

Information concerning some Confederate soldiers, including Franklin L. D. Thomas and Robert Wayne C. Thomas, sons of Micajah S. and Anna C. Hightower Thomas, and concerning Capt. L. C. Neill (Company E), Capt. T. J. Henson (Company K), and Capt. Gillespie (Cavalry Company).

Franklin L. D. Thomas was born in Henderson County, NC in that part which is now Transylvania on the ninth of August, 1836. In 1855, he was happily married to Rebecca Allison who bore him eleven children. The following sketch of his experiences in the war was told to me in his own words.

“When the War broke out, I had a wife and three babies, two head of horses, two cows, flocks of sheep and many hogs, and land, all down here in the South and I was here. Now for me to desert all I had and flee to the mountains to bushwhack my way through, or go to the Smokey Mountains and fight against my next door neighbor, I didn’t intend to do. I was enlisted on the 14th day of July 1862 under Capt. L. C. Neill, Company E, 62nd North Carolina Regiment and was made Sergeant.”

At this point in our talk, we began to speak of dear old Capt. Neill and Mr. Thomas said in a broken voice with tears in his eyes, “I loved Captain Neill and love his memory, and I do not forget his kindness to me all during the War.”

Resuming his story, he said, “At the same time Company E enlisted, Company K enlisted under Capt. T. G. Henson and a Cavalry Company enlisted under Capt. Gillespie, all at Bethel Old Fields as it was known then, no known as the Beardman Place. Arriving there, we were ordered to Johnson Station [Johnson City]. We stayed there a short time, drilling, then we were ordered five miles down the Watauga River to Carters Depot. There we drilled several months. Col. Carter of East Tennessee made his way from Kentucky and surrounded us and there we were captured and paroled home for about two months. We were then exchanged and told to report to the same place. Here at Carters Depot, the Yankees turpentine the bridge and ran our supply train out on it, and burned it and the bridge, and the supply train fell into the river. We remained there for a short time and were then ordered to Zolacofer, near the Virginia line, where we stayed several months and were then ordered to Greenville, Tennessee where we drilled for awhile. Our command was then ordered to Cumberland Gap. I begged Capt. Neill to take me but he asked me to stay till he got to the Gap, and if it was any place for a sick man, he would let me know.

On about the third day, he wrote that it was no place for a sick man and for me to stay in Greenville as long as I could. In a few days times, a dispatch came that the whole force that was holding Cumberland Gap was captured and carried back to Camp Douglas to prison where they were kept twenty-one months till the close of the War. I had a brother

in the force. General Moore, doctor in charge of the hospital, now told me that since the enemy had possession of East Tennessee and as he did not want his men captured, that would give me a thirty day furlough to come home, which I did by way of stage to Asheville, then on to Hendersonville and home.

As the force that was captured could not be moved by the enemy that night, they threw out a large picket around them. Col. George Clayton, commanders of the 62nd North Carolina Regiment, made his escape that night by crawling out betwixt the pickets, and coming across the Smokey Mountains, he made his way to Asheville. Hearing that I was home on furlough, he wrote to me a letter to gather up all of Company E and Company K and all the recruits I could and report to him at Asheville, which I did. I then had to take charge of these men till later, when I got word from Camp Douglas that Lt. Jas. Gash was dead. This left a vacancy in 2nd Lieutenant place. This place was open to me, but as I could not hear well enough, because of a battle injury to my ears, to tell what the field officer said, Col. Clayton appointed Wm. Luther 2nd Lt., and I went on through the war as sergeant.”

The next few pages of Mr. Thomas’ history are taken from a little memorandum book which he carried in his pocket from July till December 1864. He had carried other little books in which he had kept account of his experiences before that time, but they had all been taken away from him when he was captured.

The little book goes on to say:

July 11, 1864 – Got a letter from home that some of my family was sick. Got a ten day furlough to go home and see them. Arrived at home July 12th and found them a little on the mend.

August 22, 1864 – Left my wife and four little children to return to my command in Asheville, NC. Arrived there on the 23rd and found all the command in good health.

August 25 – Col. McDowell left here to take command of Thomas Legion at Valleytown.

August 27, 1864 – Franklin L. D. Thomas declined being commissioned as Lieutenant in Company K, 62nd North Carolina Regiment, and W. A. Stevens was elected in his place.

Sept. 5 – W. A. Stevens went before the Board and was found incompetent to fill the place, and Col. Clayton was ordered to hold another election in Company K, 62nd North Carolina Regiment, and W. N. Luther was elected to fill the place.

Sept. 22, 1864 – The battalion got orders to cook three days rations and, on the morning of the 23rd, got orders to march to Greenville, Tennessee. Arrived there on the

25th of Sept. Got orders the same night to retreat back to North Carolina. The Regiment left Greenville at 8 o'clock in the night and traveled all night. Came to Warm Springs and took up camp there.

