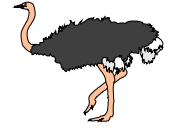


STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 12 Number 2

Newsletter

February 2011

Roger Williams Straus and Gladys Guggenheim Straus

Several years ago I was contacted by a woman who worked at The Straus Center, part of Frost Valley YMCA, in Claryville, NY. She explained that The Straus Center was the former country home of Roger Williams Straus and his wife Gladys Guggenheim Straus. After Roger died in 1957, Gladys donated the house and property to the Frost Valley YMCA.

Roger often called this place his Utopia. He and Gladys loved fly fishing. They felt the Neversink River that ran through their property was one of the best places to pursue their passion. Today The Straus Center at Frost Valley YMCA is a vacation venue. People who fly fish come to the area, part of Sullivan County, for the excellent accommodations, lovely forest and its Neversink River. It is also a retreat where weekend or week long classes are held in quilting, bird watching, hiking, yoga, music and movement, poetry, crafts, baking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing and a variety of other options. Frost Valley YMCA calls it "a perfect place to take timeaway." While expanded to accommodate twenty two guests, the house is still maintained with some of the family's furniture and accessories

Roger Williams Straus was born December 14, 1891 in New York City. He was the son of Oscar S. Straus and Sarah Lavanburg Straus. Oscar, a lawyer, public servant and author, was twice Minister to Constantinople, Ambassador to Turkey (once it became an ambassadorial position), Secretary of Commerce and Labor (when this was one department) and a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. Roger, their youngest child, followed sisters Mildred Caroline and Aline.

Oscar S. Straus wrote *The Development of Religious Liberty* and then *Roger Williams: The Pioneer of Religious Liberty*. Roger Williams was the first American to propose religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Obviously these ideals resonated with Oscar because he named his only son Roger Williams Straus. As we will see, Roger took these ideals to heart and honored his namesake throughout his life.



Roger Williams Straus
and
Gladys Guggenheim Straus
1921 passport photograph

Roger grew up in a world only few of us can imagine. His father wrote from Constantinople in December 1898, "Last night we had our first diplomatic dinner & reception - they passed off perfectly and elegantly. Our house is well adapted to entertaining and we had about-half of the diplomatic body - who remained until mid-night. When it comes to entertaining Sarah is "right in it." She understands it ... it is the Sultan's birthday. I am going to Selamlik and taking Roger Aline & Sissie along - the former two have not seen this sight - while Sissie wishes to see it once more." (Author's note: I believe

Sissie is a pet name for Oscar and Sarah's oldest child Mildred, and not Nathan and Lina's daughter, whose actual name was Sissie.)

Other mentions of Roger during his formative years include attending a Coming Out Party at the White House

*"We are not makers of history.
We are made by history."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Straus Historical Society, Inc.
Newsletter (ISSN 1536-9188)

is published semi-annually
by the

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Society, Inc**

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knowledge, understanding and ap-
preciation of the Lazarus Straus
family and the historical context
in which they lived through re-
search and education. You are in-
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for articles, calendar events, and
material relating to the Straus fam-
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The Straus Historical Society Awards

Many of you know about the significant achievements of the Strauses in the areas of philanthropy, business, social welfare, and public service. It is our plan in the near future to present the Straus Historical Society Awards to people who currently exemplify excellence in these fields. It is also our plan to present the Straus Historical Society Scholarships to students who show outstanding promise in pursuing careers in these fields. These presentations are intended to be the highlight of an evening event.

We feel confident that the Scholarships and the Awards will be effective in promoting the importance of these fields, which also reflect the commitment and dedication of the Straus family.

Our goals cannot be achieved without the commitment of the Society's supporters. We hope that, working together, a strong Straus family connection will be forged which will help to assure our success in reaching these goals.

However, before we proceed with these plans, we will initiate an online survey of the Straus Historical Society's donors and friends, which we hope will assist us in pursuing the objectives of the Straus Awards and Scholarships. We also anticipate that the responses to the survey will inform us about our donors and friends, their interests in the Society and their expectations for its future.

The survey is currently being designed and will be sent online shortly. When you receive it, we ask that you take the time to complete it. Your participation is important to the Straus Historical Society and the relationship that it values with you.

Please contact either Richard Gerstman at Richard@gerstman.com or Al Berr at aberr@nyc.rr.com with your questions or comments.



**A Message from the
Executive Director: Joan Adler**

I am pleased to announce that we now have two new e.mail addresses, both of which are shorter than info@straushistoricalsociety.org. You can now write to

info@straushistory.org
or
info@strausfamily.org.

E.mail written to either of these addresses will be delivered to our SHS mailbox seamlessly and will make it easier for you to correspond. Please bookmark either or both addresses.

when his father was Secretary of Commerce and Labor, frequent trips to Constantinople when his father was Minister and then Ambassador and to Europe with his family. In 1910 Oscar was at the American Embassy in Constantinople when he wrote of his nineteen year old son: "We are very happy to have Roger with us. He is not having as good a time as we would like, as there are very few young people of his age about, though he gets considerable tennis and frequently plays with the British Ambassador. He acted as our chief aid at the dinner the other night, and acquitted himself very gracefully; better than any secretary we have had."

