
The Thrasher Newsletter

Volume 42. No.2

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

Savannah Farewell



TFA Reunion 2023 Attendees Delight in Historic Savannah

The group gathered for dinner in the Anne Bonny Room at the Pirates House on May 6. Pictured are (front row, L-R) Linda Bishop, Nancy Cherry, Jennifer McGrath, Marianna Rhodes, Jacob Wang, Ivy Darnall, Joan Stine and Emily Thrasher; (back row, L-R) Chris Cherry, John Thrasher, Steve Wang, Don Law, Peggy Thrasher Law, Susie Thrasher, Paula Thrasher, Celestea Sharp, Bruce Rhodes, Joe Stine, Carol Bishop, Klaus Darnall and Warren Thrasher. (Not pictured Charity Wang)

By PEGGY THRASHER LAW

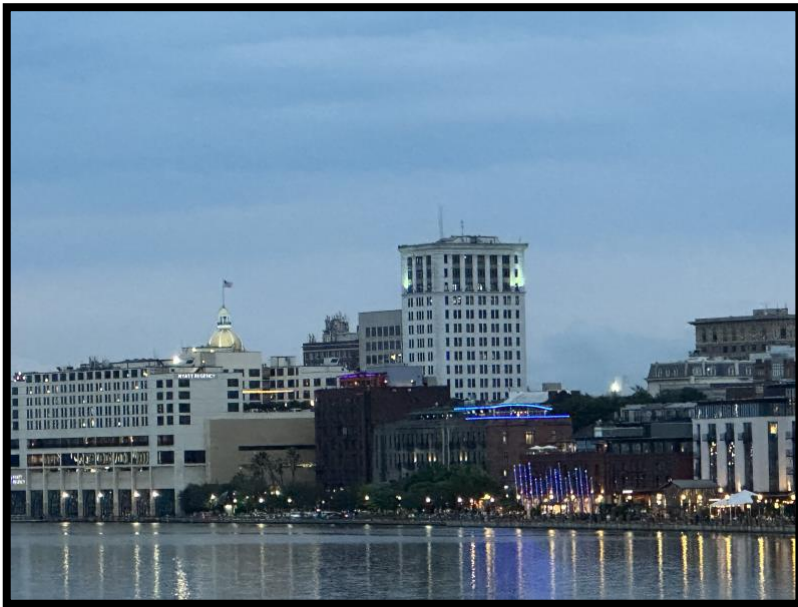
Ambling through Savannah's 22 historic squares resplendent with lofty, Spanish moss-covered oaks, hearing the soft conversation of pedestrians and the easy-going clopping from horse-drawn carriages, smelling the sugary aroma of sweet treats and Lowcountry spices in the air, you just may have passed a trolley filled with raucous Thrashers, history buffs all, loudly illuminating our tour guide with a finer point of Georgia history exclaiming, "*ACTUALLY*, before Marthasville, Atlanta was known as Thrasherville!" Cousin John would be proud! And so, the 49th Annual Thrasher Family Association Reunion attendees drew together for a weekend of fellowship and storytelling in centuries-old Savannah on May 5-7.

The last of the original 13 colonies, Georgia was named after England's King George II. Savannah became its first city when British General James Oglethorpe and 120 passengers aboard the ship Anne made landfall in 1733 along the bluffs of the Savannah River. Today, convivial and charming, Savannah is known as the "Hostess City of the South." In the spirit of that gracious hospitality, our president John Paul Thrasher and his wife Paula, as well as local Savannahians Warren and Emily

Thrasher, welcomed us all as we congregated at the Planters Inn on beautiful Reynolds Square overseen by a statue of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. It is fitting for us to have been well ensconced on this square since The Rev. John Bugg Thrasher, father of Col. Warren A. Thrasher, was a Methodist preacher in Georgia. TFA member Celestea Sharp authored a wonderful article about the Oconee County, Georgia home of Judge B.E. Thrasher, father of The Rev. John Bugg Thrasher, in a 1991 issue of Athens Magazine, which included a discussion of Salem Methodist Church where many Thrashers are laid to rest.

Fortified by gift bags filled with snacks and city guides, courtesy of Warren and Emily, our crew met in the lobby Friday evening and set out for River Street, where Savannah's historic cotton warehouses have been converted into unique shops, hotels and restaurants along a cobblestone street. Despite the rain, with umbrellas in hand and lifts from the "Thrasher brothers' shuttle service," we all made it to the dock to board the Georgia Queen, an old-fashioned paddleboat with three levels and an open-air top deck.

