

Fox Hall - *Part 18*, "In the Name of God Amen", Ann's Possessions

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Editor's note: For an enlarged view of figures, simply zoom in on your computer.

Based on prior research and evidence discovered during restoration, the house presently known as Fox Hall was constructed circa 1725-30 and was owned by Ann Thelaball. It was constructed on land previously owned by Ann's father, James Thelaball, mother, Ann, and later by her brother, Francis Thelaball. Ann, the daughter, was married twice - first to James Lowery and later to William Ivy. Ann owned Fox Hall and likely lived there from the time of its construction until sometime before it was deeded to her son, John Ivy, in 1760. Complete restoration and research information to date is contained in seventeen separate articles in this *Fox Hall Series*, published on this website under Decorative Arts/Architecture.

The stated purpose for this article is to determine, if possible, Ann Thelaball's personal possessions during her tenure at Fox Hall from circa 1725 to say 1750, or barring that, the type of personal possessions she might have had during her tenure there.

Of particular interest in this study are any wills, inventories, and/or court documents, if they exist, for Ann Thelaball, herself (doubtful because she was a married female and did not die at Fox Hall), her first husband, James Lowery, and her second husband, William Ivy. Too far before or after these three individuals, Ann's possessions, as well as those held jointly by her husbands, would not likely have been at Fox Hall during her tenure there.

However Ann became owner of Fox Hall, she "left" it to her son, John Ivy, in 1760 (See Springer article p. 27).¹ There is an inconsistency here in that in William Ivy's second will, dated 1769, he makes several bequests to his wife, Ann. *"In the Name of God, Amen. I William Ivy sen^r of Tanners Creek in Norfolk County being sick and weak in Body, but of sound Mind and Memory, Do make and Ordain this my last Will and Testament in Manner and form following ... I Give and Bequeath unto my loving Wife Ann Ivy during her Natural Life the one half of my Land whereon I now live ..."*² This would indicate that Ann was alive and living with William Ivy at his residence, not Fox Hall, in 1769. The problem here is probably the use of the word "inherited" in Springer's article. Springer did not have access to Ivy's 1769 will at the time she was conducting her deed research.

Springer also noted that there were no deeds reflecting Lowery or Ivy ownership of Fox Hall (See Springer article p. 25).³ This reinforces that

Ann gave Fox Hall to her son, John Ivy, and had moved to other land owned by her husband, William Ivy.

Ann Thelaball's brother, Francis Thelaball, built his home, now known as Lynnhaven House, in Princess Anne County, Virginia. The home of her other brother, Lemuel Thelaball, also was in Princess Anne County.

Francis inherited his father's property, including what is now the Fox Hall tract, from his father, James Thelaball, in 1711, or Francis subsequently bought the Fox Hall tract (See Springer article pp. 25-26).⁴

Francis died in 1726/27, and Ann, his sister, apparently came into possession of the Fox Hall tract (not clear as to how). Based on nearly identical design and construction characteristics, Lynnhaven House and Fox Hall were likely constructed at roughly the same time, 1725-30, by the same undertaker or contractor.

As previously noted, James Thelaball, in his will dated 1707 and proved in 1711, left his plantation to his son, Ann's brother, Francis Thelaball. In addition, he left to Francis "... *one Gold Seal ring which was my Father's ...*". He also left assorted personal items, real property, and slaves to his other children and to his wife, Ann. Of particular interest to this article, James Thelaball left "... *unto my daughter Ann Thelaball one Negrow till She come to y^e age of Sixteen ...*".⁵ In James Thelaball's

1713 inventory, a "... *Negro girl named Jenny* ..." is listed at a value of "... £15 ...".⁶ She is but one of several slaves listed in this inventory. Later in the 1714 will of Ann Thelaball, Ann's mother, she "... *doe give unto my Saïd Daughter Martha Thilaball one Negro Girl called by the name Jenny... and that the first Child which the Saïd Negro Jenny hath and Doth bear on her body, be it male or female as such Live until it is fifteen months old, Shall be Delivered and properly belong unto my Daughter Elizabeth Thalabel and to her heirs for Ever with and the profit that Ever may attend that Child and the next Child that the Saïd Negro Jenny hath that Live to be fifteen months old be it male or female Shall be Delivered and properly belong, unto my Daughter Ann Thilaball and her heirs for Ever with all the profitt that Ever may attend that Child and after that all Her Increase of the Saïd Negro Jenny and her Selfe to belong unto my Daughter Martha Thelaball and to her heirs for Ever butt in case my Daughter Martha Thelaball Should die without Lawful Issue of her body then Elizabeth and Ann Thilaball to their heirs for Ever ...*".⁷