In 1912 Princeton college student Roger Williams Straus was an office boy during the unsuccessful presidential nomination campaign of Theodore Roosevelt. He later said TR was one of two men who most influenced him in life; the other being his father Oscar S. Straus. Roger graduated from Princeton University in June 1913. At the end of September his engagement to Gladys Eleanor Guggenheim was announced. At the time, both families were vacationing in Paris. Gladys was eighteen years old. She was born August 15, 1895 in Elberon, NJ, the third and youngest child of Daniel and Florence Guggenheim. Daniel, the son of Meyer, was one of five brothers who participated in the family business, The American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO). Daniel was also an avid promoter of aviation and rocketry.

Like Roger, Gladys grew up in a life of privilege. The family lived in the Royal Suite at the St. Regis Hotel in New York City in the winter. Their summer home was in Elberon, NJ. Both Roger and Gladys' family's exemplified a love of family, great philanthropy, public service, interest in commerce as well as the arts and a grounding in the values of their shared religion, Judaism.

Roger and Gladys were married in the ballroom of the St. Regis Hotel on January 12, 1914. The title of a *New York Times* article about the marriage stated, "Not Only Cements the Friendships of Years but Joins Two Houses That Are Known All Over the World for Great Achievements." At the time Roger had not yet decided on whether he would pursue a career in public service or join his father-in-law's mining concern. He opted for the latter, becoming president by 1941 when Simon Guggenheim died.

Daughter Florence stated that her father enjoyed his work and travels to visit the many company owned mines around the world. He was interested in meeting the people who made the business work, not necessarily the executives. Florence said he was a very people oriented person. He didn't take advantage of his executive position and only took the amount of vacation everyone else did even though he could have taken more. He truly enjoyed his profession. In 1947 he became chairman of the board.

During World War I Roger wanted to serve. At first he wasn't accepted because he was underweight and had flat feet. But his father's intervention enabled him to join the Infantry with a commission of Second Lieutenant. He was sent to Siberia as an intelligence officer on the commanding general's staff.



Three Generations - about 1915
Oscar Solomon Straus
Roger Williams Straus
Oscar Solomon Straus II

While Roger was overseas during the war Gladys, by then the mother of two young sons, Oscar S. Straus II and Roger Williams Straus Jr., was not content to be a stay-at-home wife and mother. Her mother-in-law Sarah opened the Hannah Lavanburg House for the care and protection of immigrant girls. As World War I progressed, the girls were moved to an annex and the house was used as a haven for the country's fighting men. Gladys, her mother-in-law and brother-in-law Frederick Lavanburg took over the house's management.

Once Roger returned from Siberia he went back to his job at ASARCO where he was a director and assistant to the president. Roger and Gladys' third child, a daughter, Florence Guggenheim Straus was born in 1922.

Roger and Gladys were active in the American Progressive Jewish Reform Movement, In 1923 Roger was part of the New York Convention Committee to celebrate their Golden Jubilee and in the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. He was their New York president. He also spoke out about the need for greater acceptance of the role of women on synagogue boards. Roger was active at Temple Beth El and Temple Emanu-El in New York City. He was also politically active, serving on a Republican committee to formulate a plan to defeat Mayor Hylan.

Like his parents and in-laws who set such a good example, Roger was involved in charitable endeavors. He

was honorary secretary of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. In 1927 when the merger of Temple Beth El and Temple Emanu-El was approved, Roger became a trustee of the consolidated Temple Emanu-El. He was president of the Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation, which concerned itself with the building of model homes for the underprivileged. He was also a trustee on the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation which gave fellowships to artists and scholars abroad.

Beside his professional life, Roger W. Straus is known as one of the founders of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1928. This organization's mission is to fight bigotry, racism and bias through conflict resolution, advocacy and education. The national conference was set up as an outgrowth of "a violent brand of bigotry" in the 1928 presidential campaign. Roger served along with co-chairs Newton D. Baker, a Protestant, and Professor Carleton J. H. Hayes, a Catholic. In 1929 he proclaimed: "It is now in your hands in the new, less dramatic, but equally difficult, warfare, that of the spirit and intellect, to combat the corrosive, brutal theory of materialism, and thereby to serve again our religion, our country and humanity." He was co-chair of many conferences held at the new Williamstown Institute of Human Relations. The program of the institute was under the auspices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Dr. Everett R. Clinchy was its director. In 1939 Gladys, representing New York City, attending this conference whose central theme was "Citizenship and Religion: A Consideration of American Policy with regard to the Relations of Church and Synagogue to the State." Roger spoke about the "need for strengthening the moral and spiritual values of the nation's people as a means for saving democracy in a world fraught with antagonism and false standards."

