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STRAUS FAMILY NEWSLETTER

August 1995

The Straus Family Project A Progress Report

On June 2, Robert K. Straus, Edward K. Straus, Kenneth H. Straus and I met to discuss the future of the Straus Family Project. Edward hosted this luncheon meeting at his apartment in New York City.

Since the last newsletter my time have been primarily consumed trying to complete the bibliography. Each document in the Straus Family Collection is being recorded, often with annotation. There are, as of July 10th, 558 pages of the bibliography. I expect that the entire work could reach up to 1,000 pages. Bob and I have been discussing what will be done with this bibliography once all the data is entered. One option is to write a book based on the material in the files. Bob has broached this subject with several family members. There has been no support of this proposal. We then decided to look to a publisher for guidance. Bob had lunch with the publisher of Henry Morgenthau III's family biography, Julian Bach. Bach thinks the time is not right for a book of this kind. He suggested that a university press might be interested. At the June 2nd luncheon meeting Bob, Ken and Edward decided a book about the family should not be pursued at this time.

I gave Bob samples of the bibliography, specifically the entries relating to his father Jesse. At our luncheon meeting the pages were shown to Edward and Ken and the future of the Straus Family Project was discussed. It was decided that the bibliography would be completed and I would look into the possibility of putting all the information, including scanning the actual documents, onto a CD-ROM. All the data on the CD would be indexed for ease of use.

In late June I attended a computer show at Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City to learn about CD writers. I found two companies that make machines enabling small end users, such as myself, to write to CD. This is exciting news. We will be able to put the entire bibliography and all the scanned documents, illustrations and photographs on a CD with an index. These CDs can then be made available to the family. For those without a computer, or if your computer does not have CD capability, a book form of the bibliography will also be made available. Then, using the book as a guide, specific copies of documents and photographs can be requested. Given the enormous amount of material, it is unfeasible to send everyone in the family all the documents in paper form. The bibliography will serve the purpose of allowing people to see what is in the collection and to decide what

is of interest to them. Then, they will be able to request copies of those documents. Almost all the material in this collection is in photocopied form. The originals have either been sent to The New York Public Library or returned to the owner. It is not too late to send your family letters, photographs and memorabilia for inclusion in the collection.

One exciting aspect of CD technology is that it is amenable to so many differing formats. It is possible to add videotape to CDs. Wouldn't it be exciting to have the faces and voices of the oldest generations in the family telling stories about their childhood? I have been doing informal oral histories with some of these people on audio tape. A videotaped interview, as part of the Straus Family Collection, would be much more interesting than listening to an audio taped interview or reading its transcript.

Some of you have asked about including photographs in the address book. Although the cost would be prohibitive in that format, I believe the CD might provide the perfect solution. A family directory can be added to the CD with a photograph and brief biographical notation, similar to those in Who's Who. The newest CD writers make it possible for us to add to and edit the information on the CDs we produce. Perhaps we can issue an annual update as new information is incorporated into the collection. Once the family tree and genealogy are published, I hope before the end of the year, that information can be included on the CD. There should be enough space on one CD for a truly comprehensive collection of all the work of the Straus Family Project.

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The Straus Family Project A Crossroad

Another aspect of the Straus Family Project discussed at the June 2nd meeting was the future of the newsletter and address book. As you know, although family members have been sending for subscriptions, this does not completely cover the cost. Bob Straus has been subsidizing my work. It is now time to learn if the family is sufficiently interested in the project to make it self-sustaining. Bob has agreed to continue funding my work on the bibliography, but he has asked that the rest of the family take over the responsibility of funding the newsletter, address book and the daily administrative duties of the project.

Many of you write or call asking for information about a particular relative or some aspect of the family history. There are continual updates to the address book and family genealogy. I travel to the city or to various locations to meet with family members to do oral interviews and to gather material which is being donated to the collection. All of this takes time, time which must be funded. In addition, there are fixed costs such as: postage, phone, supplies and the rental fee for the storage facility where the originals and the bulk of the Straus Family Collection are kept. It was especially fortuitous that we had this storage facility when my house burned down. Thank goodness, nothing in the collection was damaged.

