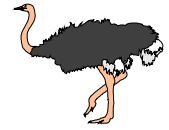


STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 2 Number 2

Newsletter

February 2001

Last House In Talbotton

By Mike H. Buckner, Edited by Joan Adler
January 27, 2001

When Mr. Lazarus Straus brought his family to Talbotton in 1854, it was to a small, two-room house with two shed rooms at the rear of the house. The house was located just two blocks north of the courthouse square where the present-day Talbotton Library is located. The house was very modest and it must have been a "make do" situation. We know Mr. Straus' business prospered and a more comfortable home was needed. During the visit of the Straus family in March 1927, it was reported in the *Columbus Enquirer and Sun* that as the group toured Talbotton, several houses that the family had lived in were pointed out. The last house occupied by the Straus family in Talbotton is the only one to survive. It is known by locals as the Mrs. Tennie Smith home and her descendants have lived in it since 1888. It is from Mrs. Smith's daughter, Mrs. Amoret S. Callaway, that so much local history has been preserved. Mrs. Callaway led a drive to save the old school building. She contacted the grandsons of Lazarus and persuaded them to purchase the building in 1927. It was at that time it became the Straus-LeVert Memorial Hall. She kept all newspaper clippings, personal letters from Straus family members, and pictures and scrapbooks. When Mrs. Callaway passed away in 1975, the collection was continued by her daughter, Mrs. Frances Callaway Aldrich. At her death in January 2000, it became the sole property of her son, Dr. Robert J. Aldrich of Sydney, Australia. In going through the house and out buildings, he saved all the materials relating to the Straus family.



The house is located about 1/2 mile south of the courthouse square on U.S. Highway 80, which is the road that leads to Geneva, Georgia. It is close to town, but was more convenient to Collinsworth Institute where Isidor, Nathan and Oscar attended school. Collinsworth Institute was located about one mile from their home on the same road.

While the Straus family lived there, it must have been a show place. House and out buildings were painted white. Out buildings included: smoke house, carriage house and slave quarters. There were beautifully terraced gardens with boxwoods and urns. After the Straus family moved and the war ended, things were never quite the same. The house and out buildings began to need painting and repair. The huge yard and garden could not be maintained in the same manner as before and the steady decline prevailed until the state you see it in today.

When the house was built in 1840, it was in the typical Greek Revival style. It had four large rooms with a hall down the center and a detached kitchen and dining room at the rear. Double front and rear doors in the hall open onto spacious porches which connect to add-on parts of the house. There are seven fireplaces in the house with fine Greek Revival mantels. The wallpaper in the parlor and painted molding around the doors and windows look original and may be the same as when the Straus

family lived in the house. It is certainly of the time period. All the furnishing have been removed so you can see the architectural beauty of the house more clearly. Dr. Robert Aldrich has given his permission to see the house, hopefully in June, when

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The Straus Historical Society, Inc. is dedicated to advancing the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Lazarus Straus family and the historical context in which they lived through research and education. The Straus Historical Society Newsletter is a semi-annual publication of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. You are invited to submit articles or ideas for articles, calendar events, and material relating to the Straus family and to their history.

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**A Message from the Treasurer of the
Board: Oscar S. Straus III**

The Straus Historical Society, Inc. has just finished its second year as a tax-exempt organization - and in the black, but just barely.

Our mission is to preserve, research and disseminate the history of the Straus family and its many contributions based on the family's involvement in government, commerce and philanthropy. This is a great mission; one we do not take lightly.

To continue to provide the type of information and service that we do, we need **your** help. Family members and interested friends are encouraged to send in their family related memorabilia, provide oral histories, participate by joining the Board to share your ideas and knowledge and, if you have not already done so, become a member and contribute to our work.

For those of you who do not see a ready reason to participate, look at the past **and** the present. This family is a great one - a true example of the American dream! The Straus Historical Society deserves your support. Please help us.



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

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have participated in our programs, contributed materials to the Straus Family Collection, taken the time to let me know they are reading and enjoying the newsletter and who have made a commitment to keep the Society up and running.

My work has been made all the more pleasurable because I know it is making a difference in your lives. Please continue to communicate with me about how you would like see our programs evolve. Let me know what is important to you and how the Society can better accomplish its goals.

This first year of the new millennium promises to be both interesting and challenging. Our newsletter and flyers will keep you informed as new programs are developed and new challenges are met.

My job would be impossible without your active support and participation. Let me hear from you!

Last House In Talbotton

(Continued from page 1)

a trip to Georgia is being planned by the Straus Historical Society in conjunction with the Historic Talbotton Foundation.

Across the street and a block nearer town is the old home of Henry Persons, now the Greg Palmer home. Mr. & Mrs. Persons and the Straus family were close friends and maintained their relationship long after the family moved to New York. There is no doubt the Straus family visited the Person's home many times.



It is fitting, then, that it is in this house that we find another prize of the Lazarus Straus family -- the dining room table, left behind

when they moved to Columbus, Georgia in 1862. The table was left in the Tennie Smith house and was given to Mrs. Jean Battle Coolik, granddaughter of Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Coolik used the table in her cabin just out of town for many years. In 1999, Greg Palmer bought the Coolik property and moved the table to his dining room. Greg, who collects antiques, did not know the history of the table, but was impressed and wanted to use it.

When Greg would not sell me the table, I had to let him in on the "secret" told to me by Mrs. Coolik. The dining table was made locally of native chestnut as much of our finer Talbot County pieces were. It measures 43 inches by 78 inches and will seat eight comfortably. The top is made of five wide boards and there are turned legs that are somewhat shorter than those of a standard table. They have not been cut off but were designed and made that way. From the physical description of Mrs. Sara Straus and her young family, it would have suited them perfectly. Today, the legs sit on small square blocks as it did the first time I saw it many years ago. The blocks give about two inches additional height for modern use. Greg thought the blocks were to protect the floor from the delicate turned legs but I think the table was made that way and the blocks were added as the children grew, or by the second owner. Greg has also issued an invitation to the family to see the table and his home.



Mark Your Calendar: The Straus Historical Society and Historic Talbotton Foundation are planning to sponsor a trip of historical discovery to Talbotton and Columbus GA the weekend of June 21-24. An announcement, with additional information, will be mailed within the next few weeks.