Headquarters, Asheville, NC, Oct. 17th – Got orders to cook four days rations and marched to Bull's Gap, Tennessee to reinforce General Vaughn, but when we got there, the Yankees with Gen. Gillam in command had left the Gap and fallen back to Mosey Creek. The Mountain District Brigade went down the railroad to Russellville and burned the bridge and tore up track and burned it, then marched back to the Gap and camped. General Vaughn is still down below this place about twenty-five miles on the railroad.

October 20th, 1864 – General Vaughn sent a dispatch to Col. Clayton from Morristown that he had commenced a fight with the enemy, and he wanted Col. Clayton to reinforce him. We got orders to march at 6 o'clock in the morning. We marched to Russellville, and there met General Vaughn on retreat, stopped them there and formed in line of battle, but the enemy fell back and we had no fight with them. But General Vaughn's Brigade was badly whipped and lost about three hundred killed and wounded and all artillery. We fell back to Greenville and then Col. Palmer's Brigade marched to Asheville and Gen. Vaughn marched on towards Virginia.

November 5th – Arrived at Asheville, NC

November 17th, 1864 – Got orders to leave Asheville at 7 o'clock at night and camp at Spring Creek. Stayed there three days and then started to reinforce Vaughn and Breckenridge at Bull's Gap. Arrived there on the 20th of November late in the evening. A dispatch came about 8 o'clock at night that the Yankees were evacuating the Gap, and we were ordered to march that night. Col. Palmer's Brigade went down on the left of the Gap with Col. Vaughn's Cavalry in their front and cut them off at Russellville and had a fight with them and took about sixty prisoners. We stampeded them on all that night and captured all their wagons and six pieces of artillery and six ambulances. The wagons numbered about sixty-two in all, besides a great many other things. We took about three hundred prisoners in all. We stopped at Morristown and stayed one night, then went on to Strawberry Plains and went into entrenchments before day and stayed there until after dark that night. Company K of the 62nd North Carolina Regiment was sent out[...] in front at sharpshooting and stayed there all day and came out without the loss of a single man. Came out and lay on the field until 12 o'clock at night. Then we were ordered to fall back about two miles and stayed there—then marched back to the [Cader or Cedar?] Creek Road. There we turned and went on down the river and crossed at their pickets and killed five and captured one. We crossed Paint Mountain just at night on the 24th of December and camped at the foot of the mountain on the other side; stayed there all day on Christmas Day 1864.

Mr. Thomas then said, "From there we fell back to Asheville and fortified Battery Park Hill, but when Gen. Stoneman came with an overwhelming force of cavalry, we were not able to withstand it, so we surrendered. The war was over a few days later.

When I reached home, I found my horses gone, one cow killed by the bushwhackers, and most of my hogs and sheep gone. My life had been threatened; the bushwhackers, a band of Union soldiers and outlaws, had told my wife for her to write me never to set foot in North Carolina or they would kill me.

I had no greenback and not a thing to start on. I had one little yearling which I swapped as \$12 on an oxen and promised to pay the balance in the fall. With this oxen, I managed to make a pretty good crop.

I shall never as long as I live forget the kindness of Mr. McHune Johnson to my family while I was away fighting. He would not let them lack for anything he could give them. My wife had no salt and he gave her some of his own till he could get her some from Charleston. One bushel cost him \$20, and when it came, she and a little boy carried it across the mountains. That night the outlaws and bushwhackers came and stole it and a bushel of meal.

About ten years after the War, I moved to Greenville, SC. There I lost my wife and was left with seven little children: Delah, Martha, Charlotte, William, Andrew, John and Mary. They not being able to manage the housekeeping, I came back to North Carolina to get my wife's sister Mary to keep house and help me raise them. She loved them devotedly and took such good care of them, in about a year's time, we were married. She is a devoted mother to them till this day. She is as attentive to them as she is to her own children."

The following is a list of all Mr. Thomas' children:

First wife Rebecca's children: Delah Anna Elizabeth; Martha Jane Verina; Charlotte Rebecca; William Micajah Smith; John Bascom; Andrew Jackson; Mary Ella Caroline; and Merrimam Franklin (dead).

Second wife Mary's children: Anna Bertha; Jason Pinckney (dead); Mitchel Alexander; Leander Webb; Margaret Rachel Isabell; Adeline Suveniah; Thomas Jefferson; Rosa Lee (dead).

Mr. Thomas is now nearly eighty years old but strong and well for one of his years. He is a good citizen, a conscientious member of his church, and a favorite among his comrades.

January 20th, 1914

Jane Davis Patton, Historian
Transylvania Chapter, Daughters of the Confederacy

Below is a list of some of the names that appeared on the roll books of Company E and Company K, 62nd North Carolina Regiment.

