

Retracing the lives of enslaved people is a long and difficult process. The census records, so valuable in tracking other ancestors, are often of little help when researching enslaved people. The earliest records only count the number of slaves, with no regard to age or gender. Although the details improve with time, enslaved people never had their names recorded in the census records.

Owners' wills and deeds of sale are often far more useful. An enslaved person's name, and occasionally their age, would be listed in these records. They also offer a defining point between living in one place and another. Letters and biographies of slave owners may also mention slaves, although we have to be careful to remember the potential biases of the source.

These sources are most useful for those few people that can be found in multiple records and those who stay in one place or with one family. But, many people are only seen once or twice and very little is known about them. Some are lost to history, known only as numbers on a page. Nevertheless, they are remembered here with as much information as we can find.

## **Richard & Aggy's Known Family**

### **Richard (I) (b?-before 1835)**

Richard and his wife Aggy were born in Virginia<sup>1</sup>. They most likely accompanied the Vances in their migration into these mountains as two of the three slaves listed in David Sr.'s 1790 census record in this area<sup>2</sup>.

Richard and Aggy seem to be the matriarch and patriarch of the Vance family slaves, being afforded more consideration than others. They had three children whose names we know: Hudson, Ann,<sup>3</sup> and "young" Dick<sup>4</sup>. There were most likely several more. One record suggested that they had at least three more sons<sup>5</sup>.

In 1813, Richard was willed to Priscilla Vance by her husband, David Vance, Sr. The will stipulated that Richard not be sold out of the family. Also, upon Priscilla's death, Richard and Aggy along with Jo and Leah were to be given "full liberty to go and live with any of my children where their own children live, not as slaves, but as old acquaintances who have labored and spent their strength to raise my children and their own also" <sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, he did not live to be granted this freedom<sup>7</sup>.

One or more enslaved families at a slave cabin on the farm of William Gaines, 1862. Hanover County, VA. Library of Congress

### **Aggy/Agga/Agnus (b?-1837)**

Aggy was born in Virginia, probably sometime before 1775. She and her husband, Richard, most likely accompanied the Vances in their migration into these mountains as two of the three slaves listed in David Sr.'s 1790 census record in this area<sup>2</sup>.

Aggy appears to have held an unusually high status and level of consideration from the Vance family. When letters were sent to Vance family members who had moved outside the area, Aggy was allowed to send greetings to their slaves<sup>8</sup>. She was "freed" by David Sr.'s will upon Priscilla's death<sup>6</sup>. Priscilla further willed, in 1835, that Aggy's children Hudson and Ann were not to be sold until her death; no mention is made of "young" Dick, who is also believed to be her son<sup>9</sup>. Although David, Jr. apparently intended to sell Ann and Hudson before that, he appears to have abided by his mother's request<sup>10</sup>.

Aggy was one of two early black members of the Reems Creek Presbyterian Church. Her death is recorded in church records by 1837<sup>11</sup>.

### **Richard (II)/Young Dick Vance (1807–after 1870)**

Richard (II) is believed to be the son of Richard(I) and Aggy<sup>4</sup> and is referred to as "young Dick." This would make him the brother of Hudson and Ann<sup>3</sup>. He was willed to David, Jr. when he was six years old<sup>12, 13</sup>, although both David and young Dick continued to live with their mothers for at least a few more years. Dick (II) is not mentioned in the estate sale of David Vance, Jr.<sup>14</sup>. He was probably sold before that time, perhaps when David Jr. was financing his move from Reems Creek to Lapland. But, it appears that Dick Vance did not leave the region<sup>13</sup>.

In 1842, Dick Vance married Nancy Weaver Vance<sup>15</sup>, who was born in 1820<sup>13</sup>. In 1870, Richard is a farmer living in Reems Creek with his wife and their three children—Elisha, Julia, and Emily. They live next door to Hudson, Hudson's family, and Abe Vance, who may be another freed Vance slave<sup>13</sup>. Interestingly, in 1895, Dick and Nancy will have a grandson named Zebulon B Vance<sup>16</sup>.

### **Ann (circa 1815–d?)**

Ann was born around 1815<sup>17</sup> in North Carolina, most likely in Reems Creek<sup>18</sup>. She was the daughter of Richard and Aggy and the sister of Hudson<sup>3</sup> and, probably, of "young" Dick<sup>4</sup>. An Anne is mentioned in a note from Aggy in the 1830 letter between the Reems Creek Vances and the Bedford County Tennessee relatives<sup>8</sup>; this may be the same person or someone else.

In her will of 1835, Priscilla Vance stipulated that Ann be sold only after Aggy's death so that Aggy might enjoy the company of her children in her old age<sup>9</sup>. This seems generous at first, but David Sr. stipulated that any children born after 1813 to Aggy and Richard or Jo and Leah should be freed when Priscilla died<sup>6, 19</sup>.

David Vance, Jr. desired to sell Ann before his mother's will allowed<sup>10</sup>, though it appears that

David purchased Ann from his sisters as she is assumed to be the Ann repurchased by Mira Vance in the 1844 estate sale upon the death of her husband<sup>14</sup>. No post-war

census records or marriage registration has been found for Ann Vance and no further information is known about her.