The Hoboken Connection

As many of you who read these pages know, Craig E. Carlson has been researching the history of L. Straus & Sons cut glass. He has documented the time line of their entry into the glass cutting field and their progression as cutters within Macy's to the development of their own factories around the city.

Cutting glass involves the use of large turning wheels upon which the glass blanks are held until a deep groove is cut into the glass. This is accomplished by skilled workers, using nothing more than a keen eye and a steady hand. A stream of water is played over the wheel to abate some of the heat generated by the friction of the cutting material, whether cork, wood or diamond, over the glass. After the initial cuts are made, the cutter goes back over his work until all the cuts are uniform and the entire pattern covers the outside of the blank. Now the glass piece is returned to a wheel, this time to a polisher. The glass is again pressed against the turning surface until every facet sparkles. In this manner, a crude piece of glass is turned into an object of art.

After their initial success at Macy's, the Straus family opened a cutting shop on Warren Street to serve their L. Straus & Sons customers. By 1893, the demand so exceeded the supply that salesmen were stealing from other salesmen to satisfy their orders. The Strauses outgrew their Warren Street factory, opened another on Jay Street and, in 1894, opened a cutting factory in Hoboken NJ. The five story brick building was 425 feet long and 35 feet wide. It attracted much attention because of its length. Craig wrote: "The new Straus factory was considered to be one of the finest and largest establishments of its kind in the US. Every workman had a window to himself. The atmosphere was referred to as a paradise of sunlight and cheerful. The work environment provided by the Strauses was quite different from that of the sweat shops that dominated the Lower East Side of Manhattan during the same time period."

On May 20th 1897, fire destroyed the Hoboken factory. "One newspaper reported that two men were in the Straus factory when their lamp went out. Both men struck a match to relight the lamp. One of the men threw his match away and almost instantly there was a puff of smoke and then the entire floor was a mass of flames."

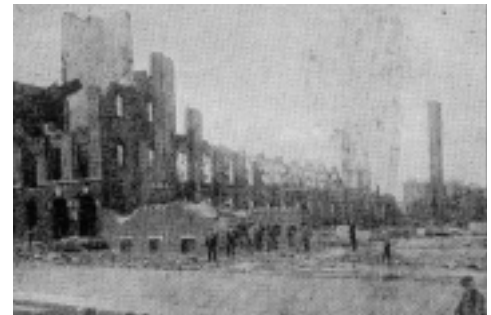


Photo by permission of Craig E. Carlson

The Hoboken Historical Society is building a museum across the street from the site of the L. Straus & Sons glass cutting factory. Their first exhibition will be devoted to Straus cut glass. Craig and I have been invited to speak about the glass and about the family during the opening celebration weeks, planned for the Winter of 2001. We hope you will join us.

The Descendants of Fradche (Fraidgen Lazarus/Loeser) Straus and Jakob (Loeb Nathan) Straus

Helmut "Tom" Mueller contacted me several years ago. His wife, Marie Therese Weil was a descendant of Fradche and Jakob Straus and he had published a genealogy of his wife's branch of the family. Since that time, we have been exchanging information. Tom, his second wife Lucy and I, met at their Wakefield RI home where they could not have been more hospitable or generous. Tom has granted permission for the use of his information in this article; a continuation of the series of articles about the history of the Straus family.

To help you put this part of the family tree into perspective: Jakob (Jacques Lazarus/Loeser) Straus and Kendel (Sara) Meyer were the parents of Fradche. Fradche's father Jakob was also the father of Isaak, father of Lazarus, and of Salomon, father of Sara. Therefore, Fradche's children were Lazarus and Sara's first cousins.

In 1806, Napoleon convened the Assembly of Notables in Paris with the aim of developing laws that would determine the status of Jews within his Empire. Jakob (Jacques Lazarus/Loeser) Straus was selected as one of the representatives from the Department of Mont Tonnerre. One result of the Assembly was that, in 1808, Napoleon decreed that all Jews must take a surname. Many people took the name of a prominent family in their town and, therefore, many people became Strauses. On October 26, 1808, declarations were made and recorded in the registers of Niederhausen, "Arrondissement des Kaiserslautern." At that time, Loeb Nathan, a merchant from Munsterappel, took the name of his father-in-law Jakob (Jacques Lazarus/Loeser) Straus and the names of his children were changed as well. His wife Fradche (Fraidgen Lazarus/Loeser), daughter of Jakob (Jacques Lazarus/Loeser) Straus of Otterberg, became Sare (Fradche) and their son Nathan (1798-) became Abraham; Mayer (1805-1894) became Charles and daughter Hendel became Jeanette. Joseph was lucky enough to keep his given name but the entire family's surname was changed to Straus. Five children, Helene, Johanna, Lazarus, Marianne and Zerle, were presumably born after 1808 since they were not named in this declaration.

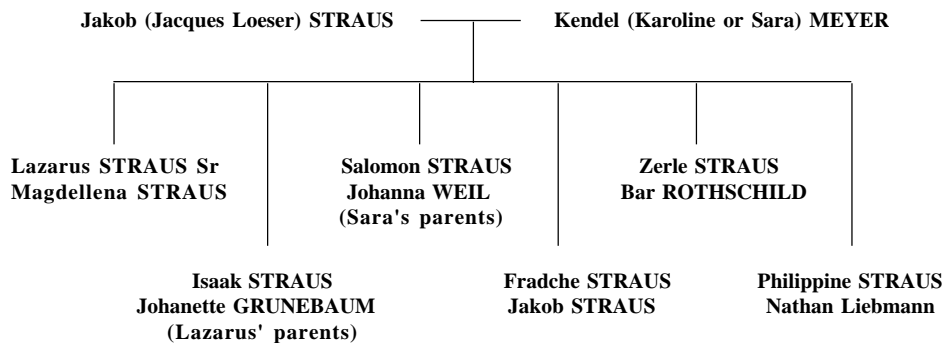
We have no further information about the lives of Abraham, Johanna, Lazarus, or Zerle. Helene married Herz Hammel. Jeanette married Simon Marx. Marianne married Raphael Hirsch and had children Louis, Anna, Jakob, Albert, Emil and Oscar. Charles, known as Karl, married Ester Rothschild, daughter of Phillipine and a man whose first name we do not know. He was the son of a Rothschild so we have called him Bar Rothschild, which means

son of Rothschild. If you refer to the tree in the center of the page you will see that this is another first cousin marriage. Karl was Sergeant-Major of the Cuirassiers (Cavalry) in Munich from 1827 to 1833. King Ludwig admired this Sergeant-Major, who was scrupulously conscientious in his service, and also very good looking. This was the reason that the King had him painted in his uniform for the gallery at Nymphenburg, where the painting is still on exhibition. Cousin Hermann Straus of Mannheim had the portrait copied by a well-known artist, Richard Strassberger, and sent the copy to Nathan Straus in New York where it hung at "Driftwood," Nathan and Lina's Mamaroneck, NY home. Karl settled in Grethen near Durkheim, Palatinate-Rhenish Bavaria. For fourteen years, 1860 to 1874, he was the mayor of the town. Though married, he had no children. Karl witnessed his brother Joseph's marriage and signed the marriage certificate. On this certificate, Karl's occupation is noted to be soapmaker, from Grethen.

