

The Hance-Chesley Cemetery



Young Dorsey Hance, 1791-1855

Some of John Hance's descendants kept to the Quaker faith and followed its abolitionist teachings. Several of these individuals moved to Ohio and New York in the first decades of the 19th century.

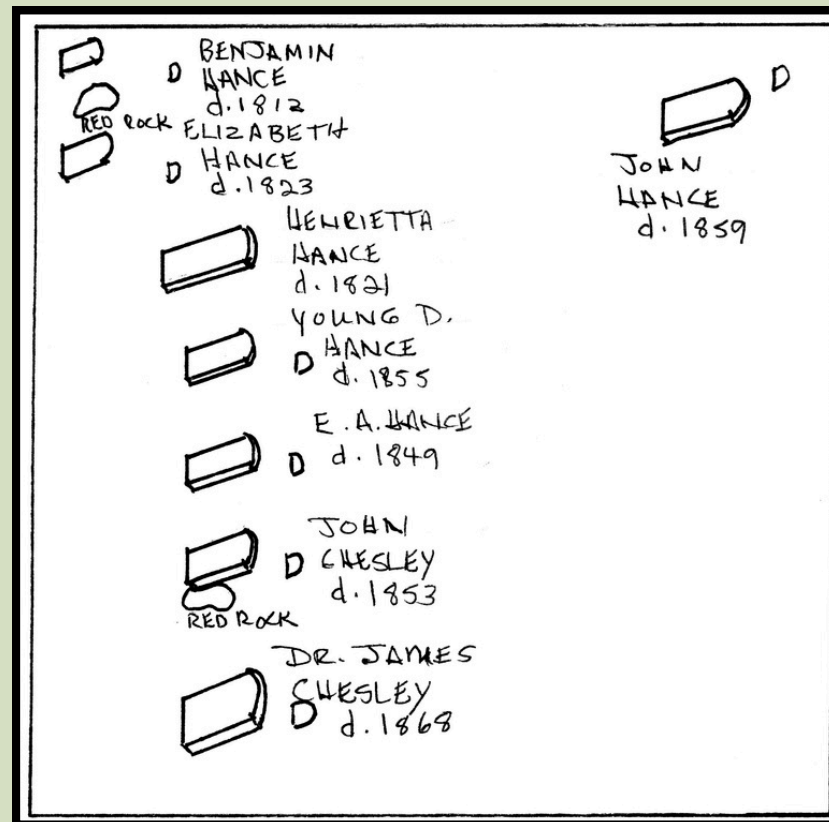
The branch of the family in this cemetery remained in Calvert County. By the 1820s, they owned upwards of 800 acres of land that extended west from the Bay. By the mid-1830s, led by Benjamin and Elizabeth's son Young Dorsey "Y.D." Hance (1791-1855), the family moved to a farm on the Patuxent River about six miles to the west.



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This cemetery is the burial ground for members of two families joined by marriage. The oldest graves are for Benjamin Hance (1755-1812) and his wife Elizabeth (1766-1823). Benjamin was the grandson of an English Quaker who arrived in Maryland 1659 and settled north of Parkers Creek.

Y.D. married (in succession) the sisters Henrietta (1794-1821) and Eloise A. Chesley (1798-1849). Henrietta died before the Hances moved to the Patuxent and she was laid to rest in this cemetery. Burials in later years included Henrietta's two brothers, her former husband, and her sister, thus reuniting the extended family.



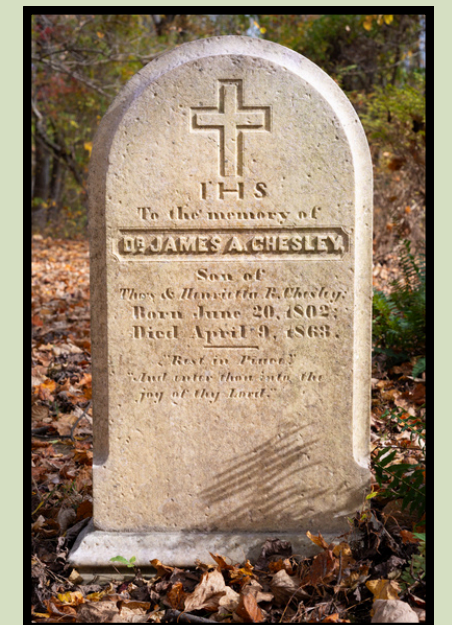
Drawing by Barbara Grosvenor, 1996

One of Henrietta and Eloise's brothers was John Reeder Egan Chesley (1792-1853). He was a lawyer who first practiced in Washington and later in Calvert County. We don't know the exact location, but the 1830 census lists him, his wife, and five enslaved individuals.

The second brother was James Alexander Chesley (1802-1868), a medical doctor who received his degree from the University of Maryland in 1823. In 1838, Chesley bought 338 acres of land from his brother-in-law Y.D. Hance, at about the time Hance moved to the farm on the Patuxent. In 1858, after Y.D.'s death, Chesley purchased an adjoining 121-acre parcel from Y.D.'s son John A.C. Hance.

As the land acquisitions suggest, James A. Chesley was a farmer as well as a physician. In 1851, samples of his tobacco won second place in an Agricultural Exhibition and Cattle Show in Baltimore. Enslaved labor performed the work on Chesley's farm. The federal census slave schedule for 1850, when Chelsey held 336 acres, lists 7 enslaved individuals. By 1860, when the farm encompassed 457 acres, the count of enslaved reached 24.

Another sale by John A.C. Hance is relevant to the cemetery. In 1864, John T. Chambers purchased 254 acres just north of the Chesleys. The Chambers deed reserved a small tract "for the burial ground of the heirs of Y.D. Hance."



James A. Chesley, 1802-1868