Our three-hour tour on the entertainment dinner cruise (cue the "Gilligan's Island" theme song) was quite the melodic ride! Two long tables filled with Thrashers posed a jovial picture. An extensive buffet was offered, including Lowcountry shrimp and grits and key lime pie. After supper, many revelers chose to escape, dare I say it,



Top: Joe and Joan Stein on deck with Celestea Sharp

Left: From aboard the Georgia Queen, we took in the sight of Savannah's beautiful skyline.

the acoustically challenged musician, to watch a quiet sunset topside. The Savannah River rolled along peacefully. Small clusters of folks, with libations, held conversations. Linda Bishop and Nancy Cherry found a quiet table to have a confab. From the open-air promenade, you could peer through the window and catch sight of Susie Thrasher and her daughter, Jennifer McGrath, cutting the rug on the dining room's dance floor. Don and Peggy Thrasher Law, Celestea, John, Joe Stine, Carol Bishop, and the Wang family watched the massive container ships lumber by in the river. And in the cool night air, the bridges and windows of Savannah's skyline began to sparkle.

Saturday morning, while greeting the day from our seventh-floor penthouse meeting room, we sipped coffee and indulged in a catered boxed biscuit breakfast. Our meeting began against a backdrop of gorgeous views of the city's architecturally diverse skyline dotted with spires and steeples visible from the room's wrap-a-round windows. New members Bruce and Marianna Rhodes traveled farthest afield coming from Napa, Calif. The Wang family -- Steven, Charity and son Jacob -- were first-time attendees from Buford, Ga. Joining in immediately, Jacob, our youngest participant, capable and bright, enthusiastically read Nancy's minutes from last year's meeting. Connections were made and genealogies were shared by everyone in the circle. Many Thrasher tales were told: stories of preachers and army lieutenants, of arranged marriages, fiddle makers, educators, railway men, storekeepers, farmers and adventurers. I think surely there was a haberdasher among our progenitors, as several ball caps sporting Savannah and Tybee Island logos were chosen in the first door prize drawing of the day. I hear that Klaus Darnall and Chris Cherry headed off in separate directions to discover the city while the business meeting was conducted. We, too, decided to wander as we dismissed for free time to find lunch before embarking on the Old Savannah Trolley Tour.

Known for its beautifully preserved architecture, Savannah is gorgeous even in the rain. Our trolley meandered through the Historic District and passed buildings in the Federal, Georgian, Regency, Gothic-Greek-Romanesque Revivals, and second French Empire styles. Among the many



landmarks we took in: the Hamilton-Turner House, the Mercer Williams House, the Telfair Museum of Art, the Lucas Theatre for the Arts, the many restored historic buildings of SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design), Bonaventure Cemetery, Forsyth Park Fountain, the homes of Juliette Gordon Low and Flannery O'Connor, the Savannah Theatre, the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, and, of course, Chippewa Square, where the bench scene in the movie "Forrest Gump" was filmed. If life really is "like a box of chocolates," I believe the Thrashers would take a bite out of each one! Do you see visions of saltwater taffy, pralines, and macaroons from Savannah's candy companies? Or do you crave a double scoop cone from Leopold's Ice Cream? It was a good spot to visit with Joe and John on Sunday afternoon, reminiscing about homemade ice cream churned on a hot summer day. Do you remember taking turns cranking the handle on the ice-filled bucket? I can picture the scene, Joe's wife Joan cooling off with the woven straw fan won in the Saturday night door prize drawing.



Above: the group cheers for the winner of the Kentucky Derby. Below: (L-R) Nancy Cherry, Peggy Thrasher Law and Warren Thrasher, Carol Bishop (the winner!) and Klaus Darnall don hats for the festivities.



Back at the Inn, all 22

of us donned our festive hats for our very own Kentucky Derby party. With the sounds of Churchill Downs on the television, out the window, we had a bird's eye view of a private Derby party in full swing on the cordoned-off street below. Between Planters Inn and the historic Olde Pink House, treetops, bright bonnets and flowery fascinators made a colorful painting. We picked our horses, put a dollar in the kitty, sang "My Old Kentucky Home," and waited for the start of the most exciting two minutes in sports; "AND THEY'RE OFF..." We whooped and hollered as Carol's pick, Mage, crossed the finish line for the win! Carol's impressive windfall was \$22, plus a dollar lagniappe.



Arrgh!

*(L-R) Chris Cherry,
John Thrasher and
Steve Wang do their
best pirate imitation.*