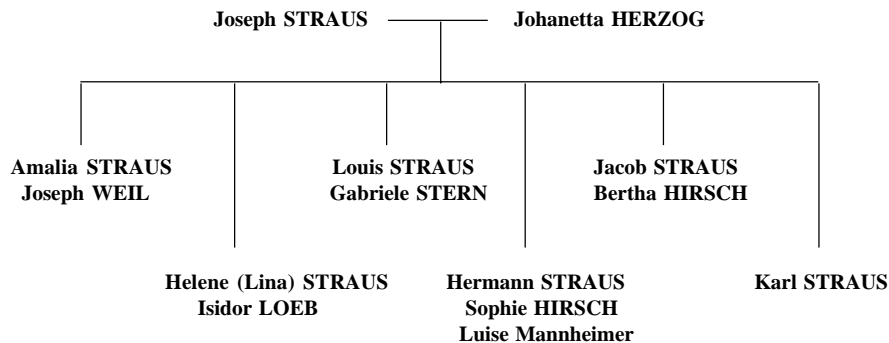
It would be fascinating to further research the descendants of this branch of the family. At the time Tom wrote his genealogy, he had documented the lives of 280 individuals. The remainder of this article will focus on the descendants of Joseph Straus, son of Fradche and Jakob, and Johanetta Herzog. It is from this line that Marie Therese Weil, Tom's first wife and her family have descended.

Joseph Straus (1807-1899) was born in Munsterappel, a small town of 1,800, about 20 miles north-northeast of Kaiserslautern in the Pfalz (Palatinate). On his children's birth certificates, he is identified as a "Handelsmann," a merchant or dealer. His granddaughter, Anna Loeb, described Joseph as "a tall smart man and full of humor." Joseph's wife Johanetta Herzog (1809-1883) was born in Ungstein, which has been annexed by, and today is part of Bad Durkheim, about 15 miles due west of Mannheim. Anna Loeb described Johanetta as "a pretty woman ... good features, black hair when she died, 72 years old." The name Herzog (German for "Duke") was fairly common among Jewish families, although not nearly so common as Straus.

The couple lived in Otterberg, a small town about five miles due north of Kaiserslautern, home of Joseph's grandparents, as well as Isaak and Salomon Straus and their families. All of Joseph and Johanetta's six children were born there. Later, Joseph moved to Mannheim where two of his sons lived. He made his home with his oldest daughter, Amalia, who also lived in Mannheim. He was a popular personality. Anna Loeb wrote that Joseph introduced Nathan Straus to Lina Gutherz, "a very beautiful woman," who became his bride. "Joseph Straus is the relative who took Nathan Straus around when he came the first time to Germany and Mannheim in 1875. He was guided whom to visit by a list of relatives and friends which his father had



given him when he left New York. Joseph Straus brought Nathan Straus to the Gutherz home, which visit culminated in his engagement and marriage to Lina Gutherz on April 28th 1875." Anna Loeb wrote, "Nathan Straus was always very attentive to my grandfather, visited him when ever he came to Mannheim, gave him very nice gifts like a brown Velvet house coat, which he wore always." Joseph Straus was 82 years old when he died of pneumonia.



Joseph and Johanetta had two daughters, Amalia (1837-1908) and Helene (Lina) (1839-1920) and four sons, Ludwig (Louis) (1841-1875), Louis, Hermann (1843-1922) and twins Jacob (1845-1920) and Karl (1845-1920). Amalia moved from Pirmasens to Mannheim after the death of her husband, Joseph Weil (1838-1876), who died very young. She was a well educated and intelligent woman who had five children; Emil (1866-1935), Albert (1867-1945), Anna (1869-1958), Emma (1873-1936) and Frida (1875-1875). Frida died in infancy. Emil was very witty. He worked in the bedfeather factory and banking firm M. Kahn Sohne, which belonged to his uncles Hermann and Jacob, partners of Bernard and Emil Kahn. Hermann became a partner in 1874 and his brother Jakob soon followed. Bernard was the father of Otto Kahn of New York, partner of Kuhn-Loeb, bankers. Hermann pioneered the establishment of a commercial link between the Russian feather producers and the German bedfeather industry. Emil never married. He died in Mannheim. Anna married Robert Dosenheimer in Worms. After being held in a concentration camp during the war, she moved to New York to be near her only child, Helene Gottlieb.

Second child Albert married Elli Schuchardt (1864-1892). I will write about this part of the family at the end of this article. It is from this line that Tom's wife and family descend.

Emma, fourth child of Amalia and Joseph Weil married Albert Heidelberg (1861-1934) in Worms. She divorced him and married Rudolph Baruch (1869-1932).

Lina Straus Loeb & Isidor Loeb



Lina Straus, second child of Joseph Straus and Johanetta Herzog, married Isidor Loeb (1836-1865). The couple had four children; Louis (1866-1931), Alfred (1868-1921), Adolf (1871-1930) and Johanna (Anna) (1873-1957). Louis never married. He worked as a coffee wholesaler, came back to live with his mother

after his father died and remained with her until she died in 1920. Alfred worked at the family firm of M. Kahn Sohne. He was sent to Geneva by the firm and later

emigrated to America, married Edith Marx and had one son, Richard.



