
The Thrasher Newsletter

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SUMMER 2024

The ties that bind



Twenty first century Thrasher descendants meet "Cousin John" Thrasher, along with some of his 19th century friends in historic downtown Norcross during the 50th Thrasher Family Association reunion.

By PAULA THRASHER

The historic railroad town of Norcross, founded by "Cousin John" Thrasher in 1870 and named for his good friend and fourth Mayor of Atlanta Jonathan Norcross, was the setting for the 50th Annual Thrasher Family Reunion May 31-June 2, 2024.



Those who attended enjoyed a weekend of fun and discovery and left with a patchwork of memories:

- Gathering Friday night for a lively (and loud) evening of dinner and drinks (another round, please) at the aptly named Iron Horse Tavern in the charming downtown.



John Thrasher & Dr. David Thrasher



(L) John Thrasher, David Thrasher, Alice Thrasher, Celestea Sharp, Jacob Wang, Charity Wang, Steve Wang, (C) Linda Bishop, (R) Paula Thrasher, Joan Stine, Joe Stine, David Sumner



Elise & David Sumner, Joe & Joan Stine



Susie Thrasher & Jennifer McGrath (daughter)

- Checking door prize ticket numbers at the Saturday morning business meeting in hopes of winning one of the coveted mounted railroad spikes fashioned by TFA member Klaus Darnall. (Members got a sneak preview when Norcross mayor Craig Newton was presented one after his welcome message in which he acknowledged “Cousin John” as the town’s founder.)



Front (L to R) Linda Bishop, Jennifer McGrath, Susie Thrasher, Celestea Sharp, Paula Thrasher, Joan Stine, Carol Bishop, (Back L to R) Steve, Jacob and Charity Wang, Alice & David Thrasher, Mayor Craig Newton, David & Elise Sumner, Joe Stine, John Paul Thrasher, Dan Bishop



Joan Stine



Klaus Darnall's handiwork

- Listening as author Mark Pifer recounted the oft-told but always amusing tale of the fiery Irishwoman Mrs. Mulligan hosting the first party in Atlanta, thanks to her cabin's new wood floor – installed by "Cousin John" as a condition for her husband's employment as foreman on his railroad embankment project (for which he was paid the princely sum of \$25,000). Appropriately, "Cousin John" was the guest of honor. As the story goes, he danced until one of his boot heels came off and he continued in a hippity-hop fashion.



(L to R) Celestea Sharp, Dr. David Thrasher, Mark Pifer (author) & Don Law

- Vying for one of the chicken salad croissants from Newk's (sorry to the less-in-demand turkey and ham sammies) as we picnicked in Thrasher Park named for you-know-who. We washed down our boxed lunches with homemade iced tea and lemonade provided by Steve and Charity Wang and son Jacob.



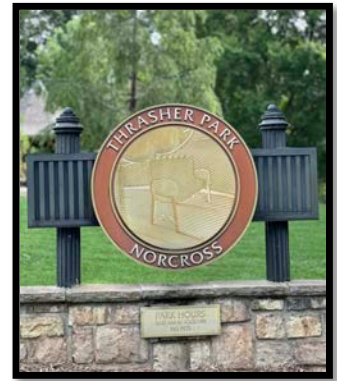
Above (L to R) Dr. David Thrasher, Alice Thrasher, Joe & Angie Grooms, Elise & David Sumner



Right: Peggy Thrasher Law & Don Law

- Learning from local historian Dr. Gene Ramsay as he shared his research on the early history of Norcross and the vision “Cousin John” had for the town.

- Strolling downtown sidewalks to hear stories from the past shared by reenactors from the Lionheart Theatre Company in 19th century costumes at key historic sites – including yarns spun by “Cousin John” brought back to life by one of the Lionheart reenactors. “Cousin John” handed out “deeds” to some Norcross real estate to his friends. What a delightful way to experience history!



Dr. Gene Ramsay



Mark Pifer with David & Elise Sumner



Joe & Joan Stine



Paula & John Thrasher with Norcross Welcome Center Director Stephanie Newton

- Capping our railroad-themed weekend, we returned downtown from the Crowne Plaza to the to The Crossing Steakhouse in the historic Norcross Depot, hard by the railroad tracks, for our closing dinner. As we dined on steak, salmon and chicken on the private deck overlooking a row of shops and restaurants on South Peachtree Street, the sound of train whistles and the clackety-clack of railroad wheels on steel rails punctuated our conversations. While there wasn't much free time for shopping over the busy weekend, the evening's door prizes offered a small sample with goodies from downtown merchants including A Taste of Britain, Good Things Home and Garden, and VSOP Olive Oil & Vinegar Taproom. We even gave away the best-that-Publix-sells floral centerpieces!



