



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

Copyright © 2010-2012. All rights reserved.

Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

William Ewing Thomas

Compiled by Michael Patterson
Copyright © 2010-2012. All rights reserved.

William Ewing Thomas was a veteran of a Tennessee infantry regiment who came to this area about seven years after the War ended. He lived in the Coppell area for many years before finally settling in the residential area of Grapevine where he died in 1930.

Family genealogists at ancestry.com say his parents were William S. Thomas and Minerva Ewing (1820-1874). They also say William S. Thomas was born about 1820 and that he died as a Confederate prisoner of War in Camp Chase, Ohio.

We have been unable to locate William S. Thomas and his family in the 1850 census. In 1860, William E. Thomas was with his parents and siblings in the Sumpter District of Hancock County, Tennessee, in the area served by the post office at Yellow Spring, Tennessee. William E. Thomas was seventeen years old. His father, William S. Thomas, was the owner of real estate worth ten thousand dollars and personal property worth seven thousand five hundred dollars, which included four slaves.

William E. Thomas's first wife was Lavina Jane Bishop, who was born in Washington County, Virginia in 1844, and died in Hancock County, Tennessee on August 18, 1869. She lies buried in the Old Thompson Settlement Baptist Church Cemetery. Family sources say they were married February 11, 1866 (sic), and that she was a daughter of Joseph P. Bishop and Martha Pennington Parsons.

William E. Thomas served the Confederacy in Co. D, 29th Tennessee Infantry. He enlisted at Camp Powell, Tennessee on August 13, 1861 for a term of twelve months. By the end of October, he was serving as 2nd Sergeant of his company. Another muster roll of the company shows that he enlisted at Henderson Mills, Tennessee. On January 6, 1863 he became ill and was absent from the regiment for a time. A muster roll for January and February, 1863 shows that he was "Paid on Descriptive Roll at Hospital."

Mr. Thomas was wounded during the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia on September 19, 1863 and was sent to a hospital. On September 23, 1863 he entered the Foard Hospital at Marietta, Georgia. His name appears on a company muster roll made at Dalton, Georgia on January 15, 1864, at which time he was still in the hospital. He received a furlough when it was time for his release. On June 25 or 26, 1864 he was captured by federal forces in Hancock County, Tennessee, and on July 9 he was sent to Chattanooga, Tennessee. After passing through Nashville, Tennessee, on July 14 he arrived at the federal military prison in Louisville, Kentucky where he remained about three days before being forwarded to Camp Douglas, Illinois. He entered Camp Douglas on July 18, 1864.

He remained at Camp Douglas until he was discharged from there on June 16, 1865 after signing an oath of allegiance to the federal government. At that time, he was described as being six feet tall with blue eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion. He was a resident of Hancock County, Tennessee.

Family researchers at ancestry.com say Mr. Thomas's second wife was Frances Emily Hatfield (May 24, 1857-Apr 19, 1888), who was born in Hancock or Claiborne Co., Tennessee. She was a daughter of Adam Yeary Hatfield (1814-1877) and his wife, Mary F. "Polly" Davis (1819-1906).

William Thomas and his wife, Frances, are found in the 1880 census of Precinct 8 in Dallas County, Texas. The census taker made a notation that Mr. Thomas had been married once previous to his marriage to Frances. Frances said both her parents were natives of Tennessee. They had five children with them in that year: William, Emmit, Levina, Minnie, and Mary Thomas. The Thomas family had arrived in Texas from Tennessee between the births of Minnie and Mary. Mrs. Frances Thomas died on April 19, 1888 and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

In 1900 Mr. Thomas and his family appear in the census of Dallas County's District 8. Many of their neighbors are also associated with Grapevine and are buried in Grapevine Cemetery. Mr. Thomas's third wife, Mattie Thomas, said she and Mr. Thomas had been married seven years. She had never given birth to any children. Mr. Thomas's children from his earlier marriages who were with the family included Edgar T. and Oscar E. Thomas. Emmett Thomas was a widower living alone next-door to them.

In 1910 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were living alone in Dallas County's District 2, but the names of their neighbors indicate they must have been living not far across the county line from the Grapevine community. They had no children with them in that year.

By 1920 William and Mattie Thomas had moved across the county line and were living along Main Street in Grapevine, Texas, where they spent the rest of their lives. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Thomas applied to the State of Texas for a Confederate pension.

An obituary for Mrs. Thomas appeared in the Grapevine Sun on November 11, 1929: "*MRS. MATTIE THOMAS BURIED LAST THURSDAY. Mrs. Mattie E. (Bishop) Thomas passed away on the evening of Nov. 7. She was born in Lee County, Va., on March 27, 1861. Was converted and joined the Methodist church, where through her whole life she lived a consistent and beautiful Christian life. She was married to W. E. Thomas on Dec. 27, 1892, placing her church membership*

with him in the Coppell Methodist church until they moved to Grapevine, in which she has since held her membership. A better life has not been lived in our midst, as is attested by all who knew her. She lived on the theory that life was given that she might give it to others, and this she did as perfectly as it seems possible to have done. She had no children of her own, but she was a perfect mother to Bro. Thomas's children by former marriage, as was possible for anyone to be, and these children had a love for her that knew no bounds. The whole community joins her aged companion and his children in their sorrow. After a short service held in the home, Saturday, November 9, the body was borne to the Methodist Church where services were held by her Pastor, L. Pat Leach, assisted by former Pastor, Bro. Atchley of Lewisville, and Bro. Binyon, Pastor of the Presbyterian church. Her body now rests in the Grapevine Cemetery to await the morning of the resurrection. Her Pastor."

