# CHAPTER 1

# Thomas Evatt: The American Beginning

EDITOR'S GUIDE

We begin with Thomas Evatt/Evet, the earliest ancestor in the American line followed here. His estimated birth precedes the surviving records discussed in this chapter. His wife was Elizabeth; his overseas parents and passage to America remain unknown.

About 1640 — Estimated birth of Thomas Evatt/Evet.

1693 — Thomas appears in an Essex County legal record.

1704 — Thomas is named in the Essex County quit-rent roll.

## A family comes into view

The American story begins with a man already living in the Virginia colony. Thomas Evatt, also recorded as Evet or Evitt, was born about 1640. The surviving records allow us to follow his household in the colony.

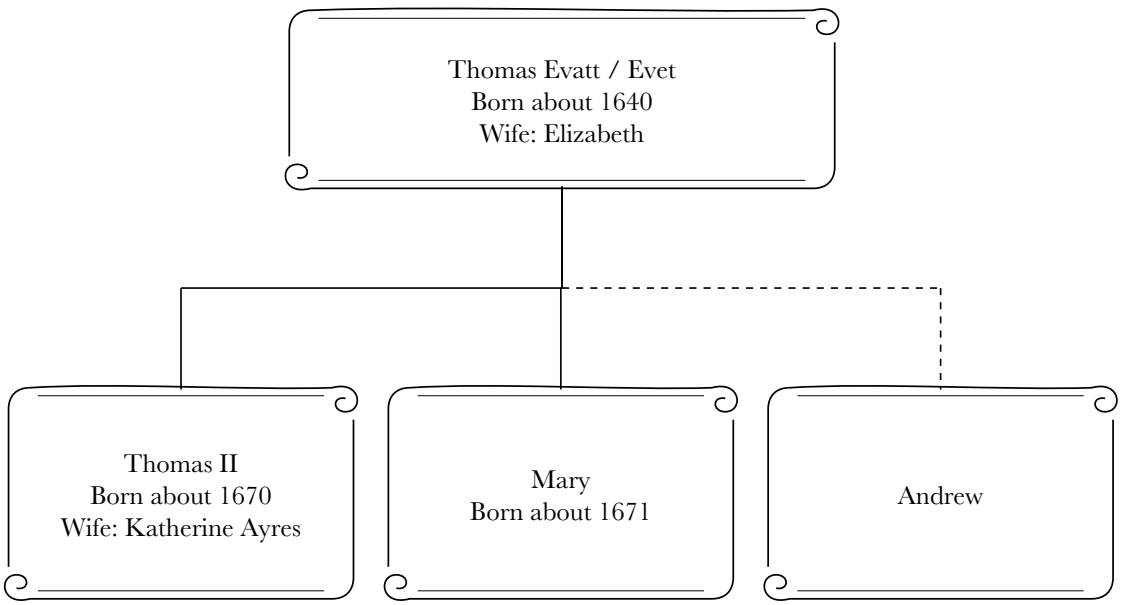
## A household beside the Rappahannock

The elder Thomas Evatt, born about 1640, and his wife Elizabeth are the couple whose household in the Virginia colony begins the traced family. They appear in an Essex County legal record dated September 11, 1693, concerning the binding of Joseph Smith to William Leake. To be "bound" to someone meant being placed under a legal obligation to serve that person, often for a fixed term or as an apprentice learning a trade. A later record documents a purchase from William Freeman and his wife Eliza on November 10, 1696. These notices establish the kind of world in which the family appears: land, household obligations, and county courts.

Essex County had been formed in 1692 when Old Rappahannock County was divided into Essex and Richmond. A change from Old Rappahannock to Essex in a record can therefore reflect a new county name rather than a move to another farm. Essex lies south of the Rappahannock River, on the Middle Peninsula. The Northern Neck lies across the river, between the Rappahannock and Potomac. [11]

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

# The Beginning in Colonial Virginia




Notes. Elizabeth was Thomas's wife. Thomas II and Katherine Ayres are followed in Chapter 2. Andrew is a possible son of Thomas. The dashed line marks Andrew's uncertain placement.