### **Hudson/Hutsel (1822–after 1900)**

Hudson was the brother of Ann<sup>3</sup> and “young” Dick<sup>4</sup> and was born in 1822<sup>20</sup>. According to Priscilla’s 1835 will, Hudson and his sister were not to be sold until after the death of his mother, Aggy<sup>8</sup>. However, this is far short of David Sr.’s 1813 request that they be freed upon Priscilla’s death<sup>6</sup>, 19. It appears Hudson was sold between 1837 and 1844, since he does not appear in the David, Jr. estate sale<sup>15</sup>. However, he did not seem to leave the region. It may have been at this time that he was sold to the nearby Alexander family<sup>5</sup>.

In 1849, Hudson married Elmira/Mira Mills<sup>21</sup> who was born circa 1823<sup>20</sup>. He and Elmira were living with Abraham Vance in 1870, believed to be another former Vance slave. They are living next door to Hudson’s brother, Richard (II), and his family<sup>20</sup>. In 1877, Hudson used two cows as collateral for a loan to pay a debt to Franklin Dawes and Company. It is unclear where the original debt came from. <sup>22</sup>

When the 1880 census was recorded, Hudson and Mira are living with Harriet Horn, a white woman, and her three mixed race children <sup>23</sup>. Hudson was the father of the youngest two children and had at least two more children with Harriet<sup>24</sup>. By 1900, Hudson was living alone in the French Broad Township at the age of 78<sup>25</sup>. He is likely the Hutsel Vance who, in 1901, married Mamie Berry, a forty-two year old widow living in Buncombe County<sup>26</sup>. Hudson died in a cabin fire on December 22, 1909<sup>27</sup>.

### **Jo & Leah’s Known Family**

#### **Jo (b?–before 1835)**

Jo was born in North Carolina<sup>28</sup> and was one of the four oldest Vance slaves in 1813<sup>6</sup>. Jo and Leah (I) were married<sup>6</sup> and were probably the parents of “young” Leah<sup>29</sup>, although they likely had other children whose names we do not know.

Along with his wife, Jo was willed to Priscilla Vance by David Sr. in 1813. Upon Priscilla’s death, Jo and Leah along with Richard and Aggy were to be given “full liberty to go and live with any of my children where their own children live, not as slaves, but as old acquaintances who have labored and spent their strength to raise my children and their own also” <sup>6</sup>.

Unfortunately, he did not live to be granted this freedom<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Leah (I) (b?–before 1835)**

Born in North Carolina<sup>28</sup>, Leah would eventually marry Jo, another Vance slave<sup>6</sup>. She is believed to be the mother of “young” Leah<sup>29</sup>. They likely had other children whose names we do not know.

Along with her husband, Leah was willed to Priscilla Vance by David Sr. in 1813. Upon Priscilla's death, Jo and Leah along with Richard and Aggy were to be given "full liberty to go and live with any of my children where their own children live, not as slaves, but as old acquaintances who have labored and spent their strength to raise my children and their own also"<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, she did not live to be granted this freedom<sup>7</sup>.

### **Leah (II)/Young Leah/Leah Vance Erwin (circa 1806–after 1880)**

Leah (II) was born around 1800<sup>30</sup> and is assumed to be the daughter of the Leah (I) as she is referred to as "young Leah"<sup>29</sup>. Leah was willed to David Vance, Jr. by his mother in 1835, although she is listed as already living with him<sup>31</sup>. She married Sandy Erwin, a Baird family slave, in 1841<sup>32</sup>. Leah had at least four children by 1844, and most likely more who had already reached adulthood. Mira Vance repurchased Leah and her four children at the David Vance, Jr. estate sale<sup>14</sup>. Three of the four children may be the 14- year-old boy, 10-year-old girl, and 6-year-old girl seen in the 1850 slave schedule<sup>33</sup>.

Leah was considered one of the best cooks and housekeepers in the region<sup>34</sup>. She remained with Mira Vance throughout slavery<sup>35</sup>, and seems to have maintained some sort of relationship with her former owner following emancipation. Leah and Sandy attended Mira Baird Vance's funeral in 1878<sup>36</sup>. Leah lived until at least 1880<sup>37</sup>.

Leah is listed as "Leer" and "Lear" in the 1870 and 1880 census records. In the former census, Sandy and Leah are living with Joseph Erwin (7) and Jane Erwin (5), likely grandchildren, and a white man named John Mathews (29)<sup>38</sup>. Ten years later, they were living with granddaughters Leah Williams (14) and Jennie Williams (12)<sup>37</sup>.

### **Sandy Erwin (circa 1807–after 1880)**

Sandy was initially owned by Gov. Vance's great-grandfather, Alexander Erwin. In 1839, Alexander Erwin willed Sandy to his daughter, Hannah Erwin Baird, although Sandy was apparently already living with the Bairds by then<sup>39</sup>.

Hannah's husband, Zebulon Baird, died suddenly in 1827. Although Sandy had been willed to Hannah, it seems that she ensured that her late husband's estate papers stipulate that Sandy not be sold out of the family<sup>40</sup>. In her will of 1849, Hannah Baird also required that Sandy be retained within the family, stating that she "never intended Selling the property giving me by my Father"<sup>41</sup>.