Jenny's name appears again in 1741, along with several other slaves, in the first will of William Ivy, Ann's second husband. In part, Ivy

bequeaths "... unto my Son John Ivy after my Demase the Plantation I now live with half the Trust of Land Adjoining now in my Possession also Give my Son John Ivy my Piece of Land Called Burkes Quarter Containing One Hundred and forty Six Acres likewise four other Negroes by Named Jenny, China, Tom and Peggy ...".⁸ Apparently, Ann's sister, Martha Thelaball, did not survive her, and Ann inherited Jenny.

In 1742, the Norfolk County Court "... Settled all Matters in Differences Between Mr Lemuel Wilson and Sophia his wife ... And Capt William Ivy and Anne his wife Relict of James Lowery deceased ... As follows - Firsthand Sett apart Toby and America for the said Anne Dower of the said Lowerys Slaves And haved Sett Apart for Mr Lemuel Wilson Bess and Jonas ...".⁹ This court order is important for two reasons. First, by stating "... Capt William Ivy and Anne his wife Relict of James Lowery deceased ...", it provides evidence that Ann was married first to Lowery and then to Ivy. Second, it shows that Ann, along with both of her husbands, owned slaves during Ann's tenure at Fox Hall.

In William Ivy's first will of 1741, there is some insight into things, as opposed to human beings, that Ann and her husband possessed. "... I

*Give unto my Said Son John Ivy ... Twelve Silver Table Spoons
Marked 1 Ivy Six Tea Spoons & One Pairs of Tea tongues And a
Soup Spoon, all of Silver to him and his heirs forever ... I Give to my
daughter Elizabeth Ivy at the Age of Twenty One Years or day of
Marriage ... two hundred and Fifty Pistoles (i.e. small gold coins), or
the Value of them in Silver, Twelve Silver Table Spoons Marked E
Ivey Six Silver Tea Spoons One Pairs of Silver Tea Tongues One
Silver Soup Spoon all of the same Mark ...".¹⁰*

Beyond the above noted court records, there are no wills, inventories, or court records for Ann, or either of her two husbands, that indicate possessions, including routine household items, during Ann's tenure at Fox Hall. Consequently, known possessions of close relatives near the timeframe of Ann's tenure should suffice to provide some indication of what Ann might have owned.

Ann's father, James Thelaball, left an extensive inventory dated 1713 in addition to his will. This is not to say that Ann actually acquired any of these items belonging to her father, and the inventory pre-dates Ann at Fox Hall. However, she most certainly lived with and was familiar with such items in James' inventory, and she probably would have owned similar items at Fox Hall (Fig. 1, Inventory of James Thelaball, 1713).¹¹