Above: Adolph Loeb

After Adolf completed his studies, he entered the banking house of "Loeb." His sister Anna called him "a very clever boy, ambitious, much sense for musik and theatre." He lived in Berlin where he often met with his cousin Oskar Straus, who was studying there. After many years, Adolf decided he wanted to travel abroad, to see foreign lands. Although he was very attached to his mother, and she strongly objected to his being so far away,

Right: Anna Loeb Nathan and Hortense Loeb



he decided to emigrate to the United States. He accepted a position with his uncle Karl. The two men understood each other very well and worked well together. Adolf became a partner in Karl's firm. Together they built up a very fine tobacco business. Karl and Adolf were invited to the home of Mrs. Oppenheimer from HERNSBACH, where Adolf met her 12 year old granddaughter Hortense Huntsberry (1882-1955). She was a beautiful child, very gifted in music and art. When she was 21, she and Adolf married. His mother, Lina, came to America for the wedding and spent the winter there. She was often the guest of Nathan and Lina Straus. In May 1903, when Lina returned to Germany, Adolf and Hortense brought her back. Hortense had never been there before and loved it, returning often. Adolf's uncle Karl was very fond of Hortense and made his home with the couple for many years.

The fourth child of Lina and Isidor Loeb was Anna. She married Sigmund Nathan (1867-1897), a partner of Philipp Schmitt Sagewerk in Sandhausen, a saw mill. They were married 23 years and had one child, Marianne (1899-1956). Sigmund was in poor health and died young, when he was 52 years old. Anna became very close to her brother Adolf and his wife Hortense. After World War I, they and their two children came to Germany every year and Anna often traveled with them. Their daughter, Marguerite married a famous artist in London, James McBey (1883-1959). Hortense and Anna made their home together after Adolf's death and they traveled extensively. They spent their winters in Philadelphia and their summers abroad. Hortense bought a house in Tangier where the two began spending their summers. Hortense died suddenly, on the Andrea Doria, but not on its fina, and most famous journey.

The third child of Joseph and Johanetta was Louis. (See the family tree on this page for reference.) Louis married Gabrielle Stern (1839-1913) of Vienna. They were the parents of three children; Oskar Nathan (1869-1954), Serafine (1871-) and Anni (1874-1924). Joseph died at 34 of unspecified severe injuries and



Oskar Straus

Gabrielle's father, a man with a very strong head, took over the responsibility of familial patriarch. He wanted his grandson Oskar to become a clothing manufacturer or a banker but Oskar had other talents and ideas. Tom Mueller wrote, "It appears that from the 16th century until recently, if your name was Straus or Strauss and you lived in Vienna, you were more or less ordained to become a composer, or at least a musician." Oskar Straus is the composer who wrote "The Chocolate Soldier" and

"Waltz Dream." He studied composition with Hermann Gradener at the Vienna Conservatory, harmony and counterpoint with Anton Bruckner at Vienna University and did graduate work with Max Bruch at the Berlin School for Advanced Music. After commenting to Max Bruch that "people like Johann Straus are doing rather well in the business," Bruch threw him out. Oskar returned home and began writing an eclectic mix of lyrical and piano pieces. He also began earning a little money as a pianist and composer.

At this time, Oskar fell in love with a violinist named Helene Neumann (1870-1895). His grandfather forbade the union. However, a child was on the way and Oskar and Helene were married. He was promptly disowned and disinherited. For the next five years, the couple moved from place to place while Oskar worked as a conductor, trying to earn enough money to keep his growing family fed and housed. Tom Mueller wrote, "He was, in fact, fired from two of them, (positions) in part because of his inclination to deport himself as a famous man well before fame had caught up with him. It finally did, in Berlin, where he co-founded

a cabaret and became its music director. He wrote all the music and it was a huge success with both critics and audiences. Unfortunately, his marriage fell victim to the change in his fortunes and the enterprise did not last much beyond the first season, because he and his impresario and partner, Ernst von Wolzogen, had a falling out. The final exchange would have made splendid material for the cabaret: Oskar in love with one of the performers on the stage, and Wolzogen with another. To vent his displeasure with Oskar, Wolzogen announced publicly that "I don't appreciate the music director having an affair with one of our singers." Oskar's response: "And I don't appreciate that the impresario puts his affair on the stage to impersonate a singer." Previously, he had been accused of writing music for "the alley," the German connotation being "low-class." Oskar conceded that that may be so, "but only for the finest alleys."

Oskar Straus composed more than 50 light operas in addition to many more serious pieces of music. It was during his time as conductor at the municipal theatre in Brno, while publishing serious compositions, that he began thinking of creating artistic cabaret music that would stand somewhere between opera and musical variety, "The Chocolate Soldier" was among the first of the 20th century's light operas, combining a subtle satiric story with charming music. It was first performed in New York in 1909. The New York Times obituary stated, "... the young Viennese composer wove into his music the swish of taffeta skirts and the waltz rhythms of the younger members of the court of Emperor Franz Josef who came there to recover from the rigors of the social season spent under the austerities of the Hapsburg monarch." Oskar Straus made many visits to New York and spent the war years there with his second wife, Clara Singer (1866-1967), with whom he had two children, Erwin (1910-1966) and Walter (1913-). In fact, he became a citizen of the United States, but returned to his beloved country after the war. He died in 1954 in Bad Ischl Austria. His son Ludwig (1895-1917) died in France during World War I. Second son Leopold (1897-1944) died in Auschwitz. He left a son Erwin of New York and a daughter, Kitty Makart (1898-1982).

Hermann Straus was the fourth child of Joseph and Johanetta. Anna Loeb called him a "very handsome man." He became a partner in M. Kahn Sohne, the bedfeather and banking firm in Mannheim, along with his brother Jakob. Hermann married Sophie Hirsch (1853-1877) of Darmstadt who died in childbirth when their son Fritz was born. Fritz (1877-1942) became a scholar;



Hermann and Luise Mannheimer Straus

a professor at the University of Strassburg, then, after the war, at the University of Berlin. After his wife's death, Hermann married Luise Mannheimer (1855-1932) of Worms and they became the parents of five children, including Ludwig (1881-1954) who became a partner of M. Kahn Sohne after his father's death. When Hitler came to power, Ludwig moved his family to Brevard NC where he worked at The Ecusta Paper Corporation, his brother Harry's company.



Ernst Straus

Another of Hermann's sons, Ernst (1882-1915), married Amanda Lass (1884-1979) in Kent England because his father was so strict, Ernst did not dare tell his father he was getting married. Their daughter Carmen (1908-) was six years old when her parents married. Ernst was in the middle of successful career at M. Kahn Sohne when he was drafted during World War I and lost his life in Loretto.

