
The Thrasher Newsletter

CoEditors: Sue Q. Thrasher & Nancy T. Cherry Circulation: John E. Thrasher III Volume 35 No.1 February 2017



*Let us love our family this Valentine's Day.
Make time for each other. Serve one another.
...and get together in May at our next reunion!*



Correcting the Record:

Dr. Thrasher's 1895 Book

Submitted by: James Moule
Berkeley, California

A History of the Thrasher Family written and published by Dr. Marion Thrasher in 1895 is invaluable to anyone researching a Thrasher family in America. It contains letters written to Dr. Thrasher that are primary evidence and contain information that is difficult or impossible to obtain from any other source.

However, Dr. Thrasher's book is based only on the recollections of his correspondents whose memory was sometimes aided by Bible records. It is not surprising that the farther back in time the book goes, the less accurate it is. It contains four major errors:

1. The "Three Brothers" myth.

Dr. Thrasher believed that all persons named Thrasher in America were related and could be traced to three brothers, Thomas, William, and John who emigrated from Wales and settled in "Redstone, Maryland". (Of these, John was Dr. Thrasher's ancestor.) This belief lead Dr. Thrasher to mix several unrelated Thrasher families together.

The myth that three brothers came to America and that one went here and another went there is a common myth in nineteenth century family histories. It is now known that John

Thrasher did indeed have brothers named Thomas and William. They, along with two additional brothers and three sisters were all born in Prince Georges (now Montgomery) County, Maryland, the children of Benjamin and Mary Thrasher. Whether the family came from Wales is not known. Different branches of descendants have different oral traditions on the origin of the family.

Part First of the book deals with Thomas Thrasher. His date of birth is correct. However, he never moved to Virginia. He died in Frederick County, Maryland in 1804. The account of his children is incomplete and incorrect and, in particular, his son John did not marry Susan Barton. DNA tests show that the John Thrasher who married Susan Barton is totally unrelated.

The account of the family of Elias Thrasher and Henrietta Lamar is fairly accurate with one major exception: It was Eli Thrasher who married Henrietta Lamar and was the father of the children listed. Eli's brother, Elias, married Sarah Lamar and had a family not discussed by Dr. Thrasher.

Part Second of the book deals with the family of William Thrasher. William actually stayed in Maryland, where he died in 1800. None of his children were born in Boston. There is a totally unrelated Thrasher family in New England and the William Thrasher, Jr. described in the book was probably part of that family.

2. Redstone, Maryland

No such place existed. However, it is easy to understand why Dr. Thrasher thought it did. Through oral tradition he knew that his ancestor, John, came from Maryland, which was true. He must also have heard that John lived at or near a place called "Redstone". What he did not know was that in about 1778 John Thrasher moved to the area not far from Fort Redstone (now Brownsville) in Western Pennsylvania and lived there for a dozen years before moving on to Pendleton County, Kentucky.

3. Revolutionary War Service

It is not surprising that Dr. Thrasher claims that his ancestor, John, entered the army as an officer at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and won distinction by his bravery. There is a natural tendency in oral traditions to exaggerate the military service of the persons described. What can be proved about John Thrasher's military service is as follows:

He served in the French and Indian War, participating in the campaign against Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh) from 9 October 1757 to 23 October 1758. He was probably under the command of then Colonel George Washington in that campaign.

John participated in preparations to resist the British. On 29 Nov 1775 John Thrasher was Ensign in Capt. William Luckett, Jr.'s company of militia, 4th Battalion in Frederick Co.,

MD. John's name is on a list of Associators in Frederick Co., MD dated December 1775. John Thrasher's name appears on a list of persons swearing loyalty to the United States in 1778 in Frederick County, Maryland. (His wife's father and her brother, Richard Ankrom Sr. and Jr., are on the same list.) However, it appears that John may not have seen active service. Thomas Weekley of Frederick County, in his pension application, says that he served a three-month tour of service in John Thrasher's place beginning in January 1777.

A list of troops under the command of James Archer, Captain, Fort Jackson, Washington County, PA dated 1782 includes the name John Thrasher, private. Nothing can be proved, but I believe that the record refers to John's son, John, Jr. John Jr. would have been 17 years old in 1782. The History of Adair Co., Missouri states that John, Jr. served in the Revolutionary War at age 18. It is also known that John, Jr.'s brother, Josiah, also served in Captain Archer's Company at Fort Jackson at that time.

