

The Thrasher Newsletter

CoEditors: Sue Q. Thrasher & Nancy T. Cherry Circulation: John E. Thrasher III Volume 33 No. 3 August 2015



Front row, L to R: Melanie Thrasher, John Paul Thrasher, Susie Q. Thrasher, Lee Thrasher, Hershel Thrasher, Karen Thrasher, Elise Sumner, David Sumner, Anna Sutherland; inset above Melanie: William Hayes & Paula Thrasher; Middle row, L to R: Rebecca Hayes, Zack Hayes, Melinda Nelson, William C. "Clint" Rhodes, Juanita Thrasher, Celestea Sharp, Ivy Darnall, John E. Thrasher III, Eleanor Thrasher, Helen Thrasher-Long, Nancy Cherry, George C. Thrasher, Pam Thrasher, Klaus Darnall, Ken Sutherland; Back row, L to R: Ashton Hayes, Michelle Bandy, JoAnn Bandy, Joe Grooms, Joan Stine, Angie Grooms, Joe Stine, Vicki Mills, Frankie Goldsby, Karen Thrasher, Roland Farrow, William S. Rhodes, Chris Cherry, Jim Moule, Warren Thrasher, John Long, Chere Athey, Don Athey, Bonnie Bolin; High left: Randy Thrasher, Jack Thrasher, Bill H. Thrasher (photographer and photo editing magician)

Norcross welcomed the Thrasher Family Association

By David E. Sumner

Almost 50 Thrasher cousins traveled from eleven states to attend the 41st annual Thrasher reunion held June 12-13 in Norcross. Highlights included a Historic Norcross Walking Tour, a business meeting and social with several informative presentations, and Saturday dinner at The Crossing Steakhouse.

The group met on Saturday morning at the Norcross Welcome Center and Museum, where its director Cate Kitchen greeted us and gave everyone a gift bag. Before the tour, Thrasher visitors spent time viewing three large displays with photos and text honoring John Thrasher's role in founding the city.

The walking tour stopped at six sites where local actors from the Lionheart Theatre gave five-minute re-enactments of historic characters who reflected the evolution and growth of the city. The walking tour was organized by Dr. Gene Ramsay, assisted by Joe Stine. Ramsay, an industrial engineer, is co-author of a book about Norcross history (*Images of America: Norcross*) and writes a local history column for the newspaper. Gene Ramsay explained how the tour originated:

"Tanya Caldwell, the theatre's producing artistic director, heard that you folks had asked for a tour and expressed interest in participating," Ramsay says. "I gave her biographies of several people from the town's history who might be of interest, and we picked out the ones that you saw. They were a sample of people who lived in Norcross and in the area whom we felt were representative of the way the community had evolved over time."

Ms. Caldwell recruited the actors and found people who wrote the scripts. The six historic characters included Emma Dodgen Scott (played by Ms. Caldwell), who appeared at the first stop at the old Summerour Cotton Gin. She was followed by Lola Key (Debbie McLaughlin) at the old Methodist Church, which was erected in 1875 and is now the Norcross Community Center and home of the Lionheart Theatre. The third stop came with an appearance by Ivey Wingo (Eric Lang) at the Lillian Webb Park, the former site of the town baseball field. Wingo, who grew up in Norcross, played professional baseball from 1911 to 1926. He was a catcher for the victorious Cincinnati Reds in the 1919 World Series, when players on the opposing Chicago White Sox team accepted bribes from gamblers to lose the series.



The liveliest re-enactment occurred on the fourth stop at the site of the former Checkers Alley on Jones Street, where a game of checkers led to a heated argument between Reps Miller (Jason Caldwell) and Col. Clifford Jones (Joe McLaughlin). The argument was due to a long-standing grudge – Reps Miller lost control of a mule team a century ago and the ensuing chase down the alley caused so much commotion that the owner bricked it up to prevent future episodes and blocking the shortcut to the town privy!

The fifth stop occurred next to the railroad near Thrasher Park. Tom Rainey (Sean Casey), a former Southern Railway conductor and brakeman, told the story of how his train broke apart going up a hill, and the resulting close call he had when stranded on a trestle over a gorge. While Rainey was giving his talk, a freight train came rumbling down the tracks, much to the amazement of Thrasher visitors. Ramsay says the train's appearance was just coincidental, since more than 35 trains travel through Norcross every day.

Be Like John J. Thrasher

Well, John the railroad builder
And merchant was so kind
People called him "cousin"
He was friendly all the time

He made and lost fortunes
But he knew how to laugh
Hard times made him better
Not so bitter, not so sad

Chorus:
Be like John J. Thrasher
Not Black Bart
Don't let anger rule
Be like John J. Thrasher
Not Black Bart
Let the love of God shine through

Bart had a lovely sister
So beautiful and young
She drove to the drug store
In her buggy all alone
The druggist did insult her
She came home and cried
Bart did beat the druggist
And he beat him 'til he died

(Chorus)

We're gathered here together
As the Thrasher family
God our loving Father
Helps us choose how we will be

Let's raise our glasses
As we sing along
Give a hearty toast to
Our beloved Cousin John
By Elise Carr Sumner

Next came a stop at the site of the former Brunswick Hotel, a three-story hotel built by Cousin John Thrasher. Granny Cain (Nancy Caldwell) told about her experiences managing the hotel with her husband in the late 1800s. Concluding at Thrasher Park, Gene Ramsay gave an informative overview of the early history of Norcross and Cousin John's role in founding the town, based on his extensive research.

