy was bald-headed until she was three years old), and the *real* baby was in a crib in the corner.

“My, what a large baby you have they would say!” The only problem was that the baby in the bed with Mom was two years old!

Peggy always told people when we were young, “I’m Peggy Huntzinger,” then pointing at me, “and *that’s* Patty Franks.”

However, my three sisters, including Peggy, are the best sisters anyone could ask for, and they are not only my sisters, but also my very best friends!

Well, if I am Patty Franks, by that token I am also Patty Brandenburg, because Barbary (Barbara) Brandenburg married Jacob Franks I, probably in Frederick County, Maryland, circa 1764. And there have been Franks around ever since!