4. The family of John and Elizabeth Thrasher

Part Third of the book deals with the family of John Thrasher, Dr. Thrasher's great great grandfather. It is not surprising that a genealogy based on oral tradition would have a number of errors about that distant generation. The major errors are:

- a. Dr. Thrasher was correct that John's wife was named Elizabeth, but she was Elizabeth Ankrom, daughter of Richard Ankrom of Frederick County, MD. The recollection of the name Hooker probably comes from remembering the Hook family of Frederick County that married into the Thrasher family in other generations. In particular, John's mother was Mary Hook.
- b. The stated families of John's sons Stephen and Josiah are relatively accurate, but the data given on John's other children is seriously flawed. First, John did not have a son Elijah and no sons went to Georgia. This error is the result of Dr. Thrasher's preconceived notion that all Thrashers must be related somehow. Second, John did not have a son, Elias. The family listed for Elias Thrasher is actually that of John's son, John, Jr. (with a few errors and omissions). This was a Missouri family, as stated.
- c. A seemingly small error that has misled many people is that John did not have a son named John F. Thrasher. His son was named John and he had no middle name or initial. That son, in turn, had a son named John F. Thrasher. Dr. Thrasher had these two generations confused and that has confused many people ever since. (In the early 1800s there were four men in Pendleton County, Kentucky named John Thrasher. Two of them married women named Elizabeth Rush. It is no surprise that Dr. Thrasher – or more likely his correspondents – were confused.)
- d. John Thrasher and Elizabeth Ankrom had several sons and a number of daughters of whom Dr. Thrasher was unaware. A complete account of this family is beyond the scope

of this essay. It can be found in the Three Generation project of the Mid Atlantic Thrasher Association.

General Observations

Having studied this book for over forty years, I have noticed a few things. Dr. Thrasher was a very good editor. People's names are always spelled the same wherever they appear. If an incorrect date appears in one place, the same incorrect date appears wherever else it is cited. Dr. Thrasher made errors, but they were not the result of carelessness.

If Dr. Thrasher gives a complete date (month, day, and year) he is correct. I have been able to compare most of his dates to primary sources (tombstones, wills, obituaries, Bible records, church records, etc.) and in every case they agree exactly.

If Dr. Thrasher just gives a whole year as a date, it is only an estimate—accurate to about plus or minus five years. He never used the word *circa*. Perhaps he thought it was understood.

While Dr. Thrasher made many errors about the relationships between people named Thrasher, statements about relationships to other families are accurate. For example, he says that Josiah Thrasher was married to Nancy Bonar, the daughter of John Bonar and Christe Inghram. Eventually I found the church record of the birth of Ann, the daughter of John Bonar and Christian Inghram in Baltimore (now Harford) County, Maryland. I have never found an instance in which primary sources have proved that Dr. Thrasher's statements about relationships to other families are incorrect.

Other Thrasher Families in the United States

Although Dr. Thrasher believed that all Thrashers in the United States were related, it now appears that most Thrashers in the United States are descended from at least seven different Colonial families:

1. Descendants of Benjamin Thrasher who settled near Rock Creek in Prince Georges Co. (now Montgomery Co.) Maryland by 1719. According to family tradition, Benjamin was of Welsh ancestry. This is the family described by Dr. Marion Thrasher¹.

Prince Georges Co., MD was the frontier when Benjamin settled there. A few descendants stayed in Western Maryland, but most followed the frontier as the nation expanded: first to Monongalia Co., VA (now Washington Co., PA) in 1773; then to Pendleton Co., KY in 1790; then to Rush Co., IN; Clermont Co., OH, Marion Co., MO; and Illinois in about 1820; then to Alabama, Texas, California and Oregon, by 1900 they were dispersed throughout the West.

Additions and corrections to Dr. Thrasher's book have been published in MATA DATA, the newsletter of the Mid-Atlantic Thrasher Association² An extensive account of some of the Missouri descendants has been published by Thrasher and Thrasher³

2. Descendants of John Thrasher who purchased land in Goochland County, Virginia in 1738. It is believed that this family originated in Great Britain.

