

## Joseph Brabham



No Picture Available

Born: 1740 Scotland

Married: 26 Oct 1772 Flora McPhail

Died: 1789 Erhardt, SC

### Kearse Community

This neighborhood nestled between Colston, St. John's, Rivers Bridge, and Buford's Bridge communities derived its name from one of the pioneer families to settle here about the middle of the eighteenth century. William Kearse was born in Germany and, along with several of his countrymen, settled in this area where a number of his descendants still reside.

Joseph Brabham (born 1740) and his wife, Flora McPhail Brabham, came over from Scotland, stopping first in Virginia, then moving on down to the Santee and finally settling in this area. The first cabin he built was at Buford's Bridge; then he built his permanent home near the present Kearse United Methodist Church. Many of his descendants who have intermarried with Kirklands, Kearses, and McMillans also live in the surrounding area.

Information from the book, "History of Bamberg County South Carolina" by the Historic Society of Bamberg County.

### THE BRABHAM FAMILY.

To Joseph Brabham and his wife, Flora McPhail Brabham, the founders of the Brabham family in South Carolina, were born five sons and six daughters that grew up and married—there may have been others who died in childhood or youth. The names of these sons and daughters, and the parties to whom they were severally married, are as follows:

Reuben, name of his wife not known to me.

John, married Martha Moyer.

Joseph, Married Sarah Kirkland.

James, married Mary Graham.

Archibald, married Rebecca Grimes.

Sarah, married Willis Knight.

Nancy, married Jacob Kearse.

Flora, married William Kearse.

Mary, married George Tass Grimes.

Cynthia, married George Kirkland.

Elizabeth, married first a Broxton, afterward married S. Richardson.

Information from the book, "Mizpah: A Family Book" by Rev M. M. Brabham

Joseph  
Brabham  
purchased  
100 acres of  
and in 1785  
for ten  
pounds  
sterling.

*1000*  
*1000*  
**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting,

**K** NOW YE, That for and in consideration of *ten* ~~Pounds~~ Sterling Money paid by *Joseph Brabham*

into the Treasury for the use of this State, We have granted, and by these Presents do grant unto the said *Joseph Brabham* his Heirs and Assigns, a Plantation or Tract of Land, containing *100* Acres ~~situated in the District of Bamberg~~ *at the head of the Little Creek bounded S.E. by John McWhorter and S.W. by Miles Land all other sides by vacant Land*

Having such Shape, Form and Marks as are represented by a Plat hereunto annexed, together with all Woods, Trees, Waters, Water-Courses, Profits, Commodities, Appurtenances and Hereditaments whatsoever thereunto belonging, To Have and to Hold the said Tract of Acres of Land, and all and singular other the Premises hereby granted unto the said *Joseph Brabham* his Heirs and Assigns, for ever, in free and common socage.

Given under the Great Seal of the State.

WITNESS, his Excellency *Thomas Pinckney* Esquire, Governor and Commander in Chief of the said State of Carolina.

*the fifth* Day of *November* Anno Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and *Eighty* and is the *Twelfth* Year of the Independence of the United States of America.

*Thomas L. M. S. Parkin*

And hath thereunto a Plat thereof annexed, representing the same, certified by *J. Brumby* Surveyor-General.

*16th March 1785*

Information from the book, "History of Bamberg County South Carolina" by the Historic Society of Bamberg County.



The following comes from the book, "Mizpah: A Family Book" by Rev. M M Brabham, 1923 pgs 2-6

The original Joseph Brabham, was a Revolutionary soldier in Gen. Francis Marion's Army, and was twice wounded in that conflict, once at Briar Creek, in Georgia, and once at Dorchester near Charleston. A fellow soldier with Joseph Brabham, Sr., was his brother-in-law, a Mr. McPhail, who, in the battle at Dorchester received a sabre cut on the head and was left on the field for dead. The fight was hand to hand with heavy sabres, and on horseback. Before McPhail himself was wounded, he cut off a British soldier's head, which, as he afterwards said in relating the story, "rolled down the hill like a round snuff box." While McPhail recovered from his supposedly fatal wound, and was fond of relating his experiences in the battle, yet he never fully recovered the normal use of his mind.

Another incident of the Revolutionary experiences of our ancestors as related to me by my grandfather, Joseph Brabham, Jr., was that on one occasion a number of Tories

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who had been on a raiding expedition to the upper part of the State, were returning with a lot of plunder, robbed from the Whig settlers, and had stopped for the night, making their camp near a stream over which they had crossed on a bridge. Some scouts from among Marion's men had followed them, and when they discovered their camp, went back and reported. Arrangements were made for an immediate attack, and to avoid making a noise in crossing the bridge, the soldiers were ordered to dismount, to fold their blankets and lay them as a pathway on the bridge, then gently to lead their horses over this path of blankets. Reaching the opposite side, they gathered up their blankets, remounted and soon were charging down on the campers, who were eating their supper. Surprised and panic stricken there was quite a scattering of the feasting Tories. Some were shot down, some were captured, while some escaped into the neighboring swamps. Among the plunder here captured were some barrels of rum, the heads of which, by order of General Marion, were knocked out, and the rum thus removed from the use of his own men—avoiding in this way a possible drunken carousal on the part of any who might have been addicted to drunkenness.

As to whether Joseph Brabham, Sr., moved from "over on Santee" before or after the Revolutionary War is uncertain. But as Joseph Jr. said the reason his father moved to Barnwell District was for the benefit of the fine grazing lands found there, it may have been that he first observed these lands while a soldier, following the "Swamp Fox" and after peace came moved over and settled there.

