

ABNER LESTER

2d. Abner Lester, b. 1783(M), d. April 1871(F), of pneumonia, m. Oct 14, 1806(M)
 Rachael West, b. ca. 1875(M), d. Oct 1871(F), dau of Isaac West Sr. &
 Rosanna West; 6 children: Fleming, Pauline, Abner Jr, Ann, Sarah, Elizabeth.

Abner was fourth child and fourth son of John & Catharine Lester.
 Abner and his sister Mary married sister & brother.

Abner and Rachel moved to present Floyd County, date undetermined but probably about 1809 when he acquired a tract of 500 acres from Rachel's father, Isaac West Sr. This land was on Big Run on Middle Ridge. They lived at this place for about 40 years. All the children were born there and three married while they lived there: Pauline married Jacob Wickham, Abner Jr. married Mary Ann Helms and Sarah married James Kelly. Fleming moved to the town of Jacksonville about 1840 and married there.

About the year 1850, Abner bought land on West Fork Creek and moved near the Toncray furnace and iron mines, about one mile south of present Rt. 221. Abner Jr. and family moved with him and they lived within 100 yards of each other. Ann married James Ross from Patrick County, and Elizabeth married Levi Thompson, a near neighbor.

Apparently they were not happy in this place and in 1854 moved back to their old home neighborhood. Abner Sr. acquired a grant for 266 acres of land on Beaver Dam Creek and Little River. This was all in woods, and Abner Jr. hired John & George Goodson to clear an acre of land and to build a house. The house was a log house with a separate log kitchen and an entry between the two; it had a stone chimney. While the house was being built, Abner and Rachel lived on an adjoining tract in the double cabins called "the Bryant cabins" on old Bent road. When the house was completed, Abner Sr. and Rachel moved in with Abner Jr. and family.

Abner Sr. became crippled (cause unknown - arthritis?) and for the last 20 years of his life could walk only with two crutches and could do no work.

In October 1861, Abner Jr. was enrolled in the Confederate States Army and left home. According to his daughter, Barbara, he was uneasy and unhappy about leaving his family as his wife was critically ill and there was no one to care for his children but, she stated, Abner Sr. assured him that his wife and children would have a home and that the land would be theirs if he (Abner Sr.) died.

Abner Jr.'s worst fears were realized; his wife Mary Ann died in October 1861, shortly after his departure, and he died of fever seven months later. He died in Abingdon Hospital and his body was brought home by Parris Dobbins and buried in Pine Creek Cemetery (later moved). The children were left orphans. The youngest was two years old and the oldest was twenty-three. The children supported themselves "by their own hard labor," said Barbara.