



## Grossnickle Family

The year 1717 began with an event occurring which would affect the life of one individual dramatically. That event in turn would affect the future lives of thousands, perhaps millions, in a way that no one could comprehend.

The land of Germany at the turn of the 18th century was a land filled with unrest. Religious upheaval was occurring throughout Europe; the Anabaptist movement had taken off; and numerous charismatic leaders had appeared upon the heels of Martin Luther's bold confrontation at Worms. The world would never be the same as talks of the new land in the west filled everyone's interest.

Little did Peter Grosnikel and Madelina Danner, who had married in the early 1700's, realize their first child, Johannes, born in 1717, would say goodbye to them at the age of 21. They would never see him again. And, 7 years later, another son, Peter, would embark on a similar journey to join his brother in the new world of America, which would become the United States. At 21, Johannes was faced with a decision that would affect his family for evermore. He could have chosen to remain with his family in the comfort of a familiar land — although a troubled environment — or decide to follow his dreams, along with thousands of others who said goodbye to parents, family, social culture, and take the perilous odyssey to a foreign land.

What was it about Johannes that compelled him to take such action? Was he a dreamer? Was he an outcast? Was he caught up with friends? The hopes of riches? A religious movement? The answer we do not know — but he made the decision to take the journey.

In 1738, Johannes made his decision to go to America. How would he get there? Where would he go? How would he support himself? He was part of a group, and yet he was alone. He started his journey in the area of Wittenberg, Germany, where he was born. He probably took a ship down the Rhine River from the Palatine region, arriving in Rotterdam, Holland. A trip of several hundred miles. In Rotterdam, he boarded the ship Nancy, along with several hundred other immigrants. Leaving Rotterdam under the leadership of Captain William Wallace, the ship Nancy sailed to Dover, England. Here it made a short stop for supplies, and then off across the treacherous Atlantic to a developing town called Philadelphia, part of the colony of William Penn. For many weeks, he was in the confines of the ship — with little sunlight, little food, and horrible sanitary conditions. The ship arrived on September 20, 1738. Johannes was now in America — he survived the trip, and his new journey began. A young man of 21.

NOTE: More of the story will be provided at the 75th Reunion, October 14, 2007.