



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
September—October 2014 • Vol. 18 No. 5

John Boyd Thacher — The Man Behind the Park

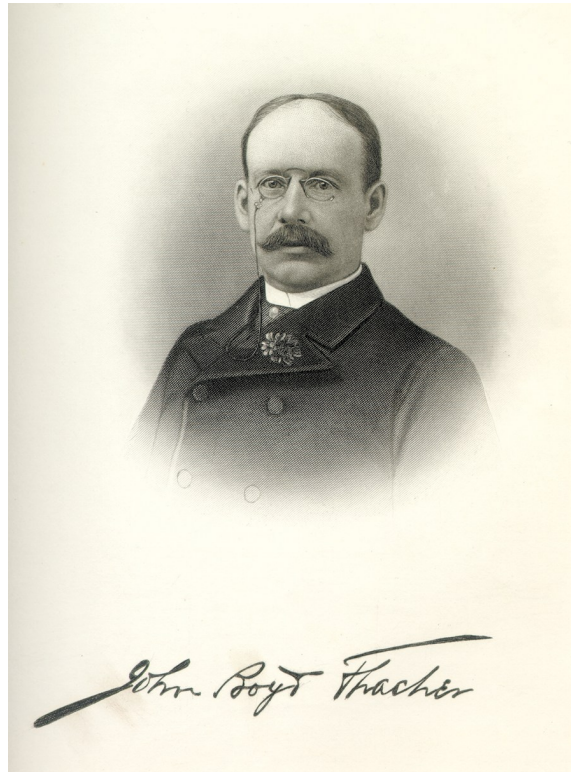
John Boyd Thacher State Park is enjoyed today as a testament to a couple to exploration, preservation and the public good. Thacher was the son a Presbyterian Minister who became a wealthy manufacturer. This unique combination gave him a love for intellectual, scientific and societal progress and the economic means to pursue these loves.

After graduating Williams College he joined his family's business, Thacher Car Wheel Works, as an iron molder fabricating railroad car wheels and parts. He learned the business from the shop floor up and eventually became a managing partner.

In 1872, he married Emma Treadwell, who deserves equal, if not more, gratitude for the existence of the park. Emma was a partner and facilitator in John's pursuits of public service and historic preservation.

Thacher followed his father, four-term mayor of Albany George Hornell Thacher, into a life of public service. He was elected to the State Senate in 1883 and served as mayor of Albany from 1886-1888 and again from 1896-1898. Each year he donated more

to charity than he drew in salary from any of his public offices.



Thacher was a nationally renowned scholar of Christopher Columbus and the early explorers of the Americas. He was a bibliophile who amassed a private library of 41,000 items including rare 15th century manuscripts. This collection is now preserved in the Library of Congress.

Emma persuaded John to establish a summer residence in Altamont. When he became aware of the rare scientific value of the geology and fossil record preserved in the Helderberg Es-

carpment, he purchased 350 acres to ensure public enjoyment of its wonders. After his death, Emma achieved their shared goal by donating these lands "for the use and benefit of the People of the State of New York," dedicated one hundred years ago today.

- by Tom Thacher

(Great great nephew of John Boyd Thacher)

Updates

100 Years of Inspiring Memories

Thacher Park Centennial Event Coming SOON!

In 1914, Emma Treadwell Thacher donated 350 acres of land along the Helderberg Escarpment to the State of New York in memory of her husband, former mayor of Albany and NYS Senator, John Boyd Thacher. The park dedication and opening was held on September 14, 1914.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Friends of Thacher Park will commemorate this event on September 13, 2014, 10-7, with a huge celebration at the Park (most activities in the Pear Orchard section).

The celebration will include guided hikes to the seldom-seen Hailes and Tory Caves, music (Hair of the Dog and Oobleck), food and drink, a hawk watch, local artisan and craft vendors, a scavenger hunt, pony and wagon rides, climbing wall, 'fossil dig' and more. For a more detailed event schedule, please see the last page of this newsletter. Admission, parking, parking shuttles and many of the family activities are free. For the historically inclined, there will be a re-dedication of the Park at Thacher Point, site of the original Park dedication in 1914. Commemorative mugs and glasses will be available for sale at the Friends information table.

We hope all Friends members (and your friends and family) can join us on September 13 to be a part of history, and to kick off Thacher's next 100 amazing years. Volunteers are also needed if you have capacity and interest. If you can help us out with a three-hour shift, please contact the Park Office (872-1237).