In 1935 Roger was awarded the American Hebrew Medal for the Promotion of Better Understanding Between Christians and Jews. The following year he received the "silver cup" from his Princeton classmates to honor his outstanding achievements, especially in philanthropy.

Daughter Florence said that Roger was a Zionist. In 1938 he co-chaired the Greater New York Campaign of the United Palestine Appeal. This organization's concern was

for the thousands of immigrants from Eastern Europe who hoped to resettle in what was then Palestine. Although not a Zionist, Gladys was keenly aware of the problems of Jewish refugees. She accepted the executive chairmanship of the 1940 campaign of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs in New York City. A newspaper article announcing her acceptance of the chairmanship stated that she had long been identified with communal activities.

Both Roger and Gladys were active in Republican affairs. In 1935 Gladys was named vice chairman of an advisory campaign committee to re-elect Chase Mellen Jr. chairman of the Republican Committee.



Roger W. Straus fly fishing in the Neversink River

When Thomas E. Dewey ran for District Attorney in 1937 and then for governor of New York in 1938, Roger was his New York City campaign manager. The two became very close and both Dewey and his wife and Roger and Gladys vacationed together when their schedules permitted. Roger was mentioned as a possible candidate for governor of New York in 1942 but supported Dewey as the Republican candidate, a race Dewey won. When Dewey ran for president in 1944, Roger was vice-chairman of the Republican National Committee. Dewey was defeated but ran for re-election as governor of New York in 1946 with Roger as one of his campaign managers.

Women's liberation was not on anyone's mind when Gladys Guggenheim Straus was a young woman. Her father used to say that she should have been the boy in the family because she always had good skills. She was accepted to Bryn Mawr College but didn't go because she married Roger that year. But she was always very driven to be involved. For more than fifty years she was on the board of Mt. Sinai Hospital. She was involved with the Republican Party, becoming the chair of the New York State Committee of the Women's National Republican Club from 1936 through 1951. She was appointed to the Citizens Committee for Dewey in 1942. At the time she was director of the American Arbitration Association. Although she enjoyed her social life, she was primarily interested in the business world. She became interested in food, healthy eating habits and diet. When she was invited to help finance the new Gourmet Magazine, she did so but also became very active in its publication. In 1943 she was

named commissioner of the New York State Emergency Food Commission. One of her programs was a war time school for housewives with lectures, demonstrations, classes and exhibits.

Gladys carried on the philanthropic work initiated by her parents and grandparents. She and her Guggenheim cousins continued to support free concerts in Central Park, known as the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Memorial Concerts. She was chair of the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation, which supports criminal justice studies, medical education and hospitals. In 1951 she was named a trustee of the Community Service Society, a private, nonsectarian family health agency. She continued to serve there for many years.

When the countries of the world were trying to decide where to establish the physical presence for the United Nation, Roger W. Straus stated that he was willing to relinquish his Purchase, NY estate to the United Nations.

Roger was elected regent-at-large by the New York Board of Regents in 1947, the governing body of the state educational system. It was a 12 year term. There was strong Democratic opposition. They wanted someone who represented the interests of organized labor to fill this important spot. Shortly before he died in 1957, Roger was named chancellor of State the Board of Regents. His daughter, Florence, said it was a position he was anxious to fill.

In 1947 he served on the NYS Commission Against Discrimination. He also retired as finance chairman of the Union of Hebrew Congregations that year.

Roger supported the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952. Florence thought he was going to be named Ambassador to England by Eisenhower. But he felt he was needed at home by American Smelting. In 1954 he was nominated by Eisenhower as a representative in the nine member United States delegation to the UN General Assembly.

In 1936 Roger was co-editor of *The American Way* along with Newton D. Baker and Carleton J. H. Hayes. They were the co-founders, with him, of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He wrote two pamphlets, *Reli-*

gious Liberty – Civilization’s Barometer and Religious Liberty and Democracy: Writings and Addresses. Following the example set by his father, Roger wrote about the things in which he believed.

Throughout his lifetime Roger W. Straus was given countless awards for his outstanding accomplishments in the fields of philanthropy and religious tolerance. Upon accepting an award for distinguished service of the Men’s Club of Temple Emanu-El, he said, “. . . the United States must bring up the ‘heavy artillery’ of spiritual and moral forces . . .”