Hans Hermann (Harry) (1884-1951) Straus had emigrated to America in 1902, traveling on the same steamer as his uncle Adolf when Adolf returned from a business trip abroad. Harry's intention was to stay just long enough to learn English, but he liked America so much he stayed. He lived in New York where he worked as a salesman for a company making cork tips for cigarettes. He later sold cigarette paper, invested in a French paper mill, eventually acquiring control of that company. When I first met Flora Stieglitz Straus, she told me about Harry Straus and his cork business and so we know that Harry kept in touch with the Lazarus Straus family of New York. Harry became a cigarette paper expert. He felt the industry wasn't being run properly. It was entirely dependent on a constant supply of linen rags from Europe. No other raw material fulfilled the requirements for cigarette paper at that time. Harry began to experiment with hemp. But the federal government prohibited the production of marijuana just about the time when he thought he had a viable alternative. It's the flax in the linen that makes good cigarette paper. So Harry reasoned that, if he started with flax, he would be ahead of the game. But flax was grown in this country solely to make linseed oil. The plants were designed to yield many seeds and little straw. The second problem was that the fiber needed covered the woody core of the plant and it had to be separated. This was a costly process. Harry began, by a system of trial and error, importing European varieties of the plant, planting them in all kinds of soil, with many different kinds of fertilizer, in many states, under many different growing conditions, until he found the right combination to produce exactly the plant he thought necessary.

Harry sent Arthur Loeb (1914-1968), son of his cousin Adolf, to Blue Earth Minnesota. (I've written about Adolf earlier in this article.) Not only did Arthur find the perfect place to grow Harry's flax, he met a school teacher, Kitty Vachreau (1913-) whom he married in 1941 in Chicago. They lived in Brevard and had three daughters. Alfred died in 1968. Kitty remarried, to Tom Barger who, as a young geologist and mining engineer, had gone to Saudi Arabia in 1937 and became instrumental in establishing the American presence in the oil fields of the Arabian peninsula.

Harry moved with his family to Asheville NC. Fritz, Harry's half-brother, was a chemist. He and his staff of engineers and chemists sought a process by which they could separate flax fibers from their core. They finally devised a method of running the flax through a decortication process that worked. During the early days of World War II, Harry showed the American made paper to the cigarette makers along with examples of the French paper. They read the signals coming from Europe and lent Harry \$2 million to build a domestic paper plant to produce wrappers from domestic raw material. Harry wanted a location for his factory with an abundant source of soft, clean water, to be near his customers and with a willing, able and plentiful labor pool. Brevard NC seemed ideal. The first 17 buildings of the factory were completed in May 1939. He called his company The Ecusta Paper Corporation, Ecusta is the Cherokee word for "Rippling Water." The Davidson River supplied the water for the factory.



Hermann Straus' 70th Birthday - 1913
Standing: Ernst Straus, Fritz Straus, Franz Straus, Martha Landeck Straus, Harry Straus, Ludwig Straus, Margarete Straus Baldauf
Seated: Renee Unselt Straus, Luise Mannheimer Straus, Hermann Straus, Walter Straus, Elisabeth Nathan Straus,
Foreground: Annelise Straus Meyerhof

Many family members came to Brevard and worked for Harry Straus. Apparently, Harry enjoyed the role of company head, and could be difficult to work for, especially for his relatives. Karl (1921-), his brother Ludwig's son, wanted to leave the company to pursue an education. Harry said he had done pretty well with only a fifth grade education and couldn't understand why Karl felt he needed more. Karl resigned and followed his dream, earned a law degree and became a very successful attorney. Harry never spoke to him again.

Harry is credited with saving many lives just before World War II because family always knew they would have a place to work and a good life in Brevard. In researching his family genealogy, Tom heard over and over again, "...he worked at The Ecusta."

Harry was much beloved by his employees for his kindness and generosity. In 1945, he purchased 315 acres, including one of the oldest summer camps in the mountains, Camp Sapphire, for his employees and community residents to use for recreational and outdoor education. Today, a development company is building a planned community called Straus Park. There will be four distinct residential areas and two commercial areas with ample recreational facilities.

Tom wrote, "Harry's genius had revealed itself when he saw the possibility of making his paper from a raw material that would free the product from its dependence on foreign materials. His ingenuity and his perseverance were needed when he, in part brilliantly and in part stubbornly, went about solving the problems involved. His business acumen made it possible to put it all together into an enormously successful enterprise. And his incredible luck came into play when all the pieces fell into place with exquisite timing. It was the kind of luck, however, that almost inevitably comes to someone who lays the groundwork the way Harry Straus did. He set himself up for it."

Harry and his wife Martha Washington Landeck (1886-1951) had two children, Louise Carolyn (1920-) and Harry Jr. (1923-1972). Louise married Roger King (1918-), the advertising manager of Ecusta.

Franz Straus (1887-1918), son of Hermann and Louise Mannheimer, married Lisa Hoerlin (1886-1965) in London, like his brother Ernst, and then moved to Stockholm. He had one daughter, Ingrid Louise (Lola) (1914-). Franz lost his life in Flanders during World War I. Tom visited Lola and Aka Morling



Franz Straus

(1913-1993) who were happy for the renewed contact with family members. Margareta (Grete) (1894-1982), youngest child of Hermann and Louise, married Gustav Baldauf (1880-1935) in Munich. She had two children, Annemarie (1919-1943) and Gunther (1923-). Annemarie lived with the Harry Strauses for many years and Gunther, like so many other family members, worked for Ecusta. The Baldaufs were a family with many Ph.D.s between them.

I return here to the family of Albert Weil, son of Amalia Straus and Joseph Weil, grandson of Fradche and Joseph Straus. (Refer back to the tree on page four) Albert married Elli Schuchardt, daughter of Dr. Theodor Schuchardt, who founded the specialty chemical company bearing his name. Albert, born and raised in Pirmasens, had a Ph.D. in chemistry. He worked at this firm and married the boss' daughter. They had what Tom refers to as "four rather remarkable children." The company thrived under Albert and he personally carried on the tradition of the family he married into, becoming another pillar of the community. He was given the title Kommerzienrat, which is a state appointment that carries a stipend. A loose translation of the title is "Economics Counselor," a sort of president of the Chamber of Commerce. He was so respected that the Nazis were unable to touch him. When Gorlitz, where the family lived, was liberated by the Red Army, Albert came out of his house to greet them and was knocked in the head with the butt of a soldier's rifle. He died six months later.

