
The Thrasher Newsletter

Co-Editors: Sue Q. Thrasher & Nancy T. Cherry - Circulation: John E. Thrasher III - Volume 33 No. 1 – March 2015

Invite the State Bird to your backyard

I have a question for you: What is the state bird of Georgia? Is it: a) northern bobwhite; b) cardinal; c) northern mockingbird; or, d) brown thrasher?

Times up. If you guessed the brown thrasher, you are right. On March 20, 1970, after a 35-year campaign waged by The Garden Club of Georgia Inc., the Georgia General Assembly designated the brown thrasher as Georgia's official state bird.

Since that time, many have questioned why the brown thrasher was picked as our state bird when there are so many far more colorful birds such as the northern cardinal, scarlet tanager and eastern bluebird to choose from. In truth, the brown thrasher was originally selected by school children in 1928. And I, for one, agree with the student's choice. After I tell you a little about the bird, I think you will, too. In fact, I am convinced that you will want to invite it to reside in your backyard.

Nobody is sure how the bird got its name. Some suggest that it was named for its color and habit of twitching its tail back and forth. This is reminiscent of a flail used years ago to thrash seeds out of the stalks of harvested grain. Others believe the name stems from the birds habit of thrashing leaves and soil in search of food.

I would think that our state bird should be found throughout the state and indeed the brown thrasher is. It ranges from Rising Fawn in northwest Georgia to St. Mary's on the Georgia coast.

The brown thrasher is fairly large, measuring roughly a foot in length. While it is not blessed with eye-popping color, it is still a handsome bird. Its back and tail are foxy brown, while its creamy white breast is festooned with prominent dark brown streaks. The wings are marked with two white wing bars. Its eyes are bright yellow and its beak is slightly curved.

The thing that distinguishes the brown thrasher from most other birds is its song. Oh, what a song! The brown thrasher is the master of one of the most extensive song repertoires of any bird in North America. More than 1,100 song types have been attributed to this species. Its catalog of songs includes snatches of the songs of many of its bird neighbors.



The thrasher's song consists of a string of phrases that are usually uttered twice. The famous writer and naturalist Henry David Thoreau described the brown thrasher call as, Drop it, drop it, Cover it up, cover it up, Pull it up, pull it up. Although its songs are similar to those of the northern mockingbird, it is fairly easy to tell the songs of the two apart as the mockingbird typically repeats the phrases in its vocalizations three times.

Brown thrashers prefer to live in shrubby habitats like forests with a shrubby understory, in brushy fencerows and old fields, and in backyards accented with small trees and shrubs. Here the birds spend their day beneath shrubs scratching the ground with their powerful feet and tossing leaves and other ground litter aside with their formidable bills in search of small insects, worms, spiders and other tasty invertebrates. They will also dine on fruits, berries and nuts.

If you want to attract brown thrashers to your yard, it is essential that you provide the often secretive birds with plenty of dense shrubs and fruit- and nut-bearing trees. They seem particularly fond of thorny shrubs that offer a barrier against the intrusion of would-be predators. There is any number of plants to choose from, including wax myrtle, native crab apples, dogwoods and hawthorns.

Here is a tip: Leave fallen leaves beneath shrubs and in places near shrubby habitats. Brown thrashers love to hunt for food in such sites.

Brown thrashers also frequent brush piles. If you don't have one, create one in a back corner of your backyard. Thrashers and other birds will use the brush pile to escape predators and severe weather.

Another feature that will help attract brown thrashers is a birdbath or small pond. While they will use birdbaths placed on pedestals, a birdbath located on the ground might be your best bet. You will find more different kinds of wildlife use it more than one perched in the air. Whatever type you use, make sure it has a sloping, rough bottom that isn't over 1½ inches deep in its deepest end.

At one time, brown thrashers were rare visitors to bird feeders. However, nowadays it is not unusual to see them at feeders. They are fond of suet, particularly if it is laced with peanut butter. If your pockets are deep enough, you might even consider feeding them meal worms. Believe me, a brown thrasher can go through a lot of mealworms in a short period of time.

I hope you now agree with me that a handsome bird that also is an accomplished vocalist, pest control agent and inhabitant found throughout the state is a worthy neighbor and deserving of the title of Georgia's official state bird.

- Article by Terry Johnson, formerly with the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, a noted backyard wildlife writer and expert, and executive director of TERN, the friends group for Wildlife Resources' Nongame Conservation Section. It was published online at: <http://www.georgiawildlife.org> and submitted to the Thrasher Newsletter by John Paul Thrasher of Newnan, Georgia.