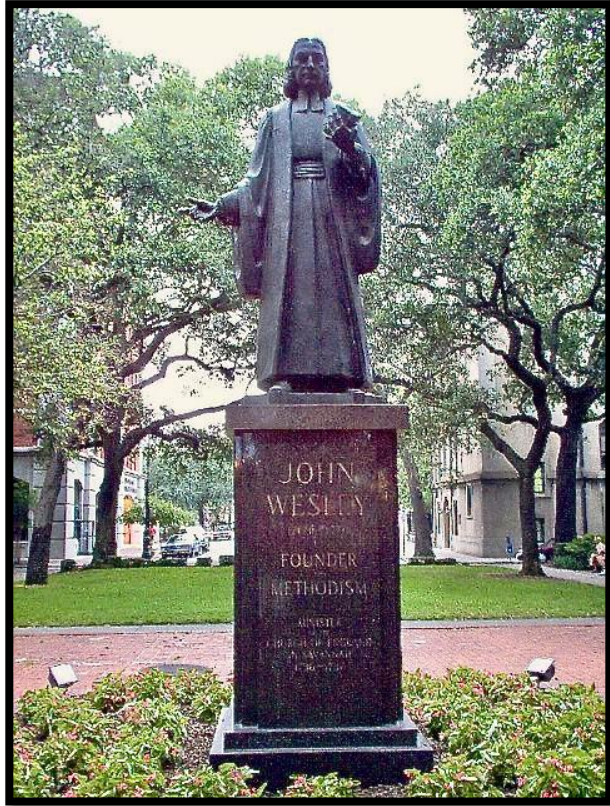


To finish off the evening's festivities, "avast me hearties" to the Pirates' House for supper. Established in 1753 as an inn for visiting seafarers, it is the oldest house in Georgia and was built on the grounds of the first public experimental garden in America. Scottish writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, is said to have drawn inspiration for his "Treasure Island" while visiting the inn. Our banquet room was perfectly decorated with round tables, not unlike islands strewn with treasure chests, doubloons, jewels and the ole Jolly Roger flag! To our amusement, John offered to pay our favorite paddleboat musician to play tunes for us, but Warren remarked that he'd paid him double not to show up!

Thank heavens! It was great to laugh, chat, and sup on Georgia Peach Glazed salmon, Honey Pecan Chicken and New York Strip Steak with our relatives in the private Anne Bonny room. Of course, we all gathered for our traditional group photo, this time in front of the wall-length mural of an *olde* map of the Carolinas and the "Golden" coast of Georgia. We all yelled, "Arrgh!" under the sword of the red-haired pirate Anne Bonny.

What a delightful weekend we all had making new memories while reflecting on the past. Looking back, it comes as no surprise that this group would light and linger on the sight of a building inscribed with the Latin phrase attributed to Oglethorpe and the original trustees of Georgia; "Non sibi, sed aliis" which translates "Not for self, but for others." Found on the original seal of Georgia, the phrase was included in the official "Georgia's Creed" by resolution of Georgia's legislature in 1939. The last sentence of the creed states, "I feel a sense of pride in the history and heroic deeds accomplished by my forebears, and shall endeavor to so live that my State will be proud of me for doing my bit to make my State a better Commonwealth for future generations."

“Not for self, but for others.” A true genealogical phrase if ever there were one. We reunite as families to tell tales of our shared heritage so that we may remember those who have come before us. We strengthen bonds with one another in the here and now, proclaim and secure our legacy for future generations, and celebrate our shared family tree in a circle of belonging. And so, dear Thrashers -- John and Paula, Emily and Warren, Susie, Jennifer, Peggy and Don, Celestea, Carol, Linda, Joe and Joan, Nancy, Chris, Ivy and Klaus, Bruce and Marianna, Steven and Charity and Jacob -- until we meet again, with Wesleyan sentiment:



“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

2024 TFA Norcross Reunion

The 2024 TFA reunion will be held in Norcross, Georgia, on the weekend of May 31-June 2 hosted by 50th Anniversary Reunion Committee. The Crowne Plaza is the reunion hotel about a mile from downtown Norcross. Rates are \$125 for two queen beds without breakfast or \$139 with breakfast buffet for two. The first Norcross reunion was held in 1990 and the second in 2015. Rumor has it that the Lionheart Theatre Company will return for an encore performance of their historical reenactments. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

By DAVID SUMNER

A Genealogical Odyssey: Finding Our Thrasher Heritage

By **STEVE WANG**

In the early Summer of 2020, while we were mostly shut down and solely online for pandemic control, my son Jacob Wang, then 11 years old, was pursuing the end of online sixth grade and any online Scout Merit Badges he could manage. One of these was the Genealogy Merit Badge, which was offered by an instructor who was also very active in the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and is now President of the Lyman Hall Chapter of the SAR. While working on the badge one afternoon, Jacob asked me about generations back past his knowledge, especially any Patriot ancestors we might have.



(L-R) Jacob, Charity and Steve Wang

I was able to go back 150 to 175 years in many cases and could trace lineage to half a dozen Patriots, which he thought was cool -- especially when he could continue his research on Ancestry (ancestry.com) and found that the vast majority of the information I'd given him was corroborated. He became interested in the possibility of joining SAR, so we began to periodically dig a bit deeper. Eventually, we had those half dozen lines, and a couple of them we believed we might prove out for SAR membership. That was good, as we had heard it was best to have a lineage and a spare -- one that was ready to send off and another just as ready in case something went awry with the first line.

We had a lineage back to Patriot Rev. John S. Cobb, who served multiple stints in Patriot forces, finally winding up in the Continental Line at Yorktown, Va., at the time of Cornwallis' 1781 surrender. We also discovered a lineage back to Patriot William Alexander. We went with the Rev. John S. Cobb line, saving back the William Alexander line. After something like 20 weeks of processing time, on Dec. 31, 2022, we were both accepted as members of SAR.