During the afternoon meeting, Elise Sumner sang and performed two original songs with her ukulele: "Be Like John J. Thrasher" and "Let's Stay Friends."

Joe Stine gave a presentation on John Thrasher's activities in the Georgia Legislature from 1859-1963 (also in this issue of the newsletter).

"I became interested in Cousin John's legislative activities when I found out that he served the Confederacy as a legislator and not as a soldier," Joe says. He made trips to the state archives in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The Crossing Steakhouse located in the historic 1909 railroad station was packed on Saturday night with 47 Thrasher cousins. Special guests

included Bucky Johnson and his wife and Cate Kitchen and her husband. Johnson gave an entertaining talk about the expansive growth and robust business activity of Norcross. Johnson retired as band director and head of the music department at Georgia Teach eleven years ago.

“Our organizers and host city really went all out to help us understand the Thrasher family’s connection to the town of Norcross,” said Celestea Sharp of New York City. “I was extremely impressed with the warmth of the welcome we were given by Mayor Bucky Johnson and other Norcross citizens. They brought Norcross history and our family’s place in it alive in the most entertaining way possible.”

“This reunion was so well organized that it will be a tough act to follow,” said Jim Moule of Berkeley, California.

Most people simply enjoyed the fellowship and seeing each other. John E. Thrasher, III, said, “I enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new ones. The time spent visiting was the most important to me and making those present feel like a part of the group.” Nancy Chery said, “I’m an after-hours sort of person. I love the late-night after-dinner sessions that give us a real chance to socialize.”

Celestea spoke for us all when she said, “My favorite part of the Thrasher reunion each year is getting to see the family members I already know and getting to meet family members who are newcomers to the reunion. This is an unchanging pleasure no matter where we gather.”

The Gwinnett Daily Post carried an article about the reunion:

<http://www.gwinnettdailypost.com/news/2015/jun/13/family-of-norcross-founder-john-j-thrasher/>

NOTE from David Sumner

The 2015 Norcross Reunion happened because of a rare congruence of circumstances and the names of those circumstances are Bucky Johnson, mayor; Cate Kitchen, director of the Welcome Center and Museum, and Gene Ramsay, local historian and tour organizer. It happened because the city takes such great pride in honoring its founder and first mayor, John J. Thrasher. After Bucky Johnson invited us to hold a Thrasher reunion in Norcross in an e-mail, Cate Kitchen and Gene Ramsay took over and it began falling into place. They were very eager to make sure we had a good time. We also thank Tanya Caldwell, director of the Lionheart Theatre and all the volunteer actors she recruited for the historic re-enactments.

Joe Stine and I worked together on the plans, consulting frequently with John E. Thrasher III, and never made a decision without his blessing.

Two days before our scheduled departure from Indiana, I fell and broke my collarbone and severely injured my hand. Since I couldn’t drive for a month, I am so grateful to Elise who graciously volunteered to drive the 600 miles each way and help me get around. Her musical performance on Saturday afternoon delighted the crowd. Visits with my sisters—Frankie and her friend Roland from Florida—and Joann and her daughter Michelle from Oklahoma—made the weekend even more special. As Bob Hope always said, “Thanks for the memories.”



Thrasher Punch

4 oz. Svedka Strawberry Lemonade Vodka
1 oz. Blue Curacao
4 oz. Sprite
4 splashes each: Orange juice & Cranberry juice

Thank you Bonnie Thrasher Bolin for getting the recipe for the Thrasher Punch we saw advertised at the Historic Cotton Gin in Norcross. I wonder what Cousin John would have thought of it. We learned from the presentation at Thrasher Park that he was a teetotaler!

Beware! Caution! Watch Out!

By John E. Thrasher

I have been doing genealogical research since 1972 and for the first time I recently came upon some information that just didn't look quite right and the names didn't fit what I already knew. I read in the Georgia Genealogical Society's Quarterly that the Georgia Archives announced a new project that sounded as if I should check it out for Thrasher information. Here is the address in case you would like to check there, too, for any family in Georgia:

<http://georgiaarchives.org/>

Look under "Name File II." There was only one Thrasher reference in the file and it concerns the Thrashers of the southern part of Clarke County (now Oconee County) and Greene County.

After studying the document and being quite puzzled, my first thought was to ask the one person who I believe to be THE expert on the Thrasher family and history of that region, Celestea Sharp! Celestea studied the document and decided that this is an example of a fake claim.

So many researchers are excited to find any new information and will accept what they find without question. Because this document is a good example of what we believe to be a fake claim and relating to our family, we decided to include the document in the Thrasher Newsletter for you to see. Following the very genuine-looking document are Celestea's comments and reasons to state that this is a fake claim.

Celestea:

I am quite perplexed by the document you have directed me to. I agree that it does not fit with Joseph Cloud Thrasher's children, since his youngest son John seems to have died quite young and was not alive in 1835.

