

Nancy Cherry

## For Christmas:

### Aunt Delie's

### Blackberry Cordial

My first cousin Beverly found this among our grandmother's recipes and reprinted it in the Summers Family Cookbook many years ago (Grandmama was a Summers who married into the Thrasher family).

Aunt Delie (Margaret Adelia Thrasher) was my grandfather's spinster aunt who helped rear him after his mother died when he was 8. I am sure she used blackberries from the bushes that line the lane back to the Thrasher farm in Maryland.

1. Put the berries in a kettle with enough water that you can see the water through the fruit. Boil until the berries are soft, then mash and strain them.
2. To 3 quarts of juice, add 3 pounds of white or loaf sugar and a good handful of each cinnamon bark and cloves. Let it boil fifteen or twenty minutes. When cool, add one quart of rum.
3. Then bottle it.



Eleanor Thrasher included this recipe in the Thrasher Family Association Cookbook Supplement more than ten years ago. It is on page 44. Eleanor also instructed me that the cordial should be clear, not cloudy. Pushing the cooked fruit through the strainer (to get more of it) will result in a cloudy and thick product.

Aunt Delie had left us by the time I came along, but I often heard her name mentioned fondly. My tribute to her, including a picture, was published on page 3 of the May 2016 issue of the TFA newsletter.



## Wishing all an incredibly Happy 2020 Holiday Season!!

David E. Sumner and Peggy Thrasher Law

## Getting to know your TFA President, John Paul Thrasher

Ask John when his love of genealogy began, and he will tell you a story. On a summer day in Georgia in 1975, a 20-year-old traveled the back roads with his mother, father, and little sister to Macon to attend a Thrasher reunion. John remembers the beautifully manicured backyard with its garden bridges at the home of Dorothy and Joe Pruett, and the jovial gathering of relatives that looked, and laughed, and talked with a familiar cadence. John recalls, "The reunions were always held in June." Reaching for his copy of Dorothy Pruett's book, *Cousins by the Dozens*, to check the date, he reads the inscription, "To John, June 21, 1975." It was his birthday. That trip would usher in a lifelong love of genealogy and his natural progression to the president of the Thrasher Family Association. "I had always thought of myself as a Virginian," John says, "and it took me a few years to realize that I had some deep Georgia roots."



John Paul Thrasher of Newnan, Georgia, new president of the TFA, comes from a long line of Georgia Thrasher families. The seventh generation to call Georgia home, his Thrasher ancestors migrated to Georgia from North Carolina around 1795. But he started out in Virginia. He was born June 21, 1955, at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, while his father, Col. Warren Thrasher, was stationed at the Pentagon. John is the third of four children: Warren, Jr., Susie, John, and Peggy. A "military brat," he lived the first four years of his life in Falls Church, Virginia, moved with the family to Fort Riley, Kansas, for a year, and then to Alabama for two years while Col. Thrasher served as commandant of cadets at Marion Military Institute. The family returned to the D.C. area in 1962 when Col. Thrasher was transferred back to the Pentagon. **(continued Page 2)**

### DNA Report

Nancy Cherry

The latest information and news on our Thrasher/Thresher DNA testing project

Page 3

### Salem Methodist Church

Celestea Sharp

A full update on successful efforts to preserve an important symbol of Thrasher family history.

Page 4

### Thrashers in the News

Nancy Cherry

A WWII relic, curiosity, and a little research, leads to a surprising connection for a Thrasher family.