In the meantime, Jacob and I wondered if we might be able to trace back to some of the original settlers of Virginia. As it turned out we could, and I recently became a member of the Jamestowne Society. We were able to trace back to our qualifying ancestor James Knott (1603-1653), who farmed in Nansemond County (now absorbed by the City of Suffolk, Va). Knott appears on the Musters of 1623-24 and 1624-25. These are the censuses taken to determine who had lived through the massacres of the Powhatan War.

In our quest, I posted various questions, portraits I'd turned up and other such information on genealogical pages on Facebook. Several of these connected me with cousins I'd not known we had. One of them prompted us to get to know -- first online and then in person -- Linda Bishop, who put us in touch with folks at the Athens Chapter of SAR, which we ultimately joined.

We discovered we were cousins through our Dillard lines and then also possibly cousins through our Thrasher lines. We had been working lines on Ancestry, and one day she messaged to inquire if I was related, by any chance, to any Thrashers. I responded that my grandmother's great-grandmother was Mary Jane Thrasher Byrum and soon discovered the Thrasher Family Association.



Ruby Nell Anthony and Joseph Nathan Wang on their wedding day

Jacob and I are descended from Benjamin Thrasher (1740-1801) and Sarah "Sallie" White (1769-1855) who were born in Maryland but settled in what was then Franklin County, Ga., where eventually they were laid to rest in Shoal Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, about six miles south of Lavonia, Ga. The Shoal Creek and Reed Creek areas became part of the newly formed Hart County in the mid- 1850s. Most of Hart County was formerly Elbert County territory to the south.

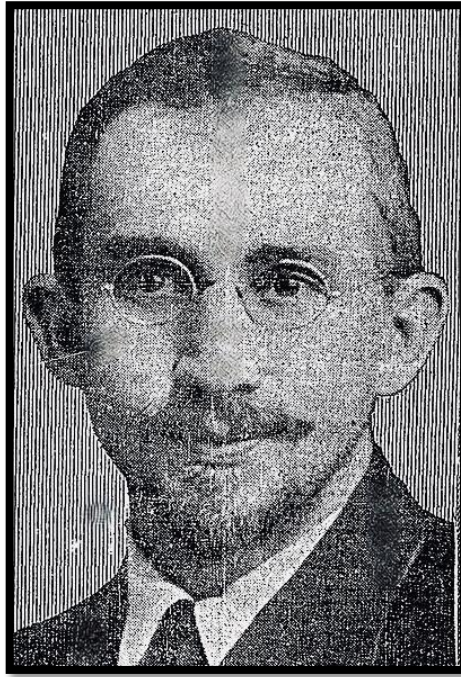
Benjamin's and Sallie's son, Benedict Randal Thrasher (1793-1859) married Terah Lindsay (1809-1859), and Mary Jane Thrasher (1838 or 40-1906) was their daughter. Mary Jane Thrasher married William Byrum (1827-1890) and their daughter was Charlotte Elizabeth Byrum (1862-1940), who married George Washington Anthony (1861-1942). Their son Thomas Anthony (1880-1952) was my paternal great-grandfather. He married Ethel Vickery (1888-1950), and their daughter was my grandmother, Ruby Nell Anthony (1913-1999). Ruby Nell married Joseph Nathan Wang in 1936 in New York. They had a son, Joe Wang, who is my father.

Jacob and I are active in the SAR Color Guard. Jacob won the Elijah Clarke DAR Chapter's History Essay 2022, and placed second in the SAR Rumbaugh Oratory April 29, 2023, for his work illuminating Martha Washington as the great and often unsung Patriot she was.

Our genealogical odyssey has been a most rewarding outgrowth of Jacob's Scouting Merit Badge. Certainly, our findings have often surprised us. One of the most surprising aspects has been the availability of images of ancestors, but we do not know whether to trust photo identifications. This was bolstered by seeing the oft misidentified photo of Cousin John Thrasher recently at the 2023 Thrasher Reunion in Savannah. One of our discoveries along this line is the purported portrait of Rev. John S. Cobb, which we will likely never be quite certain is actually the Patriot himself. Ours is an age of huge possibilities, especially via the internet, but it is also filled with possible cases of misinformation.

Our odyssey has been a fabulous voyage back through time and we look forward to learning more in the years to come. We highly recommend genealogy as a family hobby. It greatly strengthens relationships and one's sense of place and time.

All about the ‘Thrasher Incident’ of 1915



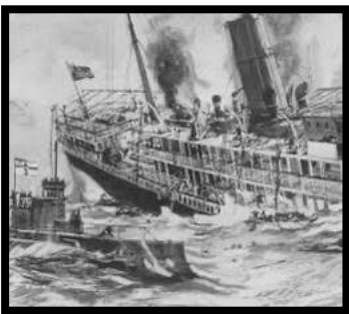
By **PAULA THRASHER and JOHN THRASHER**

The American who became the first casualty of World War I never set foot on a battlefield. He never experienced enemy gunfire. He never donned a military uniform. His name: Leon Chester Thrasher.