I have just researched two types of records (1) pre-1800 Greene County tax digests (book that I own) and (2) records of Payments for claims for Creek Indian Depredations (website: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/georgia/payments-to-citizens-of-georgia.htm>).

From (1), I observe the following: Looking at the two testators in addition to the Joseph Thrasher listed, there is no one named "John Steen" in these tax digests; however, there is a "James Steen" listed nearby Joseph Cloud Thrasher as early as 1793. There is a James Ware (James Wares, Jeames Wares, James Wars) listed as a near neighbor to Joseph Cloud Thrasher and his property, starting as early as 1793 and continuing through 1799. Thus, James Ware seems to be a legitimate witness. John Steen could be a son of James Steen, and so could be a legitimate witness. Also, there is NO John Thrasher listed in Greene County in 1793!

From (2) above and my own knowledge of government Creek Indian Depredation Claims, I feel like 1835, when this claim document was written, is rather late for this kind of claim to be made. I would need to do more research to find out if such claims were still being accepted at this late date. Most of them were not made later than 1821-22.

Finally, from the few sentences that I can make out from page 4 of the document, it appears the government (state of Ga, I presume) finds this claim dubious on several counts. "This claim was brought in on the last day . . . for the reception of claims and for that reason viewed with more distrust than those brought in at an earlier day."

I don't know if you can read the writing -- I had a terrible time trying to read it. The government says they don't see why anyone would wait this late to file such a large claim, and also that they can't believe the Indians could make off with so much property without someone in Greene County going after them to retrieve it. And they say it is suspicious that the testator(s?) seem to be the same as for another claim recently filed in Greene County ("by a comparison of hand writing"). Finally, they say, "I have inquired of respectable men living near where the testimony was taken, who do not know such witnesses. THE CLAIM IS

BELIEVED TO BE FICTITIOUS."

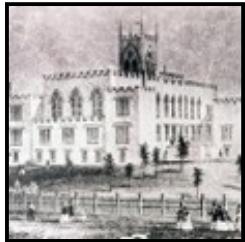


SO, THIS IS A FAKE CLAIM! There probably were no people with the names of Joseph T. Thrasher and this John Thrasher. Researchers beware

JOHN J. THRASHER, FULTON COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By Joseph Stine

In 1859 John Thrasher was elected to the House of Representative of the Georgia General Assembly as the representative for Fulton County. He served from 1859 to 1863 for four regular sessions and one special session. The regular sessions were held in November and December and the special session was held in April 1863.



Remember, the capital of Georgia from 1804 to 1868 was Milledgeville. It was the seat of the state government throughout the Civil War (1861-65). The Gothic revival brick building was a parallelogram, with walls four feet thick. Although it was a magnificent statehouse for its time, the structure did not have the dome commonly associated with capitol buildings and resembled instead a castle or fortress.

At various times John J. Thrasher was assigned to Standing Committees for Agriculture & Internal Improvements, Banks, Penitentiary and Deaf & Dumb Asylum. He was involved either on a committee or personally in the following issues:

<u>1859</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1862</u>	<u>1863</u>
Slaves	Federal Relations	Slaves	Salt	Salt
Militia	Militia	Militia	Cotton	Slaves
Women's Rights	Women's Rights	Salt	Rail Roads	Rail Roads
Medical College	Medical College		Confiscation	Insurrection
	Rail Roads		Distilled Spirits	Distilled Spirits
			Deaf & Dumb	U.S. Money

Note that the issues change over the years from pedestrian to survival. Of course the most important issue was Federal Relations. In November 7, 1860, Governor Joseph Brown, sent a special message to the Georgia General Assembly concerning actions taken by Northern states contrary to federal law regarding slaves and actions already taken by other Southern states. The governor recommended “the call of a Convention of the people of the State at an early day; and I will cordially unite with the General Assembly in any action, which in their judgment, may be necessary to the protection of the rights and the preservation of the liberties of the people of Georgia.” Thrasher and 12 other representatives were appointed to a joint committee with 5 Senators relative to the Governor’s Special Request on our Federal Relations. This shows Thrasher’s standing among his 150 peers.

On Nov. 20, 1860, the committee reported a Senate bill to authorize and require the Governor of the State of Georgia, to call a Convention of the people of this State, and for other purposes therein mentioned – Yeas were 148, Nays were none. Thrasher voted yea. An

election of delegates was held statewide on January 2, 1861, and the Convention was convened on January 16, 1861. On January 19th the vote to secede from the Union was passed, with 208 Yeas and 89 Nays. Thrasher was not a delegate to the convention.

In 1859 a bill was passed to prevent free persons of color, commonly known as free negroes, from being brought or coming into the State of Georgia. Several bills were tabled that would allow voluntary slavery or free persons of color to go into slavery. Also tabled was an act to prevent slaves from raising poultry for their own use in this State. In 1861 a proposed act to prevent the railroad companies of the State of Georgia from employing slaves as wood passers and fireman because the railroads were thought to be corrupting all the slaves along the railroad line by stealing and trading with Negroes. This bill was indefinitely postponed.