Two sons of Albert and Elli earned Ph.D.s in chemistry. Konrad (1893-1963) became chairman of the board of Farbwerke Hoechst, one of the four chemical companies resulting from the Allied-ordered breakup of I. G. Farben. Konrad's son is a physicist/chemist and a professor at the Darmstadt Institute of Technology. His son-in-law is a physicist. Albert's youngest son, Lothar (1894-1962), took control of Schuchardt but was sent to

a forced labor camp at Nordhausen, an underground installation where V-1 and V-2s were built during the war. There he lost 50 lbs and would not have lasted much longer if the Americans had not liberated the camp. He was reunited with his wife and child who had been protected because her family was not Jewish. They settled in Munich where Lothar arranged the financing to begin a new Dr. Theodor Schuchardt, G.m.b.H. chemical company. Just as the company was regaining its position of prominence, Lothar became a victim of lung cancer.

Lothar's only child, Marie Therese (1932-1973) spent a year attending high school in Roanoke VA following the war. She became close with the family that sponsored her and they took her to Asheville to meet her relatives who reciprocated, visiting her in Roanoke. This experience in America strongly influenced Marie Therese's decision to emigrate to America with her husband Helmut, Tom" Mueller (1925-) and daughters Cornelia (1954-) and Claudia (1955-). The young family moved to the Roanoke area where daughter Caroline (1958-) was born. Marie Therese was diagnosed with Hodgkins disease about five years after their emigration. After being given a poor prognosis, Marie Therese lived eleven years more, outliving the very doctors who had made the early forecast that she would live only another few months.

Daughter Caroline's decision to become a doctor seems to have been triggered by her mother's extended illness. Caroline lives in Cincinnati OH where she specializes in pediatric and preventative medicine. She is a professor at the medical school. Cornelia, Marie Therese and Tom's oldest daughter, is a marine biologist. She is an independent contractor who works for the Navy in Newport RI. Her husband, Wayne, who has a Ph.D. in marine biology, works for the EPA.



Helmut "Tom" Mueller, Marie Therese Weil Mueller and their children (from lower left) Claudia, Caroline and Cornelia

Claudia and her second husband Marty, live in MA. She is director of international sales and marketing for a computer company and travels worldwide in conjunction with her work. Claudia's son from her first marriage lives in Austria with his Dad. Tom, an air traffic controller in Germany, started a new profession in VA. He started out in sales but quickly turned his considerable talents to engineering and eventually opened his own business, manufacturing items such as wet/dry vacuums. Tom and his second wife Lucy live in Wakefield RI.

This article is inspired by Tom Mueller's thorough research and could not have been written without his active support. Space does not permit a more in-depth look at the lives of these Straus relative nor could I include the stories about many others. If you care to learn more, please contact me or Tom Mueller at 50 South Glen Court, Wakefield, RI 02879. mueller@intap.net

Yesterday and Today

Nathan Straus & Irving Lehman Straus

Nathan Straus was born on January 31, 1848 in Otterberg, Rhenish Bavaria, in the same house where his mother Sara, sister Hermine and brothers Isidor and Oscar were born. His father, Lazarus, had emigrated to America in 1852 and sent for the family two years later. Nathan was six when he arrived in New York on the maiden voyage of the steamship "SS St Louis." Their further trip to their new home in Talbotton GA took several weeks.



Nathan's love of animals, and of money, became apparent when he was very young. He stopped a runaway horse when he was six and was given a ten cent reward by its owner, the first money he ever earned. From then on, Nathan found many ways to earn money including grinding lumps of calcium into balls and selling them to the Southern ladies to be used as face powder.

Nathan attended Collinsworth Institute with his brother Isidor and private school in Columbus GA. He spent a year in Montgomery AL pursuing more advanced studies and furthering his religious education. When the family moved to New York after the Civil War, Nathan attended Packard's Business College where he learned bookkeeping. He was chosen orator of his class when he graduated in 1886.

The story of Nathan's convincing R. H. Macy to allow the Strauses to open a 25' x 100' concession in the basement of his store is well known. Nathan had tired of traveling around the world, securing merchandise for his family business and opening new markets for their sales, and thought this would be a good business opportunity. He could not have known how right he was.

When the family was moving from Columbus GA to Philadelphia in 1865, Nathan got left behind in Nashville TN during a train stop. With only 50 cents in his pocket, he was able to survive until the next day when he rejoined his family. He never forgot the experience of being penniless, hungry and alone. For the remainder of his life, Nathan found ways to help the poor without taking away their dignity. He is best known for his milk stations and for his philanthropy in Israel.

Nathan met Lina Gutherz on a business trip to Germany. The couple married after a courtship of only five weeks, most of which time Nathan was away buying goods. Theirs was an extremely close relationship and Lina was his staunchest supporters.

More complete information about Nathan can be found in articles written for the February and August 1998 issues of the newsletter.

Irving Lehman Straus was born in New York City April 1, 1921, the third son of Nathan Straus Jr. and Helen Sachs Straus, brother of Nathan III, Barnard Sachs, and R. Peter and the grandson of Nathan and Lina Straus. He was named for his uncle Irving Lehman, the distinguished Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals. Irving Straus attended the Riverdale School, Taft Preparatory School in Watertown CT and Amherst College.

He served in the Navy as an aircraft carrier pilot in the Pacific from 1942 to VJ Day in 1944. Following the advice of a Navy buddy, Irving opened a tropical fish import/export company after the war. His friend promised to supply the air freight. Irving arranged for a shipment of fish to be delivered from Germany, where many tropical fish were bred in those days. Unfortunately, the whole shipment spent some time on a layover in either Greenland or Iceland (Irving couldn't remember which) and the fish arrived in New York in a huge block of ice. That was the end of the tropical fish business.



From there, Irving became a partner in a Wall Street brokerage house where he remained for ten years. During that time, he learned that he was more interested in marketing and investor public relations. He has owned Straus Corporate Communications for forty years and shows no sign of slowing down. He has played tennis, basketball and golf and has been interested in the American Jewish Historical Society.

Anna M. Straus is Irving's devoted wife. When asked about his current activities, Irving states that his main focus these days is on work and his home life with Anna. He says it took



many years before he got it right. It is clear to anyone who knows Anna and Irving, that the couple are crazy about one another and still behave like newlyweds after 24 years of marriage. Until recently, Irving and Anna owned a house in Tivoli NY where the couple loved to garden and to be part of their beautiful natural surroundings. They hope to find a new country home a little closer to New York City.