John moved to Guilford (now Rockingham) Co., NC in 1761. Descendants moved to Georgia, Alabama, and Florida and are now dispersed throughout the Southland. A member of this family of historical note was "Cousin John" Thrasher the first merchant in Terminus (now Atlanta), GA. This large family has been documented by Rainer^{4,5}, and Pruett^{6,7,8}. Dr. Thrasher's book contains several letters from members of this family that were used by Rainer and Pruett.

3. Descendants of Christopher Thrasher who emigrated from Germany and settled in Fincastle, Botetourt Co., VA in about 1760.

Some of his descendants stayed in Virginia, some moved to Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Indiana. I do not know of a published genealogy of this family, but Dr. Thrasher's book contains two letters that are very valuable to those researching this family. Ellen Smith had prepared a carefully researched genealogy before her untimely death.

4. Descendants of Arthur Thresher of Reheboth, MA who m. Mary Goodrich on 21 Apr 1684 and descendants of Christopher Thrasher of Taunton, MA.

I have not studied these families, but am of the impression that descendants stayed in New England for quite a few generations. In the mid 1800s some descendants were in north Ohio. These families have been described by Thresher⁹ and Bonsall¹⁰.

5. Descendants of Richard Thrasher who made his will in Frederick County, VA in 1752. Descendants were first in Hampshire Co., VA; Piedmont, WV; Allegany Co., MD, and Tennessee. They have now spread throughout the south.

This family has been documented by Smyth¹¹. Other possible descendants have been documented in *The Thrasher Newsletter* published by the Thrasher Family Association¹².

6. Descendants of George Thrasher born about 1755 in North Carolina, and who died 13 July 1849 in Gwinnett County, Georgia. These descendants are now spread throughout the south. This family is documented in *The Thrasher Newsletter* Vol. 28, No. 1 December 2009 and Vol. 28 No. 2 March 2010 and Vol. 29, No. 4A October 2011.

7. Descendants of William Thrasher and Sarah Groce who arrived in North Carolina from England in 1764. Descendants moved first to Tennessee and southern Kentucky and are now spread throughout the south. This family is documented in *The Thrasher Newsletter*.

1 Dr. Marion Thrasher, A History of the Thrasher Family (San Francisco, 1895).

2 Mid-Atlantic Thrasher Association c/o Nancy Thrasher Cherry, 3100 Elkridge Court, Beltsville, MD 20705.

3 Laura Thrasher and Jo Anne Thrasher, Some Ancestors and Descendants of John W. Thrasher, (privately published, 2009)

4 Vessie Thrasher Rainer, Henry County Georgia, the Mother of Counties, (McDonough, GA, 1971).

5 Vessie Thrasher Rainer, Thrasher-Barton Descendants of Georgia, (McDonough, GA, 1977).

6 Dorothy Sturgis Pruett, Our Thrasher Heritage, (Macon, GA, 1986).

7 Dorothy Sturgis Pruett, Cousins by the Dozens, (Macon, GA 1975).

8 Dorothy Sturgis Pruett, Cousins by the Dozens - Supplement, (Macon, GA, 1978).

9 H. Hayward Thresher, The Threshers of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, (Tucson, AZ, 1986).

10 Grace P. Bonsall, Christopher Thrasher of Taunton and some of his Descendants, (Manuscript, 1950).

11 Norman A. Smyth and Marietta C. Smyth, Ancestors and Descendants of Norman Alexander Smyth and Marietta Curry Smyth (Washington, DC: privately published, 1992)

12 Thrasher Family Association, c/o John E. Thrasher III, 6424 S. E. 169th Ave, Micanopy, FL



Thrasher Family Association 2017 Reunion

May 5th, 6th and 7th 2017

Montgomery, Alabama

Alice and David Thrasher will be hosting this year's reunion in Montgomery, Alabama in May. They will be sharing more details about the reunion in the April newsletter. It is never too early to make your reservations:

Staybridge Suites-East Chase
7800 East Chase Parkway
Montgomery, AL 36117

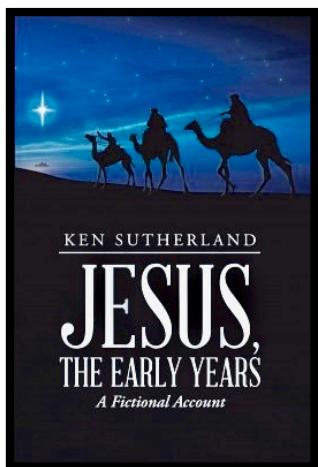
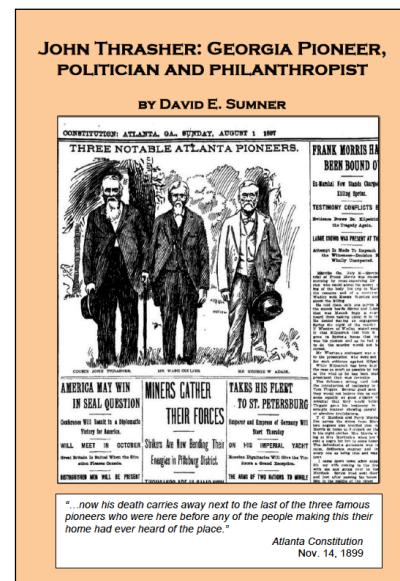
Call: 334-277-9383 and be sure to give them your code, TFA, to get the reunion rate.
You can also go online: **Staybridge/reservation**

It is important to book before the cut-off date of Midnight 04/14/17 to get the TFA rate.

John Thrasher: Georgia Pioneer, Politician, and Philanthropist published

David E. Sumner has published a new 36-page biography of Cousin John titled *John Thrasher: Georgia Pioneer, Politician, and Philanthropist* which is available in Kindle and print editions on Amazon.com. "It's a completely new and expanded version from the previous 24-page *Railroad Man* published four years ago. *Railroad Man* also had some factual errors," says David. "The new biography includes material about Cousin John's term in the General Assembly from 1859-1963, which was contributed by Joe Stine, and new details about how Cousin John founded Norcross based on Gene Ramsay's talk at the 2014 Norcross reunion. Gene also wrote an excellent introduction titled, "Railroads Created the Need for Atlanta." Finally, I found additional articles in the *Atlanta Constitution* between 1870 and 1900, which illustrated how famous and well-known Cousin John was in Atlanta for years after he moved away."

The book includes a bibliography of all known books and articles about Cousin John. Just search for "John Thrasher" on Amazon, where it sells for \$7.95 plus shipping. However, David will be selling copies for \$6 at the Montgomery reunion. He will give a short talk on his newly discovered research and plans to donate copies to Georgia libraries and archives to help assure Cousin John's place in the state's history. The Norcross Visitors Center has already ordered 100 copies of *John Thrasher: Georgia Pioneer, Politician, and Philanthropist*.



Ken Southerland's *Jesus, The Early Years* is out!

Our own, Ken Southerland has also published his book. I am so impressed with all of the writers we have in the family.

In *Jesus, the Early Years*, author Ken Sutherland brings alive the chaotic world of the beginning of the Christian era. This fictional account explains how a carpenter's son acquired such an understanding of the Jewish scriptures. This narrative answers many of the questions surrounding the story of Jesus and his family. How did Mary and Joseph, raised about ninety miles apart, meet? How did Jesus receive his education? Where did he obtain access to scrolls? Where did he spend his childhood? Who were the Magi and what drove them to travel hundreds of miles across the desert to Bethlehem? Which city in the world had the largest population of Jews? Filled with both historical and fictional accounts to suggest answers to these and many more questions, *Jesus, the Early Years* describes the tumultuous and unstable world of the Middle East under Roman rule and how Jesus and his fellow Jews lived during that time.

Ken has a website, www.jesustheearlyyears.com where you can order a book or you can order directly from Lulu.com

John E. Thrasher, President of Florida State University

I came home from work one day in about 1975 when Eleanor and I lived in Jacksonville, Florida to find a large color TV sitting in my driveway. The box was addressed to John E. Thrasher and a post office box number in Jacksonville. I knew who John was as his name appeared in the Newspaper occasionally for he was involved in local politics. I also knew that he lived in Orange Park, a few miles away. Since the delivery company couldn't deliver the TV to a PO Box, they looked in the telephone Directory and saw my name, which in that listing did not have the III following it. So the TV was delivered to me!