Roger died in 1957 after suffering a heart attack at his Claryville fishing lodge. The Roger Williams Straus Memorial Foundation was established by Gladys G. Straus to promote the aims of the National Conference of Christians of Jews and World Brotherhood with an initial grant of \$1,000,000. Gladys said the gift was to “promote religious liberty, build understanding and civic cooperation among the world’s great religions, foster research into the roots of prejudice and further universal peace and brotherhood among peoples of the world.” A grant was made to Princeton University “for a pioneering project to combine the resources of the social sciences” under the new Roger Williams Straus Council on Human Relations. Faculty members from the fields of history, economics, politics, sociology, social psychology and anthropology came

together to study human resources, human relations and human organization under this grant. A 1966 grant by the foundation enabled the creation of a center for the advanced study of human relations at the Rensselaerville Institute on Man and Science headed by Everett R. Clinchy. The center would “focus on a systematic and sustained effort to probe the nature and meaning of differences, conflict and change to human relations.” Study would also be conducted on the “causes and consequences of prejudice, discrimination and violence between individuals, groups and nations.”

Gladys continued her other philanthropic activities until her death in 1980. She was president of the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation. The foundation, named for her parents, occupied itself with support for hospitals and medical education, studies in criminal justice as well as housing for the underprivileged. She also continued



Gladys G. Straus
fly fishing in the
Neversink River

financing the free concerts series in Central Park. She was a trustee for the Institute on Man and Science in Rensselaerville. She once said of her many philanthropic activities, "It seems that as soon as I get out of one, I get mixed up in another."

In researching the lives of Roger Williams Straus and Gladys Guggenheim Straus for this article, I've found that both Roger and Gladys truly believed in the need for spiritual and moral integrity and conducted their lives according to these principals. A *New York Times* essay stated, "There was a goodness in him that shone through, took precedence over and was the foundation for all his other fine qualities. Roger Williams Straus inherited a family tradition of public service, and his life was a fulfillment of ideals." The same can be said of Gladys Guggenheim Straus. It is a legacy to be valued and remembered.

This article started with information about Roger and Gladys Guggenheim Straus' home in Claryville, NY. The Straus Historical Society will arrange a weekend trip for family and friends to The Straus Center at Frost Valley YMCA in Claryville if there is interest. I've spoken with the people there and they agree that a family weekend would be welcome. If there is sufficient interest we can schedule our visit for the weekend of September 16 - 18, 2011 when the entire house will be available to us. Their customary weekend begins Friday afternoon and culminates on Sunday.

My vision for the weekend would be to have people arrive late in the day on Friday. On Saturday and Sunday people can arrange their own activities. Many of them are outdoors. But there are also indoor options. Perhaps

I can give a slide show and talk about some aspect of family history. There will be breakfast and lunch on Sunday before people head back to their homes.

There are eleven rooms, nine with private baths that can be booked on a first come, first served, basis. Please let me know if you are interested in a weekend in Claryville. If there is sufficient interest, I will proceed with the arrangements. My contact is: Joan Adler at info@straushistoricalsociety.org or by phone 631-265-0383. Let me know by March 30th if you plan to join us for this weekend adventure

as the Center is very popular and we will have to work hard to schedule a weekend date before they are all booked.

If it is determined that there is sufficient interest to proceed, I will get brochures from Frost Valley YMCA with detailed information for you about the facilities and the

w e e k e n d courses available to their guests. You can choose to participate in whatever intrigues your interest or simply stroll through the lovely grounds and the area's woods. Of course, fly fishing is always an option.

For now, please let me know no later than March 30th if you want to join a SHS weekend at The Straus Center at Frost Valley YMCA in Claryville, NY, the former home of Roger W. and Gladys G. Straus.



Roger Williams Straus



Straus Center today, part of Frost Valley YMCA

Last Letter Written by Ida R. Straus - Wednesday, April 10, 1912 On Board RMS "Titanic"

Throughout the years I've corresponded with a great many people. Some of them want information about a member of the Straus family or about some aspect of Straus history. Others have items made by L. Straus & Sons and want information about the item's value. I've had many notes from people who believe they are related to the Strauses and want confirmation. No matter what the query, it's interesting and sometimes surprising to learn what people want to know or share.

A recent e.mail correspondence with Kate Hebden, production co-ordinator of ITV Television in the UK included a wonderful bit of information about a letter written by Ida Straus. The letter was written on Wednesday, April 10, 1912 when Ida was already on board "Titanic" and it was underway. After twenty years of researching the history of the family and collecting the many artifacts relating to them, it was great to find something this exciting and new to add to our collection. A scan of the actual letter was sent from the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England.

This may have been the last letter written by Ida Straus. It is interesting on many scores. Ida signed her name Ida R. Straus. Ida's actual first name was Rosalie but she was known throughout her life as Ida. I have never seen a letter written by Ida where she used the initial "R." anywhere in her signature.

In this letter Ida referred to the possibility of trouble because of Titanic's size. She wrote that, after Titanic was underway, "it looked painfully near to the repetition of the Olympian's experience on her first trip out of the harbor..." Olympic was a sister ship of Titanic's. Three ships, Olympic, Titanic and Britannic, were built by the White Star Line. They were Olympic-class ocean liners designed to surpass rival Cunard's largest ships. Olympic collided with the British warship HMS Hawke on September 20, 1911 shortly after her launching. Titanic's maneuverability had never been

tested at full speed. She had a near collision with the steamer New York when she left the dock at Southampton at noon on Wednesday, April 10, 1912, apparently due to the amount of suction caused by the enormous displacement of the water by Titanic's engines. Ida's letter was

written shortly after this occurrence. It was written to Mrs. Burbridge, wife of the owner of Selfridge's Department Store in London.