Irving has two children from previous marriages, Daniel and Billy, grandchildren Christopher, Ian and Emma, great grandchildren Nathan and Dana and a stepson, Edward Perper, Anna's son.

The Jesse Isidor Straus Chair of Business Administration at Harvard Business School

In January 1973, Jack Isidor Straus (MBA '21) and Robert Kenneth (Bob) Straus (MBA '27) established and endowed a Chair of Business Administration at Harvard Business School in honor of their father Jesse Isidor Straus (Harvard 1893). This endowment is to be maintained into perpetuity. The intention of the professorship "is to focus attention on aspects of human behavior relevant to the making of decisions."

Bob studied General Semantics and of the work of Count Alfred Korzybski. In his article, "My Map Was Not The Territory; 1933-1996," Bob wrote, "GS (General Semantics) changed the words from "perceiving" to "abstracting" and added an invaluable tool -- the structural differential -- to help bring the perspective that I had repressed into consciousness and, to learn to compare it with that of other individuals, especially those from different backgrounds, cultural, epistemological, etc. And then to go on and see how differently each of us evaluates the perspective that we have abstracted!" The approach is multidisciplinary. Many other family members have, independently, become interested in decision-making and have used its dynamics in business and in teaching.

There has been no Jesse Isidor Straus professor for many years. Bob Straus, during the last years of his life, had been corresponding with Harvard in the hope that they would be encouraged to find a suitable candidate for this professorship. Gerald Dunn Levy has also been encouraging the Business School to fill this position.

In November, I was contacted by Louise Packard, Director of Development at the Harvard Business School. She was pleased to report that Max Bazerman had been selected as the Jesse Isidor Straus Professor of Business Administration. Professor Bazerman's credentials are impressive: author of more than 100 articles, a management expert in negotiations and decision-making, teaching at the Sloan School of Management at MIT, Boston University, University of Texas and Northwestern University's Kellogg School before joining the faculty of Harvard Business School in 1998.

Ms. Packard requests that you contact her at 617-496-6424 if you are interested in learning more about Professor Bazerman, about the Jesse Isidor Straus Chair of Business Administration, want to receive periodic updates about Professor Bazerman's work or if you want to meet with Professor Bazerman.

Did You Know?

Jesse Isidor Straus was named Isidor Straus when he was born on June 25, 1872. His son, Jesse Isidor Straus II was born January 13, 1900. On July 5, 1912, after the sinking of "Titanic," Jesse II's name was legally changed to Isidor Straus II. Then, on August 15, 1929, his name was changed for a third and final time, to Jack Isidor Straus.

L. Straus & Sons

Since our last newsletter, Craig E. Carlson has spoken about L. Straus & Sons brilliant cut glass in Hershey PA, at the Corning Museum in Corning NY and before a group of Straus family and friends at the home of Leon Auerbach in New York City. The focus of each talk was different and each was fascinating.

On Sunday, September 24, 2000 Craig spoke at the Hershey Museum about the L. Straus & Sons 1893 Chicago World's Fair twelve foot cut glass candelabrum in their permanent collection. The museum has an active speakers program and more than 75 people showed up to learn about this beautiful masterpiece that consists of 1,329 separate pieces of glass. The Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, James D. McMahon, Jr., set up a display of some of the extra pieces from the candelabrum so that we could all have an up close view of the glass. There was an enthusiastic question and answer period following Craig's presentation. Joan attended as a representative of the Straus Historical Society. Many people were curious about the family and it was gratifying to see so much interest. Craig and Joan have been invited back to the museum to observe the dismantling, cleaning and reconstruction of the candelabrum the next time this takes place.

Then, at the height of the fall leaf turning season, Craig spoke to the 39th annual Seminar On Glass at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY. NY. Craig's fascinating talk and beautiful slides were enjoyed by more than 200 glass enthusiasts who learned about the new glass pieces identified because of the Straus-Macy catalog. The catalog, published this past summer by the American Cut Glass Association, includes patterns of Straus glass in one volume that have not been seen in almost 100 years. As a result, collectors are finding pieces in their collections that had not been identified as "Straus" glass until now. Craig's work has revolutionized the cut glass collectors field.

Marjorie and Leon Auerbach hosted "cutglassdamfam" on December 6, 2000. Craig spoke to a group of Straus family and friends. Although none of the participants were initially cut glass enthusiasts, everyone left completely mesmerized by Craig's presentation. Craig and John Niemiec brought about thirty pieces of L. Straus & Sons cut glass from their personal collection. John is the consummate display artist and arranged the pieces so that each was shown off to its best advantage. He also made a sign for each item explaining the pattern name, date, factory it was made in and giving a brief description of the piece. This made quite a difference, as we were able to see these beautiful works of art up close and could more easily discern the differences and similarities in their patterns.

It was a very special evening, made even more so when Joan was presented with her own piece of L. Straus & Sons cut glass, a beautiful bowl in the Khedive pattern that was cut and then polished on a wooden wheel in



1893. It was an early birthday present from her husband, arranged as a surprise by Craig, John and Frank. The bowl comes from Craig and John's own collection, making it even more special.

Craig has agreed to give a presentation in Talbotton GA during our planned visit the weekend of June 21st - 24th, 2001. Please look for a flyer with more specific information. It will be in the mail soon.

Oscar S. Straus to Mr. Eugene Meyer

In October of 1999, I received a copy of a letter written by Oscar S. Straus to Eugene Meyer. Kim Klausner of the Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, CA sent the letter to me and has granted permission to publish its contents in the Straus Historical Society's newsletter.

Both Oscar and Eugene Meyer lost loved ones in the "Titanic" disaster. Oscar wrote to express his condolences. In light of his own profound loss, I find this letter quite moving and wanted to share it with you.

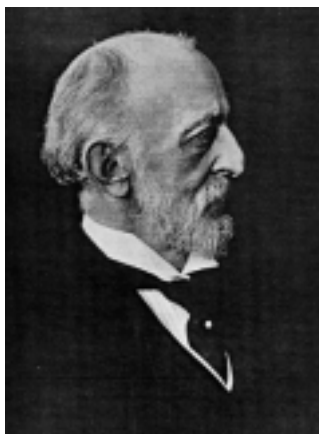
5 West 76th Street
New York

April 21, 1912

My Dear Mr. Meyer

Our hearts are sorrowing by reason of the same calamity. It would seem our beloved ones died that others might live. You have lost a son, I a sister and a second father - he was the inspiration of my life. We deeply sympathize and mourn with you.