Sandy married Leah Vance in 1841<sup>32</sup>. He supposedly "bought his time" before emancipation, though no record as yet confirms this<sup>36</sup>. Sandy and Leah later lived outside Asheville in Sulpher Springs with various children, possibly grandkids, in their household. Also, in 1870, a white man named John Mathews lived in Sandy's household. Sandy was a farmer who could neither read nor write. He owned \$60 worth of personal property in 1870<sup>38</sup>. He attended Mira Vance's funeral in 1878<sup>36</sup> and lived himself until at least 1880<sup>37</sup>.



## **Other Slaves Associated with Reems Creek**

### **May (b?-d?)**

May was sold, along with two of her children, to John Benjamin in the David Vance, Jr. estate sale of 1844 for \$857.00<sup>14</sup>. No other information is known.

### **Venice/Venus (b?-before 1850)**

Venus was a nanny for Zeb and Robert when they were young. She is fondly recalled by Robert in the Clemet Dowd biography of Zeb<sup>42</sup>. She was auctioned, along with 11 other slaves, at the 1844 David, Jr. estate sale<sup>14</sup>. Robert states that Venus went up to the auction block carrying his younger sister and declared that anyone who took her also took “her” child. Mira Vance repurchased Venus for \$1 with no contest from anyone present<sup>42</sup>. While Mira did purchase Venus for \$1, the truth of the family legend is unclear.

Since she does not appear on the 1850 slave schedule for Mira Vance, it is assumed that Venus died sometime between 1844 and 1850<sup>17</sup>.

### **Abram Vance (1799?-after 1870)**

In 1813, Abram was willed to David Vance, Jr.<sup>12</sup>. His history is uncertain. Most likely, he was the Abe who was sold to Montraville Weaver in the estate sale of David Vance, Jr. in 1844<sup>14</sup>. He may be Abraham Vance, born in 1799, who was living in the household of Hudson Vance in 1870 in Reems Creek<sup>20</sup>.

### **Philip (b?-d?)**

Phillip was willed to David Vance, Jr. in 1813<sup>12</sup>. He does not appear in David Jr.’s estate sale of 1844<sup>14</sup>. No other information is known.

### **Moses (b?-d?)**

Moses was willed to Priscilla Brank Vance in her husband’s 1813 will<sup>12</sup>. No other information is known.

### **Jim (circa 1820s?-d?)**

Jim was to be sold as per Priscilla Vance’s will of 1835, with the proceeds to be equally divided between her grandchildren, of the deceased George and Priscilla Vance Whitson<sup>43</sup>.

This may be the same Jim purchased by John Roberts in David Vance, Jr.’s 1844 estate sale, which would imply that he was sold within or repurchased by the Vance family after Priscilla’s death. Newspaper announcements of the estate sale indicated that one of the enslaved men for sale was a blacksmith. Because that is such a valuable skill and because Jim was sold for much more than the other man sold, he is likely the blacksmith<sup>14</sup>. No other information is known.

## **Hannah Prestwood (b?-d?)**

Hannah was a slave of Jonathan Prestwood and freed by his will of 1838. Because it was not legal to free a slave in this way, it was necessary for her to be willed to someone. According to the will, Hannah was allowed to select the person she would live with and she selected David Vance, Jr.<sup>44</sup> It is very likely that this is the same Hannah from Aggy's 1830 note, the Hannah who has a "fine son in her old days"<sup>8</sup>. This would indicate a close relationship between the Vance and Prestwood slaves, perhaps as a result of a bond between their masters. It is also possible that Hannah was hired to David Vance during the harvest season, a common practice among neighbors in the region.

## **Slaves Associated with Asheville**

### **Isaac (after 179445-d?)**

Isaac was willed to Zeb's uncle Robert Brank Vance in 1813<sup>12</sup>. He probably lived in the town of Asheville with Robert in the 1820s. He was hired out to work for the Patton family during this time as well<sup>46</sup>. In Robert's will of 1827, it is stipulated that Isaac be sold to the Pattons as Robert believes this is what Isaac would desire. This sale, also including Robert's slaves Peter and Harry, is to be completed for a total of no less than \$1,700<sup>47</sup>. No further information is known.

### **Peter Vance (after 179445-after 1866)**

In 1813, Peter was willed to Zeb's uncle Robert<sup>12</sup>. He probably lived in the town of Asheville with Robert in the 1820s. He was hired out to work for the Patton family during this time as well<sup>46</sup>. In Robert's will of 1827, it is stipulated that Peter be sold to the Pattons as Robert believes this is what Peter would desire. This sale, also including Robert's slaves Isaac and Harry, is to be completed for a total of no less than \$1,700<sup>47</sup>. Peter married Harriet in 1826 and lived at least until 1866<sup>48</sup>. He may have died before 1870<sup>49</sup>.

### **Harry (after 179445-d?)**

Harry was also willed to Robert in 1813<sup>12</sup>. He probably lived in the town of Asheville with Robert in the 1820s. He was hired out to work for the Patton family during this time as well<sup>46</sup>. In Robert's will of 1827, it is stipulated that Harry be sold to the Pattons as Robert believes this is what Harry would desire. This sale, also including Robert's slaves Isaac and Peter, is to be completed for a total of no less than \$1,700<sup>47</sup>. No other information is known.