This is the little-known story of how he became a part of American history. The “Thrasher Incident,” as it became known in the media, heralded the beginnings of America’s involvement in “The War to End All Wars.”

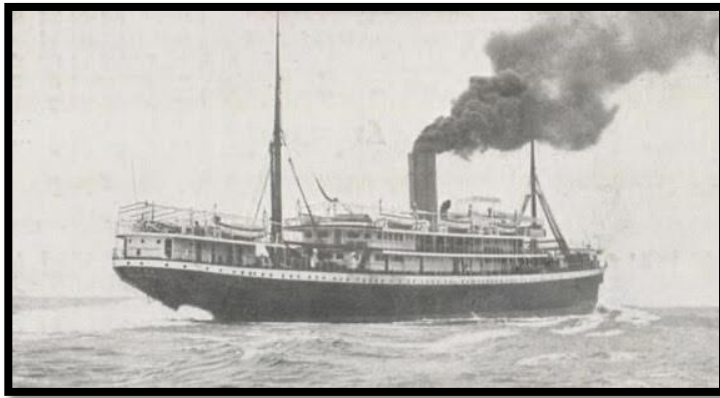
On March 27, 1915, Thrasher, a 31- year-old mining engineer from Hardwick, Mass., boarded the British cargo-passenger ship the RMS Falaba in route to his job on West Africa’s Gold Coast. The steamship left Liverpool, England, carrying a crew of 95 and 147 passengers, setting out on what would prove to be a most perilous voyage. Also onboard was “a general cargo of the ordinary kind.” It included 13 tons of cartridges and gunpowder “for Government use on the West Coast.” The Falaba was unarmed and therefore had no means of defense or offense.

On March 28 at 11:40 a.m. the conning tower of a German submarine U-28 was sighted by the watch of the Falaba at a distance of 3 miles. At the time, the Falaba was in the Irish Sea about 60 miles west of St. Ann’s Head, Wales. The captain ordered the ship to steer away at maximum speed. When it was apparent that they couldn’t outrun the faster German submarine, the Falaba stopped engines around 12:00 p.m. after the U-boat captain signaled “stop or I shoot.” The German submarine then closed to within 100 yards of the Falaba. The U-boat captain then signaled: “Abandon ship immediately,” and hailed through a megaphone to the Falaba to take to the lifeboats as they were going to “sink the ship in five minutes.”



The Falaba captain answered that he was taking to the boats. For the most part, both the German and British government agree on these basic facts. While the evacuation was still in progress, the U-boat fired a torpedo striking the Falaba mid-ship. The strike detonated the ammunition in the ship's cargo hold, causing a massive explosion. The ship sank in eight minutes at approximately 12:18 p.m., within 20 minutes of the notice from the submarine of her intention to sink the ship. Of the 104 lost in the sinking, 57 were passengers and 47 were crew.

Thrasher was among the 104 killed. He had been the lone American aboard the RMS Falaba. After being in the waters of the Irish Sea for 106 days, Thrasher's remains washed ashore on Ireland's coast on July 11, 1915. Initially thought to be a victim of the RMS Lusitania sinking on May 7, 1915 (40 days after the sinking of the Falaba), he was designated Body No. 248. The Lusitania, a Cunard liner, had been torpedoed by another German U-boat, killing 1,198, including 124 Americans.



A bit of backstory: In February 1915 the German Admiralty had declared a war zone around Britain with all ships in that zone to be targeted. Germany's 30 submarines began sinking all vessels whether they were considered a threat or neutral. Britain's response was a tightening of the naval blockade of Germany. Britain's Admiralty instructed all ships to steer away at maximum speed or ram any submarines but not to zigzag.

The Germans claimed that the submarine's crew had followed protocol when approaching the Falaba, giving the passengers ample time to abandon ship and firing only when British destroyers began to approach. The British official press report of the incident claimed that the Germans had acted improperly: "It is not true that sufficient time was given the passengers and the crew of the vessel to escape. It would have been nothing short of a miracle if all the passengers and crew had been able to take to the boats within the time allotted."

For two years, even after the "Thrasher Incident" and the subsequent sinking of the Lusitania, the United States maintained its resolve to stay out the conflict. The final straw was continuing unrestricted German submarine warfare and the discovery of something that would come to be known as the "Zimmermann note," a covert diplomatic telegram from the German Foreign Secretary to the government of Mexico proposing a military alliance against the United States.

Ultimately Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, joining its European allies in the fight, as President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed "the world must be made safe for democracy."