With regard to cattle and grazing lands at the time of the settlement of the original Joseph Brabham in Barnwell District, my grandfather said that on account of the absence of undergrowth among the pines—tall, long leaved, yellow pines—as was the case at that time, there was heavy growth of "woods grass," intermingled with what they called "highland fern"—probably the beggar weed—besides cane in the swamps. This combination made excellent range for stock; so much so that the cattle were raised at

practically no expense, it being necessary only to watch them sufficiently to keep them from going astray. At certain seasons on account of their good condition and free range, it was not safe for the women and children unprotected, to come into contact with the herd. Grandfather said that he, as a boy, had, on occasion, climbed trees to escape their attacks. An important part of the food of these early settlers consisted of milk from their cattle; and grandfather—Joseph Brabham, Jr., who lived to be more than ninety years old, never lost his fondness for milk.

As to deer hunting—there were two methods of doing this. One was to chase them with deer hounds; meantime placing a man with a gun loaded with buck shot, at selected places or “stands,” to shoot the deer as it passed. It was characteristic of the deer to follow the same general run from one swamp or hiding place to another, and it was this habit that enabled the hunters to know where to stand. Another method of hunting deer in those days was what was called “fire hunting.” In this method, they used a long handled frying pan, such as was used before the introduction of cooking stoves. To use this pan in hunting, the bowl was filled with short pieces of rich pine, “fat lightwood,” as it was called. With this ablaze and held on the shoulder of a person who walked through the forest at night—this being the time when the deer did their grazing—followed closely by another with a loaded gun, would attract the attention of the deer, which instead of stampeding, would stop and watch the blazing torch and thus discover their own whereabouts by the shining of their eyes. Immediately the eyes were seen a halt was made, and the man with the gun fired at the eyes and thus got his victim.

As my grandfather’s early taste for milk never left him, so with regard to his taste for venison; and in after years, when there were no longer deer in the country, he kept a fine flock of sheep, and in the absence of venison, there was no meat that he liked so well as mutton; and his choice piece of venison or mutton was what he called the “saddle”—the shoulders and ribs, and not the hams.



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As there were deer and numerous other game in those early years of the settlement of the country, so also were fish quite abundant. Not only were they found in the streams, but the ponds and "bays"—thickly grown swamps inside of which was more or less of shallow water with cypress trees and water grass; with occasional "lakes"—stretches of deeper water, usually with black gum trees. Here it was that fish of various kinds abounded; there were also terrapin and alligators. Part of a very large pond of the above description stood on the land taken up by the original Brabham. On account of its size and comparative depth, it was called the "Ocean," and is still known by that name. It is probably safe to say that the name was not given by the the pioneer, Joseph Brabham, for having himself crossed the Atlantic, he would hardly have dignified an inland pond swamp not exceeding a square mile in area with so great a name. Possibly some native backwoodsman, who had never had a glimpse of the sea, venturing too far in a full time, had his rickety bateau capsized, and his near-drowning experinece may so have impressed him as to lead him to think that the perils he endured were similar to those of the briny deep, and so, he may have named the pond, The Ocean! This idea, of course, is purely imaginary.

The site of the first cabin home of Joseph Brabham, Sr., was near the old grave yard in which his bones have lain since the year of his death, 1818. The above mentioned grave yard, now and for many years, entirely neglected, was later used as a burial place for negroes. It is in what is called the grave yard field, and is a part of the legacy left by James M. Brabham, Sr., to Mizpah Church. These and adjoining lands were in possession of the Brabham family for about a hundred and forty years.

For some cause, probably health conditions, Joseph Brabham, Sr., moved about one mile eastward and settled on a blackjack ridge, about the very spot later occupied by the home of Aunt Betsy Kearse Brabham, to be written about later. At the time of the earliest recollection of James M. Brabham, Sr., his grandfather, Joseph Brab-

ham, Sr., lived at this last named place, but of course not in the same house. At this time this grandfather was quite an old man, and a class leader in the Methodist Church, he, seemingly, having been among the first to fall in with the Methodist preachers, who made their first appearance in South Carolina soon after the Revolutionary War. A few hundred yards north of the old gentleman's modest home stood his little log meeting house, which, at the time of which my uncle spoke, had nearly rotted down.

As to the early Methodists of that day—my grandfather said they were disliked by most of the people, that some were so prejudiced against the Methodist preachers that they would purposely misdirect them, and thus confuse them as to the routes they wished to travel. To offset this disadvantage the preachers came to an understanding among themselves, as to certain signs that they would leave along the way for the guidance of their successors in travel—such as broken limbs, marked trees, etc. It is gratifying to the descendents of the old pioneer, Joseph Brabham, Sr., that he was friendly to these early ministers of Christ, that he not only was converted to their faith, but that he also built a house for the worship of God, and left a record of his own personal service in the cause of the Master. It is quite probable that the prayers of this old class leader and his godly wife, which were doubtless made for their children, and children's children, on down the line, have availed much for us and ours. It is certain that this writer was first brought to Christ while living on a part of the original homestead of the old class leader, and while his home was directly in sight of the old grave yard where, with that of his good wife and others, his body awaits the resurrection of the just. I hereby record my gratitude to God for the knowledge of these pious ancestors.

Joseph Brabham, Sr. was





Joseph Brabham, Sr. and his wife, Flora McPhail are buried in the Brabham Family Cemetery 6 miles south of Bamberg, SC. The Cemetery is located on a farm known as the "Church Farm".

Front of headstone reads: Brabham

Back of headstone reads: In Memory of Joseph and Flora McPhail Brabham, Scottish Ancestors of the Brabham Family in S.C. 1740-1818

Pictures provided by Clyde Kears