As the war progressed in 1863 an act to provide for the suppression of domestic insurrection within the limits of the State of Georgia and to aid in the repelling of invasion was passed. Thrasher had been excused before this vote was taken. An act to confiscate Real Estate of alien enemies was postponed and never returned.

Before the war quasi-militia bills were passed to establish home guards. The legislature incorporated the Gate City Guards of Atlanta, the Fulton Dragons of Atlanta and the Bainbridge Volunteers. Thrasher's handiwork was apparent in the establishment of these guard units. Early in the war a motion by Mr. Thrasher to provide for a company of Snappers & Bombardiers was referred to a special committee, consisting of Messrs Thrasher, Washington, Tatum, Cabiness, and Lester. The outcome is not known.

Railroads were always of interest to John Thrasher. When a bill to regulate the freight on the Western & Atlantic Rail Road was proposed, Mr. Thrasher moved indefinite postponement which passed with 73 Yeas and 37 Nays. Thrasher voted Yea. John Thrasher must have been a free market supporter of less government regulation. John Thrasher was also concerned about the movement of troops and supplies. He offered a resolution instructing the Superintendent of the W & A Railroad to provide ambulance cars on said road for sick and wounded soldiers which was passed and sent to Senate. He proposed an act to prohibit the running of railroad engines and cars on the Sabbath or Lord's day which was tabled. In 1863 he reported that over 100 cars had been taken off road and not returned and proposed to send out special agent to find missing cars. He proposed a bill to expedite food shipments on the railroad. An act to incorporate Atlanta & Roswell Rail Road Company was passed. Atlanta was still the hub.

As the war progressed the salt supply became a serious problem. Remember that salt was more for preserving meat than for flavor. An act was passed to authorize the Governor to appoint a competent and practical Geologist for the State of Georgia with the view to develop more fully the mineral resources of the State. Interpreted this meant "look for salt." The House approved an amended Senate bill to encourage the manufacture of salt within the State of Georgia. In 1862 a number of salt mining companies were incorporated: Effingham

and Scriven Salt Mining Companies, Grantville Salt Manufacturing Company, Planters Salt Manufacturing Company, Georgia Salt Manufacturing Company, and Cobb County Salt Mining Company. In 1863 it was reported that 40,000 bushels of salt at Saltville, Virginia, was awaiting shipment to Georgia. Their production was 1500 bushels per day. A Western & Atlantic Rail Road train was sent to bring the salt to Georgia. A Senate resolution on salt supply was adopted.

In 1862 an act to regulate exportation of corn, wheat, meal, flour, bacon, salt, and other articles produced in the State of Georgia or kept for sale therein was lost. Thrasher had been excused and did not vote. Also that year a Senate bill to prevent and punish the planting and cultivation in the State of Georgia over three acres of cotton during the war with the Abolitionist was passed. The House took up the Senate resolution relative to the spinning of cotton for home consumption and adopted the same.

From John Thrasher's membership on certain Standing Committees the following bills or actions were considered. In 1859 a proposed bill to give aid to the Oglethorpe Medical College of Savannah was lost but the next year it was passed with Thrasher voting in the affirmative. In 1860 Thrasher reported a bill to incorporate "The Southern Eclectic Medical College" of the city of Atlanta. By 1862 the Georgia Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb was being neglected. A House appointed committee visited the asylum and reported poor management, lack of control of spending and improper sale of property. The committee recommended the institution be reorganized under a new Board of Trustees.

In 1862, Mr. Thrasher reported a bill to be entitled an act to prohibit the retail of distilled spirituous intoxicating liquors in the state, and to repeal laws authorizing the granting of license to sell by retail intoxicating liquor and to punish persons for its violation. No action was taken. Also in the 1862 session Mr. Hawkins, of Forsyth, reported a bill to be entitled an act to prevent the distillation of grain into ardent spirits until twelve months after the end of the present war, and to prevent the exportation of grain from the state to be distilled. Was this an issue about grain to eat or about grain drink? Again in 1863 Mr. Thrasher reported a bill to be entitled an act to prohibit the retail of spirituous liquor in the State, and to repeal all laws authorizing granting the license for selling the same by retail and to provide for punishing persons for violating the provisions of this act. The bill was laid on the table for the present and never returned. We do not know what the actual intent of the bill was but it might have been an early initiative for prohibition or possibly a means to conserve corn for grits. Maybe this was just the Baptist coming out in John Thrasher because later in life he was in organizing congregations for two Baptist churches.

Women did not have a right to be in business unless allowed by an act of legislature. A bill was reported to be entitled an act to make Hannah Jarrett a *feme sole* trader (A *feme sole* trader is a married woman who is entitled to carry on business on her own account independent of her husband.). Thrasher reported bill for relief of Rachal Augustine Morrissy, widow of James Morrissy, deceased.

In 1860 Thrasher voted negative on bill to abolish the public execution of criminals condemned to death by the laws of this state, and to provide for their execution in private. The bill did not pass.

Thrasher also voted for a bill to protect the rights of the people of Georgia which was passed. Thrasher reported a bill to punish the taking and carrying away the wood or timber from land of another.