Page 3

David E. Sumner and Peggy Thrasher Law

## Getting to know your TFA President (cont.)

(continued from Page 1) Planning to retire from the Army in 1963, Col. Thrasher and his wife Caroline designed and built their “dream house” in northern Virginia, but never had a chance to live there. John recalls that shortly before the move-in date, his father received a telephone call from Dr. O.C. Aderhold, president of the University of Georgia, offering him a position as the Professor of Military Science (PMS) and commander of the university’s Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). After discussing the opportunity with Caroline, Col. Thrasher accepted the offer. They traded the “dream house” for the “dream job” at UGA where he and Caroline, both native Georgians, had graduated in 1940. The family packed up and moved to Athens to begin a new adventure. John muses, “According to my sixth-grade autobiography, we arrived in the ‘Classic City’ on August 1, 1963.” John, who was eight, says they lived in the Holiday Inn across from the UGA campus and next door to the Athens YMCA on Lumpkin Street for a month until their new house was available. John remembers that his father reconnoitered the situation, used accumulated leave, and took the family on an impromptu trip to the beach, saying, ‘if we were going to stay in a hotel, we might as well stay in a hotel at the beach!’ At UGA, Col. Thrasher commanded the ROTC from 1963-1967. He retired from the Army with 27 years of service and then joined the faculty of UGA’s Terry College of Business teaching management and serving as an administrator from 1967-1984. John recalls his father’s sense of humor: “Dad retired from UGA in 1984 at age 70 or ‘statutory senility’ as he called it.”

John graduated from Clarke Central High School in Athens in 1973 and continued the family tradition of attending the University of Georgia. John was active in campus life. As vice president of the University Student Union, he spearheaded a campaign to build a new student center, initiating the slogan found on the lapel pins of countless students, “Wouldn’t It Be Nice?” The Memorial Hall Ballroom, where his parents had attended dances, was still being used as a student center. Dean Emeritus William Tate joined the effort and played a significant part in the successful campaign. The UGA Tate Student Center is named in his honor. John earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UGA in 1978 and moved to Atlanta to begin a 24-year career with Georgia Power in the external affairs organization.

John met his future wife, Paula, while she was a reporter for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Paula, who majored in journalism at UGA, retired from the newspaper in 2007 after 31 years as a reporter, theatre critic, travel writer, and editor. John and Paula married in 1985 and recently celebrated their 35th anniversary. Their daughter, Caroline, majored in theater performance at Columbus State University and after graduation studied sketch comedy and improv with The Second City in Chicago. She is now an actor and comedian with Second City-Hollywood in Los Angeles. She is married to Tim Tietjen, a jazz guitarist, whom she met while both were working as entertainers aboard the Norwegian Dawn cruise ship.

John moved with his wife and daughter to Newnan, about 35 miles from downtown Atlanta, in 1990 when he was named the founding director of Georgia Power’s Shenandoah Environment and Education Center. John quickly embraced his new city. He was the founding chairman of Coweta Communities in Schools, past chairman of the Newnan Coweta County United Way, and founding board member of Newnan’s Salvation Army Service Center. He was named to the inaugural class of Leadership Coweta in 1995 and was chosen to carry the Olympic Torch in 1996 as part of the “Community Hero” program. He was a board member of Newnan Community Theatre Company and served on the Newnan Cultural Arts Commission for 13 years. He is a longtime member of the Newnan Rotary Club, Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Georgia. John played a leadership role in establishing a sister city partnership between Newnan, Georgia and Ayr, Scotland. He was invited into membership of the Burns Club “o” based in Kilmarnock, Scotland. With locations throughout the world, Burns Clubs honor the famed Scottish poet and bard of Ayr, Robert Burns. John attends the Atlanta Burns Club and wears the tartan of the Stewart clan from his maternal grandmother’s line.

John’s career was paused in 2003 after a serious accident when he fell off an extension ladder from the second story of his home. After an 18-month recovery, John pursued a second career in real estate, receiving his Georgia real estate license in March of 2005. John joined a start-up real estate company, Josey Young & Brady Realty, with whom he has been affiliated for more than 15 years. In 2011, John served as the president of the Newnan-Coweta Board of Realtors and was named Realtor of the Year. He is a member of the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors, and both the Georgia and National Associations of Realtors.