When the 1930 census was taken, William Thomas and his single son, Oscar T. Thomas, lived together in their home along Main Street in Grapevine. Oscar was working as a teacher in the public schools.

William Ewing Thomas's death certificate shows he was born in Tennessee on June 1, 1843, to William L. Thomas and his wife, Minerva Obion. Mr. Thomas died in Precinct 3 ("Grapevine" is marked through) at 7 a.m. on July 17, 1930. His death was caused by chronic bronchitis of three years duration. He was buried in Grapevine Cemetery the next day by the Lucas Undertaking Company.

A short notice of his death appeared in the Dallas Morning News on July 19, 1930: "*W. E. Thomas, 87, Dies At Home at Grapevine. GRAPEVINE, TEXAS, July 18—W. E. Thomas, 87, died here Thursday. He was a native of Tennessee but moved to this community in 1872 and has resided here continuously. He was a Confederate veteran, having spent three years in active service and the remainder of the time as a wounded prisoner in a Federal prison.*"

A longer obituary for Mr. Thomas appeared in the Grapevine Sun on July 24, 1930: "*W. E. THOMAS, AGE 87, BURIED HERE LAST FRIDAY. Funeral serviced for William Ewing Thomas, age 87 years, for 13 years, a resident of Grapevine, who died Thursday morning at his home, were held Friday afternoon at the Grapevine Methodist Church. Rev. J. R. Atchley of _____, and Rev. F. L. Willshire, Grapevine, officiated, and burial was in the Grapevine Cemetery. Mr. Thomas was a native of Tennessee but moved to this community in 1872 and has resided here continuously. He was a Confederate veteran, having spent three years in active service and the remainder of the time as a wounded prisoner in a federal prison. He was a prominent landowner here, and a member of the Methodist Church. Surviving him are two sons, E. B. Thomas, Wichita Falls; O. E. Thomas, Grapevine, and three daughters, Mrs. Levina McGehee and Mrs. Mollie Gordon Cummins, Canton; and Mrs. Minnie McNeely of Fort Worth.*"

Family sources at Ancestry.com report that Mr. Thomas and his first wife had three children: William Preston Thomas, Emmett Bascom Thomas, and Martha Lavina Thomas. The following brief accounts of their lives, and those of their half-siblings, were taken from material at ancestry.com and from public records.

William Preston Thomas was born January 30, 1866 and died January 17, 1907.

Emmett Bascom Thomas was born at Mulberry Gap, Tennessee on February 8, 1868 and died May 4, 1933 in Wichita Falls, Texas in the State Hospital there. His last permanent address was in Dallas. He was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Martha Lavina Thomas was born June 28, 1869 and died March 14, 1956. She married William D. McGehee on September 17, 1885. She died in Thurman Convalescent Home in Amarillo, where she had been for five days. Her last permanent address was 2005 Fifth Avenue in Canyon, Texas. She was buried in Wayside Cemetery in Wayside, Texas.

Minnie Alice (Thomas) McNeely was born in Tennessee on October 21, 1873 at Mulberry Gap, Hancock County, Tennessee. She married James D. McNeely (1874-1943). She worked for many years as a purchaser for the W. C. Stripling Company. She died in the Leisure Lodge Nursing Home in Borger, Hutchinson County, Texas on December 6, 1976, where she had been living for the past nine years. Her death certificate gives her mother's name as Frances Alice Hatfield. Her body was returned to Fort Worth, and she was buried in Rose Hill Cemetery in the Handley section of East Fort Worth.

Charles Thomas was born October 2, 1875. He died October 21, 1875 and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Freddie L. Thomas was born February 16, 1877. He died March 6, 1877 and lies buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Mary Thomas was born in Texas about 1878. We have found no further record of her.

Edgar T. Thomas was born August 24, 1880 at Coppell, Texas. An obituary appeared for him in the Grapevine Sun on January 15, 1916. He was a lifelong bachelor, and worked for several years at Grapevine before finally moving to Abilene, Texas. At the time of his death, January 7, 1916, he was working in a bank there as a cashier. His body was brought back to Grapevine Cemetery for burial. His headstone says he was the husband of Etta Coker.

Oscar Ewing Thomas was born June 1, 1883 at Coppell in Dallas County, Texas. He was a teacher in the Grapevine schools for many years, from where he retired in 1938. He died in traffic accident at the intersection of U. S. Highway 60 and Texas F.M. Road 168 at Umbarger, Randall County, Texas, on the afternoon of February 24, 1975. He was buried in Dreamland Cemetery in Canyon, Texas. He was a resident of Canyon at the time of his death. He was survived by a sister, Mrs. J. D. McNeely, or Borger, Texas.

Thaddius Thomas was born November 16, 1885. He died December 10, 1885 and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