Changing county boundary lines was always an issue. In 1859 an Act to provide for the change of county lines by the Interior Courts of the several counties whose proposed lines are to be changed. Bill lost with Thrasher voting no. The House had over 290 requests for county line change during the that session. The House was still in control.

A committee reported an act to amend several acts incorporating the city of Atlanta by conferring upon the Mayor of the city the power to try and punish offenses in said city, heretofore tried in the Superior Court by fine and imprisonment, and to make the judgments of the Mayor a bar to prosecution for same offense in the Superior Court. The bill was not passed.

It was not until 1863 before a committee bill proposed an act to make it unlawful for any person or persons in this State to receive, pass or circulate, buy or sell, give credit or currency in any way or manner, or offer or propose to do the same to any note or notes, bill or bills, draft, or any promise of any kind of paper or papers having the semblance of same, issued, made or executed by the United States Government, or any State composing the same, or citizen, or corporation therein. The bill passed. Thrasher had been excused and did not vote.

In 1863 an act for the prevention of small pox was lost with Thrasher voting against it. An act for taxing dogs was lost with Thrasher voting for the bill. Only the title of a bill was in the minutes. Without having seen the actual proposed act it is difficult to understand fully what was meant by it but hopefully you got a feeling of who Representative John Thrasher was.

John Thrasher's attendance was excellent as shown by being present at most roll calls and recorded voting. In 1862 he was granted leave for business on November 28th but returned the following week. In 1863 he was granted leave on April 16th for the balance of the session which ended on April 18th.

Source: Minutes of the House of Representatives of the Georgia General Assembly for the years of 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862 and April 1863 are found in the library and on microfilms at the Georgia Archives in Morrow, Georgia. The regular session minutes were type set, printed and bound in a book. The minutes of 1863 were hand written only and not complete.

This article was presented at the August 2015 annual meeting of the Thrasher Family Association in Norcross, Georgia. Joseph Stine, great great grandson of John J. Thrasher.

James Thomas Thrasher

A Hero of NASA

By Bill Thrasher Ph.D.

It was the winter of 1959 - the morning after the worst snow storm I had ever experienced in my young 20-year life in North Alabama. My father, James Thomas Thrasher, awakened me before daybreak with an urgent request.....

Background: My father was a refrigeration mechanic - the best I have ever known. He operated Thrasher Refrigeration in Decatur, Alabama, and serviced approximately 90% of the grocery stores, meat packing and produce houses in the area. He was loyal to his customers. Once when he was helping a fellow refrigeration mechanic in Florence, Alabama, about 65 miles away, install the refrigeration equipment for a new supermarket. He returned home at about 1 A.M. to find an important call had come in. A local meat packing house had called saying that he had slaughtered about 40 head of cattle that day and hung them in his cooler - **which had quit working!** I went with my dad as he immediately drove to the packing house and worked hours to repair the system - saving the owner from a great loss. My dad used to say, "If you don't go when a customer needs you, he doesn't want you when he doesn't need you." He always responded in times of emergency.

In 1956, he closed his refrigeration repair business and started working as a refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic for the Army Ballistic Missile Authority (ABMA - also known as Redstone Arsenal which later became Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) or NASA/Huntsville). Then, in the winter of 1959, a snow storm hit North Alabama. This is a snapshot of me in the snow. Actually, I was on my knees - the snow was 13 inches deep and the temperature was around zero or below. All the roads were covered.



My dad woke me before daybreak with an urgent request..... He felt strongly that he needed to get to work at ABMA. He was aware that there were many huge water cooling towers and associated water pumps that would be destroyed by freezing if someone did not drain them before they froze. He felt that he should try to get to work to help drain the exposed water cooling systems to protect them from the sub-zero freezing conditions.

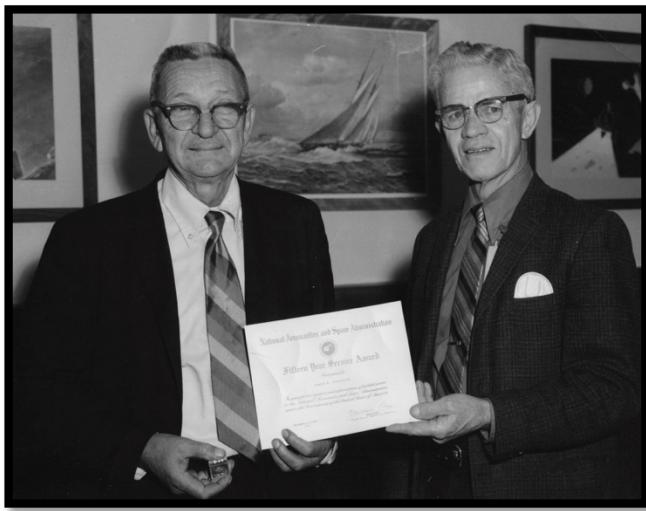
No cars were traveling the back roads where we lived that morning. He felt that Highway 31 would probably be passable - kept that way by the big trucks that traveled that route all through the night. He needed my help to get his car to US highway 31. He and I worked for about two hours slowly working our way towards the highway. Sure enough, he was correct, the trucks were still moving north to Decatur. As I walked back home, he was able to follow

the trucks to Decatur and on to ABMA located just west of Huntsville.