Affectionately
Oscar S. Straus



Friends of Straus Park A Warm Fall, A Cool Winter and How We Handled It

by Leon Auerbach, Edited by Joan Adler

Friends of Straus Park (FSP) spends a lot of time watching The Weather Channel. As many of our activities are outdoor events, we have to. We are quick change artists when it comes to new dates and/or new locations.

We were blessed in October 2000 when the best weather of the season just happened to be on the day we held our Art In The Park Celebration of Art, Music and Food. FSP focused our activities around a colorful display of painting, sculpture and photography. Once again, Eric Mattes, the original Parks Department designer, led walking tours through the Park giving historical background and explaining the reasons why particular plants were selected for each site. We repeated our past years' winners with demonstrations and instruction by the Fred Astaire Dance Studios in salsa, cha-cha and tango. These Latin rhythms were complemented by folk dance specialist Karl Finger who brought country to the city from Massachusetts. There was an exciting presentation by SOH-DAIKO, a group of drummers who perform "ballet" as they beat on giant drums. The music continued with Jazz and Bossa Nova as well as the "Sinatra sounds" of Bill Safenstein.



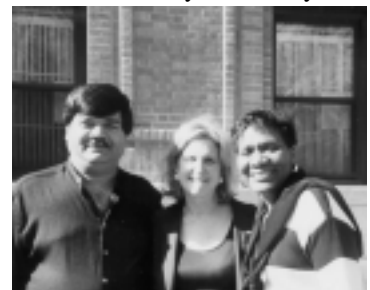
Fred Astaire instructors leading cha-cha



Ascension School students helping at the food tables

Neighbors and local restaurants brought out exotic delicacies that excited the taste palates of the area. Students from Ascension High School helped with the setup and presentation at the food tables.

We were visited by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields. Both are long time supporters of the reconstruction and development of Straus Park. We were also treated to a visit from a former Council Member for our area, Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, who arrived early with greetings from Mayor



P.K. Sharma, Congresswoman Carolyn Moloney & Man. Boro Pres. C. Virginia Fields

Giuliani. So you can see, our efforts and fun had official sanction from the Powers Above! It was a great day!

The holidays came and went and New Years followed right on schedule. The Parks Department, under the direction of Jerry Quinn, Supervisor of Mechanics, hung more colored lights on the trees at the south end of the Park as we planned our Mid Winter Song Fest for January 19th. We had to face reality when a cold, rainy drizzle forced us to move up to Jo Abrams apartment. With multi-talented John Olund at the piano, we were a willing group of 15 to 20 songsters doing a variety of cold weather tunes in a warm surrounding. We were helped by a selection of fine wine, cheese and hors d'oeuvres. Another Wonderful Musical Memory!



Voices raised on high in a warm setting

February offered a special Literary Evening on Friday, February 23rd. We invited our Board member, Andre Aciman, noted author and essayist to do a reading from his books, *False Papers* and *Out of Egypt* as a benefit for FSP. Aciman, a professor at Bard College, also read from his forthcoming novel, *Over The Footbridge*. Andre's novels are published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux under the leadership of Roger Williams Straus. This was a unique evening and a grand beginning for the year 2001.

Events planned for the rest of the year include our Fourth Annual Straus Park Commemorative Celebration on Saturday, April 21st; a Spring Concert to benefit Straus Park on Friday, May 4th; our annual Spring Planting Flowers in the Park Saturday, May 19th; an event, still to be planned, for the Park on Wednesday, June 13th; a musical evening in the Park with The Ellington Project on Wednesday, July 18th; another event to be planned for Wednesday, August 18th, our Fifth Annual Art in the Park Day-Long Celebration of Music, Art, Dance and Food on Saturday, October 13th; and our annual Fall Planting Flowers in the Park on Saturday, October 20th. Mark your calendar and come out to join in the fun. We plan these events with you in mind.



Photo: Margaret Kavanau

We'd like to hear from you and we'd like to see you at the Park. Contact co-chair Leon Auerbach at 212-865-4948 for further information, to join Friends of Straus Park, or to volunteer your assistance.

"Memory" at Straus Park
With Winter Here....
Can Spring Be Far Behind?



Photo: John Olund

Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

"The Autobiography of Isidor Straus" privately published by Sara Straus Hess, in softcover - \$30.00

"Genealogical Miscellany" a family genealogy compiled by Robert K. Straus with addenda - \$35.00

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

Color photograph album of the Straus family's trip to Talbotton and Columbus GA, October 24-26, 1997 - \$40.00

Color photograph album of the Oscar S. Straus Memorial rededication ceremony and reception, October 26, 1998 - \$35.00

Videotape of the Oscar S. Straus Memorial Rededication Ceremony - October 26, 1998 filmed by Alan F. Hockstader - \$20.00

Videotape: "Titanic on Broadway," a television special about the making of the Broadway play which includes Joan Adler speaking about the Straus family and a CNN segment in which Paul A. Kurzman is interviewed regarding the play "Titanic" - \$20.00

Send your tax deductible check to Joan Adler, payable to the **Straus Historical Society, Inc.**, P. O. Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. A receipt will be issued for your purchase and for your contribution to the Society. You can contact Joan Adler by phone: 631-265-0383, fax: 631-724-4487 or e.mail: famjad@aol.com

Board Meeting - February 6, 2001

A Straus Historical Society, Inc. meeting of the board of directors was held Tuesday, February 6, 2001 at the home of Alan F. Hockstader in White Plans, NY. After a light supper, the board got down to business.

Business items discussed at the meeting include: a treasury and financial report, the need for a fund-raising and grant writing committee, suggestions for future articles in the newsletter, a discussion of a genetic genealogy project and whether the Society should participate, plans for future presentations at historical societies and educational institutions, a proposed historical trip to Talbotton and Columbus GA and a report on Joan's ongoing work. Please contact Joan if you would like to receive a copy of the minutes from this, or any other, SHS board meeting. A copy of the Society's address may be found in the side-bar on page two.

The next meeting of the board of directors will be held May 16, 2001 at the home of Robin Schafer Dillon in Bronxville, NY.