The Rowden family of Miller and Maries counties are descendants of John Rowden, and English sea captain who came to America. He brought his wife and son, John Jr., and they settled in Colonial Virginia. It has been family legend handed down through the generations that Captain John Rowden made a trip back to his native England and never returned to his family in America, presumed lost at sea. The son, John Jr., carried the Rowden family name forward in early America.

Abraham Rowden, a descendant of Capt. John Rowden, was born in Henry Co., Virginia (Pittsylvania Co.) in 1752. Abram was a son of John Rowden, born ca 1738, and Sarah Echols of Henry Co., Virginia. The Echols family history is well researched and documented, reaching back to early Virginia and North Carolina. Sarah was a daughter of Abraham Echols and Sarah Tamer and a granddaughter of John Echols and Mary Cave. John and Sarah had several children including: Abraham Echols Rowden b. ca 1752 m. Rachael Cheek; Laban Rowden b. ca 1760 m. Miller Adams in Pittsylvania Co., VA 1785; Joseph Rowden b. ca 1765 m. Susanna/Sooky Adams, Pittsylvania Co., VA 1790; John Rowden, Jr. b. ca 1758 m. Mary Brewer; Tabitha Rowden b. ca 1767 m. John Glover Crane, Pittsylvania Co., VA 1787.

John and Sarah (Echols) Rowden moved into East Tennessee in their later years of life. John died in Roane Co., Tennessee in 1817 and his probate record is on file at the courthouse In Kingston (Estate Book A, page 93.) His heirs are named; Abraham, Laban, John Jr., Tabitha, and Susey (also called Sookey, widow of Joseph Rowden.) Sarah had preceded him in death prior to 1871.

Abraham, called Abram, married Rachel Cheek in Virginia about 1780. It is rumored she was an Indian, but this has not been proven. They were parents of at least 4 sons, although there were probably other children as well. Their known children were: Nathaniel Rowden b. 25 Mar 1785, Henry Co., VA m. 1) Nancy Crane 2)name not known 3) Margaret McFarland 4) Anna McKinney Dennis 5) Elizabeth Hickman; Asa Rowen b. 11 August 1792 Henry Co., VA m. Margaret Hannah in East Tennessee; Hardin Benton Rowden b. ? d.? (Lived in Ten., Alabama, Illinois, and Iowa) m.?; Abraham Rowden Jr. b 1807 m Ann Brandon 1825, Roane Co., Tennessee.

For several years the Rowdens remained in East Tennessee in the counties of Roane, Rhea, McMinn, and Meigs. There they married, raised children, and homesteaded the land for a time in the Hiwassee Indian District. But wandering was in their blood and new lands beckoned them onward. Some of the family went to Alabama for a while and others moved to Jersey County, Illinois. There are many Rowden descendants living in central Illinois today whose ancestors remained in the ‘Land of Lincoln’. An international Rowden Family Association was organized 5 years ago and Rowden descendants from all over the United States and Canada meet every year for a 3-day reunion; sometimes in Missouri and other years in Illinois.

The Rowdens who came to central Missouri and settled were Nathaniel, Asa (both sons of Abraham and Rachel) and Meshach (son of Joseph and Susannah). Abraham Rowden died in Roane Co., Tennessee about 1822. His wife, Rachel (Cheek) accompanied her son, Asa, and his family to Maries County (then Osage County) in the early 1840’s. It is believed Rachel is the first person buried in the Red/Rowden cemetery of western Maries County near the Miller county.
boundary line. Asa homesteaded in the same region in the early 40's. Rachel died circa 1843. Many Rowdens are buried in this old cemetery overlooking the rugged hillsides and valley of the Little Tavern countryside.

**Nathaniel Rowden** and most of his surviving children followed Asa to Missouri from Illinois. Nathaniel was quite a character...he fathered 22 children by five wives. He outlived all but his 5th wife, **Elizabeth Hickman**, who was many years younger than he. As far as can be determined, he was never married to more than one wife at a time. One researcher of the family insists Nathaniel was of the Mormon faith and was polygamous, but there is no foundation of proof for that theory.

These are 3 branches of the Rowden family which have extended to the present time in Miller and Maries counties........

I. **Asa and Margaret (Hannah) Rowden** lived in Maries County and died there. Their children were: Robert Rowden m. Nancy Tyree; Asa E. (Ake) Rowden m. 1) Catherine Hill 20 Emma Hutchison; William A Rowden m. Matilda Wiseman; Rufus Rowden m. Polly Massey; James H. (Dog Tail) Rowden m. Emeline Powers; Rachel Rowden m. John Esey; Sarah Rowden m. Isaac ('one-arm Ike').

II. **Nathaniel Rowden** and his many children:
   - By wife #1 (Nancy Crain, m. Robertson Co., TN 10 Mar 1812)
     - James E. Rowden b. ca 1812 m. Margaret Lawson
     - William Harrison Rowden b. Ca 1813 m. Malvina Bailey
     - Sarah/Sally Rowden b. ca 1815 m. 1) Andrew Lawson 2) John Hardin Rowden
   - By wife #2 (name not known; married in Tennessee)
     - Martha/Patsy Rowden b. ca 1825 m. Baryon Parks (it is believed other children were born between 1815-1825 who did not survive.)
   - By Wife #3 (Margaret McFarland, m. 1828 Rhea Co., TN)
     - Nathaniel Wiley Rowden b. ca 1831 m. 1) Sarah Davenport 2) Sarah Pittman 3) Mary Coats 4) Hannah Tyson
     - Jane D Rowden b. ca 1829 m. David Wilson
     - Nancy C Rowden b. ca 1835 m. Calvin Dial
   - By wife #4 (Anna McKinney Dennis m. 1836 in Illinois)
     - Lucy Caroline Rowden b. ca 1837 m. 1) Aaron Hickman 2) Thomas Hickman
     - Malinda Rowden b. ca 1838 m. John Brandon
     - Isaac Darneal Rowden b. ca 1843 m. Caroline Clark
     - Jacob L Rowden b. 1845 m. Agnes B Clark
     - Francis Marion Rowden b. 1840 (no other record found)
   - By wife #5 (Elizabeth Hickman m. 1848 (Osage Co Missouri)
     - Missouri Ann Rowden b. 1851 m. John Henry Clark
     - Andrew Rowden b. 1853 (no record)
     - Margaret Rowden b. 1854 (no record)
     - John Rowden b. 1856 (no record)
     - Alonzo Rowden b. 1858 (no record)
III. **Meshach Rowden**, son of Joseph and Susannah (Adams) and his wife, Sarah (McNabb) of Roane Co., Tennessee. They married in Roane Co. May 5, 1816. It is believed Meshac was a cousin to Asa and Nathaniel Rowden. Meshac and Sarah settled in Miller Co. before 1850 near the site of Brays Mill. Their children:

- John Rowden born ca 1823 m. Martha
- William Rowden born 1818 m. Abigail Renfrow 1843 Roane Co Tenn.
- Elletha Rowden born 1821 m. Joseph Johnston 1840 Roane co, TN. Joseph killed by bushwhackers in Civil War.

Meshac, William and Abigail are all buried at the Old Brays cemetery. It is believed Sarah, Elletha, John and his wife, Martha, all move to Crawford Co MO.

Researching the Rowden family is a wonderful Journey backward in time…..They were made of good, pioneer stock..tough and adventurous. It is documented they were farmers, early-day teachers Indian traders, wanderers, soldiers, politicians, attorneys, and hotel operators. Of such is what has made America the outstanding nation it is today!