In his shop of about 36 mechanics, my father was the only one to show up for work that day. He worked through that day and night and for the next two days without leaving work. He used a cot in the nurses' station to take short naps. A couple of the other mechanics came in to work on the second day and by the third day they were well staffed. He had been successful in draining the water from most of the large cooling towers and pumps - preventing them from being destroyed by freezing.

My father was later given a commendation for his service "above and beyond the call of duty." He was credited with saving millions of dollars worth of equipment. A photo and write-up describing his efforts were published in the newspaper (so far I have not been able to gain access to a copy.)

In 1980, at my father's funeral, about six of the mechanics who had worked with him at ABMA and later at NASA/MSFC came to his funeral - out of respect for him as their friend and co-worker. They said that they wanted to make sure that his family understood just what kind of man he was - to have accomplished those heroic deeds during that '59-'60 winter storm.



James Thomas Thrasher (left) receiving 15-year service pin

NOTE: The Army Ballistic Missile Agency (ABMA), commanded by Maj. Gen. John Medaris, was formed in 1956, taking over from Redstone Arsenal. Wernher Von Braun was the Director of ABMA's Development Operations Division.

The ABMA's primary mission was developing the Army's first intermediate-range ballistic missile, the Jupiter. By August 1958, the system was delivered to the Air Force for deployment overseas. Jupiter later proved to be a significant bargaining chip in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Nike Zeus and Pershing missile systems which later played a role in ending the Cold War were also developed there.

As part of the 1957–58 International Geophysical Year, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union proposed to launch scientific satellites. Although von Braun had proposed in 1954 that his group could place a satellite in Earth orbit, the Naval Research Laboratory, using its Vanguard rocket, was given this assignment.

On 4 October 1957, the USSR orbited Sputnik I, the first Earth satellite. A second Sputnik was launched a month later. In December 1957, the U.S.'s first attempt to launch a satellite-carrying Vanguard failed. Medaris and von Braun immediately pleaded for the opportunity to show what the Army's "space team" could do. The go-ahead was given and in January 1958, America's first satellite, Explorer I, was placed into orbit using a modified 4-stage Jupiter launch vehicle. Six months after Explorer I, President Dwight Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). All Army space-related activities were then transferred to NASA.

MINUTES
The Thrasher Family Association
Meeting of June 13, 2015
Norcross, Georgia

Hosts: David Sumner and Joe Stine

Attending: Chere and Don Athey of Cumberland, MD and Sanibel, FL; Joann Bandy of Shawnee, Ok; Michelle Bandy of Shawnee, OK; Bonnie Bolin of Fayetteville, GA and guest Vickie Mills; Chris Cherry of Pasadena, MD; Nancy Cherry of Beltsville, MD; Ivy and Klaus Darnall of Atlanta, GA; Frankie Goldsby and Roland Farrow of The Villages, FL; Angie and Joe Grooms of Davidson, NC; Ashton and Rebecca Hayes, Will and Zack Hayes of Sumter, SC; Helen Raye Thrasher-Long and John B. Long, Jr. of Birmingham, AL; Jim Moule of Berkeley, CA; Melinda Nelson of Atlanta, GA; William C. (Clint) Rhodes of Atlanta, GA ; Celestea Sharp of New York City; Joan and Joe Stine of Orlando, FL; Elise and David Sumner of Anderson, IN; Anna and Ken Sutherland of Jacksonville, FL; Amanda and Lee Thrasher, Kirsten, Ally, and Noah Thrasher of Jasper, GA; Juanita and Bill H. Thrasher of Live Oak, FL; Eleanor and John E. Thrasher III of Micanopy, FL; Karen Lynn Thrasher of Atlanta, GA; Karen and Hershel Thrasher of Shelbyville, TN; Jack Thrasher of Roswell, GA, Melanie Thrasher of Acworth, GA; Paula and John Paul Thrasher of Newnan, GA; George C. Thrasher of Hampton, GA; Randy and Pam Thrasher of Marietta, GA; Susie Thrasher of Watkinsville, GA; Warren Thrasher of Savannah, GA.

Pre-meeting Activities: Most restaurants in Norcross were not large enough to accommodate our group, so on Friday evening, attendees met in the lobby of the hotel and then departed for the restaurant of their choice. On Saturday morning, the group was treated to a tour of historic spots in Norcross. The tour was arranged by the Norcross Chamber of Commerce and included re-enactors and interesting sidebars to history. Hosts David and Joe provided golf-carts for those who needed them.

Call to Order: The annual business meeting of the Thrasher Family Association (TFA) was called to order by the Chair, John E. Thrasher III, at 2:05 p.m., on Saturday, June 13, 2015 in the meeting room of the Holiday Inn Express in Norcross, Georgia. The room was lined with members' displays, photo albums, research notebooks, and interesting memorabilia of Thrasher families.

John E. welcomed all new attendees, including Ivy Darnell (daughter of Bill Rhodes); Melanie Thrasher, (daughter of Bill H. and Juanita), and Karen Lynn Thrasher (daughter of Roger and Elizabeth Thrasher), also Ron Farrow (friend of Frankie Goldsby), Lee Thrasher (son of Hershel and Karen) and John Long, husband of Dr. Helen Ray Thrasher. He thanked the Grooms for hosting last year's successful reunion in Reidsville and complimented this year's hosts, David Sumner and Joe Stine, for the morning's amazing tour of Norcross.