I have made corrections and added information sent to me in connection with the family tree. I hope, before the end of the year, to issue an updated family tree in book form. There will be charts and some biographical material. In order to produce an artistic tree, similar to the one commissioned in the mid 1950's, contributions totaling between \$3,000 and \$4,000 will have to be considered. This remains up to the family to decide if you want to have a new tree done. Please communicate with Rob or with me if you have any comments.

The coming months are going to be a period of evaluation. We will have to decide where the project is going and how it will get there. It is time to pull together a more formal organization and a process for decision making about the future direction of the project. If the project is to continue it will be essential to identify additional family members willing to be involved in directing it. Those currently involved cannot continue on their own. Without your involvement the project and this newsletter will stop. If you have any interest in seeing the project continue please contact Joan Adler at 516-265-3340 or Rob Straus at 617-661-9711.

We are at a crossroad. It is up to you to decide whether this project will go forward and where it will go. I will be perfectly happy to continue. You must decide to contribute, both financially and with your personal involvement, if the Straus Family Project is to be kept alive.



The Children of Isidor and Ida Straus
Beatrice, (daughter of Irma and Jesse), Irma Nathan Straus, Vivian, Minnie, Sara,
Jesse, Percy, Herbert

Many Waters Cannot Quench Love - Neither Can The Floods Drown It

This issue's featured story is about the events leading up to the sinking of the Titanic, the last correspondence with Isidor and Ida Straus. This is a personal story about two people and their relationship with one another and with their family. The ending is well known, but the story of the Straus' final trip to Europe has not been told.

On November 11, 1911 Isidor's secretary wrote the Cunard Steamship Company Ltd requesting booking on the "Caronia" for January 6th, "\$1300 for the two rooms and bath for himself and Mrs. Straus, and accommodations for valet and maid at \$77.50 each."

Beginning January 13, 1912, Percy, Herbert and Jesse kept up a running correspondence with Isidor and Ida. Percy wrote at least once a week, telling his parents about weather conditions and about the activities of various family members. His letters included some news of business and city events. His letters began, "Dear Papa and Mamma." Jesse's letters were almost entirely business reports. He kept Isidor abreast of the progress, or lack of progress, of the various departments in the store, gave him detailed financial accounts and wrote about merchandising decisions made in his absence. Of the three brothers, Jesse seemed most confident in this professional relationship with his father. He wrote, "My dear Parents." Herbert's letters were addressed to "Dear Father." They contained news of the city and about other merchant's activities. Between the three brothers, Isidor and Ida were kept fully informed about political, family and business news.

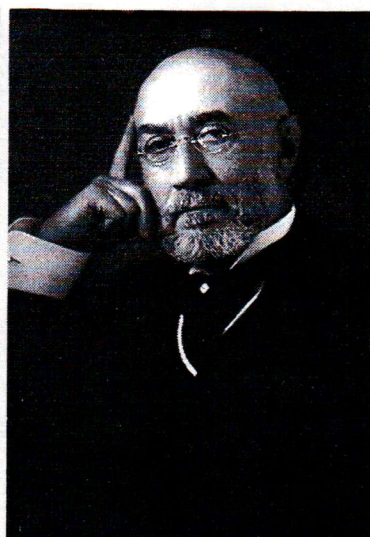
Percy, January 13th: "Jesse left yesterday afternoon for Pinehurst without his travelling companion. ... On Sunday Edith and I went down to Red Bank... Your Roche car will be ready for Minnie to-morrow morning. ...Mrs. Abraham is still in the South. ... I stopped at Sarah's this morning on my way down. She is feeling and looking very well indeed. According to latest reports from the rest of the family, they are all the same."

Herbert, January 19th: They were expecting a cable letting them know the ship had arrived in Gibraltar. "We have been

having a very severe spell of cold weather, in fact the coldest in twenty years. As evidence of this the Hudson was frozen over at Yonkers and people walked across it with the utmost safety. ... "The baby (Edward) goes outdoors each day and the vaccination which we feared might cause him some discomfort, has not troubled him in the least. When the doctor came the other day to examine him, without anyone saying anything to him, he walked up to the doctor and said "Doctor, it's taken". The remainder of this letter tells of social events such as a dinner at the Schiff's, an overnight at the Warburg's and an expected meeting of the Young Men's Hebrew Association to which Herbert and Felix Warburg will go. "I was elected at the last meeting of the Manhattan Club, although the necessary papers which I was supposed to fill out through some misunderstanding did not arrive until the morning after the meeting which shows that they were not very particular or the Thousand Dollars was a very alluring bait. I want to thank you for the gift and hope on your arrival, that you will permit me some time to act as host at the Oyster Bar."