On board R. M. S. "Titanic"

Wednesday

Dear Mrs. Burbridge,

You cannot imagine how pleased I was to find your exquisite basket of flowers in our sitting rooms on the steamer. The roses and carnations are all so beautiful in color and so fresh as though they had just been cut. Thank you so much for your sweet attention which we both appreciate very much.

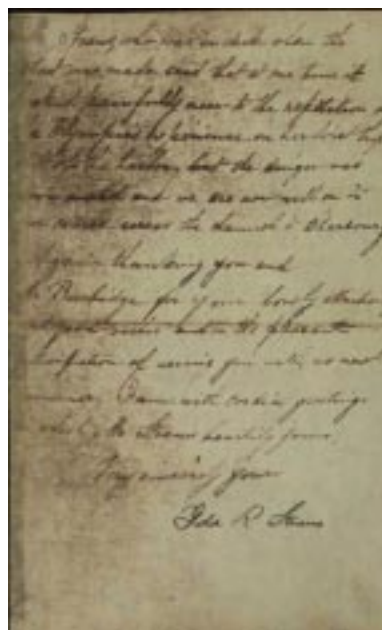
But what a ship! So huge and so magnificently appointed. Our rooms are furnished in the best of taste and most luxuriously as they are really rooms not cabins.

But size seems to bring its troubles – Mr. Straus, who was on deck when the start was made, said that at one time it looked painfully near to the repetition of the Olympian's experience on her first trip out of the harbor but the danger was soon averted and we are now well on our course across the channel to Cherbourg.

Again, thanking you and Mr. Burbridge for your lovely attention and your wishes and on the pleasant anticipation of seeing you with us next summer I am with cordial greetings which Mr. Straus heartily joins

Very sincerely yours,

Ida R. Straus



At the Imperial Palace of the Tuileries, March 17, 1808
NAPOLEON, Emperor of France
King of Italy and Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine,

According to the report of our Minister of the Interior
Our Council of State included,
We have decreed and do decree that which follows:

First Title

Article 1: From this time on, the extension given by our decree of May 30, 1806, for the payment of taxes by Jews, is over.

Article 2: The aforementioned taxes will be heretofore regulated by the following stipulations:

Article 3: Any engagement by a Jew to make a loan to a minor, without the consent of his trustee, to a woman, without the authority of her husband, to men of the military without the authority of their captain, be it a soldier or a petty-officer, to a chief officer if it concerns an officer, will be null and void according to the law. The carriers or grantees will not be able to prevail. Our magistrates will authorize no action or pursuit.

Article 4: No bill of exchange, bill payable to order, no obligation or promise underwritten by one of our non-commercial citizens to the profit of a Jew can be met unless the carrier proves that the transaction was done entirely without fraud.

Article 5: All credit, of which the capital will be augmented in a devious or obvious fashion, by the accumulation of more than 5% will be reduced by our magistrates.

If the interest accrued to the capital exceeds 10%, the tax will be declared usurious and as such will be annulled.

Article 6: For legitimate taxes which are not usurious, our magistrates have the authority to give to debtors extensions which are equitable

Second Title

Article 7: Heretofore, and dating from September 1st next, No Jew will be able to enter into trade, negotiation, or any traffic without having received a license from the prefect of his department, which will not be accorded without precise information and without a certificate 1. from the town council stating that the aforementioned Jew was not involved in usury or in illicit traffic and 2. from a representative of the clergy (Synagogue) where he lives, attesting to his good conduct and his honesty.

Article 8: This license will have to be renewed each year.

Article 9: Our magistrates are specially charged to revoke the aforementioned licenses as soon as they learn that a licensed Jew is practicing usury or fraudulent trafficking.

Article 10: Any commerce by an unlicensed Jew will be null and without value.

Article 11: It will be the same with each mortgage taken on the goods by a non-licensed Jew, as soon as it can be proven that the aforementioned mortgage was taken for a tax resulting from a bill of exchange or for any commercial happening, be it negotiated or trafficked.

Article 12: All contracts or written obligations to the benefit of a non-licensed Jew, be it for foreign or commercial trade, negotiated or traded, can be revised as a consequence of an inquiry by our magistrates. The debtor will have to prove there was usury or fraudulent trafficking and if the proof is acquired, the taxes will be susceptible either to an arbitrary reduction by the tribunal or to the revocation, if the usury exceeds 10%.

Article 13: What is stated in Article 4, of the first title, of this decree, concerning the bills of exchange and bills paid to order etc. are applicable in the future as in the past.