I phoned John and our first meeting was when he came for his TV. It was a nice "get acquainted" meeting and since that time we have seen John and his wife Jean and corresponded numbers of times. John has been very involved with politics and certainly now holds a most prestigious position. From my view point he does have at least one major flaw: He's not interested in family genealogy!

A friend of mine taught at Robert E. Lee Senior High School in the late 1950s and knew John as a student there. Because John and I had the same name, I was told about him. John's parents lived on Myra Street in Jacksonville and are listed in the City Directories for that time.

When Susie included the article about John in the March 2015 issue of the Thrasher Newsletter, I decided to research his family line and using the Jacksonville City Directories, located his parents. It was then with great pleasure that I discovered that I already had his father's genealogy in the computer and 99% of John's line had been already printed in the Thrasher Newsletters:

Thrasher Newsletter, December 2012: Benjamin Thrasher, c 1753 - May 1801
Benedict Randal Thrasher, 1792 - before Oct. 1852
Thrasher Newsletter, April 2013: Sabrina Thrasher, c 1820 - c 1880
Harriet Thrasher, Oct. 1835 - after 1900
William Thrasher, May 1859 - before 1910
Julius P. Thrasher, April 1891 -
William L. Thrasher, 1917 - 1986
John E. Thrasher, 1943, S. C.

Submitted by John E. Thrasher III



James F. "Jim" Thrasher Passes Away

Published in Lake City Reporter on Jan. 24, 2017

Mr. James F. "Jim" Thrasher, 70 of Lake City, passed away on Friday, January 20, 2017 at the Haven Hospice Suwannee Valley Care Center in Lake City. He was born in Fort Payne, Alabama to the late Nona B. and Gaston Falls Thrasher. Mr. Thrasher was a graduate of Columbia High School class of 1964. He retired as the

Operations Sergeant Major in 1996 after 29 1/2 years of service with the United States Army and the Florida National Guard having served with the 83rd Troop Command. Mr. Thrasher also worked with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement from 2002-2011 serving as an Administrative Assistant in the Live Oak Field Office and he was also the Veterans Service Officer for Columbia County from 2012-2015. He was a member of Wellborn Baptist Church, the Sons of the American Revolution Lake City Chapter serving as a color guard member and President from 2011-2012, and he was an avid Alabama fan. Mr. Thrasher was preceded in death by one brother, Joe Leonard Thrasher.

Survivors include his wife of 34 years, Mary Howell Thrasher, Lake City; two sons, John Thrasher and wife Teresa of Lake City and Alan Raulerson and wife Stacy of Ft. Myers; two daughters, Traci Norris and husband Anthony and Sherri Lee and husband Don all of Lake City; one niece, Joella Cupit and husband Ken, Liberty, MS; nine grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Funeral services were conducted on Wednesday, January 25, 2017, in the Chapel of Gateway-Forest Lawn Funeral Home with Pastor Rusty Bryan of Wellborn Baptist Church officiating and assisted by Mr. Dwight Law. Interment followed at Mt. Beulah Baptist Church Cemetery in Wellborn. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Haven Hospice Suwannee Valley Care Center at 6037 W US Hwy 90, Lake City, FL 32055 or the Wellborn Baptist Church Missions Fund at P.O. Box 228, Wellborn, FL 32094. Arrangements are under the direction of GATEWAY-FOREST LAWN FUNERAL HOME, 3596 S US Hwy 441, Lake City. 386-752-1954 Please leave words of comfort for the family at www.gatewayforestlawn.com

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

Query



<http://thrashertrailways.com>
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David Sumner took this photo of a Thrasher Brothers Trailways bus at a hotel in Muncie, Indiana. The website stated they are based in Birmingham, Alabama but doesn't give their names. Does anyone know if they are related?

Thrasher Descendants

We're always talking about the younger generation. Well, I want all the Thrasher kin to know we have some stalwart young boys to carry on! This is Corin and Felix Golding, my grandsons in their tree house.

They are the greatgrandchildren of Caroline and Warren A. Thrasher, founding members of the Thrasher Family Association.



Submitted by Susie Thrasher

Please continue to share your news and photos with your "cousins by the dozens"

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