Those who have visited Nancy Cherry's home will remember the long country lane into their family farm is lined on one side with bushes, mainly blackberry bushes. The *Brown Thrashers* love that row of bushes. We think it is very appropriate.

The Sanford “Little Red Schoolhouse” Championed by A. M. Thrasher is Gone



A class on the front steps of Sanford Primary School about 1900.

The early schoolhouse known by many as “The Little Red Schoolhouse” in Sanford, Florida burned to the ground in the early morning of July 3, 2014. The schoolhouse was the oldest school building still standing in Seminole County, Florida and was on the National Register of Historic Places.

On April 13, 1882, Sanford mayor, A.M. Thrasher requested that the board of Aldermen appoint a committee of three to look into the construction of a school and to appropriate funds for that purpose. The final work on the school was completed in October 1882 by the firm of Gilbert and Raymond at the final cost of \$606 with \$346.50 of that amount coming from private donations. A deed dated January 23, 1883, indicates that lot for the school was purchased from the Florida Land and Colonization Company for the sum of one dollar. The trustees of the school named on the deed are A.M. Thrasher, A.E. Phillips, and E.B. Vandeman. In Webb’s 1886 Directory, the building is listed as “Sanford Public School” and W.B. Lynch is listed as the principal.

The Polk City Directories for Sanford show changes in the school’s name over time. In 1909, it is Sanford Public School (branch.) In 1917, it is Sanford Primary School #1, and in 1929, it is Eastside Primary. Some time in the 1940s the building became Sanford Nursery School, and it continued at least until 1957.

By 1959, the building was no longer being used as a school and instead became a warehouse for the county school board. In 1964, it was briefly the “Little Red School House for Exceptional Children” before reverting to a facility for the school board.

In the 1970s and 80s, the building was used by community groups, including Seminole Community Action, Head Start, and Manna Haven. In the late 1980s, it was the Temporary Living Center. In 1996, Tajiri School of Performing Arts and Academics, headed by Patricia Merritt Whatley, moved into the building. Tajiri provided arts education for close to a decade at this location. The school closed in 2006. In 2010 the building and property were sold for taxes. Later the city paid the back taxes and the property reverted to city ownership. The property was listed for sale when it burned in July 2014.

In 2004, the Historical Commission of Seminole County placed an historical marker in front of the old school. Following the fire, the marker, along with a sculpture created by Tajiri students were removed and placed by the city of Sanford in temporary storage.

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In the newspaper

Surprise snowman



Steve Bittner/Times-News

Maci Thrasher Wilson, age 4, of Bowling Green, Maryland opens the family mailbox. Her mother, Mechelle Thrasher built the snowman encompassing the mailbox as a surprise for Maci while she was visiting her grandmother, Janet Thrasher.

- Thanks to Chere Athey Thrasher for sharing this delightful picture of her grand niece, Maci

Reunion Dates: June 12-13, 2015

Hotel: Holiday Inn Express Norcross, 7035 Jimmy Carter Blvd, Norcross, GA 30092

Hotel reservations: (800) 315-2621 or (770)409-0004

Hotel reservation deadline: June 1, 2015

Saturday dinner: 6:00 p.m. The Crossing Steakhouse, 40 S. Peachtree St, Norcross. (678) 280-9081. Menu available: www.thecrossingofnorcross.com

Dinner and golf cart reservations (deadline: June 8): Joe Stine, 407-855-5319 (home), 407-898-2292 (cell), or e-mail stinejoe@bellsouth.net

Historic Downtown Norcross tour planned for 2015 Reunion

A walking tour of historic downtown Norcross is the most recent addition to the Norcross 2015 Reunion. We will meet Saturday morning at the Norcross Welcome Center about 9:30 for a two-hour tour starting at 10:00 led by local historian Dr. Gene Ramsay. Gene is the co-author (with Cate Kitchen and Edie Ri of *Images of America: Norcross*, published in 2011 by Arcadia Publishing. He has a PhD from Georgia Tech. A golf cart tour ride will be available, but is limited to those with a physical disability (not for convenience) and reservations are required. Parking is available at the Norcross Welcome Center and Museum, 189 Lawrenceville Street. Arrive early at the Norcross Welcome Center to view their historic displays. Many thanks to Joe Stine for arranging the tour and the itinerary.

Dinner at *The Crossing Steakhouse* will be at 6:00 p.m. with keynote speaker Bucky Johnson, mayor of Norcross. Dinner may be ordered and paid for ala carte from the menu, but we need your dinner reservations to ensure we request the correct number of tables in the special dining room. See online menu at www.thecrossingofnorcross.com. Please send dinner and golf cart reservations to Joe Stine. Please make your hotel reservations directly with the Holiday Inn Express before June 1 and mention you are with the Thrasher association for a special rate of \$89 (plus tax). After June

1, rooms will be released to the public and may no longer be available. The HIE offers a free buffet breakfast, business center and swimming pool.