## The land and the quit rent

Alongside the purchases and court business, an annual land-charge list gives another view of the family's Essex holding. An entry for Thomas Evitt appears in the printed compilation of the Virginia colony's quit rents for 1704, reproduced below. A quit rent was an annual charge attached to landholding. It was separate from the price paid when a tract was bought.

Thomas's Essex County holding is described as 150 acres. At two shillings per hundred acres (a shilling was one-twentieth of an English pound), the annual quit rent on that holding would have been three shillings. The reproduced printed entry reads 100 acres, rather than the 150 acres retained in the family account. The entry could refer to either the elder Thomas or his son, who shared his name.

The 1696 purchase from William Freeman and his wife Eliza may be the land behind this later holding. Chapter 4 follows a further transaction: the sale of 162 acres by John, the elder Thomas's grandson, in 1753. The family history traces John's property to his grandfather, suggesting that the 162 acres may have included the earlier holding. A later survey or an additional purchase could explain the difference in acreage; the surviving entries leave both possibilities open.

On May 21, 1717, Thomas submitted a formal request to be excused from county levies, or local taxes, because of age and poor health. It is a brief glimpse of a man growing older, dealing with an obligation that had become burdensome. Together, the land and court notices place him within the ordinary business of the county.

# The 1704 Quit-Rent Entry

THE QUIT RENTS
OF VIRGINIA,
1704



*Compiled by*
Annie Laurie Wright Smith

GENEALOGICAL PUBLISHING CO., INC.
BALTIMORE 1975



| | | Acres |
|---|---|---|
| Etherdge Thomas junr | Norfolk Co | 33 |
| Ethredge William | " " | 250 |
| Ethredge Wm. junr | " " | 80 |
| Etherington Thomas | Princess Anne Co | 105 |
| Evans Abraham | Surry Co | 150 |
| Evans Abrigall | Norfolk Co | 100 |
| Evans Anthony | Surry Co | 100 |
| Evans Benjamin | Prince Georgs Co | 700 |
| Evans Charles | Henrico Co | 225 |
| Evans John | Accomack Co | 200 |
| Evans John | Charles City Co | 800 |
| Evans John | Northampton Co | 200 |
| Evans John | Prince Georgs Co | 800 |
| Evans Mary | " " " | 400 |
| Evans Peter | " " " | 270 |
| Evans Rice | Essex Co | 200 |
| Evans Sarah | Accomack Co | 150 |
| Evans Thomas | Northampton Co | 300 |
| Evell Charles | Accomack Co | 550 |
| Evell Marke | " " | 250 |
| Evell Solomon | " " | 125 |
| Everett Simon | Isle of Wight Co | 1100 |
| Everett William | Nansemond Co | 150 |
| Evitt Thomas | Essex Co | 100 |
| Ewbank William | King & William Co | 350 |
| Exam Francis | Isle of Wight Co | 200 |
| Exam Jeremiah | " " " " | 300 |
| Exam William | " " " " | 1440 |
| Exam William | " " " " | 150 |
| Exum Sarah | Nansemond Co | 150 |
| Eyes Cornelius | King & Queen Co | 100 |
| Eyres Anne, widdo | Northampton Co | 733 |
| Eyres Capt. John | " " | 744 |
| Eyres Nicholas | " " | 325 |
| Eyres Thomas | " " | 1133 |
| Ezell George | Surry Co | 150 |

------- F -------

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fabin Paul | Northampton Co | 60 |
| Faile John | Henrico Co | 240 |
| Failton Roger | Isle of Wight Co | 237 |
| Fairfax James | Accomack Co | 900 |
| Falliham Morriss orphans | Prince Georgs Co. & Rob River | 200 |
| Farguson James | King & Queen Co | 300 |
| Farish Robert | " " " " | 1400 |
| Farloe John senr | Henrico Co | 100 |
| Farloe John junr | " " | 351 |
| Farmer Henry | " " | 100 |
| Farmer John | King & Queen Co tax due | 250 |
| Farmer Samuell | Nansemond Co | 160 |
| Farrar John | Henrico Co | 600 |
| Farrar Thomas | " " | 1444 |

*Printed quit-rent compilation: Thomas Evitt, Essex County, 100 acres. [12]*