News & Notes

Returning to my Roots

By DAVID SUMNER



The editor-in-chief suggested I write a short piece about my latest book project, which traces the rise and fall of the Florida citrus industry since 1865. Many of my Florida ancestors, including my father, were citrus growers in the Dade City area. I grew up surrounded by oranges and grapefruit trees, which I could see near my bedroom window. I think there needs to be a book about why the industry grew so rapidly after the Civil War and declined almost equally fast after 1995. For the last 150 years, the industry has battled a continuous series of devastating freezes, diseases, and hurricanes.



Elise and I spent two weeks in Florida from April 25-May 9, driving more than 1,000 miles interviewing citrus growers and industry executives from Orlando to Vero Beach. The interviews included prominent growers, the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, board president and executive director of Florida Citrus Mutual, executive director of the Florida Department of Citrus, a professor of citrus, and board president for Florida's Natural juice. After the 2022 Thrasher reunion in Micanopy, I spent a week doing research at the Florida Southern College citrus archives in Lakeland and the University of Florida Citrus Research and Education Center archives in Lake Alfred. This is a long-term project, which will take the next two or three years to complete.



Wedding bells in the Lone Star State: TFA member Jeff Thompson married his longtime girlfriend Dena on Nov. 5, 2022, in Pflugerville, Texas, at the home of Jeff's parents, Terry and Glenda Thompson, who are also TFA members. It was a small celebration with friends and family in attendance. We send congratulations from their TFA "cousins"



TFA travelers abroad: Four of our faithful TFA members couldn't make it to Savannah for the reunion because they were otherwise engaged the first weekend of May. Alice and Dr. David Thrasher were touring Biblical sites in the Holy Land. Meanwhile, Anna and Ken Sutherland were in Scotland visiting the ancestral home of the Sutherland clan. They toured Dunrobin Castle, the family seat of the Earl of Sutherland and Clan Sutherland in the Highlands of northern Scotland.

Anna and Ken Sutherland

Not so corny: Two years ago, TFA treasurer Angie Grooms of Davidson, N.C. had never attempted to toss a beanbag-like sack into a hole on an angled wooden ramp. Now she's a cornhole gold medalist in what has become America's favorite lawn and tailgate game. She was unable to attend the reunion because she was successfully defending her state championship at the Mecklenburg County (N.C.) Senior Games in the women's 65-69 division. Now she's heading to Pittsburg on July 7-9 to participate for the second year at the National Senior Games. Angie said friends talked her into joining a neighborhood competition in 2021. Although she hadn't played the game before, she agreed to play and surprised herself with a win! She said her brother had a cornhole board in his backyard just for recreation, but never gave it much thought. "I thought you couldn't play without a beer in one hand," she said with a laugh. How popular is cornhole? The American Cornhole League is making a big push for the game to become an Olympic sport.



Angie and Joe Grooms



Speaking of tournaments: New (and youngest) TFA member Jacob Wang, a high school freshman from Buford, Ga., is competing against a field of 5,000 at the National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament in Phoenix, Ariz. The competition is continuing as this newsletter "goes to press," so to speak. He qualified to participate by winning the Georgia Northern Mountain District Tournament in February. His parents are Charity and Steve Wang. The three attended the annual TFA Reunion in Savannah in May. We wish Jacob the best of luck!

Jacob Wang at the NSDA Tournament

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE
THRASHER FAMILY ASSOCIATION
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
MAY 6, 2023**

Attending: Carol Bishop, Athens, GA; Linda Bishop, Athens, GA; Chris Cherry, Pasadena, MD; Nancy Cherry, Beltsville, MD; Ivy & Klaus Darnall, Atlanta, GA; Peggy & Don Law, Watkinsville, GA; Marianna & Bruce Rhodes, Napa, CA; Celestea Sharp, Watkinsville, GA; Joan & Joe Stine, Orlando, FL; Emily & Warren Thrasher, Jr., Savannah, GA; Paula & John Paul Thrasher, Newnan, GA; Susie Thrasher & Jennifer McGrath, Watkinsville, GA; Charity & Steve Wang & Jacob, Buford, GA.

Welcome: John Paul Thrasher, Chairman of TFA, welcomed everyone at 9:01 AM. As a warmup for the meeting to follow, the first group of door prizes, courtesy of Warren and Emily, was distributed. Paula won the first one, then Peggy, Bruce, and Celestea. John Paul announced that yesterday was Marianna and Bruce's anniversary, and that Don Law is retiring at the end of May.

Call to Order: John Paul called the business meeting to order at 9:11 AM. The meeting was held in Room 702, "The Board Room" of the Planter's Inn, 29 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA 31401.

Approval of Last Year's Minutes: Jacob Wang read the minutes aloud. Susie Thrasher moved to accept them as written; Peggy seconded. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: As of April 19, 2023, TFA's checking account balance stands at \$5505.99. The account is held by First Citizens Bank of Raleigh, NC.

John Paul noted that \$500 of that amount will be withdrawn to cover expenses by the hosts for this year's reunion. He also noted that the treasury accepts donations. This year's hosts were the four children of Col. Warren A. Thrasher – Warren, Jr., Susie, John Paul, and Peggy.