## **Slaves Associated with Haywood, Macon, or Cherokee Counties**

### **Esther (circa late 1700s–d?)**

Esther was possibly born sometime between 1776 and 1794<sup>50</sup>. In David Vance, Sr.'s will of 1813, Celia Vance was given the option to take either “young Leah” or Esther and the other girl was to belong to Priscilla<sup>12</sup>. It appears that Celia chose Esther<sup>31</sup>. She was probably living with Celia and Benjamin Brittain after 1817 in Buncombe County and after 1822 in Haywood, Macon, or Cherokee Counties<sup>51</sup>. No other information is known.

### **Isham (b?–d?)**

Isham was willed to Priscilla Brank Vance in her husband's 1813 will<sup>12</sup>. He was then willed to Zeb's aunt Celia in 1835, but listed as already in her possession<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, he was probably living with the Brittaines after 1817 in Buncombe County and after 1822 in Haywood, Macon, or Cherokee Counties<sup>51</sup>. No other information is known.

### **Washington (b?–d?)**

Washington was willed to Priscilla Brank Vance in her husband's 1813 will<sup>12</sup>. He was then willed to Zeb's aunt Elizabeth Vance Davidson in Priscilla's 1835 will<sup>43</sup>. He was listed as already in her possession, so he was probably living in Cherokee County before 1835<sup>52</sup>. No other information is known.

## **Slaves Associated with Bedford & Rutherford Counties, TN**

### **James Vance (1793<sup>53</sup>–after 1870)**

James lived on the Vance's Reems Creek property probably until he went to Bedford County Tennessee, outside Nashville, with Zeb's uncle Samuel. It is unclear if he was living with Samuel in Tennessee between 1810 and 1813 or if he only moved there after being willed to Samuel by his father<sup>12</sup>. He remained on that Vance property until at least 1865 and, in her will of the same year, Christina Weaver Vance asked her executors to take care of Jim and ensure a dignified burial when he died<sup>54</sup>. James is listed as a blacksmith in the 1870 census and can both read and write. He lives with a black female, Leah, who was born in Tennessee in 1822. She is most likely his daughter. She is a cook by occupation and can also read and write<sup>53</sup>.

### **Simon Vance (1798<sup>55</sup>–after 1870)**

Simon lived on the Vance's Reems Creek property probably until he went to Bedford County Tennessee, outside Nashville, with Zeb's uncle Samuel. It is unclear if he was living with Samuel in Tennessee between 1810 and 1813 or if he only moved there after being willed to Samuel by his father<sup>12</sup>. He is not mentioned in Christina Vance's 1865 will and so may have been sold prior to that or willed to someone else by her husband in 1849<sup>54</sup>. Following emancipation, Simon lived in Coffee County Tennessee, bordering Bedford County to the east,

with Vanna Vance, a black woman born in Virginia around

1817. They were most likely married. Simon is a domestic servant and Vanna keeps house. Simon can read, but not write<sup>55</sup>.

### **Dory (before 1813–d?)**

Dory was willed to Zeb's Uncle Samuel in 1813<sup>12</sup>. No other information is known about him.

### **Jane (b?–d?)**

Jane was willed to daughter Jane Vance Davidson in Priscilla Vance's will of 1835, although it was noted that she was already living with the Davidsons in Bedford County, Tennessee<sup>43</sup>. Since she was not mentioned in David Sr.'s will of 1813, she may have been born after that date. If she was older and was bought by the Vances rather than being born into slavery with the family, she may have lived with the Davidsons in Haywood County before 1814<sup>56</sup>.

This is probably the same Jane to whom Aggy "sends her love" in an 1830 letter sent from Priscilla and Mira Vance to Jane Davidson in Bedford County<sup>8</sup>. No other information is known about her.

### **Wilson (b?–d?)**

Wilson was willed to Zeb's aunt Sarah Vance McLean in Priscilla Vance's will of 1835 and listed as already in her possession<sup>43</sup>. He probably lived with the McLeans in Logan County, Kentucky, and later Rutherford County, Tennessee. Aggy also "sends her love" to Wilson in an 1830 letter sent from Priscilla and Mira Vance to Jane Davidson in Bedford County, which borders Rutherford County<sup>8</sup>. No other information is known.

### **John (b?–d?)**

In 1865, Christina Weaver Vance willed John and Thomas to her daughter Margaret. There would have been a very short amount of time Dory was willed to Zeb's Uncle Samuel in 1813<sup>12</sup>. No other information is known about him.

### **Thomas (b?–d?)**

In 1865, Christina Weaver Vance willed John and Thomas to her daughter Margaret. There would have been a very short amount of time Dory was willed to Zeb's Uncle Samuel in 1813<sup>12</sup>. No other information is known about him.

---

### **End Notes**

1. In the 1880 Census, Richard and Aggy's son Hutsel/Hudson identifies Virginia as the state of birth for both his parents.

2. This is based on the belief that they were born in Virginia, as was David Vance, so they most likely were given to him by his father when they migrated to North Carolina or purchased just before. However, this is unconfirmed and is not the only possible explanation.

The name of the third slave recorded in the 1790 Census is unknown. This person may have been Jo or a child of Richard and Aggy or another adult or child.