John was elected president of TFA in 2019 after the retirement of John E. Thrasher, III. John says he wanted to become TFA president to continue the work begun by Dot Pruett, his father, and John E. Thrasher in preserving our Thrasher heritage. His sister, Susie, created the TFA website and edited the newsletter from 2015-2019. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 marks the first time in 46 years that the reunion was not held. He plans to resume the annual reunions as soon as it is safe to travel. John seeks to improve and enhance communication to TFA members. His goals include continuing efforts to expand the TFA newsletter, to digitize genealogical records and photographs, and to make the website the “go-to” place for Thrasher information. John believes that we stand on the shoulders of those founders that came before us and it is up to us as TFA members to continue to do all we can to ensure that the Thrasher Family Association will thrive for future generations.

## Congratulations, Ivy!

I know that we all had a wonderful time at the Jamestown/Williamsburg Thrasher reunion is 2018. For several of us it was especially exciting because we were either a new member or hoping to become a member of the Jamestown Society. Dr. David R. Thrasher and Bonnie Bolin had recently become members. Pretty soon after them, Bonnie Schmidt and I became proud members. Now another of our TFA group has been accepted. Congratulations to Ivy Rhodes Darnall, member #10290! Ivy’s ancestor at Jamestown was Sir Francis Bickley.

Even if you feel that you have exhausted sources of Thrasher research material for your particular Thrasher family line, keep in mind the adventures you can have by proving other family genealogical lines.

Who will be next to become a member of the Jamestown Society?

-John E. Thrasher III





Nancy Cherry

**Thrashers in the News****Ernest Boyce Thrasher 1919 - 2017**

The widow and children of E. B. Thrasher, Jr., of Roanoke, VA, were surprised recently when a woman with a curiosity about World War II contacted them. She had found a WWII American pilot's cap in a French museum's auction list. The woman, who lives in the Netherlands, researched the name handwritten on the inside of the cap and traced the family to secure permission to bid on the cap so that she could return it to them. The Thrasher family, on the Zoom call, recognized the handwritten signature as that of their loved one. E. B. Thrasher's wife, Sue, aged 90, said she was "dumbfounded."

"I feel like he is giving the family like this little wink and nudge," said the woman who found the cap. "It's like, okay, yes, I left this earthly world in 2017, but I want you to have this cap." The finder shared information she had found about E. B. Thrasher, Jr. with his family that was unknown to them. He had never talked about his WWII service.

This story appeared on WDBJ, NBC-12, from Roanoke, VA, on November 23, 2020. It was written by Leanna Scachetti.

A quick online search reveals that Ernest Boyce Thrasher, Jr. was born to Ernest Boyce Thrasher and Edith Kate Brewbaker on February 12, 1919 in Springwood (near Roanoke), VA. He was a graduate of Roanoke College with a degree in Business. Just days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army. He was commissioned as an officer, and commanded a B-24 Liberator, completing 50 combat bombing missions in Europe. He was based in Manduria, Italy, serving in the 450th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force.

After the war ended, he became a claims adjuster for the Norfolk and Western Railway, living in Portsmouth, Ohio. His first wife, whom he married in 1946, was the former Pauline Glover who died in an auto accident in early 1952, when she was 31.

Thrasher married Sue Pollard Cocke in 1957. He worked for the Veterans Administration for more than twenty-five years before retiring to enjoy golf and his flower beds. He died April 29, 2017 at the age of 98, leaving Sue, his wife of 60 years, a daughter Linda Bach, and three sons, Steve, Richard, and Andrew plus six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

His brother, William Joseph Thrasher, a Lieutenant in the Navy from 1942 to 1946, died in Roanoke in 2014 at the age of 92.

Nancy Cherry

**DNA Report**

As of mid-November, we have 77 entries in the Y-DNA project; actually 76 – one man tested twice. Of those, 57 are haplogroup R-M269 (European); 7 are E-M37 (Mediterranean; TFA's Mid-Atlantic contingent), three are I-M253, and the rest appear only once or twice in the list.

