

*A Big Thank-You to Our Sponsors...*



*Albany County Convention and Visitor's Bureau*

*The Albany Runner's Exchange*

*Bruegger's Bagels*

*Hannaford Supermarkets*

*Hannay Reels*

*Hudson-Mohawk Road Runners Club*

*L.L. Bean*

*New Salem Fire Department*

*Price Chopper, Inc.*

*Stewart's Shops*

*The Town of New Scotland*

*...and all of the dedicated volunteers who made  
this event possible!*

**Commemorate the Centennial!**

*~Centennial Mugs and Beer Glasses~*

*~Books on Park History and the Indian Ladder Trail~*

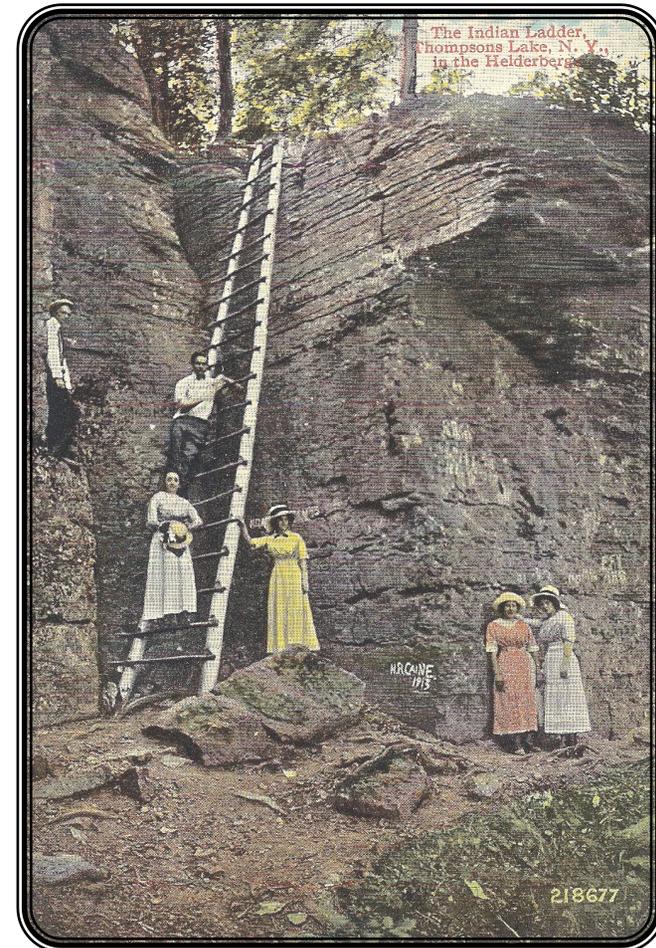
**On Sale at the Friends Tent!**



Program Design By:  
Ethan Duffany 2014

# *John Boyd Thacher State Park Centennial Celebration*

**1914-2014**



***Saturday, September 13, 2014***

***10am-7pm***

*Letter from Rose Harvey*  
*Commissioner, New York State Parks*

Dear Friends:

It is my great honor to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of John Boyd Thacher State Park and welcome you to the park for the centennial celebration!

The great Helderberg Escarpment, one of New York State's defining landscapes, has been a source of wonder and discovery for countless visitors over the last century. With great foresight and generosity, John Boyd Thacher ensured that the escarpment would be protected and preserved. New York State now proudly owns approximately 2400 acres of land at Thacher State Park for the public to enjoy.



Over the last century, the park has grown to include not only the spectacular vistas of the Hudson Valley, Green Mountains and the foothills of the Adirondacks at the Overlook, but also 25 miles of trails for hiking, skiing, biking and snowmobiling; the historic Indian Ladder Trail; the Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center, built with a generous donation from Fred and Martha Schroeder; and the campground on the shores of Thompson's Lake. And, the park continues to draw people from around the world to study the Helderberg's unique and significant geological features—once called the “key to the geology of North America.”

As we celebrate today, we look forward to the next 100 years. A new plan for the park lays out a bold vision for the future including expanded recreational opportunities, new visitor amenities and facilities, and exciting capital improvement projects funded by Governor Andrew Cuomo's NY Works initiative, which is revitalizing our state park system for a new generation of park visitors.

I would like to also express my gratitude to the Friends of Thacher State Park for all they do, each and every day, on behalf of this park. From trail maintenance to annual events, our friends and volunteers make so much happen at this park and we are deeply appreciative of their support.

To everyone at the park, in the community and throughout the state inspired by this remarkable place, enjoy the celebration!

Sincerely,

*Rose Harvey*

*A Classic Site for Geological History*

*By: Dr. Chuck Ver Straeten*



These high limestone cliffs, forested slopes, and sweeping views across the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys to distant mountains have struck people since their first discovery over 10,000 years ago.

But those 10,000 years are dwarfed by the “deep history” left behind in the rocks of John Boyd Thacher State Park. Fossil shells of marine life and coral reefs tell of 400 million year old tropical seas. The park's shale and sandstone tell of the erosion of the young Appalachian Mountains, formed by ancient collisions of continents. Even only 20,000 years ago (a short time ago to geologists), a mile or more thickness of glacial ice buried Thacher Park,

helping sculpt the rocky landscape to its modern (yet ever changing) form.