Article 14: No Jew can loan to servants or to people on paid salaries on security, or on pledge, and he can't loan to other people, unless entered into with the help of a notary, who will testify in the act that the money has been counted in his presence and that of witnesses or else risk all rights over the workers to whom the courts could in this case make full restitution.

Article 15: Jews cannot, under the same penalties, receive in pawn instruments, utensils, tools or clothes of workers, day-laborers, and servants.

Third Title

Article 16: No Jew unless he is currently residing in our departments of Haut and Bas Rhin, will be allowed to settle here.

No Jew not presently residing in the other departments of the Empire will be permitted to settle here except in the case where there will be an acquisition of rural property and he will be cultivating the grounds without mixing into any commerce, trade or trafficking.

There can be some exceptions to the dispositions of the present article if we give special authorization.

Article 17: The Jewish population in our departments will not be allowed to find replacements for themselves for the draft, and in consequence all Jews who are drafted will be subjected to personal military service.

continued on the bottom of page 9

"A BROTHERHOOD OF LIFE"

Statement by Nathan Straus on his arrival from Palestine shortly after the "Titanic" disaster, in which his brother and his wife, Isidor and Ida Straus, lost their lives.

R. M. S. Caronia." May 1912

"There is such a shadow of sorrow hanging over my heart that I am not in a condition to talk. But I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks for the overwhelming tokens of sympathy which have poured forth from all parts of the world.

The one gleam of consolation I find in the darkness is the thought that it was a Jew and a Jewess who gave to the world this example of self-sacrifice, heroism and mutual love.

I have always heard a great deal of Christian love, but it is too often found wanting.

I thought that by going to Palestine to the fountain-head I should surely find it. I return more bewildered than ever at the mutual hatred of the believers in the various creeds.

Turkish soldiers of the Moslem faith guard the Holy Sepulchre to keep the peace between Greek Church and Roman; while these same Christians unite in persecuting the race from which their Saviour sprang. "Love one another" went forth the mandate from Jerusalem and how pitifully has it been forgotten. Will it ever come back?

In the "Titanic" tragedy all creeds were at least united in the brotherhood of death.

If one could only hope for a brotherhood of life!

Why wait for death to teach us the lesson of human fraternity?"



Thank you to Rabbi Mark Strauss-Cohn of Winston-Salem, NC for sending this interesting letter. Mark is interested in the legacy of Nathan Straus and has plans to write a book about his life. He wrote his Master's thesis about Nathan, a copy of which he donated to SHS. Mark came to New York for "An Evening with the Straus Family" at the Center for Jewish History co-hosted by the Straus Historical Society and the American Jewish Historical Society in New York City in 2006.

It seemed fitting to publish this letter written by Nathan Straus in an issue

of the newsletter where the featured article is about Roger William Straus. As you have already read, Roger was named for the champion of religious liberty, Roger Williams. Roger W. Straus, cofounder of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, spent his life working toward harmony between the various religious groups.

In this letter written by Nathan Straus, we see that Roger was not the only one in the family who wanted to find a way for people of all religions to respect the beliefs of others.



At the Imperial Palace of the Tuileries, March 17, 1808

General Dispositions

Article 18: The stipulations contained in the present decree will be in effect for ten years, hoping that at the end of this time and by the effect of the various measures taken in regard to Jews, there will no longer be any differences between them and other citizens of our Empire, except that if we are wrong, it may be necessary to prolong the decree until we see fit.

Article 19: The Jews of Bordeaux and in the departments of the Gironde and the Landes, having given no reason for complaint, and not having trafficked illicitly, are not included in the dispositions of the present decree.

Article 20: Our ministers are responsible, each one where it concerns him, with the execution of the present decree.

Signed NAPOLEON

By the Emperor
The Secretary of the Minister of the State

Signed H. B. Maret

A typewritten version of this document was found in Macy's Archives. It was donated, along with other Straus related documents, to the New York Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division where they are available for viewing.

An Addendum - Two Boys From England

In the February 2010 issue of the SHS newsletter I published an article about two boys from England who lived with Straus families during World War II. Shortly after that issue was published I was contacted by several family members and also by Niel Sebag-Montefiore, one of those boys, with updated information.

Edgar Gordon, who lived with Hugh Grant and Flora Stieglitz Straus, is actually a relative of the family. Part of Lina Gutherz Straus' family immigrated from Germany to England and changed their name from Gutherz to Gordon. Lina was the wife of Nathan Straus.