(L to R) Steve Wang, Charity Wang, Dan Bishop



(L to R) Jacob Wang, Peggy Thrasher Law



(L to R) Linda Bishop, Angie Grooms, Joe Grooms, Celestea Sharp



TFA president John Thrasher & Paula Thrasher

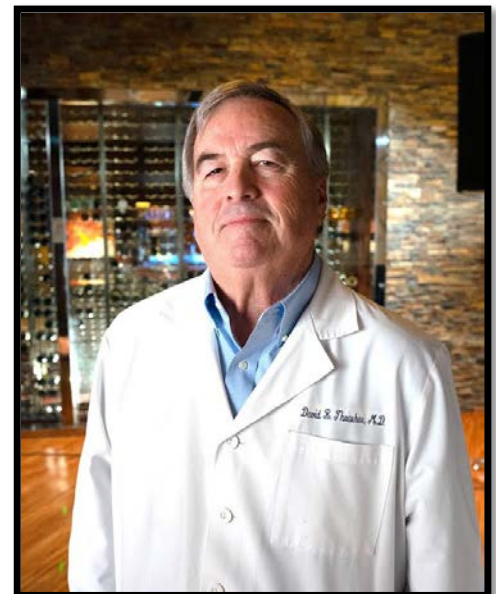
After dinner and several rounds of door prize giveaways, we returned to the Crowne Plaza and the Danville Ballroom to continue sharing stories with our cousins. On Sunday morning, over breakfast and several cups of coffee, we said our goodbyes and began talking about the 51st TFA Reunion. Chattanooga? Could be. If anybody has any other ideas, please let us know. More on the 2025 Reunion plans in the fall newsletter. Hope to see you next year.

TFA has our own Hall of Famer

By PAULA THRASHER

TFA member Dr. David Thrasher, M.D. has been selected for the Alabama Health Care Hall of Fame Class of 2024. He becomes only the fifth medical doctor from Montgomery to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Other honorees include Dr. Regina Benjamin, 18th U.S. Surgeon General and Dr. Marnix E. Heersink, for whom the University of Alabama Birmingham Medical Center is named.

Many of you are aware that “Dr. David,” as he is known in TFA circles is widely known for his leadership in the field of pulmonary medicine and his unwavering commitment to the state’s wellbeing during the COVID 19 pandemic. He worked tirelessly to educate the public about the virus and was responsible for introducing Monoclonal antibodies to Alabama and the south. Hundreds of patients came from across the southeast and as far away as Wyoming and Europe to receive this early treatment that is credited with helping hospitals from being overrun. He often was called to appear on local and national broadcast media to give updates on where we stood in the battle against COVID 19. He also was the go-to source for print media and across the country.

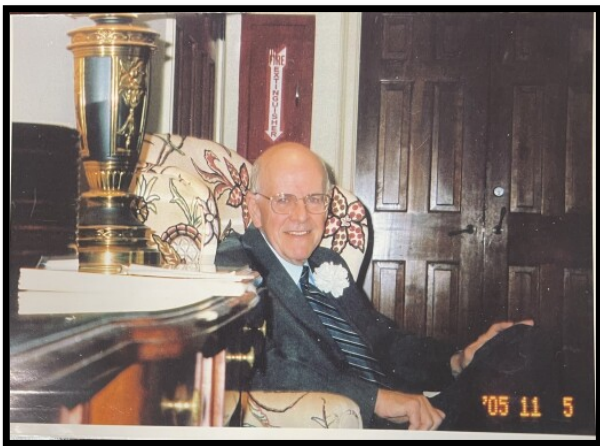


Dr. David Thrasher

He has been honored by Alabama Governor Kay Ivey as well as the Alabama Legislature for his work during the pandemic. Because of his work and tenacity, he has been credited with saving thousands of lives. His work with the Poarch Band of the Creek Indians was said to be “heaven sent.” Even though he could have retired he chose instead to push on with his work to save lives spending days on end at the hospital rarely taking a break. Such devotion to his calling did not go unnoticed, and rightly so. (We think his wife, Alice, who supported him during this time deserves her own award)

The TFA would like to congratulate the good doctor for this very special -- and well-deserved -- recognition. We are honored to call him our friend and fellow TFA member. As we say down South, Dr. David you’ve done us proud!

