

Hezekiah Thomas (1825 - 1862)

Hezekiah Thomas was born 1825 in the town of Merthyr, South Wales, ¹ which is present day Merthyr Tydfil in the historic county of Glamorgan Wales England. He most likely came to this country during the 1840s, living in the Black Creek Township area, ² and the Shickshinny borough area of Salem Township, Luzerne County Pennsylvania. Hezekiah's regimental description indicated that was a machinist, who was 5 feet and 11 inches tall, with light hair and blue eyes.

On December 20th 1846 ³ the 21 year old Hezekiah travelled about 30 miles south of Black Creek to Mauch Chunk Carbon County, and was enrolled into the Mexican War by Captain Miller. Hezekiah entered duty as a private in Company K of the 2nd Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment (Volunteers), who were command by Lieutenant Robert Klotz of Carbon County Pennsylvania.

Several years prior to the formation of Company K, the Mauch Chuck volunteers of Carbon County were known as the Stockton Artillerists; an organized corps with a reputation for patriotism, with roots in the Revolutionary War. Company K would continue Carbon Counties' patriotic and illustrious service in the Mexican War.

Hezekiah mustered-out in Pittsburg on July 12th 1848, ⁴ and returned to Mauch Chuck, Carbon County, Pennsylvania on July 28th. The regiment suffered 28 killed and 132 wounded in the war. Hezekiah himself was severely wounded in the right arm, ⁵ which was sustained in one of the final battles of the Mexican War; the battle of Chapultepec Castle.

According to the August 7th 1850 census record, Hezekiah and Elizabeth Thomas lived with George Cary, age 28 (b.1822), his wife Mary, age 32 (b.1818) and their son George Carey. John Owen, age 23 (b. 1837) was also living with the Carey family. They all lived in Hanover Luzerne County Pennsylvania. John is most likely a brother of Elizabeth and Mary Cary may be an Owen or Thomas sister. The Carey and Owens names will come up in Elizabeth's application for a Civil War Widow's Pension in 1863.

On December 25th 1850, Hezekiah Thomas married Elizabeth Ann Owens. Gilbert Borrows, Esquire, Justice-of-the-Peace, married the couple in the Exchange Hotel, Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania. At the wedding were John Owen and George Carey, who in 1863 both lived in the Post Office area of Alberts, Wrights Township Luzerne County Pennsylvania. ⁶ Elizabeth Owens was born about 1832.

Later that year, on December 25th 1850, Hezekiah Thomas married Elizabeth Ann Owens. Gilbert Borrows, Esquire, Justice-of-the-Peace, married the couple in the Exchange Hotel, Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania. At the wedding were John Owen and George Carey, who in 1863 both lived in the Post Office area of Alberts, Wrights Township, Luzerne County Pennsylvania. ⁷ Elizabeth Owens was born about 1832.

While living in the Hanover area of Luzerne County, Hezekiah and Elizabeth would start their family. The family moved to Illinois sometime after their 2nd child, Christie Ann (Christiann) was born in 1856, and before the birth of Emily in 1860. The family lived in post office Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois. Today Sterling is the county seat for Whiteside County.

Except for Emma and Melisa, all of the children were born in Luzerne County Pennsylvania. ⁸

- i. Mary Margaret Thomas was born February 13th 1852. ⁹
- ii. Daniel Stewart Thomas was born June 2nd 1854. ¹⁰
- iii. Christie Ann Thomas was born February 22nd 1856. She was named after her grandmother Christie Ann Owens
- iv. Emma (Emily) Thomas was born April 2nd 1858 in Illinois. ¹¹ May have also been known as Emily, who died about two years prior to the “act”, ¹² which became law in July 14th 1862. Emily was in the July 31st 1860 census record, but didn’t return with the family to Luzerne County, Pennsylvania from Illinois about April 1862.
- v. Melisa A. Thomas was born September 2nd 1860 in Illinois. ¹³

Children birth dates provided by Elizabeth ¹⁴ didn’t coincide with birth dates in the affidavit of George Carey and John Owen. ¹⁵ Later in 1866, the children and their birthdates would result in other affidavits by Martha Carey, Martha Handling, and Elizabeth Ann Thomas.