3. Priscilla Vance identifies Hudson/Hutsel and Ann as children of Aggy in her 1835 will.

4. Young Dick (Richard II) is believed to be a son of Richard (I) based on his name and information from the 1980 Fred Baird Interview conducted by Bob Terrell. Fred recalls his mother, birth name Emily Vance, speaking of her uncle Hudson. The 1870 Census Record for Richard Vance (II) lists a 15-year-old daughter named Emily; this would make her about 32 at the time of Fred's birth, making it reasonable to assume this is Fred's mother. If this is the case, it suggests that Hudson and Young Dick were brothers. Richard (II) would not have been named with his siblings in Priscilla's will of 1835 because he was owned by David Jr. before that time.

5. "Third Generation Will Bury Vance" Asheville Citizen-Times. Sat 25 Dec 1909, pg 5. In describing Hudson's funeral arrangements, the article mentions that Hudson and his four brothers belonged to Col. Alexander, who would have been a neighbor of the Vance family. It is unclear if Richard (II) was one of the brothers mentioned and we do not know if the men referred to were biological brothers or other slaves he grew up with.

6. In David Sr.'s will of 1813, he indicates his wish that Richard, Aggy, Jo, and Leah, and any *children they have after David's death, be freed upon his wife Priscilla's death: "... with their increase during her natural life of the four oldest negroes surviving her [Priscilla], or as many as do survive her, to-wit: Richard, Agga, Jo and Leah. It is my will and desire that they have full liberty and I do by these presents give them full liberty to go and live with any of my children where their own children live, not as slaves, but as old acquaintances who have labored and spent their strength to raise my children and their own also. I enjoin upon my children who may have the children of said old Black people not to confine them, but let them go awhile to one and awhile to another where their children may be, I enjoin upon my children to see that the evening of the lives of those Black people slide down as comfortably as may be. The four negroes (and any increase that may be) it is my will and desire that my wife will them among the children at her pleasure and discretion, only keeping in view merit and necessity."* The necessity he may be referring to here is the legal need to will the freed slaves to someone because the law prohibited freeing slaves without court approval, generally requiring a "meritous" action.

7. Aggy is the only one of the slaves David Sr. intended to be freed who is mentioned in Priscilla's will of 1835. Richard (I), Leah (I), and Jo are presumed to have died between 1813 and 1835.

8. A note is written by Mira Baird Vance on behalf of Aggy at the bottom of her 14 Sep 1830 letter to Margaret Davidson (David Vance Jr.'s niece). The note states "old Agnes sends her love to Jane and Wilson and Anne and the black people here is all well and tell Jane old Hannah (presuo\*) has a fine son in her old days" \*this word is difficult to read and cut off: possibly Preswood, an alternative of Prestwood, referring to the freed woman who would live with the Vances in 1838.

Since Jane and Wilson are named in Aggy's note before Anne, who is possibly Aggy's daughter Ann, one wonders if Jane and Wilson were not also Aggy's children born after 1813. No other evidence has been found to support this. Anne is a common name at the time and this could easily be a different person than Aggy's daughter.

9. In Priscilla Vance's will of 1835, she states that Hudson and Ann are not to be sold prior to the death of their mother, Aggy. The proceeds from their sale were to be divided among Priscilla's four daughters. Although Young Dick is also believed to be Aggy's son, he was willed to David Jr. in 1813 and so would not be mentioned in Priscilla's will.

10. In David Jr.'s letter to his sister Jane Vance Davidson dated 03 Feb 1836, he laments being unable to sell Ann and Hudson because of the restriction in his mother's will. In the same letter, David references a letter from Jane to their mother in which she mentioned "the affliction of your family, and the death of Peter". Since the money from the sale of Hutsel and Ann was to go to David's sisters, it seems likely that Jane Davidson's family (or one of her sisters' families) was experiencing financial troubles. But, David makes no apparent move against his mother's wishes.

11. The 1837 records of members and elders for the Reems Creek Presbyterian Church listed two "colored members," including Aggy Vance, who is listed as deceased by that year.

12. David Sr.'s will of 1813 lists 18 enslaved people. He indicates that Richard, Aggy ("Agga"), Jo, and Leah are the four oldest, but no other ages are given. James, Simon, and Dory are willed to Samuel Vance. Abram, Phillip, and young Dick are willed to David Jr. Issac, Peter, and Harry are willed to Robert. Celia is given the choice of Esther or Leah, with the other person going to her mother, Priscilla; she appears to have chosen Esther as Leah is listed in Priscilla's will and Esther is not. The other seven enslaved people are willed to Priscilla Vance. These people are: two married couples, Richard and "Agga" and Jo and Leah; Moses; Isham; and Washington.

13. In the 1870 Census, Richard Vance (II) (63 years old) is listed as the head of the household at his Reems Creek property. He lived adjacent to the property where his brother, Hutsel Vance is living. Hutesel lives with his family and Abraham Vance, who is believed to be the Abe who was formerly a Vance slave. Richard lives with his wife, Nancy (50), and their three children Elisha (18), Julia (16), and Emily (15). Richard is a farmer and owns \$125 in personal property, which is about \$2,300 in 2014.

14. The papers of the 1844 estate sale of David Vance, Jr. indicate that Ann, Venus, Leah, and Leah's four children were purchased by Mira Baird Vance. The documents list the following five people sold to other individuals: Abe, sold to M M Weaver; Jim, sold to John O Roberts; and May and May's two children, sold to John Benjamin. Richard (II) and Phillip, willed in 1813 to David Jr., are both conspicuously absent.