Treasurer Angie Grooms was unable to attend this year's TFA meeting; she was competing in the Senior Olympics. She sent her report to John Paul who made copies for distribution, complimenting Angie on the report's format which is both concise and comprehensive.

Angie asked that TFA find a person to replace her as Treasurer, and she will work with that person on the transition. The new treasurer should feel free to open a personal account to be used for TFA's affairs in a location convenient for him/her. This account will be in the new treasurer's name until our organization is incorporated.

No one in the room volunteered to become Treasurer. Ivy suggested this would be a good job for someone who wanted to contribute to our organization in some way but was unable to attend the annual meetings. Celestea made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Susie seconded, and the report was approved unanimously.

TFA Entity Update: We are becoming a legal entity by way of Articles of Incorporation. Incorporation will allow Susie to set up the electronic dues collection system tentatively approved at last year's meeting and our organization to have a bank account in its own name. TFA will be 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.

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.

TFA Entity Update . John Paul is using the law firm of Sumner Meeker in Newnan, Georgia to handle the business of incorporating the Thrasher Family Association. The cost for the legal fees is \$500. Last year TFA approved \$250 for this use, based on an estimate. This year TFA seeks approval for an additional \$250 to complete the Articles of Incorporation and make TFA a legal entity, Susie made a motion to approve the additional funds. The motion was approved unanimously. John Paul noted that the legal work will take a minimum of four months to complete and, in all likelihood, longer. John Paul will appoint a committee, composed of Celestea, Joe Stine, Ken Sutherland (whose career was with the IRS), Warren, and perhaps others, to look over the Articles of Incorporation and draft bylaws. After TFA is incorporated and has an EIN number, we will decide whether to apply for 301(c)3 status as a non-profit organization. Non-profit status would allow those who donate to our organization to receive tax benefits.

Membership Report. Terry Thompson was unable to attend the meeting. According to John Paul, Terry has done a good job as Membership Ambassador, but other obligations are causing him to step down. We need a replacement. There being no volunteers in the room, John Paul will reach out to members not at the reunion to see if he can find someone interested in serving as Membership Ambassador.

Newsletter Update. Now, with Paula at the helm, newsletters will be published seasonally, rather than to be expected during specific months. The Spring newsletter will cover this meeting. Also, Paula and John Paul are working on an article about Leon Chester Thrasher of Hardwick, Massachusetts, said to be the first American casualty of World War I. The sinking of the Falaba on March 28, 1915, by a German U-boat, in which Leon Chester Thrasher and 103 other people died, is often referred to as the "Thrasher Incident."

Celestea would like to see a column in each newsletter in which Nancy, as DNA project administrator, answered questions about the use and interpretation of DNA tests. Nancy responded that she has recently taken a rather intensive course on DNA and would be happy to receive questions. If she cannot answer them, she has knowledgeable resources who can.

Nancy said she would like to see a return of the tributes to Thrasher mothers and fathers on their respective holidays. Peggy Law said that she had been the creator of the original columns of a few years ago, when TFA members submitted pictures and short write-ups of their parents to be honored. Perhaps the idea could be expanded to include a most memorable Thrasher descendant.

Susie reminded the group that, with the advent of electronic newsletters, we have unlimited space for member submissions – articles, photographs, news about children and grandchildren, etc. She emphasized that we should share news of, and perhaps involve, younger generations.

John Paul uses Google Groups to send out the TFA newsletter via e-mail (We can mail a printed copy of the newsletter upon request). Google Groups is a distribution list of TFA members that can be used by the newsletter editors to easily email the newsletter to members. It also makes it possible for a member to email the entire membership. The TFA Google Groups account was set up by Jeff Thompson and David Sumner in 2020. John Paul added that it is important that the names and email 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 Susie for her work on the TFA website. He noted that death notices are usually printed in the newsletter, while the longer and more detailed obituaries are placed on the website. Susie reminded everyone that if they submit an obituary, any link to a newspaper or funeral home has a finite time period; therefore, the obituary should be submitted as a Word document.

Regarding obituaries, Nancy suggested, given the usefulness of obituaries for genealogical purposes, that we write our own obituaries and have them ready for use to ensure accuracy in names and dates and to tell our stories as we would like to have them told.

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

Around the Room: Each person in the room introduced themselves, adding important details such as how they became interested in genealogy, how they fit into the family, where they had lived or what they had done for a living. John Paul declared that he thought this was “The best part of the meeting!”

DNA Project Report: 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 have 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, 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.

Old Business: The group revisited the importance of ensuring that TFA members genealogical research is available for future researchers. Carol Bishop suggested the University of Georgia Hargett Library would be a good place to consider donating research material. John Paul will work with Carol to see if UGA has an interest.

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; and Angie Grooms, Treasurer. Jacob Wang motioned to open nominations for new officers, but when no one offered any nominations. Paula Thrasher then motioned to close nominations. Jacob moved to re-elect the current officers. Linda Bishop seconded, and the current officers were re-elected by acclamation, including Angie Grooms until her replacement can be found.