An affidavit by Mary Carey, age 50 on July 23rd 1867, indicated she was present at the birth of two children: Mary Martha and Christie Ann. Another pension affidavit, dated August 8th 1867, by Martha Handling, indicated that she saw Melissa A. Thomas, the day after she was born. Was Martha in Illinois with the Thomas family?

On Elizabeth’s affidavit to the discrepancies, dated September 5th 1866, she explained birthdates. In this document, Emily’s name, age, and birth date were crossed out. The number of children was also crossed out from 5 to 4, indicating children under the age of 16 still living. This then lead to additional issues as to Emily’s status, which required Elizabeth to provide another explanation.

In 1860 Hezekiah lived in Sterling, Whiteside County Illinois. His family may have moved or he travelled 326 miles south to enlist in Mt Carmel, Wabash County Illinois. On February 25th 1862 Hezekiah enrolled for a three year service at Mt. Carmel Illinois in Company C of the Illinois, 12th Regiment Calvary (Volunteers), commanded by Captain S. Branson. ¹⁶ Hezekiah mustered-in as a private February 28th 1862 at Springfield Illinois. ¹⁷ The 12th was commanded by Colonel Amos Voss and Colonel Hasbrouck Davis.

In February 1862 the Illinois 12th Regiment was assigned to Camp Butler in Illinois for training and drills. In April 1862, Elizabeth and the children returned to Luzerne County Pennsylvania. This would be the last time Hezekiah would see his family; on June 25th 1862 the regiment was ordered to Martinsburg, West Virginia, where they were attached to the District of Martinsburg, for duty at Martinsburg and on the Upper Potomac.¹⁸

On September 7th the 12th Illinois engaged the Confederate Army in Winchester Maryland. After routing the confederates, the 12th Company “C” took up pickets in the area. In the morning of September 12th while still on pickets, the troops from headquarters in Martinsburg arrived. The headquarters troops just evacuated Martinsburg, and burned all of their cloths, stocks, and personal affects. Company ‘C’ without their extra cloths and personal items, along with the entire Illinois 12th began their ride to Harpers Ferry.

On the morning of September 13th the Confederate Army began shelling Harpers Ferry positions. The shelling continued until Sunday night of the 14th. That’s when the all of the Calvary Units made their escape through enemy lines, and travelled through the early morning hours of the 15th.

By 10:00 P.M on September 15th 1862, the 12th Illinois arrived in Green Castle Pennsylvania, tired, labored and fatigued from their week long fighting, and escape from Harpers Ferry. The 12th Illinois was held in reserve, and witnessed over hundred thousand Union solders pass their encampment. These troops were heading toward the battle at Antietam outside Sharpsburg Maryland.

On September 19th 1862, two days after the last shot was fired at Antietam, Lee began his plans to retreat across the Potomac near Shepherdstown West Virginia. The 12th Illinois was moved to meet Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Army that remained north of Sharpsburg in Williamsport Maryland; the extreme right flank of the Union Army. Believing Stuart was mounting an attack on the river town of Williamsport, the Union Commander, McClellan, slowed his pursuit of Lee’s retreat, and sent Brigadier General John Kenly’s large Calvary force to Williamsport to secure the Union’s flank. Kenly’s Calvary troops included seven of the twelve companies of the 12th Illinois Calvary.

Moving quickly, the 12th arrived unnoticed, and for two days the 12th were surrounded by retreating Confederate troops. On the second day, September 19th a sharp fight took place, “...and one member of the 12th Illinois, Private H. Thomas from Sterling, Illinois, Private William Henry Redman left the area of the skirmish on the dead man’s horse...”¹⁹

In a letter dated, September 21st 1862 by W.H. Redman to his sisters “...Day before yesterday I had just finished writing L.K.R. a letter, not more than a half hour when we were called into action. Our Calvary was held in reserve, but then we rushed forward to meet the enemy. We were warmly received with both bullet and shell. But one man of our Company was killed and none wounded. My horse was shot with three bullets. One went through his shoulders and lodged in my saddle. Another hit him in his right side and the other in his nose. I came off the field on the dead man’s horse. The man that was killed was H. Thomas. He lived near the Jordan School House on the road to Sterling. Please inform the folks on live on his farm close to Sweeney’s farm...”²⁰

On September 20th 1862 Kenly reported that Williamsport was occupied by Stuarts 1000 man Calvary, and it would take more than his 600 Calvary troops to take Williamsport. Union command reinforced Kenly's forces with an additional 800 infantry and artillery troops bring his total strength to 1200 troops. As Kenly advanced toward the Potomac, he ordered the 12th Illinois Calvary to take the lead toward the river town of Williamsport.

