

JOHN LESTER II

2a. John Lester II, b. March 7, 1776(M), d. Sept 21, 1851(F), bur Lester Cem #5, m. Oct 5, 1802(M), Mary Ann (Polly) Terry, b. Feb 3, 1781(M), d. Feb 14, 1862(F), bur Lester Cem #5, no stone, dau of Josiah Terry; 9 children: Hulen, Matilda, Malinda, John III, Amos T., Jacob, Bird, William T., Catherine Jane.

John Lester, first child and eldest son of John and Catharine, was named for his father. Even though he was John Jr., he is referred to in this history as John II. According to the custom of the time, he was often called John Lester Sr., when he was the eldest Lester living in the community, which causes some confusion.

John married Polly Terry, daughter of Josiah Terry, and lived for about eighteen years near his parents in Montgomery County. In 1820 he bought the large home tract of Charles Simmons and moved to present Floyd County. He lived about six miles north of the present town of Floyd. The house stood some distance behind the white frame house of George Simmons which was built years later and is now seen on the hill on present Route 8. Lester Cemetery #5 was on his place. It has since been destroyed.

John Lester was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the Governor of Virginia in 1831 and was a member of the first Floyd County Court. He served the community in that capacity until his death. Men in that day dignified the office of Justice of the Peace and made its service one of honor and distinction. He also served as Sheriff of Floyd County, 1844-45. He was a prominent and influential citizen, a successful farmer, a large land owner and a slave owner. He owned a large property at the time of his death.

His will, dated April 19, 1851, probated October 16, 1851, names his wife Mary and his nine children. He appointed his sons John III and William T. as executors of his estate. John III died suddenly seven months after his father's death and the administration of the estate passed through several hands. The estate was not properly settled and much of it was dissipated. In 1890, years after John's death, some of the heirs brought suit to gain possession of their inheritance. Nearly all of the principals had died by that time but eventually a satisfactory settlement was reached. The suit furnished some previously unknown information about the family.