

LESTER

John Lester was the progenitor of the Lester family in Floyd and Montgomery counties, Virginia. John, Abner and Samuel Lester (believed to be brothers) settled in Botetourt County, Virginia, about 1770.

John Lester was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, according to family tradition. Hulen Lester, youngest son of John Lester, stated in the 1880 census that his father was born in Pennsylvania.

Intensive efforts have been made by family members and researchers over the years to locate John Lester's father and ancestors in Pennsylvania, but with no success up to the present time. Much attention has been given to the Peter Lester family in Pennsylvania whose genealogy has been compiled by Clarence V. Roberts in Early Friends Families of Upper Bucks (1925). So far a place has not been found in that family where John Lester belongs.

Roberts states: "He (Peter) was probably accompanied to this country by a brother or other relatives, as the will of George Lester, probated in Philadelphia, December 14, 1695, mentions him as a kinsman and makes him executor, and the will of William Lester of the Manor of Rockland County of New Castle, dated September 24, 1691, gives him a legacy as 'cousin' Peter Lester and also a legacy to 'kinsman' George Lester."

This establishes the fact that George, William and Peter Lester, cousins, were living in Pennsylvania at the same time and in the same vicinity and probably immigrated to this country together. It is possible that John Lester was descended from George Lester or William Lester. Their families have not been documented as was Peter's.

The question of John Lester's ancestor remains unsettled but I think it is safe to say that they were of the yeoman class who emigrated from England, probably Leicestershire, to Pennsylvania in the mid-1600s and that they probably belonged to the Society of Friends.

I am indebted to Betsy Owen (Mrs. James J. Owen, Blacksburg, Va.) for the following interesting information: Several families by the name of Heulings (Hewlings, Hulings, Hulins) lived in Bucks County near the Lester family, ca. 1680 through the 1700s. They also belonged to the Society of Friends but the record shows that some were dismissed. At least two marriages are recorded between the Lester and Heulings families.