After evading capture, Redman and his small detachment returned to Sharpsburg; camping on the Antietam battlefield, as grave diggers worked around the clock clearing the battlefield of the dead. By September 23rd the 12th Illinois Calvary camped at the village of Jones Crossroads. On the 27th the 12th were camped at Clear Springs Maryland.

Hezekiah Thomas is the H. Thomas noted in the book's passage from the William Redman Letter. In a letter written on the morning of September 21st 1862, by W.H. Redman wrote to his sisters, that H. Thomas died September 19th 1862. ²¹ However, in Hezekiah's pension file, he died September 22nd 1862, of a gunshot wound suffered in a charge during the skirmish in Williamsport. ²²

On July 9th 1863, Hezekiah's wife, Elizabeth Ann, filed for a widows pension. During this time she and her family lived in the Post Office area of Alberts, Wrights Township Luzerne County Pennsylvania. On September 14th 1864, Elizabeth was provided with \$8.00 per month, commencing on September 21st 1862.

By 1870 Elizabeth lived in the Mountain Top post office area of Wright Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Christiann (Christie Ann) Owens, age 81 (b. 1789) was living with the family, and must be Elizabeth's mother. Living with Elizabeth are her daughters; Christiann (Christie Ann), age 14, and Melissa, age 10. Also living with the family are two girls; Adaline Thomas, age 5 (b.1865), and Abbie Thomas, age 1 (b.1869). George and Mary Carey lived next door. Elizabeth's daughter Mary and son Daniel are living in the Solders Orphan School, in the borough of Mount Joy, Lancaster County Pennsylvania. **Who are Adaline and Abbie Thoams? This still needs to be verified.**

In 1880 Elizabeth Ann and her daughters Christie Ann and Melissa are still living in Wright Township, Luzerne County Pennsylvania. There is also a son named Redmond, ²³ age 16 (b.1864), and a grandson named Samuel Cleary, age 3 (b.1877). Samuel must be the son of Mary Margaret Thomas, who married a Cleary.

Living down the road is Elizabeth's son Daniel Thomas and his wife Jane Kishbaugh, and their children. They live next door to George and Mary Carey and their family.

We are still researching the whereabouts of Elizabeth after 1880.

Bibliography

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2. Part Two, Carbon County, Pages 629 & 630, Chapter VII, Carbon County in the Mexican War, Illustrated History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by Alfred Mathews and Austin N. Hungerford, publishing Philadelphia, Everts and Richards, 1884, Press of J B. Lippincott and Company, Philadelphia
3. Hezekiah Thomas Mexican War Muster Cards, File Number 1707: Cards 23303698, 23303787, 23303875, 23303963, 23304044, 23304108, 23304195, 23304272, 23304329, 23304389, 36710469, 40535595, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001
4. 1850 Hezekiah Thomas Census: Hanover, Luzerne, Pennsylvania; Roll: M432_794; Page: 465B; Image: 176. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
5. 1860 Hezekiah Thomas Census: Sterling, Whiteside, Illinois; Roll: M653_237; Page: 1025; Image: 397; Family History Library Film: 803237. 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.
6. Hezekiah Thomas Civil War Pension File: Application Number 30229, Pension Certificate Number: 30229, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001
7. Hezekiah Thomas 12th Illinois Calvary: In The First Line of Battle, The 12th Illinois Calvary, in the Civil War, by Samuel M. Blackwell, Jr. Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb Illinois, 2002
8. 1870 Elizabeth A. Thomas Census: Wright, Luzerne, Pennsylvania; Roll: M593_1369; Page: 719B; Image: 553; Family History Library Film: 552868. 1870 U.S. census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Minnesota census schedules for 1870. NARA microfilm publication T132, 13 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.
9. 1870 Daniel and Mary Thomas Census: Mount Joy, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Roll: M593_1358; Page: 89A; Image: 182; Family History Library Film: 552857. 1870 U.S. census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Minnesota census schedules for