Program:

- Bill H. spoke of his father, James Thomas Thrasher. Bill's story of his father's work ethic during the big snow in 1959 will be in the newsletter.
- Jim Moule spoke of his search to find all the descendants of Benjamin Thrasher. Benjamin died in Maryland around 1740 and is the earliest documentable ancestor in that lineage. Jim provided some details of his search for Stephen Thrasher, mentioned in a letter from his brother in Dr. Marion Thrasher's book. Eventually Jim found that Stephen's middle name was Boyd and that he had been part of the Black Hawk War. He had sons and grandsons who went to the Dakotas and Montana. Jim's database can be found by googling "James C. Moule" and looking under "Ball Family History." There is also a link to it under the

RESEARCH tab on the Thrasher Family Association WordPress webpage:
<https://thrasherfamilyassociation.wordpress.com/>

- Joe Stine posed the question, "Why wasn't Cousin John in the military?" It turns out that John was a legislator, representing Fulton County and actively involved in issues such as salt, slaves, railroads, cotton, schools, etc. Joe analyzed the actions of the legislature during Cousin John's time there and the success or nonsuccess of any bills he proposed. Joe's paper will appear in the newsletter.
- Elise Sumner led us in song. The first was "Be like John J. Thrasher, not Black Bart, a black sheep," which she had written and introduced us to at the 1994 reunion in Micanopy. Her second song was new, "Life gets better if you stick together. We are relatives –let's stay friends."
- David Sumner spoke of his appreciation to Dr. Gene Ramsey of Norcross for leading the tour in the morning. He emphasized that the invitation to hold the reunion in Norcross had come from the town's mayor, Bucky Johnson, after seeing David's book on Cousin John. Mayor Johnson would be speaking that evening at dinner.

Minutes: Minutes of last year's meeting were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: With both Buddy (Robert P. Thrasher), as treasurer, and Peggy Thrasher, as co-treasurer, absent, John E. presented the treasurer's report. As of May 31 of this year, TFA's account stands at \$4360.15. The report was accepted by those assembled. Eleanor distributed and collected renewal forms. The treasurer's report prepared by Robert "Buddy" Thrasher, Treasurer is attached below:

THRASHER FAMILY ASSOCIATION FINANCIAL REPORT
06/01/2014 THRU 05/31/2015

FINDS AVAILABLE TRUSTMARK NATIONAL BANK COL. MS 06/01/2014		\$3,260.07
DEPOSITS 06/01/2014 THRU 05/31/2015		\$1,100.00
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE 06/01/2014 THRU 05/31/2015		\$4,360.12
DISBURSEMENTS 06/01/2014 THRU 05/31/2015		
1. NEWSLETTER EXPENSE	\$422.34	
2. FAMILY TREE DNA 1 SCOLARSHIPS	\$153.00	
3. 2014 REUNION EXPENSE Joe Grooms	\$200.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES 06/01/2014 Thru 05/31/2015	\$775.34	\$775.34
FUNDS AVAILABLE TRUSTMARK NATIONAL BANK COL. MS 06/01/2015		\$3,584.79
NOTE: Included in general fund \$300.00 for yearly DNA scholarships		

Committee Reports:

DNA: Dr. Helen reported on her DNA study involving one of her cousins. This man had been distressed at DNA results showing that he matched a family of another surname, not the surname of his birth. Helen helped him dig into records and find someone of the new surname who did, indeed, turn out to be his biological half-brother. This finding turned Helen's former second cousin twice removed into her third cousin twice removed in his new family. Helen reports that she is delighted to have not lost him as a cousin, only to have switched him to the other side of her family tree.

Nancy reported that Rick Davidson had hoped to be here, as he is the one most conversant with the DNA project. He is working with researchers on a Big-Y project and had promised a breakthrough for Thrasher researchers in the Old George lineage. (Jack, Bill H., etc.)

Old Business:

Newsletter: Sue has been doing an excellent job of producing newsletters. Bonnie proposed that we e-mail the newsletter in pdf format and send hardcopy to only those without a computer. Susie liked this idea because it would allow her to include pictures in color – a desirable feature not now feasible with the cost of color printing. Newsletters would no longer be limited to a set number of pages. Susie will do a survey of our members to see if folks agree to receive their newsletters in digital form.

Website: Susie provided the password to the Membership Directory portion of the website. Susie has arranged it so that the directory links to email. Email her if you need the password. She hopes that someday the site will contain links to show whole descendant charts for each name clicked on.

Tombstones: John E. said that we should not forget about tombstones. He has received information about inexpensive (\$25) gravestone markers which we might consider. These markers are embedded in concrete at the gravesite.

Markers: Celestea commented on a marker outside of Bishop, GA erected by the DAR. She is going to see about a marker for the village of Salem. It would cost about \$1600. John asked her to write an article about it for the TFA newsletter. Celestea also reminded us that the church at Salem is completely maintained by descendants of the congregation who would appreciate donations to help with care of the church. "It is part of our heritage," she said.