Isidor Straus



Ida Straus

Percy, January 22: The terminal warehouse building was destroyed by fire, the second in ten days. Wannamaker and Gimbel were big losers. "If that condition proves continuous it might pay to take a room there for our old stock." Percy has spoken to a man who has an idea how to "eliminate the bundler, have each clerk O K the salesclerk of his or her neighbor, pack the merchandise and hand it to the customer after having sent the change down to the cash carrier. The plan is one developed by the Pneu-

matic Tube Trust to counteract the campaign of the National Cash Register people for creating of clerk cashiers by means of their new machine of which they are making five experimentally for us" Percy took Minnie to the Opera. "Last evening all but Herby and Teddy were together at Minnie's for dinner. Jesse had just returned from the South. He looks very well indeed and appears thoroughly rested. Minnie gave us a very good but elaborate dinner. On Saturday evening Edith and I dined with Lee and Clara. Lee seems to be feeling entirely well again, his only complaint being that his legs have not as yet regained their usual strength."

Percy, January 26th: He had stopped at Bonwit Teller's to see the new store. It was the most beautiful store he had ever seen. Mrs. Abraham arrived from Dallas, Texas but would not be permitted to come to the house immediately because of an epidemic of spinal meningitis there. She would be put up in a hotel where she would have a disinfectant bath and shampoo.

Her trunks and all her clothing would be fumigated by the Board of Health.

Herbert, January 26th: Nathan intended to sail on the Laconia February 3rd, arriving at Villefrenche and then Naples before going on to Jerusalem. He hoped to see Isidor and Ida during his trip. Herbert met with Robert W. Goelet about using his office to give L. Straus & Sons an order for the Ritz Carlton. Goelet wanted to get together some of the big property owners in New York to hire the best legal talent to fight exorbitant tax assessments.

Percy, January 29th: He had consulted with Governor Dix about the possibility of buying various State farms which were going to be put up for public auction. Percy concluded that red tape would make it too cumbersome to justify their making the effort. The Harvard Club met with former Secretary of State Olney presiding and President Lowell, Franklin Roosevelt, State Senator, and Judge Swayze of New Jersey speaking. Percy and Edith are looking for a Park Avenue apartment without success.

Percy, January 31st: Nathan would be sailing with Dr. and Mrs. Magnus and they all hoped to visit with Isidor and Ida. "Big strikes seem to be the order of the day. Lawrence, Massachusetts, is now in the throes of one and the Governor had been compelled to call out the Militia. It seems to have been caused by the desire of the mills to reduce wages in conformity with the reduction of hours of labor per week enforced by law. ... Neither of you were very enthusiastic about what you saw in Algiers and I am rather surprised as I have always thought it to be a very interesting place. ... Saturday evening the Macy Mutual Aid Association had their entertainment... Charlie and Grant were both there, as were Edith and I representing the firm. ... Jesse is giving you all information about the stocks."

Percy, February 12th: He and Edith decided to take an apartment on Seventy Eighth Street and Park Avenue. "At noon on Saturday, we opened the Sixth floor - "Old Fashioned Macys" without having made any announcements of it, in order to have the 220 people on the floor become familiar with their duties." (Note: This was an experiment to put a bargain department on the sixth floor.) "On Saturday afternoon, Edith and the two boys with a friend of theirs, and I, went down to Red Bank for over Sunday. I returned this morning bringing Ralph and his friend in time for school. Between coasting and sleighing we all had a delightful time. Herby & Vivy and Lucille and Gus Wertheim were at Teddy's and we all dined there last evening. Mrs. Abraham did not go with us ... Jess and Irma went to the country over Sunday, too. I saw both Sarah and Minnie on Saturday, so I can give you a clean bill of health for all your offspring."

Percy, February 19th: "This morning's papers announce definitely Stern's move to 42nd Street. They are going to cover an area about three quarters as large as ours. According to reports they are going to put up an eight story building."