1870. NARA microfilm publication T132, 13 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

10. 1870 Mary Thomas Census: Mahanoy, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania; Roll: M593_1450; Page: 485A; Image: 200; Family History Library Film: 552949. 1870 U.S. census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Minnesota census schedules for 1870. NARA microfilm publication T132, 13 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.
11. 1880 Elizabeth Ann Thomas Census: Wright, Luzerne, Pennsylvania; Roll: 1149; Family History Film: 1255149; Page: 452D; Enumeration District: 108; Image: 0227; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880; (NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

End Notes

¹ Hand Written Family Notes, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Rd., York Springs, PA 17372.

² Hezekiah Thomas, Mexican War, Muster Roll Cards, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Rd., York Springs, PA 17372.

³ Another muster-in roll card indicated Hezekiah joined in Mauch Chunk on December 24th 1846.

⁴ Hezekiah Thomas, Mexican War, Muster Roll Cards, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Rd., York Springs, PA 17372.

⁵ Another muster roll card said it was his left shoulder that was injured.

⁶ Hezekiah Thomas Civil War Pension File: Application Number 30229, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001

⁷ Hezekiah Thomas Civil War Pension File: Application Number 30229, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001

⁸ From the family notes, Hezekiah had a son Daniel Thomas who was born in 1853, and three daughters.

⁹ A different date for Mary's birth; January 13th 1852, Page 04, Hezekiah Thomas Civil War Pension File: Application Number 30229, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001.

¹⁰ A different date for Daniel's birth; June 2nd 1853, Ibid.

¹¹ A different name and date for Emily; Emma born April 2nd 1858, Ibid.

¹² Elizabeth Ann Thomas Affidavit, Page 25, Ibid. The term "act" refers to the pension act of July 14th 1862 (12 Stat. 566) increased pension rates and provided potential eligibility for pensions to every person in military or naval service since March 4, 1861, their widows and orphans, and for dependent orphan sisters.

¹³ A different date for Melissa's birth; September 1st 1860, Page 04, Ibid.,.

¹⁴ Page 03, Ibid.

¹⁵ Page 04, Ibid.

¹⁶ Hezekiah was enrolled as Henry Thomas, which was later changed to reflect his name Hezekiah Thomas.

¹⁷ Residence if Du Page County, Illinois made up of Company C, 12th Illinois Cavalry, which formed February 24th 1862, and ended May 29th 1866.

¹⁸ Hezekiah Thomas Civil War Engagements, Taylor ~ Graham, 479 County Line Road, York Springs, PA

¹⁹ H. Thomas Killed, came from Page 39, chapter three, In The First Line of Battle, The 12th Illinois Calvary, in the Civil War, by Samuel M. Blackwell, Jr. Northern Illinois University Press, DeKald Illinois, 2002; However the book is in error, when it indicated that H. Thomas was killed by a bullet that entered through his nose and exited through the back of his head. This reference came from the W. H. Redman Letters, dated April 22nd 1862, Camp Butler Illinois, "...One of our boys was shot yesterday by accident. The ball passed through his head. It entered at the left side of his nose, and came out the back of his head. I was within ten or fifteen steps of him when the gun went off. He feel without speaking – merely made one shriek and was no

more...” ; University of Virginia Library, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, P.O. Box 400110, Charlottesville VA 22904-4110

²⁰ W. H. Redman Letters, dated September 21st 1862, on the Battlefield in Maryland; University of Virginia Library, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, P.O. Box 400110, Charlottesville VA 22904-4110

²¹ W. H. Redman Letters, dated September 21st 1862, on the Battlefield in Maryland; University of Virginia Library, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, P.O. Box 400110, Charlottesville VA 22904-4110

²² Letter, dated June 12th 1864, attached to Hezekiah Thomas Window Pension File, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Road, York Springs PA. 17372

²³ Redmond is not a Thomas, but the son of George and Mary Carey, old friends of Hezekiah and Elizabeth Thomas.