The Crossing Steakhouse

To make a dinner reservation or request a golf cart tour reservation, contact Joe Stine, 407-855-5319 (home), 407-898-2292 (cell), or e-mail stinejoe@bellsouth.net. Make Holiday Inn reservations by calling: (800) 315-2621 or (770)409-0004. Deadline: June 1.

If you have any questions about the reunion please contact Joe or me. My cellphone is (765) 617-3890 or email davidesumner@gmail.com. I plan to order a third printing of my book *Railroad Man: John E. Thrasher and the Early Years of Atlanta* and bring several copies for sale. It tells the story of Cousin John's early years in Thrasherville and Atlanta, and how he built the first railroad to Norcross and became the city's founder and first mayor in 1870. Final details, directions and plans for the reunion will be announced in the next newsletter.

- David E. Sumner

Reunion schedule

Friday, June 12: The Holiday Inn Express Meeting Room will be open for Thrasher guests beginning at 6:00 p.m. Friday and all day Saturday until 6:00 p.m. Dinner on your own for early arriving guests.

Saturday, June 13, 10:00 to 12:00 . Historic Norcross walking tour by Dr. Gene Ramsay. Gather at 9:30 at Norcross Welcome Center and Museum, 189 Lawrenceville Street.

- Lunch on your own, 12:00 to 2:00.
- Business meeting and social, 2:00 to 5:30 p.m. Holiday Inn Express meeting room.
- Dinner, 6:00 p.m. The Crossing Steakhouse, 40 S. Peachtree Street. Keynote speaker: Bucky Johnson, mayor of Norcross and former Director of Bands and head of the Music Department at Georgia Tech. See online menu at www.thecrossingofnorcross.com.

Sunday, June 14. Breakfast on your own at Holiday Inn Express

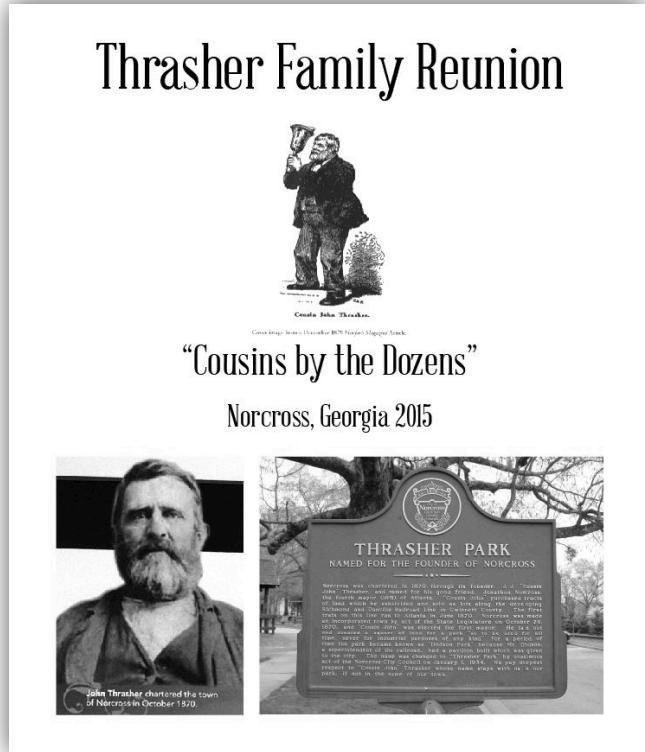
Design for the Commemorative Reunion Tote Bag

At the request of several family members, a bag that is just the right size to stash handouts and brochures will be available for purchase at the reunion this year for \$10.70.

Included in the design are pictures of "Cousin John" ringing his famous dinner bell, a dignified photo of John Thrasher who chartered the town of Norcross in 1870, and the historic marker for Thrasher Park.

I am having 25 made to have on hand. Please let me know by email (below) if you want me to hold one for you. If I know in advance that we won't have enough, I can always get more made.

drsuethrasher@gmail.com



Isaac Thrasher Sr. is the father of Isaac Thrasher Jr. and Uriah Thrasher



John Wesley Thrasher and Malinda Jane Thrasher

Cherokee claim rejected

We all know that the title of Junior did not necessarily mean that a man was the son of someone of the same name called Senior. Junior could be a nephew or a more distant relative or even a non-relative in the area who was called Junior to distinguish him from the older man who assumed the designation of Senior.