Our Thrasher/Thresher DNA testing project now includes men and women who have used another type of DNA test, the Family Finder test, nicknamed the Cousin Catcher, because it tests the other twenty-two pairs of chromosomes (autosomes) in the cell nucleus. These autosomes carry genetic material passed down from all your family lines. Thus, you may find a Family Finder match whose relationship to you comes through, say, your mother's father's mother's mother. Recently I have had great fun trying to resolve my Family Finder matches. Someone suggested that my son take the autosomal test offered by Ancestry.com because of the size of Ancestry's database, and he found more matches than he had with FTDNA's Family Finder test.

Some years ago, TFA purchased several spare DNA kits while they were on sale. The idea was that they would be provided, free or at a reduced price, to individuals we wished to test. We still have seven of those kits available, 3 Y-37 and 4 Family Finder kits. Please, folks: go find some more Thrashers or Thrasher descendants and bring them into our project.

One last thing: if you have questions about testing or your results, send them to me, and I will try to get answers for you.

Responses can be printed in the newsletter or kept private if you prefer.

*In Memoriam*[Asbury Quillian Baldwin Jr.](#)

March 15, 2020

[Albert Americus Thrasher, Jr.](#)

May 11, 2020

[Katherine Barrows Moule](#)

September 21, 2020

[Allison Moule](#)

October 30, 2020

Provided by Nancy Cherry

**From the Catoctin Clarion****July 6, 1872 (Mechanicstown, MD/now Thurmont, Maryland)****Frederick Town, Feb. 20, 1794**

We understand that some of our most respectable citizens and Capt. John Fischer's Troop of Horse will celebrate Washington's Birthday in this town in an appropriate manner. An effort will be to induce ex-Gov. Thos. Johnson (to give) an address on the occasion. A ball will wind up the festivities of the event.

**Frederick Town, Feb. 23, 1794**

After parade, on Saturday, the 22nd instant of Capt. Fisher's Troop of Horse and the evaluation of some of the militia men from the country, our fellow citizens who led a desire to keep alive the spirit of patriotism, in celebrating in a becoming manner Washington's Birth Day, repaired to the hospitable mansion of Mr. Chas Schell, near town, where they partook of an elegant entertainment prepared for them.

Mr. Alexander Kennedy was chosen President of the day, and Pat Sim Smith and Mr. Thomas Thrasher from near The Trap (Jefferson) were appointed to assist the President. After a few prefatory remarks by Levi Hilleary, Postmaster of our town, the following patriotic toasts were drank in honor of the occasion.

*Thomas Thrasher (Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Benjamin<sup>1</sup>) 1774-1842 married Martha Johns(t)on(e) in November 1817. The name of the nearby town was officially changed from The Trap or New Town Trap to Jefferson to 1831-1832.*



Celestea Sharp

**Safeguarding the Future of Salem Methodist Church**

Photo from the TFA website article "[On the Trail of Old Salem](#)"

Many members of the Thrasher Family Association will remember our 2013 Athens Reunion and our visit to Salem Methodist Church during our bus tour of important Thrasher sites in present-day Oconee County, Georgia. Seated inside this quaint, simple, and well-maintained church, we were treated to a history of its congregation provided by John Hale, whose family has been devoted over the years to the careful upkeep of this historic church. From him, we learned of the church's founding in 1820, two years after the incorporation of the town of Salem, Georgia, in what was then part of Clarke County.

This church truly has had a strong Thrasher family connection. The original nine-tenths of an acre was provided to the church in 1820 – 200 years ago exactly – by Samuel and Elizabeth Hester. Relocating from Virginia to the area, they were the parents of Elizabeth (1796-1860), who married Isaac Thrasher (1793-1878) and became the mother of Barton Cloud Thrasher (1823-1876) and William H. Thrasher (1826-1885), from whom many of our Georgia family descend. This same Hester couple donated another third of an acre in 1822 for the building of a church parsonage.

In addition, just a short distance down the road from Salem Church but on the other side of it lie the home-place lands of the Georgia progenitor of our family, John Thrasher, Jr. (1758-1844), the Revolutionary War veteran who came to the area by 1798 from North Carolina with his wife Susan Barton Thrasher (1766-1837) and their first several children, including Barton (1787-1867) and Isaac (see above). It is very probable that John and his descendants attended this church in its earliest days, and we know from the 30 legible Thrasher gravestones in the cemetery with dates beginning in the year 1899 that many later generations worshipped here, too.