Obituary: William Rhodes



June 30, 1926 — July 14, 2024

William Spencer "Bill" Rhodes, age 98, passed away July 14, 2024, in Atlanta, Ga. He was born June 30, 1926, in Atlanta, Ga., to Thomas Melvin Rhodes and Mattie Lee Thrasher Rhodes. He is the father of TFA member Ivy Rhodes Darnall.

Bill graduated from Atlanta Boys High School in 1944, Emory University Law School in 1950, and Georgia State University in 1954. Bill served in the U.S. Navy in WWII and the Korean War and was a member of the U.S.S Frank Knox DDR 742 Reunion Association.

As an attorney from 1950 until 2016, Bill believed success was in how many people he was able to help and not in how much money he might have made. He volunteered legal services to more than 100 churches, more than 100 ministers, more than 100 missionaries, and many more.

At different times for more than 60 years, beginning in the 1950s, Bill held Baptist Laymen positions with Capital View Baptist Church, Briarlake Baptist Church, Briarcliff Baptist Church, Atlanta Baptist Association, Georgia Baptist Convention, Atlanta Baptist College/Mercer University, Southern Baptist Convention, Norman Junior College, Baptist World Alliance, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia.

He also served on the Board of Directors of Books for the World, Yazoo City, Miss.; Macedonian Call Foundation, Boys High Alumni Association, and King's Bridge Retirement Center. Bill loved to travel and visited all 159 counties in Georgia, all 50 of the United States and several territories, and more than 60 foreign countries.

Bill was predeceased by his wife of 56 years, Fay Ball Rhodes, who died in 2004. Also, his sisters, Anne Rhodes Dishner and Mary Virginia Rhodes Gormley; and brothers, Travis Melvin Rhodes and Frank Gerald Rhodes.

He is survived by brother, C.J. (Charlie) Rhodes, children William Clinton "Clint" Rhodes, Ivy Rhodes Darnall (Klaus), Kathy Rhodes Davis (Bob), and Rebecca "Becca" Rhodes Hayes (Ashton); his grandchildren: Clinton Hall Rhodes, Elizabeth Weck Darnall, Taylor Rhodes Polky (Sylvanus), Whitney Davis Arnall (Justin), Mary Chandler "M.C." Rhodes, Kelsey Davis Hanna (Will), William Parker Rhodes (Christie), William James Hayes, and Zachary George Hayes, and eight great grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were handled by A.S. Turner & Sons, Decatur, Ga.

The visitation was July 19, 2024, followed by the funeral service.

In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to:

First Baptist Church of Decatur, 308 Clairmont Road, Decatur, Ga. 30030, or Kingsbridge Retirement Community, 3055 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30329.



The Thrasher Family Association is self-supporting through the dues and contributions of our members. Dues are \$20 and support our newsletter, website and research costs.



Please make your check payable to **The Thrasher Family Association** and mail to our treasurer:

Warren A. Thrasher, Jr., 50 Sassafras Trail,
Savannah, Georgia 31404

Obituary: Robert Patton Thrasher, Jr. (1936-2024)

Robert Patton “Buddy” Thrasher Jr., age 88, of Clovis, New Mexico, formerly of Columbus, Miss., passed away June 13, 2024, at UMC Hospital in Lubbock, Texas.

Buddy, as he was affectionately known to family and friends, was born March 21, 1936, in Pickens County, Ala., to the late Robert Patton Thrasher Sr. and Mary Thrasher. After graduating from New Hope High School, he served in the U.S. Army. Upon his return from the Army, he settled back in Columbus and worked for United Technologies as an engineer. He married his high school sweetheart, and they enjoyed 62 years of marriage.



He is preceded in death by his wife, Glenda Joy Thrasher, his daughter Patricia Joy Thrasher Gore, and his great-grandson Indiana Renaud.

He is survived by his sons Bobby Thrasher (Lanette) of Columbus, Miss.; Marshall Thrasher of Clovis, N.M.; sisters Nellie Gildon, Lanada Marcinko (Ron), Shirley Nance, Angie Whitten, and Tammie Burgess; grandchildren Suzanna Renaud, Garrett Thrasher, Zak Thrasher, Madison Thrasher, Emily Plemons, Mary Ann Thrasher, Trenton Thrasher, and Clayton Thrasher; and eight great-grandchildren.