Geologists and paleontologists have been traipsing these lands for 200 years. In 1914, John M. Clarke wrote “Next, perhaps, to the Schoharie Valley, the Helderbergs and the Indian Ladder have the most intimate and ancient association with the history of geology in this state and are really a classic ground in American geological science.” In the mid to late nineteenth century, European geologists would get off of ships along the east coast and ask “which way to Albany?” Albany at that time was one of the key centers of geological and paleontological research in North America. Visiting geologists' first field expedition was often to the Helderbergs, where they would explore the lands and rocks we stand on today. Geological research still continues in the park.

The designation of Thacher Park 100 years ago was part of a quest to acquire land in New York for the purpose of preservation and scientific research, by concerned and forward thinking people like the Thacher family. The public and the scientific community deeply appreciate Thacher's gift, and the ongoing efforts to preserve such lands for future generations.

---

*Dr. Chuck Ver Straeten is a geologist for the New York State Museum & Geological Survey in Albany.*

# *The History of the Indian Ladder at Thacher Park*

*By: Timothy J. Albright*

The history of the Indian Ladder at Thacher Park begins with the introduction of the native North American who migrated to this wilderness thousands of years ago. Renowned New York State Archeologist, William A. Ritchie, traces the first known inhabitants of Eastern New York back to 7000 B.C. These early Paleo-Indian hunters and gatherers found the Helderberg area bountiful in natural resources.

Some of the tribes of this region eventually joined together forming the Iroquois Nation. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Iroquois were encountered by the Dutch and other European colonists who settled along the banks of the Hudson River at Beverwyck (now Albany).

The fur trade was a driving force for cooperation between settlers and Native Americans. These frontiersmen followed their Iroquois partners from the Great River (Hudson) due west to the "Helleburgh Mountain." Upon seeing this prominent northeastern corner of the Allegheny Plateau against a blue sky, it was named "Hellebergh," meaning "Clear Mountain."

The cliffs here are continuous for six or seven miles and are an obstacle to travel. The Indian Ladder Trail followed the south side of the Horseshoe Formation, 800 feet upwards to a corner in the cliff where the height was about 25 feet. Here was the "Indian Tree," the original Indian Ladder, which was simply a tree with hand and footholds leaning against the cliff.

The legend of the Indian Ladder Trail was often repeated by frontiersmen and fur traders to settlers and farmers. The Indian Ladder was not just remembered for itself, but for what it symbolized. It came to define a place that was special. The words "Indian Ladder" conjure the romantic and natural beauty of the Thacher Park region.

John Boyd and Emma Treadwell Thacher recognized the value of the place they knew as Indian Ladder, purchasing land around the site to preserve its beauty and the natural scenic assets of the Helderberg Escarpment. It was their desire to ensure that the public would never be excluded from this extraordinary tract of land now called John Boyd Thacher State Park.

---

*Tim Albright is a local historian and co-author of the book "John Boyd Thacher State Park and the Indian Ladder Region," by Arcadia Publishing.*



# *Biography of John Boyd Thacher*

*By: Tom Thacher*

John Boyd Thacher State Park is enjoyed today as a testament to a couple dedicated 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 from 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Escarpment, 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.

---

*Tom Thacher is the great-great nephew of John Boyd Thacher. He lives in Massachusetts.*



# Schedule of Centennial Activities

<b>Centennial Ceremony</b>	11am-12pm	Thacher Point
<b>Guided Hikes</b>		
History Hike with Tim Albright	12pm-1:30pm	Thacher Point
Hailes Cave		Caver Tent
Tory Cave	1:30 & 3:30pm	Registration Required
<b>Live Music</b>		Pear Orchard
Oobleck	12pm-2pm	
Hair of the Dog	5pm-7pm	
<b>Hawk Migration Watch</b>		Overlook
Live Birds of Prey	10am-4pm	
T-Shirt Making	10am-2pm	
<b>Children's Activities</b>	10am-4pm	Pear Orchard
Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides		
Fossil Find		
Climbing Wall		
Air Brush Tattoos		
Scavenger Hunts		
Bouncy House		
Old-Fashioned Games		
Pony Rides	11am-3pm	
<b>L.L. Bean Outdoor Clinics</b>		Pear Orchard
Fly Casting with Frank	10am-12pm & 2-4pm	
Camping Essentials	10:30am & 2:30pm	
Basic Paddling Strokes	11:30am	
Stand Up Paddleboarding	12:30pm	
Navigate: Map & Compass	1:30pm	
Basic Fly Tying	1:00pm	
<b>Vendors</b>		Pear Orchard
Art and Craft Vendors	10am-4pm	
Food & Beverage Vendors	10am-7pm	
<b>Albany Runners Exchange</b>	8:30am-Finish	Hailes Cave Shelter
5K, 10K, Marathon, 50K		

## Do you have any questions?

Stop by the Friends tent or look for people in Parks or Friends of Thacher Park T-shirts!

