



COURTESY OF JOHN PATTISON

The original home of Annie Lester is seen in 2012. The homestead had chicken houses, a barn, a windmill and a tank, and 10 acres of fenced land.

Woman's homestead led to Lester St.

By David Leighton

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Running east and west between Speedway and Grant Road is a street named after a woman who homesteaded an area north of the University of Arizona.

Annie Marie Lester was born Anna Marie Stattelmann in 1871, in Bavaria, Germany. She was one of three girls born to **George M.** and **Barbara Stattelmann**, both from Germany. She received her early education at the Ursuline Convent in Munich, then came to Tucson by train in 1889 with her parents and one sister — her other sister died in Chicago. Annie became an American citizen at age 21.

On Feb. 5, 1898, at age 26, she made claim to a large tract of land encompassing Park Avenue to Cherry Avenue, from Lester Street to Grant Road (then called North Street). Her home was built later that year near North Santa Rita Avenue and East Lester Street. Other houses were built in the area later.

In records of the homestead believed to be from 1903, Annie said the primary residence was 32 by 32 feet. It had five chicken houses and a barn, 10 acres of fenced land, a well, a windmill, a tank and other small buildings. The estimated value at the time was \$1,500.

In 1899, Annie married **Frank T. Lester**, who at the time was superintendent of the Mammoth Gold Mines. Frank was born in 1858 in Kewanee, Ill., and later worked in real estate and for the Southern Pacific Railroad. They had three children together: **Frank Jr.**,



COURTESY OF CHRIS RUSINIUK

An undated photo shows Annie Lester, who was born in Germany and immigrated to the U.S.

Anna and Florence. Frank died in 1928.

According to Florence, when Annie tried to get a teacher for her children out to her ranch — then far from Tucson — city officials told her she needed more children. So she hired

EDITOR'S NOTE

Each week the Star tells the stories behind Tucson street names. If you have streets to suggest or stories to share, contact writer David Leighton at streetsmarts@azstarnet.com

workers for the ranch who had children.

Frank "Pat" Lester Jr. was a leading contender for the heavyweight boxing crown. At one point he was managed by famed promoter **Tex Rickard** and fought at Madison Square Garden. His most famous fight in the Southwest was in Nogales, Sonora, in 1926. He lost to **Jack Johnson**, the first African-American heavyweight champion.

Annie died Aug 16, 1958, in Berkeley, Calif.

Sources:

- Special thanks to Chip Travers of Generation Graphics and Chris Starks of PNC Promotions.
- Emails from Barbara Conover Bacon (granddaughter of Annie Lester)
- Biographical sketch of Annie Lester, Arizona Historical Society
- Homestead Proof — Testimony Of Claimant (Anna Lester file at Arizona Historical Society)
- "Anna Lester Dies on Coast," Tucson Citizen, Aug. 19, 1958
- "Frank M. Lester, Former Heavyweight Boxer, Dies," Tucson Citizen, Jan. 3, 1956
- Jefferson Park Neighborhood's 100th Birthday Celebration pamphlet, Oct. 17, 1998
- Phone interview with Lynne Peterson (former neighbor of Anna Lester's)

