

### **Profile: Edward Francis Thomson, 1838-1914**

Lt. Edward Francis Thomson was born March 1, 1838, near Centerville, in Fairfax County, Virginia. He was the son of Robert Tuell Thomson, a Baptist minister, and Leah Ward Kitchen Thomson. Ned, as he was affectionately called by his loved ones, was quite the handsome gentleman, standing a little over 6 feet, 5 inches tall. He had very dark brown eyes and rather long black very wavy hair. He was rarely seen without a beard or goatee.

He attended Senator Mechen's school in Centerville, Virginia. Ned was twenty-three years old when the War Between the States began and was working as a constable in Fairfax when he enlisted.

He and Captain Mott Ball and his entire unit were captured May 24, 1861, in Alexandria, Virginia. A Federal officer, Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, enraged at seeing the Confederate flag flying over the Marshall House, proceeded to cut it down. Ellsworth was immediately shot and killed by James T. Jackson, proprietor of the Jackson House. Jackson was then shot and killed by Sergeant Francis E. Bronell. Ned was put on a boat and sent down river, enroute to prison in Baltimore. He did manage to escape, however, somewhere around Woodbridge.

He later enlisted in the command of General J.E.B. Stuart and served as his guide and scout. He was soon promoted for bravery. In the fall of 1862 he transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry under Colonel Rosser. On April 5, 1865, Company H of Mosby's Rangers was organized and Ned Thomson was elected First Lieutenant. He was entrusted with many important missions, all of which he performed in such a credible manner that he was deemed worthy of the position to which he was now assigned. On April 10, Company H was involved in the last battle fought in Virginia, at Arundel's Farm between Burke and Fairfax Stations. My grandfather left wonderful notes on this little fight and many others as well. After the war Ned and some of the others left for Mexico to join Maximilian in his fight against Juarez. He eventually returned home to spend several years in the Marshall-Salem area until amnesty was granted. In 1876, he married the beautiful and petite Lucy Clair Green of Washington, D.C. My father, George Forrest, was the tenth of the eleven Thomson children.

Ned Thomson served as Justice of the Peace of Alexandria County (now Arlington County) for sixteen years. The methods he used in dealing out law and order are still talked about today. He was very active in politics and was a member of the county Democratic Committee. He was also in the business of selling tea for over forty-five years.

My grandfather died on January 14, 1914, at his home in Clarendon, Virginia, and was buried in Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Washington, D.C. A Resolution of Sorrow was adopted by the Bar Association of Alexandria County. Many important people came to the funeral, among them Colonel John Mosby, who got out of a sick bed to attend. The Colonel arrived in a shining black Barouche. One obituary notice reported the Colonel was visibly touched as the body of one of his favorite boys was lowered into the ground and that he remarked as he left the cemetery, "There won't be many of us left pretty soon."

Profile by Edward Francis Thomson's granddaughter, Lucille Thomson Blackman, and first appeared in *Southern Cavalry Review*, November 1984. Mrs. Blackman is a charter member of the Society.