John Paul has not yet looked into a marker for the Lick Fork church, but he will.

Digitizing: John wants to get the TFA newsletters digitized so that they can be sent to the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, the Library of Congress, the Frederick County Public Library in Maryland and the Georgia State Archives. John wants to put disks in these libraries. He has contacted several companies to ask for help but with no success. The project will involve digitizing about 1000 pages. Lee Thrasher thought that he could do this and will look into the task.

Atlanta History Center: According to Bonnie, the "Old Atlanta" exhibit is supposed to be ready to open January 16 at the Atlanta History Center.

New Business:

Election and By-laws: John was elected to remain as Chair by acclamation. Nancy will continue as recording secretary. Buddy will continue as treasurer, and Peggy as co-treasurer with Eleanor as a back-up for them. Bill H. will remain as our official photographer.

John E. asked for suggestions for amendments to the by-laws. He wants a vice president or a back-up for himself. Jim Moule proposed that John make specific suggestions for bylaws changes and bring them to the next meeting. Hershel suggested that the proposed changes be made known in the newsletter at least three months before next year's reunion. Bonnie remembered the discussion we held in Athens, and thought that we should elect a co-chair.

Next Year: John has some possibilities for next year's reunion but he would not reveal the possible hosts. He also is open to volunteers who would like to host. He asked what we would like to do at the reunions, and several people suggested that we include more time in the meetings for sharing.

Family News: Helen Raye Thrasher married John Long on November 1, 2014 at John's son's home in Hoover, AL. Helen is related to the Black Bart mentioned in Elise's song. David Sumner has recently retired from Ball State. His book on Cousin John, Railroad Man, is now distributed free of charge at the Norcross Visitor's Center. He is currently working on a book called Million Dollar Fumble about the football scandal between Georgia and Alabama. The book is expected to drop within the year. Glenda is recovering from a stroke. For a while she was at a hospital in Tupelo, but she is now at Windsor Place rehab facility in her hometown of Columbus, MS. George C's wife Gloria passed away last spring. Ken Sutherland's sister's husband Steve Kinte passed away at age 59. Steve was with us at the Jubilee in Maryland in 2007. Jim Thrasher has suffered a slight stroke and his wife Mary has broken her ankle. Ken Sutherland is writing a novel about Rome paying its soldiers in salt. John E. and Eleanor will soon celebrate their 60th anniversary. Dale and Trudy were unable to attend because of health issues. Al and Peggy had planned to attend, but a last-minute illness prevented it.

Merchandise: Susie distributed the Thrasher reunion totebags to those who had preordered them and sold the Thrasher hats she had ordered.

Door Prizes: Karen Thrasher helped Eleanor with the drawing. John Paul won the Thrasher tee-shirt. Ivy Darnall won the gift card. Lee Thrasher won the cork-lined wooden tray.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 4:20 p.m.

Group Picture: Bill H. took the group picture in the meeting room. He will create a composite photo, inserting photos of those not available at the time the group picture was taken and adding an interesting background.

Saturday Dinner: The group reassembled at the The Crossings steakhouse, housed in the old Norcross train station. Speaker Bucky Johnson, the mayor of Norcross, provided a rousing talk about his efforts to bring growth and a sense of community to the town.

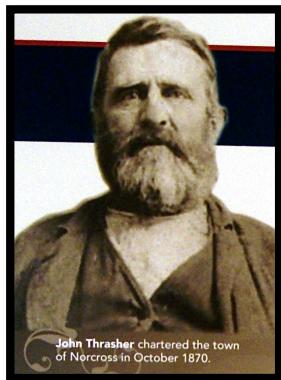
Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Thrasher Cherry, Recording Secretary

Meet Some of Our New TFA members

Col. Ashton L. & Rebecca Hayes, 3600 Katwallace Circle, Sumter, South Caroline 29154

Karen Thrasher, 207 Wedgewood Way, Atlanta, Georgia 30350

Pam, Randy and Jack Thrasher, 2798 Long Grove Drive, Marietta, Georgia 30062



Cousin John says, “Remember to renew!!”

IMPORTANT: Be sure to renew your Thrasher Family Association Membership for 2016. Dues are collected at the annual reunions each year. Eleanor collected 20 renewals in Norcross this year. Those of you who weren't there or haven't renewed yet, please mail your \$20 membership fee to the Thrasher Family Association Treasurer, Robert P. “Buddy” Thrasher at: 1047 Old McCrary Road, Columbus, MS 39702

Editor's Corner

Please continue to share your news and photos with your “cousins by the dozens”
Contacts:

Susie Q. Thrasher: 1101 Christian Drive, Watkinsville, GA 30677 or by email:
drsuetrasher@gmail.com

Nancy T. Cherry: 3100 Elkridge Court, Beltsville, MD 20705-3239 or email:
NancyTC@aol.com

John E. Thrasher: 6424 SE 169th Avenue, Micanopy, FL 32667 or email:
fish_jet@bellsouth.net

Be sure to visit **our Thrasher Family Association** website
at: <http://thrasherfamilyassociation.wordpress.com/>