Pallbearers were his grandchildren, and honorary pallbearers were members of the American Legion.

Visitation was June 19, 2024, at Memorial Gunter Peel Funeral Home. Funeral services were June 20, 2024, at Memorial Gunter Peel Chapel with Rev. Scott Cappleman officiating. The interment followed at Mt Vernon Cemetery in Columbus, Miss., with military honors.



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE THRASHER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THRASHER FAMILY REUNIONS

NORCROSS, GEORGIA

JUNE 1, 2024

Attending: Carol Bishop, Athens, GA; Dan Bishop, Tucker, GA; Linda Bishop, Athens, GA; Peggy & Don Law, Watkinsville, GA; Angie & Joe Grooms, Davidson, NC; Celestea Sharp, Oconee County, GA; Joan & Joe Stine, Orlando, FL; Elise & David Sumner, Anderson, IN; Alice & Dr. David Thrasher, Montgomery, AL; Paula & John Paul Thrasher, Newnan, GA; Susie Thrasher & Jennifer McGrath, Watkinsville, GA; and Charity, Steve & Jacob Wang, Buford, GA. Guests included the following: Mayor Craig L. Newton, Norcross, GA; Mark Pifer, Decatur, GA; and Dr. Gene Ramsay, Norcross, GA.

Welcome: John Paul Thrasher, Chairman of TFA, welcomed everyone at 9:01 a.m. He first introduced Craig L. Newton, the Mayor of Norcross, who extended his a warm welcome to all the Thrasher descendants assembled in Norcross. He offered his congratulations to our group on our 50th family reunion. Mayor Newton talked about “Cousin John” Thrasher, the founder of Norcross, as being “a visionary developer.” He remarked on the importance of staying connected to our roots, which we are demonstrating through holding our reunion in Norcross once again. President John Paul Thrasher thanked the mayor for joining us and gave him one of the mounted railroad spikes bearing the phrase “Thrasher 2024,” which Klaus Darnall fashioned especially for our reunion this year.

Call to Order: Following the mayor’s remarks, John Paul called the business meeting to order. The meeting was held in the Danville Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta NE, 6050 Peachtree Industrial Blvd, Norcross, GA 30071. John Paul noted that this year marks our third reunion held in Norcross, the last being held in 2015. John Paul thanked David and Elise Sumner for all their efforts in hosting the 2024 reunion in Norcross. David Sumner responded that he had greatly enjoyed planning the reunion. He stated that “Cousin John” Thrasher was his great-great-grandfather. “Cousin John” was buried in Dade City, Florida, where David grew up.

Door Prizes: Between business discussions, Paula Thrasher passed out tickets to all members present and began drawings for door prizes. Among the interesting door prizes were a dozen more of the mounted railroad spikes crafted by Klaus Darnall.

Approval of Last Year's Minutes: Vice President Celestea Sharp read aloud the minutes of our 2023 business meeting in the absence of Secretary Nancy Cherry. Dr. David Thrasher moved to accept them as written; Joe Stine seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Steve Wang formally became, as of November 22, 2023, the TFA Assistant Treasurer. He gave the current Treasurer's report in the absence of our new Treasurer, Warren A. Thrasher, Jr. Following Angie Grooms' stepping down as Treasurer, Warren has served as Treasurer since November 22, 2023. Steve stated that, as of May 30, 2024, TFA's checking account balance stands at \$5,198.99. The account has been held by Bank of America in Savannah, GA, since November 24, 2023. Steve Wang also announced that he is set up to receive annual dues at our reunion. Dues remain at \$20 for 2024.

John Paul noted that \$500 of TFA's checking account balance will be withdrawn to cover expenses by the hosts for this year's reunion (Elise and David Sumner of Anderson, Indiana).

Discussion following the Treasurer's Report included a question regarding how members can pay dues if they are unable to attend a reunion. Paula Thrasher responded that each of our four newsletters every year contains information about ways to pay dues. Peggy Thrasher Law raised the question of whether we should increase the \$500 amount given by the TFA to the reunion host each year to cover the various costs of hosting. David Sumner suggested that we might raise the amount next year to \$600 given the recent inflation. Susie Thrasher then stated she feels the reunion organizers should be reimbursed for all their expenses in connection with hosting. Dr. David Thrasher moved that the TFA reimburse the organizers in full for the costs of the reunion. Next, Joe Stine seconded this motion. Finally, the motion was passed unanimously.