ROLL CALL

Allison, W. B.	Raxter, Sam	Kitchen, William
Allison, J. B.	Rhabb, Felix	Galloway, J. B.
Allison, J. C.	Rhabb, Noah	Barton, Mint
Allison, G. W.	Summey, L. P.	Scruggs, John
Bane, Davis	McGaha, J. C.	Patton, John
Bane, Alexander	McCall, Hansel	Simpson, Merrit
Barnes, Street	McCall, Jason	Galloway, Jim Earl
Burnes, Marshall	McCall, Tiry	Galloway, Lyman
Burnes, James	McCall, Robt.	Orr, Cran
Cantrell, Fidel	McCall, Perry	Orr, George
Cassell, Nat	McCall, William	Orr, Volney
Cassell, Dan	Thrash, J. M.	Landreth, Joe
Cooper, M. D.	*Thomas, Robt. W. C.	Landreth, Barney
Dogens, Adam	Thomas, Joe	Hamilton, Robt.
Duncan, Andrew	Thomas, Manson	Huggins, Lankford
Dunn, Joseph	Sizemore, W. M.	Rains, Robt.
Dunn, Thomas	Sizemore, Thomas	Owen, Jackey
Erwin, Ike	Sizemore, John	Heatherly, Solomon
Gadson, John A.	Adams, Bell	Philipps, John
Hines, William	McGaha, W. S.	Ball, Henry
Hines, John	Luther, William	Owen, Anderson
Henderson William	Luther, Thomas	Gillespie, Dowel
Justice, G. F., 1 st Lt., Company K	Kinsland, Wm.	Paxton, John
Morgan, H. L.	Jones, James	Paxton, Chas.
Morgan, Phillip	Hamilton, Volner, Lt., Company E	Paxton, James
Master, William	Hamilton, Wash.	Rains, Sam
Master, Floyd	Beck, Silas, 1 st Lt., Company E	Lance, Buck
Master, Amos	Wilson, Joe	King, John
Master, Calhoun	Whitmire, John	Dunn, John
Moore, Jones	Whitmire, Manson	
Osteen, Elisha	Whitmire, Andrew	
Osteen, Elijah	Sentell, Lewis	*Robert W. C. Thomas
Osteen, jeff	Sentell, Gilfred	listed in Roll Call was
Rains, J. M.	Sentell, Gipp	brother of Franklin L. D.
Rains, Base [Basil]	Steavens, W. A.	
Rains, Pink	Tinsley, Sam	
Rains, Joe	Tinsley, George	
Rains, Butler	Galloway, Willis	
Rains, William	Galloway, Caler	
Reese, Ransom	Galloway, Joe Berry	
Reese, Bailey	Bryson, G. W.	
Reese, Thomas	Gash, James, 2 nd Lt, Company E	
	Hamilton, Andrew	

Franklin L. D. Thomas was Sergeant in Company E. He twice refused promotion to Lieutenant because of a battle injury to his hearing. At various times, he was acting Captain under Col. George Clayton, commander of 62nd North Carolina Regiment.

Mr. Thomas gave me the following information about his father, Micajah Smith Thomas.

“Micajah Smith Thomas was born in Henderson County , NC near Hendersonville in 1805. He was married to Lea[?] Anna Hightower and, after his marriage moved to Little River and went to farming. He made quite a success of this, and then was into stock raising on a large scale. In this way, he accumulated a great deal of money. In 1853, he decided to build a hotel on the public road near Cedar Mountain. His hotel is known as the Buck Forest Hotel. He remained there and made good money till the men who had deserted our side and gone over and joined the Federal troops came home on furlough. As my father was a faithful Confederate, these men with some Federal soldiers came and robbed the hotel, breaking open chests and trunks and destroying and carrying away hundreds of dollars worth of property including furniture and the like and even clothes.

They then started to kill my father, but my youngest sister Charlotte** slung around his neck trying to protect him the best she could and begging them not to kill him. They beat him over the head with their big, heavy pistols until both of his eyes were blinded, and he was blind for the rest of his life, twenty years, 1863-1883.

His property was known as the Cedar Mountain Buck Forest property. The original property contained about five thousand acres.”

Jane D. Patton

**William Henry Lance was a volunteer in the 67th North Carolina Cavalry, serving from July 15th, 1862 to Feb. 26th, 1865 when he was captured by an arm of Sherman's raiders at Kinston, North Carolina and was a prisoner of war until the surrender by General Lee. He was born June 4th, 1844, deceased Oct. 20th, 1936. He married Laura Charlotte Randolph Thomas, youngest daughter of Micajah S. Thomas and Anna C. Hightower Thomas, in 1870. Laura Charlotte Randolph Thomas was born Jan. 17th, 1850 at the Thomas Cedar Mountain homeplace and deceased June 1934. William Henry Lance

and Laura Charlotte Randolph Thomas Lance were the parents of Jackson Lyday Lance. This information given in April 1959 by Jackson Lyday Lance.

Source: Mary Jane McCrary collection, Rowell Bosse North Carolina Room, Transylvania County Library, Brevard, NC.