Reunion 2024: David Sumner has volunteered to work with as-yet-unidentified others to hold the 2024 TFA reunion in Norcross, Georgia. Ivy and Klaus and the Wang family agreed to work with David. The dates and location in Norcross are to be determined by the hosts. Susie said she believes that some TFA members do not attend because the reunions have become too expensive. She suggested that “destination” reunions not become the norm. Paula thought that others liked the variety and ambiance of such locations. John Paul thought that cost should be a consideration and that a compromise, or balance, might be the answer. Some years at a “destination,” other years with less sightseeing and more focus on family history. Someone suggested that two hotels be designated, one a “boutique hotel” close to the tourist attraction and another one, less expensive and out of the tourist area.

Update on TFA members not present: Dr. David is in Israel; The Sutherlands are in Scotland. David and Elise Sumner are attending his class reunion in Dade City. As mentioned before, Angie Grooms is competing in the Senior Olympics.

Alma Parker is moving from the West Coast back to Georgia, the Stone Mountain area. She and John E. Thrasher have worked on her genealogy and how she fits into the family.

Hershel and Karen Thrasher had planned to attend, but Hershel’s recent hip surgery made the trip a bit too difficult for him to attempt. Jeff Thompson and Dena recently got married and have moved from Delaware to Texas.

Adjournment: Paula updated everyone on the schedule for the day's activities, and then the group voted unanimously to adjourn. The time was 11:48 AM.

Secretary's note: IMHO John E. Thrasher of Micanopy, Chairman of TFA from 2004 to 2018, who died last year shortly before our annual meeting, was such a fixture in this organization for both his genealogical research and his leadership, that to simply use the term "John" in this document to refer to John Paul Thrasher may be confusing, particularly to older members or those who do not attend reunions regularly. Therefore, I have continued to call our current Chairman, John Paul Thrasher, by both his first and middle names. By next year, I don't think that will be necessary.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Thrasher 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!

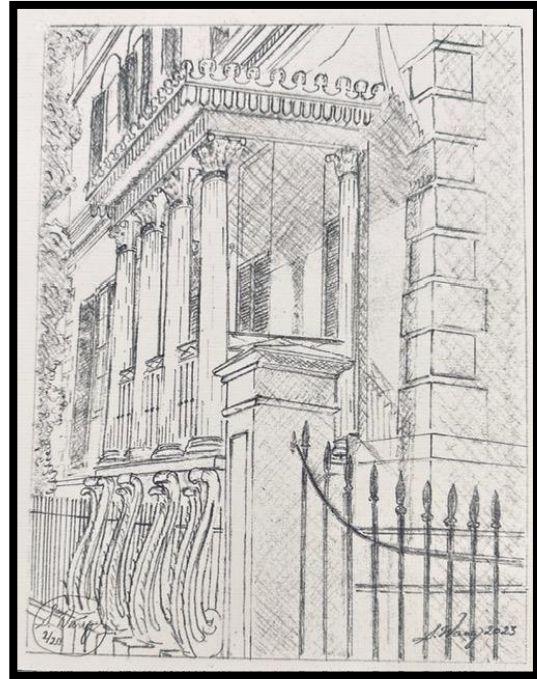
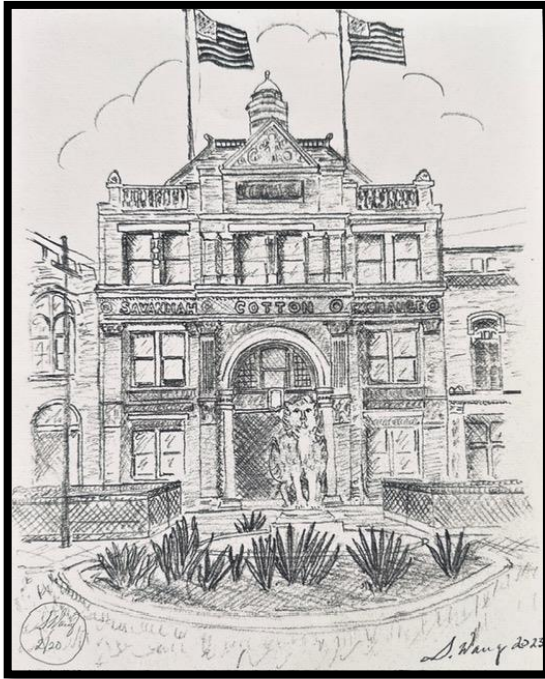
Don't miss the Photo Gallery that follows!



Savannah







*From Steve Wang's sketchbook:
 (Above left) The Savannah Cotton Exchange on River Street was completed in 1887.
 (Above right) The Lafayette Balcony,
 Owens-Thomas House in Savannah. Lafayette addressed crowds here in March 1825.*









THE END!

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