Thrasher researchers have long wanted documentary evidence that Isaac Thrasher Sr. of Hawkins County, Tennessee, was the father of Isaac Thrasher Jr. and Uriah Thrasher.

David Johnson, of Washington, DC, has found file #39431, the application of Louisa T. Loftis for a share of the fund appropriated by Congress in 1906 in favor of the Eastern Cherokees with some interesting information even though the claim was denied.

Mrs. Loftis completed her application form on August 26, 1907. She states that her full English name is Louisa Tennessee Loftis and that she was given a Cherokee Indian name from North Carolina but doesn't know it. She resides in Hilham or Hillam, Overton County, Tennessee. She was born in Bradley County, Tennessee on February 38, 1857. At the time she filed the application she was 50 years old; her husband, Francis L. Loftis, was 62. He did not belong to an Indian tribe. Louisa listed 3 children living as of May 28, 1906: Francis A. Loftis, 23; George M. Loftis, 18; and Burton Loftis, 16.

Her father's surname was Roach, although his first name has been scratched out. Her mother's English name was Louisa Thresher. Both of her parents were born in Hawkins County, Tennessee and resided in Bradley County, Tennessee in 1851. The mother died about 1891; the father was still living at the time Louisa Loftis made the application.

Her grandparents are listed as John Roach and wife and as Louisa Thresher, Cherokee name unknown. The grandparents were born in North Carolina, Carter County. They resided in Hawkins County, Tennessee, in 1851.

Louisa Loftis lists her grandmother Louisa Thresher's nine children as Wm. Thresher, Cassie Thresher, Isaac Thresher, Elizabeth Thresher, Louisa Thresher (Louisa Loftis' mother), Jo Thresher, Uriah Thresher, Manda Dalton, and Rachel Hogwood. All deceased. She states that there may have been more.

Mrs. Loftis answers the final two questions on the application form by listing her Cherokee heritage: Louisa (Thresher) Roach, parent. Isaac Thresher, grandparent and a claim through the Threshers from N. C. to Hawkins Co., Tenn., from there, here.

In June 1908, on being deposed, Mrs. Loftis stated: The ancestors through whom I claim lived in Hawkins Co., Tenn. in 1835. I do not know why some of my ancestors were never enrolled. Neither my ancestors nor I ever received any money, land or other benefits. None of my ancestors ever had an Indian name or went west with the Indians. I do not know whether any of my ancestors ever lived with the Cherokee as a member of the tribe or not. I learned from my mother that my grandfather was a half Cherokee Indian. My ancestors and I were always regarded as white people with an admixture of Cherokee Indian blood. In the same statement, she says that she never saw her grandfather but that she had heard that his mother was a full blooded Cherokee Indian, born and brought up in North Carolina. Louisa Loftis' claim of Cherokee heritage was rejected. The reasons given were: no ancestry documentation, never enrolled, and not parties to treaties of '35-'36-'46.

David Johnson started this research two years ago to learn more about the Thrasher family. His 7-year-old son, Mattan, had expressed keen interest in family history and the Revolutionary War. David's grandmother, Lucille Smith Johnson, who resides in Knoxville, came from the Thrasher family and remembers her grandmother Laura Thrasher Branham, whose parents John Wesley Thrasher and Malinda Jane Thrasher were both grandchildren of Isaac Thrasher, Sr. David wanted to trace the family history to see if there was a Native American connection and believed there might be one. Lucille took a DNA test from Ancestry that showed a small percentage of Native American background. He recently found these interesting documents and shared them with Dale Thrasher and Libby Naderhoff, with whom he has been collaborating.

Dale Thrasher compiled an article for the July 2001 issue of *The Thrasher Newsletter*. The Ancestors of David L. Thrasher, listing the descendants in each generation of the Isaac Thrasher line. David L. Thrasher was a son of Samuel Jackson Thrasher, a survivor of the boat Sultana that exploded and sank in the Mississippi River after the Civil War, killing over 1700 men. Samuel Jackson Thrasher was a son of Isaac H. Thrasher Jr. and Sarah Ann (Sallie) Cline. In this compilation, Isaac Jr. is the son of Isaac Sr. and his wife Sarah. Dorothy Pruitt addressed the Isaac Thrasher Sr. family in OUR THRASHER HERITAGE, pages 563 & 569.