Edgar Gordon wrote, "My father Harry Gutherz came to the UK in 1929 working for a German bank. He met my mother Ann Meyer who was a secretary in the same bank. They got married. He changed his name by deed poll to Gordon. I was born 14.5.1931 (May 14, 1931). When WW II broke out the schools all closed. I was 8 years old. My mother's younger brother, Fred, went to New York in 1937 and married my aunt Nina the summer of 1939. They did not know the Straus family but Flora



Hugh Grant Straus III
and Edgar Gordon

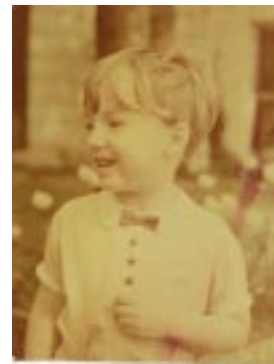
and Grant (Nathan and Lina's son Hugh Grant Straus and his wife Flora Stieglitz Straus) got in touch with them and said if she (Nina) brought me over to NYC they would look after me during the week if she (Flora) would take me over the weekend. In fact, I stayed with Flora and Grant the first 9 months in 360 Park Ave. Then I went to Fieldston (School) and shuttled between the Strauses and the Meyers. I returned (to the UK) July 1945

between VE and VJ Day. Strauses, Meyers and myself said goodbye on Pier 34, everybody crying. Subsequently I saw a lot of them in London and New York. Flora and Grant paid for me to go to Northwestern Univ. for a year. I saw Grant in Paris shortly before he died. I was very upset."

The other boy I wrote about, Niel Sebag-Montefiore, sent me photographs of himself as a young boy. Unfortunately they didn't arrive in time for publication in the last issue of the newsletter. Two are shown here. Niel also sent an



article from an unnamed and undated US newspaper. The article, "Children Put Pets on Parade In White Plains" states that a golden haired English two year old boy, who had been in the United States since October, followed his nibbling pet goat across the lawn. Niel's father was in the



Army and his mother was working in a hospital during the war. Niel stayed at Quarry Lake, the Valhalla, NY home of Nathan Straus Jr. and his wife Helen for the duration of the war.

I have been in communication with Niel who is delighted to have contact with family members once again. In fact, Joseph Nathan Straus and his wife Sally Goldfarb and their two sons visited the Sebag-Montefiore family last summer during a trip to England. Joe is the grandson of Nathan Jr. and his wife Helen. Niel wants to be kept informed of the family's activities and intends to come to New York for any future Straus events.

After receiving his copy of the newsletter and reading about how Niel Sebag-Montefiore didn't know his parents when he was returned to England after the war, Peter Richardson wrote to tell me that he had a remarkably parallel experience. Peter is the son of Evelyn Straus Weil and Ernold W. A. Richardson. Evelyn was the daughter of Minnie Straus and Dr. Richard Weil and the granddaughter of Isidor and Ida.

Peter wrote, "I came to America from England (on the S. S. Washington) at age 5 with a sister and a nanny in 1939 and stayed initially in Mt. Kisco with my grandmother -- Minnie Straus Weil. When she died a few months later, we went to stay with my mother's brother -- Richard Weil Jr. -- in Engelwood, New Jersey, and then, when my mother came over to rejoin us (her second husband having been killed in the war), I remember wondering what she would look like."

Friends of Straus Park

Article and Photographs by Margaret G. Kavanau

Snow-covered Straus Park will soon spring anew with the lush garden, flowering bushes, and flowers. Our wonderful gardener, John Olund, surprises us each year with varied tapestry of color and texture. A plaque near a tree alongside the central path thanks Leon Auerbach for his efforts in expediting restoration of Straus Park over ten years ago. The statue "Memory" is of a beautiful woman who graces the park with her sensitive and strong presence. The birdbath is aflutter with little birds. People sit. Read. Think. Even in the cold days of winter. For many, it provides a tranquil and comforting oasis in the hustle bustle of daily life.

Our core group of "Friends" led by Kate Ford, President, has worked hard to organize events in Straus Park. The weather does not always cooperate. When it did, a lovely spring evening concert of steel drum music resounded. The chairs provided by NYC Parks Department transformed the park into an outdoor concert hall. Art in the Park in October was another big success, as always. Artists showed their work, and on West End Avenue musical groups played rock 'n roll, Mexican mariachi music, and Brazilian jazz. The Book Fair was part of this event this year, made successful by community effort of contributions that included many fascinating and classy books.

For 2011 our planned events are as follows:

Evening Concert (Tuesday 6/21, 5pm – 7pm)

Art in the Park (Sunday 10/2, 10am – 5pm).

But please check with us (212 866 9038) to make sure the event dates have not been re-scheduled due to weather.

Contributions to Friends of Straus Park, Inc. can be sent to: Cathedral Station, P.O. Box 2021, New York, NY 10025.