An announcement for this estate sale in the Asheville News on July 12, 1844 indicated that one of the enslaved men was a blacksmith. He is identified as a young man at the time. Given the significantly higher sale price for him, it seems most likely that Jim was the blacksmith.

15. As was common for former slaves who married prior to the Civil War, Richard Vance and Nancy Weaver Vance registered their marriage in Buncombe County on September 1, 1866. They indicated that they had been married since 1825. Early Buncombe County Afr.-Am Marriage Records: 1814-1868, Pack Library Ref. No.: NC 929.375688. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book AA, Page 207.

16. From the 1900 census record for Elisha Vance. Although Elisha's and Harriet's ages do not

match with the 1880 census record, the child Jacob's age and the location do, so we believe this 1900 record is for the same Elisha.

17. There are three adults and five children listed in the 1850 slave schedule for Mira Vance. They are: a woman aged 44, a man aged 40, a woman aged 35, a boy and girl aged 8, a girl aged 2, and

a boy aged 1. In 1860, there are three adults and two teens, to wit: a woman aged 54, a man aged 51, a woman aged 44, a girl aged 16, and a girl aged 14.

The oldest two people are believed to be Leah Vance Erwin and Sandy Erwin (see note 33). In her husband's estate sale, Mira purchased two other adult women: Ann and Venus (see note 14). In his essay "Boyhood and Education Begun" for his brother's biography *Life of Vance* edited by Clement Dowd, Robert Vance describes their nanny Venus as a "warm-hearted old servant" (p. 13). This is, admittedly highly subjective account, suggests that she was older than the woman listed in these schedules. Additionally, Robert and others list Venus as his and his siblings' nanny, but the woman in these schedules would have been 13 when Robert was born.

Because of this, we believe the younger adult woman in Mira Vance slave schedules to be Ann and assume that Venus died sometime between 1844 and 1850, as it seems unlikely that she was sold out of the family. These schedule list the woman we believe to be Ann as 35 years old in 1850 and 44 years old in 1860, making her birth year around 1815.

18. This assumption is based on the fact that her parents, Aggy and Richard, never seem to be hired out or otherwise leave the Vance family members, who are living on the Reems Creek property at the time of Ann's birth.

19. It is unclear if this decision was made as a result of the legal restrictions in freeing a slave, Priscilla disagreeing with her late husband's request, or a family need for the funds (David Jr. seems anxious to sell the two young people, although the funds would go to his sisters).

20. In the 1870 census, Hutsel Vance lists his age as 48, giving a birth year of about 1822. He is a farmer with \$175 of personal property (\$3,310 in 2015 dollars). His wife, Elmira, is a house keeper. She lists her age as 47, giving her a birth year around 1821. Abraham Vance (71) and a young black woman named Philis Coleman (18) also live with Hutsel and Mira, but have no occupations. Hutsel is the only person in the household who can read. No one can write. They are listed as the household immediately after Hutsel's brother, Richard, and his family.

21. Hudson Vance (listed as Hutsel) and Mira Mills Vance registered their marriage in Buncombe County on September 1, 1866. They indicated that they had been married since 1849. Early Buncombe County Afr.-Am Marriage Records: 1814-1868, Pack Library Ref. No.: NC 929.375688. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book AA, Page 206.

22. This incredibly difficult to read deed was registered on 17 January 1877. Hutsel appears to put up "2 hardy cows (?) years old and black and white" against his debt. He agrees to pay the debt by the first of August that year or allow the cows to be sold to cover the cost. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book 38, Page 123.

23. At the time of the 1880 census, Hudson (listed as Hutsell) and Mira Mills Vance are living in the Reems Creek township. Harreitt Horn (white, age 22) and three mulatto children (Lillia Dunnahigh, age 9; Andrew Horn, age 4; and Richard Horn, age 1) are living with them.

24. Hudson and Harriet's relationship is confirmed in official documents for three of their children.

Andrew Horn's death certificate, Ohio Department of Health file 21539, filed April 1945, deceased's birth year 1882; Jacob Vance's marriage license, Buncombe County, book 133, page 46, applicant's birth year 1884; and Leannel Vance's death certificate, Ohio Department of Health file 55735, filed Sept. 1927, deceased's birth year 1888.

Although Andrew's record shows an inconsistent birth year, it is most likely the same person and a mistake was made in that recording. Given that Andrew Horn was older than Richard Horn, it

seems very likely that he was also Hudson's son. It is unknown if Lillia was Hudson's daughter or, indeed, if she was even Harriet Horn's daughter.

25. Based on age, location, and parents' birthplaces relative to earlier census records of Hudson Vance, we believe that we have the correct record for the 1900 census. The census worker's handwriting is difficult to read and the name is typically transcribed as "Hanse Vance." However, the third letter appears to this researcher to be taller than the rest of the lower case letters, suggesting a "d" or "t" rather than an "n," further supporting the belief that this is Hutsel/Hudson Vance. Source: 1900 Census for North Carolina, Enumeration District 146, Sheet 9, Family 143.

26. Hutsel Vance and Mamie Berry registered for a marriage license in 1901. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book 133, Page 45.

A Mamie Berry, born June 1858, is registered as a widowed head of household in the 1900 Census for Buncombe County. She had five children, although only her 22 year old daughter, Beedie, was still alive. She was born in South Carolina, as was her father, but her mother was born in North Carolina. She is a cook and her daughter is a laundress. They rent a house and both can read, but not write.

