

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Thomas Ewell R14052

VA Half Pay

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 7 Dec 2023

At a Quarterly Session Court held for Princess Anne County [now part of the City of Virginia Beach], the 2nd day of March 1835.

The Court certify that satisfactory evidence has been advanced to prove that James Ewell, Thomas Ewell, and John Ewell, were the sons and heirs at law and devisees of Thomas Ewell, deceased, (late of Princess Anne County & who served as a Captain in the Virginia State line on continental establishment during the war of the revolution) That they are all three now dead, leaving the following persons to wit: Mary Mills, Thomas Mills, Susan Mills, Hillary Ewell and Sarah Greenwood their sole and only heirs at law, and who are the sole and only heirs at law of the aforesaid Thomas Ewell deceased.

A Copy Teste/ signed J. J. Burroughs, CC

D.O. [Duty Officer?] Caragett November 1st '79

F.O. [Field Officer?] Col Gist [probably Nathaniel Gist]

The rest of the shoes in possession of Lieut Moten to be divided this evening in proportion to the strength of each Corps, including the Artillery.

The Regimental Paymaster will apply accordingly. The Division to hold themselves in readiness to March at a Moments Warning. But not to strick [strike] their Tent till beating of the Gen'l. The Division to be inspected on Wednesday and Thursday next begining with the 2nd Virginia Reg't. on Wednesday Morning at 9 O'clock

For Police Capt Thomas Ewell

For the Day Adg't Cary

For pecquet L.C.P [£.S.P.?)

For in G'd " " 1}

Q'r G'd " " 1} 3.

" " 1}

The above is extracted from some papers in my possession belonging to the Historical Society presented by Col Dabney's Jas E Heath [James Ewell Heath, Auditor of Virginia]/ Richmond Nov. 12, 1847

[From [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

To his Exc'y. John Floyed [sic: John Floyd] Esq'r

Sir/ As Agent for the Heirs of Capt Thomas Ewell dec'd I beg leave Respectfully to ask for the usual allowance of bounty Land for his Services as a Capt in the Virg'a. State Line in the War of the Revolution. In support of the claim I beg leave to refer you to Smiths report No 2 page 5 which proves that said Capt Thomas Ewell was intitled to bounty Lands &c from 1777 to 1782 and until the end of the War I am Very Respectfully/ Your most Obt Servt/ John B. Ogg
25th Feby 1834

[The following is misfiled with the federal bounty-land claim of Thomas Winder Ewell, BLWt2497-300.] Washington County D.C./ This day personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace for said County & District John B. Ogg who is in his seventy fifth year and made oath that he lived in the neighborhood of Captain Thomas Ewell deceased in Princess Anne County Virginia for many years and from reputation was well acquainted with said Thomas Ewell Ewell [sic] and always understood that he was a Captain in the Virginia State line from January 1777 to the end of the Revolutionary war in April 1783 and that his uniform coat was in his house to the day of his death which took place in January 1796 in Princess Anne County Virginia.

John B. Ogg

I was very well acquainted with Capt. Thomas Ewell during the war of our revolution. I became acquainted with him soon after his regiment which was I believe the first or second in the state line marched to Portsmouth[?] he must have entered the service when the regiment was first raised. I saw him frequently and never heard that he resigned. I left the army myself in 1781, but have understood and believe that Capt Ewell continued in the service.

[John Marshall, S5731, Chief Justice, US Supreme Court]

July 21st 1834

*John Marshall
July 21 1834*

NOTES:

The file number was previously written by mistake as R14502.

The present Thomas Ewell is confused with Capt. Thomas Winder Ewell (BLWt2497-300), who was also often referred to simply as Thomas Ewell. Papers pertaining to Thomas Winder Ewell are misfiled with those for the present Thomas Ewell, and perhaps vice versa. The [Virginia Half-Pay pension records on fold3.com](#) for Thomas Ewell R14052 includes papers pertaining to Thomas Winder Ewell. That there were two Thomas Ewells is proved by their wills. Thomas Winder Ewell died in Prince William County in 1784, and the present Thomas Ewell died in Princess Anne County early in 1796. The question argued in most of the 177 pages in the federal pension file of the present Thomas Ewell is whether he was a Captain, and if so, whether his heirs were entitled to half pay for life for serving to the end of the war. The Pension Commissioner concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the claim, and the heirs appealed the decision for three decades. Their arguments are summarized in an 1849 pamphlet by George Mortimer Bibb, recent Secretary of the US Treasury, in pages 83-101 of the Fold3 version of the federal file. Bibb charged that the Commissioner of Pensions, James L. Edwards, had incorrectly assumed that all the evidence of service by a Capt. Thomas Ewell applied to Thomas Winder Ewell. He also implied malfeasance by James Ewell Heath, the Auditor of Virginia, Edwards's successor as Pension Commissioner, and a maternal relative of James Winder Ewell.

Transcribed pension and bounty-land applications also show that there were two Capt. Thomas Ewells from Virginia. Several pension and bounty-land applications of soldiers claiming to have served in the 1st Regiment of the Virginia State Line and in Dabney's Legion include discharges signed by "Thomas W. Ewell." It is therefore very likely that Thomas Winder Ewell was a Captain in those regiments. Among the applications claiming service under a Capt. Thomas Ewell, however, four describe service in different regiments: William Cooper (S47186), Alexander Jones (S34939), John Maddox (S38183), and Edward Moody (W2156). They describe the following service:

At Petersburg VA attached to Col. Abraham Buford's Continental Regiment in late 1780

At the Battle of Guilford Courthouse NC on 15 Mar 1781

Afterward attached to Col. Samuel Hawes's Virginia Continental Regiment

The federal pension and half-pay files include a copy of the last will and testament of Thomas Ewell dated 19 Jan 1789 and proved 1 Feb 1796, leaving to his wife, Frances Ewell, use of 50 acres of his plantation, the use of his "Negro Man named Africa, and my two Negro Wenches Sabina and Kate & their children Sam, Bridget and Phillis and their future increase," and more. After her death the above property and also "my Negro Man Cuffy" were to devolve to his son, James Ewell. Son-in-law William Nimmo Dyson was to inherit "my Negro boy named Peter" and more. The will also included his son, Thomas Ewell. The widow, Frances Ewell, had died by the time the will was proved.