In correspondence with Catherine Bohrman, great niece of Augustus Lukeman (sculptor of "Memory" in Straus Park; Everts Tracy, architect), I learned that she and her mother, Marie Leuchs, Lukeman's niece, are working on his legacy. The Smithsonian has accepted Lukeman's portfolios into their archives. Among his many works, including the Confederate Generals on Stone Mountain in Atlanta, Georgia, the plaster reverse mold of one side of the Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal, showing the man with the printing press, credited to Lukeman, was donated to the

Newseum in Washington, D.C. The medal was a joint artistic effort between Lukeman and Daniel Chester French, his mentor. As Ms. Bohrman wrote, "Memory" was truly (Lukeman's) most beloved sculpture. ... For many years a full size cast waited in his Stockbridge studio to be used for the center piece of his intended garden when his house was built. A dream that death intercepted. He was a man of dreams and a very big heart." The family is so touched that his "Memory" is so loved and cared for in New York City. [For more information on Augustus Lukeman: <http://www.bloomingdale.org/Newsletters/StrausPark/NewsletterPM.pdf>]



Augustin Bustamente performing at Art in the Park



Ted Kavanau and Lenore Taussig at the Book Fair



An Updated Website

Congratulations to James D. Henderson on his updated website:

<http://web.me.com/james7122/bohemianporcelain>

Jim, a veterinarian, is an expert on Bohemian porcelain. He has written two books in which the Straus family and the Guthertz family's factories in Karlovy Vary and other places have been featured. Whenever I am queried about L. Straus & Sons porcelain I send the mail to Jim for an answer. He is a wealth of information. His new website contains examples of the Straus and Guthertz porcelains as well as information about their factories. There is also information about how one may purchase one or both of his books.

If you have any interest in painted Bavarian porcelains, especially the porcelains created by the family, you will enjoy visiting this site. Jim can be reached at james7122@gmail.com



The Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY

I am pleased to inform you that a National Historic Landmarks Committee has unanimously voted to recommend The Woodlawn Cemetery for National Landmark status. This recommendation will be considered in April 2011 at a meeting of the National Park System Advisory Board. If their endorsement is given, the recommendation will then be sent to the Secretary of the Interior for final approval.

Woodlawn requested letters of support for National Landmarks status from people in the arts, music, history, politics, literature and many others. I was only too pleased to be able to add my letter of support to those of Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York; Vin Cipolla, President, The Municipal Art Society of New York; Ruben Diaz, Bronx Borough President; Jay DiLorenzo, President, Preservation League of New York State; E. L. Doctorow, Author, Ragtime, The Waterworks, The March; Kristen E. Gillibrand, United State Senator; Herbie Hancock, Musician, Grammy Award Recipient and member of the 2nd Miles Davis Quintet; and David Garrard Lowe, President, The Beaux Arts Alliance and many others. A full list of supporters and their comments is available upon request.

Having a National Landmarks designation will enable the cemetery to apply for federal grants as well as honor the preservation and historical documentation efforts of Susan Olsen and her staff. Susan has worked tirelessly for many years to showcase the final resting places of so many notable people with her walking tours and her writing. The Straus Historical Society participated on one such tour when we visited the mausoleums and graves of the Isidor Straus family, the Hess family, the Levy family, the Scheftel family.

We were honored to add our vote of support to The Woodlawn Cemetery for National Landmark status.

Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

DVD Slide Show of the Straus Family History Tour in Germany September 13-19, 2006 - \$20.00

DVD Video of the Straus Family History Tour in Germany September 13-19, 2006 - \$20.00

"The Autobiography of Isidor Straus" privately published by Sara Straus Hess, in softcover - \$40.00

"Genealogical Miscellany" a family genealogy compiled by Robert K. Straus with addenda - \$40.00

Large black & white photograph of the Isidor and Ida Straus family taken at Elberon NJ in 1905 - \$40.00

A Reminder: Witnesses to the Past by Lothar Horter and Michael Tilly, translated by Frank and Sue Kahn. This book is about the history of the Jews in several small towns in the Rheinpfalz area of Germany. A large section contains complete information and photographs of the Mehlingen Cemetery where many Straus family members are buried. - \$25.00

The History of the Jews of Otterberg by Dr. Hans Steinebrei, translated by Frank and Sue Kahn and Dr. Andreas J. Schwab. This excellent publication contains a large section dedicated to the Straus family. Many photographs compliment the text. This book is published in English by the Straus Historical Society, Inc. - \$35.00.

My Family: I Could Write a Book by Edith Maas Mendel. This charming volume of stories about the members of Edith Mendel's family is a must read for all those interested in family history. Even if the people in this book are not your direct relatives, their appeal is universal. *My Family* is amply enriched with photographs of the people and places mentioned. - \$25.00

Shipping and handling is included for all items. Send your tax deductible check to Joan Adler, payable to: **Straus Historical Society, Inc.**, P. O. Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. You can contact Joan by phone: 631-265-0383, fax: 631-724-4487 or e.mail: info@straushistoricalsociety.org

You Are Invited

The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. invites you to attend a meeting of the board. Attendance can be in person or by conference call.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 11, 2011 at the office of board member Paul A. Kurzman, 129 East 79th Street, New York at 6 PM. There is no obligation to join the board nor to contribute to the Society. This invitation is extended so that anyone interested in the SHS may have an opportunity to participate and to share his/her views. Please contact Joan Adler 631-265-0383 or Paul A. Kurzman 212-452-7035 for further information.