27. Hudson's death was covered by the Asheville Citizen-Times twice, on December 24th and December 25th. Both articles mention that he was being cared for by the Sondley and Ray descendants of his former owner, Col. Alexander. He was to be buried in the plot at the Alexander Chapel in Reems Creek that was set aside as a slave cemetery by Col. Alexander.

The first article mentioned that Hudson had had a paralytic stroke several weeks prior to his death and the families were paying another black man to take care of him. That man is said to have left the home a couple days before the fire and, alone, Hudson attempted to warm himself with a large fire that got out of control. The story Jacob, Hudson's son, told his grandson is that the fire was set to kill Hudson for sleeping with a white woman. The Citizen-Times makes no such claims, but it probably wouldn't even if it were true. No copies survive of the one paper which may have confirmed the family story, The Colored Enterprise, (the paper may even have ceased printing by then).

28. This is based on the assumption that Jo and Leah (I) are the parents of Leah (II), see note 26. In the 1880 census, Leah (II) lists North Carolina as the place of birth for both her parents.

29. This hypothesis is based largely on Leah's (II) name and her position within the family. Jo and Leah (I) were afforded a higher status in the family as was Leah (II). It is possible that the consideration given to Leah (II) was a result of her parents in a similar fashion to the treatment Ann and Hudson seem to receive as a result of being Aggy's children. Leah (II) was also referred to as young Leah, which was a common substitute for "junior." It is important to note, however, that Leah is a very common name at the time and she may just have been younger than Leah (I).

30. Leah is believed to be the oldest woman listed in the 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules for Mira Baird Vance (see note 33). These sources list Leah's birth year around 1806. In her family's 1870 census record, Leah lists her age as 72, placing her birth year around 1798 (see note 38). Her age ten years later is listed as 70, with a birth year of 1810 (see note 37). This wide range casts doubt on her age. Despite the notorious inaccuracies of the slave schedules, these seem to be the more reliable sources than Leah's own census records. Her position within the family, as well as the consistency of the slave schedules, suggest

Mira would have had a better idea of Leah's birth year than Leah would in her old age. Mira may have gotten this information from her husband, who

would have been a boy or young man when Leah was born and may have been able to remember her age based on his.

31. Leah was willed to David Vance, Jr. in 1835 by his mother, Priscilla Vance. Leah is listed as already being in David's possession, which makes sense since Priscilla was living with her son after her husband died.

32. Sandy and Leah Erwin registered their marriage on 25 August 1866. They had been married for 25 years, since 1841. Despite the fact that Leah's maiden name is not listed on the registry, the fact that no other Sandy Erwin has been found in the Buncombe County Census records in 1870 or 1880 makes us confident that this is the Sandy and Leah who were owned by the Vance and Baird families. Early Buncombe County Afr.-Am Marriage Records: 1814-1868, Pack Library Ref. No.: NC 929.375688. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book AA, Page 67.

33. The 1850 slave schedule for Mira Vance included a 14-year-old boy, a 10-year-old girl, a 6-year-old girl, a 4-year-old girl, and a 1-year-old boy. They are believed to be the children of Sandy and Leah. It is unclear if Ann ever married or had children, but one or more of these children may be Ann's. The oldest two or three were likely purchased by Mira in 1844.

The 1860 schedule included two girls, 14 and 12 years old. They may be the 6 and 4 year old children in the previous census with an error in dates. Or, one or both girls may have been purchased between that time and the others were sold or passed away.

34. In Holston Methodism Volume 5, page 209, Mira's son-in-law Richard N. Price wrote an obituary *for her which said: His [Sandy's] wife, Leah, was one of the finest cooks and housekeepers in the country. Both of these faithful servants reached the age of near a hundred years.*

35. At her late husband's estate sale in 1844, Mira Baird Vance purchased three adult women and four children. They were: Venus, who was an old woman when they are children according to Robert Vance's recollections published in Dowd's Life of Vance; Leah, who was born circa 1800 according to her post-slavery census records; Ann, who was the daughter of Richard and Aggy; and Leah's four young children. It seems most likely that Leah is the oldest woman in Mira's 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules. Although her birth year varies a great deal between her 1870 and 1880 Census records, the schedules are within the range.

Hannah Erwin Baird willed Sandy to Mira's brothers in 1849. She asked them to share the proceeds of the sale of Sandy, but not to sell him out of the family. Mira's son-in-law, Richard N. Price, notes that Sandy was living with Mira prior to emancipation. This would suggest that Sandy is the adult man in Mira's 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules. The age listed suggests a birth year is close to the ages given in his family's 1870 and 1880 Census records.

36. Rev. Richard N. Price, Mira's son-in-law, noted that Sandy and Leah Erwin attended the funeral of their former master. He also indicated that Sandy "bought his time" (i.e. bought his freedom) before the end of the war. It should be noted, however, that his account was written thirty-five years after the funeral and may be subject to error. Taken from Price's obituary for Mira Vance written in Holston Methodism Volume 5, page 209.

37. In 1880, Sandy and Leah Erwin were living in the 9th Township of Asheville. They both listed themselves as 70 years old, contradicting earlier records, although Sandy's age is the closest to expectations. Sandy was a farmer and Leah kept house. Both were born in North Carolina, as were Leah's parents. Neither could write, although Sandy could read.