An appraisement of the Estate of m^r ffrancis Thelaball Deceas'd

	£	s	d
one bed & furniture	4	14	8
one desk of Drawers 60/ one chest & goods 53/	5	13	
one Case of bottles & old Trunk	3		
bed cloaths 29/ a pcel of Casque 34/	3	3	
a Table & parcel of Chairs		13	
a pcel of Ironwork & knives & forks	1	17	6
a parcel of glass upon ye manttelpiece	3		
a pcel bottles & Juggs	1	1	
a parcel of Lumber & earthware		13	
a parcel of New and old pewter	1	14	2
a parcel of brass & Spooone molds	1	9	6
a pcel Skimers bed pann & bowls		13	6
2 Saddles & bridles 36/ a boat & Canew 45/	4	1	
1 Iron Graplin & Chain 18/ pcel of [illeg.] Tack 9/	1	7	6
2 old Chists & box 6/6 his Cloaths 3:11:6	3	18	
1 pan Spit Shovel Tongs & pot rack		10	
a parcel of Latches & Katches		8	
a parcel of Table Linin		5	
a bed & furniture 56/ one Ditto 48/6	5	4	6
one Stilyards and two Candlesticks		5	
1 milk & Iron pots 66/2: a cart & wheels 25	4	11	2
2 grinstones one Still & old horse	50	5	
books and gun 37/ one looking Glass 10/	2	7	
19 head Cattle 16:10:0 = 29 head Sheep 5:16	22	6	
a bed & furniture 54/ [torn] D ^o 30/6	4	4	11
1 bed & old Casque & [torn]	1	2	6
1 Table & old chairs 6/ [torn] bottles 28	1	14	
a pcel Tooles 4:16:6 a pcel Saws 80/	8	16	
two p ^r hand Screws 30/ one gun 25/	2	15	
a pcel old Tooles 18/6 a pcel D ^o 28/	2	6	
4 adzes 2 ax [illeg.] all two [torn]ars 48/	3	9	
one grinstone & [torn] hooks		10	
one Canew and old [C]asque	1	11	
a pcel household St[torn] 1 pcel pewter 14/3	1	5	
a parcel D ^o 3[8]/ a par[ce]l hides 15/	2	8	
30 Oz 9 pw of plate		[blank]	
Some Cattle	4		
		[blank]	

In obedience to an [torn]r of princess--Court dated y^e third [torn] May 1727: we the Subscribers have me[torn]praised y^e Estate of m^r ffranc^s Thelaba[torn]ng first Sworn for that purpose & D[torn]d [illeg.] ye above sum

Nath^l Hutchings
John Harper Tho^s.Hunter

Presented in Court y^e 7th June 1727: by Ext & ordered to be recorded.

Figure 2

If Francis' personal property, as noted in his inventory, is, indeed, indicative of what Ann and her husbands would have owned, Fox Hall would have been furnished with: several beds with furniture (hangings), several tables, assorted sets of chairs, a cellaret, a desk, a looking glass, several chests, glassware, some silver, earthenware, and pewter place and serving pieces, cutlery, fireplace and cooking equipment, candlesticks, table linens, books, and a gun of some sort. Also, beyond her house, Ann and her husbands would have owned assorted barnyard tools, equipment, and livestock.

There has been only moderate archaeology and surface searching conducted at Lynnhaven House resulting in very little recovered in the way of first-period, personal property artifacts. There has been no archaeology undertaken at Fox Hall. With the exception of a few pieces of broken bottle glass, surface finds and artifacts discovered in utility excavations at Fox Hall have been limited mainly to nineteenth-century domestic objects.

Conclusion

Ann Thelaball was born to prosperous parents, and she apparently remained prosperous through her two marriages for the remainder of her life. They owned real property, slaves, a modest amount of jewelry, silver plate, and some gold. Fox Hall would have been well appointed but not lavishly furnished. She and her family were not of the extremely wealthy class, but they were not paupers either. They were comfortable, in today's terms - upper middle class.

Endnotes:

1. Springer, Angela, 2021, Fox Hall - Part 15, Deed Search for Fox Hall, Lower Norfolk County, VA: www.ehcnc.org, p. 27.
2. Will of William Ivy (Second Husband of Ann Thelaball), 20 May 1769, Norfolk County, Virginia, Book 1, pg. 188, 188 A.
3. Springer, p. 25.
4. IBID, pp. 25-26.
5. Will of James Thelaball (Father of Ann Thelaball), 24 December 1707, Norfolk County, Virginia, Book 9, p. 124.
6. Inventory of James Thelaball, 10 November 1713, Norfolk County, Virginia, Book 9, p. 186.
7. Will of Ann Thelaball (Widow of James Thelaball and Mother of Ann Thelaball), 16 July 1714, Norfolk County, Virginia, Book 9, p. 313.
8. Will of William Ivy (Second husband of Ann Thelaball), 19 August 1741, Norfolk County, Virginia, Book 14, p. 115.
9. Court Order (Concerning settlement of estate of James Lowery, Ann's first husband), 20 November 1742, Norfolk County, Virginia.

10. Will of William Ivy, 1741.

11. Inventory of James Thelaball.

12. Inventory of Francis Thelaball, 7 June 1727, Princess Anne County, Virginia, Deed and Will Book 1724-1735, p. 129 (Transcribed by Elizabeth Wingo, dec'd., former director, Norfolk Branch, APVA, now Preservation Virginia).