- by *Laure-Jeanne Davignon*



The Old Indian Ladder Road

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Officers of the Friends Board of Trustees

President:	John Kilroy	872-1501
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Jim Schaller	861-7452	Sigrin Newell	439-6705
Chuck Ver Straeten	872-2223	Bert Schou	221-8693
Dan Driscoll	872-0602	Linda Hodges	872-0940

As always, call 872-0800 or 872-1237 to verify activity times and dates.

Please feel free to call any board member with questions or suggestions.

Many thanks to Tom Thacher, Jim and Bonnie Schaller, Laure-Jeanne Davignon and Nancy Engel for their contributions to this newsletter, to Tim Albright for his photo of the original Indian Ladder Historic Marker, and to Rodger Fink, webmaster.



Friends of Thacher Park Member Form

Member benefits: Newsletter, Scheduled Events Calendar & 10% Discount at the Nature Center Gift Shop. Renewal date follows name on address label.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

☐ I'd like to become a member of the Friends of Thacher Park. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

☐ I am renewing my membership. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donation \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62) \$5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$100 | |

Please make checks payable to the **Friends of Thacher Park** and send to Bonnie Schaller, 6324 Hawes Rd, Altamont, NY 12009. For more info: bschaller@nycap.rr.com

INDIAN LADDER HISTORIC MARKER

Some time ago, we noticed a tall, rusty pipe near the north entrance of the Indian Ladder Trail. It still had the broken-off base of a 1932 State Ed. Dept. Historic Marker on top.



We figured it had something to do with the Indian Ladder – but no proof.

Then, out came Tim Albright's new book on Thacher Park.

On P.80, was a photo of the original Historic Marker "INDIAN LADDER" –with the text readable!

With the Thacher Park Centennial approaching, we thought that maybe a replacement (reproduction) marker could be ordered, and put up in time for the Sept. 2014 ceremonies. We met with Tim Albright, who liked the idea, and suggested the new marker be placed at "Thacher Point" which is directly above the original Indian Ladder location. To be historically conforming, the new marker would have only one word changed from the original marker - "at", instead of "near"—this point.

Chris, and Nancy approved of the idea, placement, and wording for the new marker. Catskill Castings (the company that made the "KNOX SCHOOL # 5" Marker), was contacted, and a price, and timeframe was given to us, in January 2014. Finally, at the next Friends Board meeting,



Photo courtesy of Tim Albright

the presentation was made, and motion approved for the cost of the new marker. The order immediately went in, – and the new Marker, and its post arrived at Thacher Park - in plenty of time for the Centennial Ceremony!

We think the replacement, and dedication of this Historic Marker is a fitting Centennial contribution from Friends - to commemorate the Park's most famous historical, and geological point of interest.

- by Jim & Bonnie Schaller

Friends of Thacher Park
c/o Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
87 Nature Center Way
Voorheesville, New York 12186-2601



Next: **Wednesday, September 10, 2014**
Board Meeting
7:00 pm at the Thacher Nature Center

Schedule of Centennial Activities

Centennial Ceremony: 11am - Noon *Thacher Point*

Guided Hikes:

History Hike	Noon – 1:30pm	<i>Thacher Point</i>
Hailes Cave	1:30 & 3:30pm	<i>Register at Caver Tent</i>
Tory Cave	1:30 & 3:30pm	<i>Register at Caver Tent</i>

Live Music: *Pear Orchard*

Oobleck	Noon - 2pm
Hair of the Dog	5pm—7pm

Hawk Migration Watch: 10am—4pm *Overlook*

Live Birds of Prey	
Migration T Shirt	10am—4pm <i>Overlook</i>

Children's Activities: 10am—4pm *Pear Orchard*

Horse Drawn Wagon Rides	
Fossil Find	
Climbing Wall	
Air Brush Tattoos	
Scavenger Hunt	
Bouncy House	
Pony Rides	11am—3pm <i>Pear Orchard</i>

LL Bean Outdoor Clinics: *Pear Orchard*

Fly Casting	10-12pm & 2-4pm
Camping Essentials	10:30am
Basic Paddling strokes	11:30am
Stand Up Paddleboarding	12:30pm
Basic Fly Tying	1:00pm
Navigate: Map & Compass	1:30pm

Vendors: *Pear Orchard*

Art and Craft Vendors	10am—4pm
Food and Beverage Vendors	10am—7pm



100 Years of Inspiring Memories

As always, you can find a color version of the newsletter at www.friendsofthacherpark.org/pages/news.html