Like many other rural churches in Georgia, Salem Methodist Church suffered a serious decline in the number of its congregation members by the close of the twentieth century. In 2002, the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church had decommissioned it, and regular services were no longer being held.

However, a determined group of church members (including Ruth Thrasher) and other community members continued to tenderly care for and maintain the church and cemetery. Before the decommissioning, congregation members and other local families had already set up a perpetual care fund to accept donations for the church's preservation, and they continued the operations of this fund afterwards.

This group would also undertake to continue a delightful tradition at Salem Methodist Church of holding "Homecoming Sunday" on Mother's Day each year. A full church service would be held, and attendees would bring food for a picnic afterwards on the church grounds. Since I have attended several of these Homecoming services, I can report that the church pews regularly were completely filled and the people attending came from both the surrounding county and much greater distances. They came for love of the church and its community.

In the past few years, the Thrasher Family Association became aware that the Athens-Elberton District of the United Methodist Church was considering how it might dispose of the Salem Church property since, officially, it was no longer an active church. Our current family association president, John Paul Thrasher, made sure to stay in close contact with the Methodist Church officials in charge and reached out to the Bowden family members who directed the operations of the Salem Methodist Church Perpetual Care Fund.

After many e-mails and telephone conversations over a period of months among the Methodist Church representatives, the Bowden family members, and John Paul Thrasher on behalf of the Thrasher Family Association, an agreement was finally reached to create a nonprofit organization to which the church, cemetery, and grounds would be transferred by the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

On July 16, 2019, the Salem Methodist Church Perpetual Care Fund Company was incorporated as a nonprofit entity to preserve and protect the church building, cemetery, and grounds. Dr. Joe Bowden serves as CEO of the nonprofit corporation, aided by the input of a board of trustees. Recognizing our family's deep interest in and contribution to the origins and life of the church, the nonprofit asked three members of the Thrasher family to join the board of trustees: John Paul Thrasher, Linda Bishop, and Celestea Gentry Sharp. All three of us live in Georgia, and we are all direct descendants of Samuel and Elizabeth Hester, who originally donated the land on which Salem Methodist Church was built.

While Covid-19 has prevented the 200th anniversary celebration we had hoped to hold this year for this beloved embodiment of our family's history in Georgia, we all can still celebrate the formation of this new nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving a wonderful remnant of Thrasher family history from two centuries ago.

For more information on Salem, Georgia you can find the article "[On the Trail of Old Salem](#)" by Celestea Sharp on the TFA website at <https://thrasherfamilyassociation.com/special-places/the-lost-village-of-salem-georgia/>

John Paul Thrasher

**2021 TFA Reunion Update**

Due to the current state of the pandemic in December 2020, plans for the 2021 Thrasher Family Association Reunion are still somewhat in flux. The TFA appreciates all the work that Claudia and Bob Wynne did in planning the 2020 TFA Pensacola Reunion which, no doubt, would have been a memorable gathering. While we are not able to reschedule a Pensacola reunion this year, the TFA is

working hard to finalize details for the 2021 Reunion which is tentatively scheduled for mid-August in the Athens (Georgia) area. Details will be forthcoming as soon as they are available on the TFA website: <http://thrasherfamilyassociation.com> and will be published in the March TFA Newsletter.

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

<http://thrasherfamilyassociation.com/>

Jeff Thompson: P.O. Box 896, Clayton, DE 19938  
or by email: [thompson.jeff@gmail.com](mailto:thompson.jeff@gmail.com)

Sue Q. Thrasher: [drsuethrasher@gmail.com](mailto:drsuethrasher@gmail.com)

Nancy T. Cherry: [NancyTC@aol.com](mailto:NancyTC@aol.com)

John P. Thrasher: [john.thrasher@numail.org](mailto:john.thrasher@numail.org)