Dr. David Thrasher made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Susie Thrasher seconded the motion, and the report was approved unanimously.

TFA Entity Update: John Paul announced that we officially became a legal entity by way of Articles of Incorporation approved by the Secretary of State of Georgia on October 27, 2023. As the "Thrasher Family Association, Inc.," we are now a domestic nonprofit corporation.

Incorporation allows our organization to have a bank account in its own name and will also allow our webmaster, Susie Thrasher, to set up an electronic dues collection system on the TFA website discussed at prior reunions. TFA has been assigned a nine-digit number, called an Employer Identification Number (EIN), by the IRS used to identify the tax accounts of employers and certain others who have no employees. The IRS uses the number to identify taxpayers who are required to file various business tax returns.

John Paul used the law firm of Sumner Meeker in Newnan, Georgia, to handle the business of incorporating the Thrasher Family Association. We still need to decide whether to apply for 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit organization. Nonprofit status would allow those who donate to our organization to receive tax benefits.

Our fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. Members usually pay dues for the following year at our annual meetings or by mail shortly afterward.

Membership Report: Since Terry Thompson had other obligations that required him to step down as Membership Ambassador last year, John Paul asked Dr. David Thrasher to take on this role. He has accepted and will now serve as our Membership Ambassador.

Newsletter Update: Newsletter Editor Paula Thrasher asked the group for newsletter articles or member profiles, obituaries, marriages, any interesting trips members have taken, or the graduation of a family member. She also stated that if one of us has an idea for an article, the newsletter staff can write it for the member if he or she shares it with them. Further ideas Paula mentioned were sending in a photo of a Thrasher mother or father with a short article and sending in a genealogy of various Thrasher lines. Next, she stated that if a member has a DNA genealogy question, he or she can send it to the newsletter, and they can get Nancy Cherry to answer the genealogy question. Finally, Paula added that we can contact her by calling or texting [770-328-7716](tel:770-328-7716) or e-mailing to pthrasher@numail.org.

John Paul announced that we are no longer using Google Groups to send out the TFA newsletter via e-mail. We can still mail a printed copy of the newsletter upon request. We are now using the Gmail distribution list feature. John Paul added that it is important that the names and e-mail addresses of TFA members be updated as needed to ensure all our members receive the TFA Newsletter and other communications.

Website Update: John Paul thanked the TFA webmaster Susie Thrasher (aka Dr. Sue Thrasher) for her work on the TFA website. Susie projected the website homepage on a screen for everyone to see and showed some of the content. She mentioned that it is available on the Internet at www.thrasherfamilyassociation.com. She also shared the

password with those present to access the full website, including the member directory. Susie also reminded the group that members can submit a request from the website, and she will email them the password. Susie led a discussion about using a “payment button” on the website that would allow members to pay their dues and have the funds automatically deposited in the TFA bank account. Susie will be working with the treasurer and assistant treasurer to determine the best way to add that feature to the TFA website.

The website offers unlimited space for accompanying photographs. Photographs should be sent to Susie electronically, each with a description of the individuals, date, and location. A few years ago, Susie started a gallery of Thrasher ancestors.

DNA Project Report (Reprinted from 2023 Minutes): Our Thrasher/Thresher DNA project was started in 2005, when only the Y-chromosome (which only males have) could be tested, but that was what we needed to sort the various Thrasher families we came across. Fifteen men joined the project that first year. At the time, the greatest number of markers that could be tested was 37. Now the company can test 111 markers, and it even offers the Big Y-700 test.

The Big Y not only tests more markers, to further define relationships, but it also tests indicators that allow us to trace our ancestors’ migrations through time and geography. As of May 29, 2023, we had 123 individuals in our project, with 82 of them involved in Y-DNA testing, although one of the men entered twice under slightly different names. The company tested him a second time after he refuted the results of the first test. The second test results were identical to those of the first test. Thirty-nine males and females have bought the Family Finder autosomal DNA test and 31 have purchased a mitochondrial DNA test.

Our testing company, Family Tree DNA of Houston, Texas, also offers X-chromosome testing. Other testing companies such as Ancestry.com, 23andMe, My Heritage, and Living DNA offer only autosomal-DNA testing. For autosomal testing, researchers recommend that we “fish in all ponds” to find more matches. Ancestry.com has the largest database of individuals who have tested their autosomal DNA.

