

HISTORY OF BRABSON FAMILY AND BRABSON HOMESTEAD ON FRENCH BROAD RIVER, BOYDS CREEK, SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE

The Brabson family in Sevier County originated with one John Brabson, born, 1773, in Berkely County, Virginia. He came to Sevier County in the year, 1793, and received a grant from the state of North Carolina for his lands. Through diligence and perseverance he acquired possessions until he amassed a sizeable fortune in money, slaves and lands. He also operated stores in Maryville and Sevierville, a ferry across the French Broad River, a tanyard, steamboats and mills. His wife was Elizabeth Davis and at his death in 1848, his Will provided for a division of his large estate between his widow and eight children. His body rests in the family cemetery, provided for by his Will, on the hill just above the Homestead- this site, situated high above miles of the French Broad River and historic Buckingham Island, commands one of the most ~~beautiful~~ beautiful views in East Tennessee.

The eldest son, Benjamin Davis Brabson, inherited the three story log "Mansion House" and the land surrounding it, including the lower end of Buckingham Island. He continued farming in much the same manner as had his father. In 1856 he built the two story frame house which the family still occupies. During the Civil War factions sprang up in Sevier County, which was predominantly pro-Union, and the Brabson family, Confederate in sympathy, was forced to leave the County. Since travel by road was impractical, the family went on a flat bottomed boat to Knoxville and thence by rail to Winchester, Tennessee, where they continued to live until the death of Benjamin D. Brabson in 1866. His widow, Elizabeth Toole Brabson and her eight children, returned to the old homestead in Sevier County.

Upon the death of Elizabeth Toole Brabson, the Homestead passed to John B. Brabson, one of her sons. He was the last of the old southern type gentleman farmers in Sevier County. Since he was reared in the southern tradition he maintained all of the old ways of living during his life time. His marriage to Cora Rorex produced nine children. The third son, Benjamin Davis Brabson, now owns the old home and the surrounding farm. His son, Ben Brabson Jr., is next in line to carry on the name and traditions of this 160 year old heritage.

The Great Indian War Path from Virginia crossed the French Broad River at the Buckingham Island, near the old Brabson Homestead, and followed Boyds Creek, which was named for a Virginia trader, Boyd, who was killed and thrown into the Creek in 1775. Colonel William Christian's punitive expedition against the Cherokee Indians crossed the French Broad River just below the Brabson Homestead and Buckingham Island in 1776, and followed Boyds Creek and the War Path into the Cherokee country on the Little Tennessee River. In 1780, after his King's Mountain campaign, John Sevier returned just in time to defend the frontier against a major Cherokee outbreak; he marched his force to the ~~Big Island~~ Buckingham Island (then called "Big Island"), and crossed the French Broad where Col. Christian had crossed four years earlier. Sevier met the Indians on Boyds Creek at Cedar Springs, just up the Creek a short distance from the old Brabson Homestead, and here was fought one of the major Indian battles on the Tennessee frontier.