They lived with two granddaughters—Lear (or Leah) Williams (14) and Jennie Williams (12). Both girls attended school within the previous year. Both girls list their mothers' birth place as North Carolina, but do not know where their father was born.

38. Sandy Erwin and Leah Vance Erwin were living in the Sulpher Springs Township during the 1870 Census. Sandy was a farmer who lists his age at 63; he could read, but not write. Leah was a house keeper who lists her age at 72; she could neither read nor write. They lived with two children, Joseph Erwin (7) and Jane Erwin (5), who are believed to be their grandchildren. Both were born in North Carolina. Sandy and Leah owned \$80 worth of personal property, which is about \$1,475 in 2014 dollars.

39. In 1839, Alexander Erwin wills: To Hannah Baird one negro boy named Sandy which she has in possession. Transcription provided by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

40. This note comes from the compiled research of Mike Shelton edited by Tammy Walsh. It is unclear where this information comes from.

41. Hannah Erwin Baird Will. Certified before the court of Buncombe County on 9 January 1849.

42. This comes from the early and family history sections of Celment Dowd's *The Life of Zebulon Baird Vance*. These sections were written by Zeb's brother, Robert Brank Vance.

43. Besides Aggy, Hudson, Ann, and Leah, the following enslaved people were listed in Priscilla's 1835 will: Jim, who was to be sold and the proceeds to go to the orphaned children of Priscilla's late daughter and son-in-law, George and Priscilla Vance Whitson; Jane, who was willed to Jane Vance Davidson and listed as being already in her possession; Isham, who was willed to Celia Vance Brittain and listed as being in her possession; Wilson, willed to Sarah Vance McLain and listed as being in her possession; and Washington, willed to Elizabeth Vance Davidson and listed as being in her possession.

44. In Jonathan Prestwood's will of 21 Feb. 1838, he states: "I desire that my negro Hannah to be free at my death and the said negro to have her bed & her wearing apparel, two pots which is her own, one table walnut, two chests, one big wheel, said negro woman has her choice to live where & with whom she pleases and makes choice of David Vance as her guardian." Taken from the transcription in "A Lot of Bunkum" Vol 8 Is. 6, p. 82-87, published by the Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society.

45. According to the 1820 census records for Robert Vance, there were three younger boys/men living with him. Two were between 14 and 25 years old and one was under 14. This would suggest that, in 1813, one boy was probably 4 to 6 years old (since children were not typically separated from their mothers until at least four years of age) and the other two were between ages 7 and 18.

46. Robert attended medical school in Cabarrus County before setting up practice in Asheville in 1818. His political career would have taken him away from the area, and that may have been the time that Isaac, Peter, and Harry were hired out to the Pattons, something which was referenced in Robert's will of 1827.

47. In his 1827 will, Robert states: "My boys, Isaac, Peter, & Harry, have been faithful fellows to me, and I have only to regret, that I cannot (consistently) with their own and the (interests) of of the County, place them in a better condition. As I presume they would prefer living with W. Patton, to whom they are

now hired, it is my will that they be sold to him, if he wishes to purchase them, for a sum not less than seventeen hundred dollars, [almost \$36,000 in 2015 dollars] — if he

should not, it is my desire that they be sold to the highest bidder on such Credit as my (executors) may think proper – The annual interest arising from the bond offered for them to be (placed) at the (discretion) of my mother.”

48. Peter and Harriet registered their marriage with Buncombe County on August 30, 1866. They listed their marriage year as 1826. No maiden name was given for Harriet. Early Buncombe County Afr.-Am Marriage Records: 1814-1868, Pack Library Ref. No.: NC 929.375688. Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Book AA, Page 205.

49. No census records have been found for Peter or Harriet Vance.

50. This note comes from the compiled research of Mike Shelton edited by Tammy Walsh. It is unclear where this information comes from.

51. This would be the case if Esther and Isham were to remain with Celia Vance Britton as her family moved within the region.

52. Since Elizabeth Vance Davidson was already living in Cherokee County at the time of her mother's death, it is assumed that Washington was living there also.

53. In the 1870 census for Bedford County, TN, we find a James Vance, age 77, whom we believe to be the James owned by Samuel and Christina Vance. He is a blacksmith, born in North Carolina, who can read and write. He is living with a 48-year-old woman named Leah Vance who is probably a daughter. She is a cook, born in Tennessee, who can read and write.

54. In her February 1865 will, Christina Weaver Vance, wife of Zeb's uncle Samuel, wrote “My desire and request is that my old and faithful Servant Jim, a colored man, that if I should die before he Should, that my Executors shall take care for Jim and see that when he dies that he may be decently buried.” Given the amount of time the James willed to Samuel in 1813 spent with this family, this may well be the same Jim. It should be noted, however, that Jim is an exceedingly common name.

Christina Vance also mentions John and Thomas, who were willed to her daughter, Margaret.

55. A Simon Vance can be found in the 1870 census for Coffee County, TN, who may be the Simon described here. He is a 72-year-old domestic servant who can read but not write. He lives with Vanna Vance, who is 53 years old, who may be his wife. She is a house keeper, born in Virginia who can neither read nor write.

56. This is based on when and where the family of Jane Vance Davidson moved.