

JAMES LESTER

- 2b. James Lester, b. 1779(M), d. 1860(F), m. May 11, 1815(M), Cloe (Cloey, Cloah, Cloty)Wilson, b. 1793(M) d. May 11, 1856(F), dau of Benjamin & Sarah Wilson; it is not known where James & Cloe are buried.

James Lester was the second son of John & Catharine Lester. His age is given as 71 in the 1850 census, and as 81 in the 1860 census, which establishes 1779 as the year of his birth.

It has been mistakenly assumed that James was married twice because of the following license in Montgomery County records:

"June 5, 1792. James Lester m. Mary Elswick. William Lester, security."

Although the license does not give the parent's name, James Lester in this marriage was almost certainly the son of Abner Lester, brother of John. James & Mary Lester left Montgomery County. William Lester, stated son of Abner, who was security for James, married Rachel Scaggs in 1786, six years previously.

James Lester (the present subject) would have been 13 years old in 1792. His brother William would have been 7 years old. James's marriage to Cloe Wilson was his only marriage, according to the record.

It is not known when James Lester moved to present Floyd County and built his home - perhaps in 1817 when he bought 200 acres of land on the waters of Laurel Branch and Esthers (Easter) Creek. In 1834 he was given permission to build a water grist mill and dam on Laurel Branch. He owned land on both sides of the creek. James & Cloe Lester lived and raised their family on Laurel Branch. (Laurel Branch in Alum Ridge district, near the Montgomery County line, should not be confused with Laurel Creek which flows into Little River at Sowers, another part of the county.)

James became a large land owner over the years. During his lifetime he made gifts of land and property to all his children as recorded in a chancery suit after his death (Floyd County records: Sowers et als., vs James Lester Adm. et als., Oct 1870). When he died he still owned almost 400 acres.

Cloe died in 1856. James died in August or September 1860; he was living with his son Lewis at the time of his death. His oldest son Lynch was appointed administrator of the estate in Sept 1860. Richard Dulaney, George Boothe, Andrew J. Reed were appointed to appraise the estate. The sale of his personal property was held on Oct 2, 1860. With only a few exceptions, all of the items were bought by his sons and daughters. Among the items: one arithmetick (sic), one Bible, one dictionary, one book entitled "Columbia & Orator(?)." Daughter Julia A. Carroll and Joel, her husband, sold their interest in her father's estate to Lester McAlexander. Son James Lester Jr. was a convict in the State Penitentiary of Virginia at the time of his father's death.