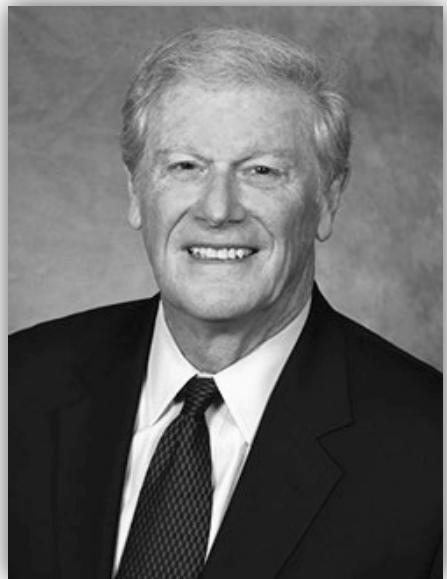
Lineage Roadmap for Descendants of William Thrasher/Thresher

| Immigrant | 2 nd gen | 3 rd gen | 4 th gen | 5 th gen | 6 th gen | 7 th gen | 8 th gen | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| William b 1745 England D 1798 NC | Isaac Sr. b 1764 at sea | Louisa m Roach | Louisa Roach m Loftis | | | | | |
| | | Isaac Jr. b 1807 m S. Cline | Malinda Jane & John Wesley Thrasher | Laura Ann m Branham | Lena Branham m Smith | Lucille Smith m Johnson | Kenneth Johnson | David Johnson* |
| | | Uriah H b 1816 | | | | | | |
| | | Samuel Marion | George Washington | James Leighton | James Oliver | Shirley m Brewer* | | |
| | | | Jesse Goldstein | Alfred Wade | Hazele m Johnson* | | | |
| | | | | | Lester Edward* | | | |
| | William "Billy" | Isaac Baker | Jesse Fielding | James Wiley Floyd | James Elmer | Dale Richard* | | |
| | | Samuel J. | Davidson James | William Robert | William Hall | William Shelah* | | |

We don't know of "this" John E. Thrasher is "kin" But we'll claim him

John E. Thrasher (born December 18, 1943) is a former Florida state legislator, businessman, lawyer and lobbyist, and has now been named the 15th President of Florida State University. He was approved by the Florida Board of Governors on November 6, 2014 and took office on November 10, 2014.

John grew up in Jacksonville and obtained his bachelor's degree in business from Florida State University where he became a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity before joining the United States Army. He served first in Germany, where he received the Army Commendation Medal, and later in Vietnam, where he was awarded two Bronze Stars. Thrasher attained the rank of captain before his honorable discharge. He returned to Tallahassee and earned his law degree with honors from the Florida State University College of Law.



In Memorium

Gloria Florine Thrasher



December 17, 1925 - January 3, 2015

Mrs. Gloria Florine Thrasher of Hampton, Georgia was born December 17, 1925 and passed away January 3, 2015 at the age of 89. She is preceded in death by her parents, Charles A. Pendleton and Etta B. Champion; Five brothers, Charles Pendleton, Kenneth Pendleton, Leon Pendleton, Howard Pendleton and Graham Pendleton; Three sisters, Helen Clark, Clara Blaschke and Etta Pendleton. Mrs. Thrasher leaves to cherish her memories, Husband, George C. Thrasher; Three sons, Harold W. Appell III, Bruce D. Appell and George D. Thrasher; One daughter; Sharon D. Baker; ten grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, one Sister, Shirley Saunders and a host of relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were Thursday January 8th with entombment at Sherwood Memorial Park and Mausoleum in Lithonia, Georgia.

Nancy Cherry shared: Many of us will miss her at the reunions. We remember fondly how she gifted us with handmade slippers, tea-towels, and the like.

Salem Methodist Church



Photo by Peggy Thrasher Law - 2013

Be sure to visit our Thrasher Family Association website:

<https://thrasherfamilyassociation.wordpress.com/>

There are some new tabs at the top of the page, including “Special Places.” Click on this tab and read the full article on “The Lost Village of Old Salem” in Oconee County, Georgia.

More than one hundred and seventy years ago, south of Watkinsville, Georgia, was the small but thriving antebellum town of Salem with a church, shops, offices, hotels, a tannery, and a boarding school. But, it vanished. Celestea Sharp set out to find out about it...This article, which first appeared in Athens Magazine, August 1990, is on our website with exclusive permission to the Thrasher Family Association...somewhat edited, abbreviated and updated. Thank you, Celestea for your family detective work!

Editors' Corner

Contact: Susie Thrasher by letter at: 1101 Christian Drive, Watkinsville, GA 30677 or by email at: drsuethrasher@gmail.com, Nancy Cherry by letter at: 3100 Elkridge Court, Beltsville, MD 20705-3239 or by email at: NancyTC@aol.com, or John E. at: 6424 SE 169th Avenue, Micanopy, FL 32667 or by email at: fish_jet@bellsouth.net

Please share your news with your “cousins by the dozens.”

We especially like pictures to go with stories