Nancy has a few Y-37 tests and Family Finder tests on hand. Because these are old tests, they are offered for TFA members’ use at no cost. Contact Nancy to see if what you need is available. If not, our testing company and the other testing companies often hold sales around holidays. There will be a more complete report of our DNA project in a future newsletter.

New Business: The only new business was the Election of Officers.

Election of Officers: The current officers are John Paul Thrasher, Chairman; Celestea Sharp, Vice-Chairman; Nancy Cherry, Secretary; Warren Thrasher, Jr., Treasurer; Steve Wand, Assistant Treasurer; and Dr. David Thrasher, Membership Ambassador.

Joe Stine conducted the election of officers. Joe motioned to open nominations for new officers; Linda Bishop seconded the motion. When no one offered any nominations, Joe Stine then motioned to close nominations. Linda Bishop seconded this motion. Joe Stein then moved to re-elect the current officers. Linda Bishop seconded, and the current officers were re-elected by acclamation.

Reunion 2025: Due to a packed schedule for our business meeting, we did not discuss plans for next year's reunion. However, during breakfast on the morning after the business meeting, Dr. David and Alice Thrasher, Angie and Joe Grooms, John Paul and Paula Thrasher, Celestea Sharp, and Linda Bishop considered the idea of holding the 2025 reunion in Chattanooga, TN. All agreed that we should investigate this possibility.

Update on TFA Members Not Present: Ivy and Klaus Darnall were unable to attend because of a previously planned trip to Scotland. However, they made a great contribution to everyone's enjoyment of the reunion by providing more than a dozen mounted railroad spikes bearing the phrase "Thrasher 2024." Klaus Darnall located and finished the railroad spikes and mounted them on finished wooden frames.

Special Speaker: David Sumner introduced our speaker, Mark Pifer, from Decatur, GA. Pifer is the author of "The Hidden History of Old Atlanta." He made a fascinating presentation to our group about "Cousin John" Thrasher's role in the early years of Thrasherville and Terminus before it was incorporated as Marthasville in 1843 and Atlanta in 1845. He described "Cousin John" as "a really, really unusual, very intelligent, and charismatic personality." Operating in an early Atlanta that "was literally the Wild West," "Cousin John" at age 21 successfully bid \$25,000 to build the Monroe Embankment - the oldest man-made construction in downtown Atlanta. In order to hire the most qualified foreman for his Irish workers, a Mr. Mulligan, "Cousin John" built the first house with a wooden floor in what would become Atlanta. Otherwise the foreman's wife would not consent to her husband's employment. After it was built and the foreman hired, Mrs. Mulligan threw the first party in Atlanta, with "Cousin John" as the guest of honor. The TFA thanked Mark Pifer at the end of

his very interesting remarks and presented him with one of the mounted railroad spikes made by Klaus Darnall.

Adjournment: Dr. David Thrasher made a motion to adjourn the business meeting, and Susie Thrasher seconded the motion. Then, the group voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting ended at approximately 11:45 a.m. Our group moved on to Thrasher Park in downtown Norcross for a box lunch and the opportunity to listen to another wonderful talk involving “Cousin John” Thrasher by Norcross historian, Dr. Gene Ramsay.

Respectfully submitted,
Celestea Sharp, Vice-Chairman
In absence of Nancy Cherry, Secretary
Thrasher Family Association

Editor’s Note

The Thrasher Family Association newsletter needs your input. Share ideas for stories – or better yet, suggest an article you'd like to submit. We're looking for profiles of TFA members, articles focused on family history and heritage, genealogy, photographs, reviews of books on topics related to the family, features on books written by members, and news about people and places. Get in touch with newsletter editor Paula Thrasher by calling or texting [770-328-7716](tel:770-328-7716) or email to pthrasher@numail.org. The newsletter is published four times a year on a seasonal basis and is published via email.

Staff members include:

Paula Thrasher, newsletter editor
David E. Sumner, chief contributing writer
Sue Q. Thrasher, layout and design
John Paul Thrasher, production director

Keep Scrolling!

Don’t miss the Photo Gallery that follows!



Two John Thrashers chat as Norcross citizens from the past and visitors look on



This sculpture marks the Eastern Continental Divide



Don & Peggy Law



Many thanks to Peggy Thrasher Law who provided the photography for this newsletter.

THE END!

**Remember you can always send your
photos for future newsletters!**