Herbert, February 21st: "I am wondering what you are going to say about Stern's new move. It does not seem an ideal location for a department store for the reason that while they no doubt will get a large carriage trade, this alone will not support them; it is quite a distance from both Subway stations, the one at Broadway and the other at the Grand Central Station and a great distance from Seventh Avenue and Broadway traffic from every standpoint. ... My youngster continues to progress each day and while he has not gained much weight he is growing very tall and svealt like his Dad; he tried to say everything and manages to make himself understood." (Edward, age two years, three months)

Jesse, February 23rd: "Yesterday, Washington's Birthday, Percy and his family spent at Red Bank and are going to stay until Monday. Wednesday evening Vivie and Herby, Irma and I all went to dinner and the theatre together, and last night Sarah and Alfred and Irma and I were at the Boston Symphony Concert. This is evidence that we are all in pretty good health and spirits."

Percy, February 26th: Regarding the Sixth Floor, "I am no more sanguine of its ultimate success than I was when the project was first broached. ... Everybody is discussing Teddy's (Roosevelt) latest pronunciamento and his avowed candidacy for the Republican nomination. The announcement of his belief in the Initiative, Referendum and Recall even to the judges, has turned many against him including those who have tried to support him in the past."

Jesse, March 1st: He is not happy with their advertising and will look for someone new to take it over. "For the present the Sixth Floor is not a huge success ... There seems to be a little feeling that our regular trade do not care to be seen on the "cheap" part of our house, and the new trade that we hope to attract has not yet learned of the existence of "old-fashioned Macy's." ... Every change of policy of this kind really should be considered sufficiently far in advance to enable us to size up the psychology of the situation, because after all the public, and what appeals to it, demands a very careful mental analysis from every point of view, in order in a measure to predetermine what the result of a specific move may be. ... The Schiff episode I think is going to turn out very satisfactorily, though I have no doubt that you are right in your surmise that it caused Mr. Schiff a lot of mental anguish to have so much undesirable publicity. The papers have all acted in an exceedingly unfriendly manner, and between innuendo and outspoken expression, have done everything they could to create sentiment against Schiff and in favor of the valet, who, according to the latest newspaper reports, has been a crook for years. ... It seems a pity that our public officials in cases of this character hold their trials in the newspapers instead of in court."

Percy, March 4th: "I stopped at Minnie's this morning ... Her kids are as cute as usual and in the best of health. On our way home from Red Bank yesterday, Junior, (Percy, age five and a half) without any warning, asked Marose whether she missed Grandpa; Marose answered "of course I do, very much

indeed; don't you?" Junior replied "I forgot him after eight days. Even she had to laugh at him."... Having decided to take our apartment ... Neither of us feel very much like furnishing so soon after having furnished at Red Bank." The previous day there was a rainstorm of such magnitude that the storm drain flooded and the 105th Street house flooded the kitchen and hall floors to a depth of two inches. "I am afraid that before anybody occupies the house again, it will require a very thorough overhauling, particularly as to the plumbing and heating system. We are comfortable and happy there, but I can see now how it was that Aunt Sara was continually complaining as she did not have the love for the house to make her look lightly at the slight inconveniences which continually cropped up. ... Vivy is ready to sail and anxious to get away; both she and Herby have been leading very strenuous lives and are glad of the opportunity to rest which the trip across affords. ... Herbert left for Aiken (S.C.) on Thursday morning and he wired that he arrived there... According to this mornings cable dispatch England is in a bad way between the coal strikers and woman suffragettes. It seems also that our miners are going to strike this Spring."

Isidor to Oscar, March 12th from Cap Martin regarding the Schiff affair: "... I finally determined to give him some sign of my sincere sympathy with him for the outrageous action on the part of the newspapers and some of the authorities, & added that I thought the people should take a lesson from this experience & insist on such legislation as will improve our libel laws so that the press should not make so free with reputations by simply prefacing any malicious lie with the words "it is alleged" should not shield them against responsibility for spreading the same. ... Roosevelt I guess is done for. "

Percy, March 18th: This letter is mostly business oriented. Much of it seems to be responses to questions Isidor had asked. Herbert was denied membership in a fish and game club, probably because he is Jewish. The U. S. Supreme Court has cleared the way for Macy's book controversy to be taken before the court in the fall. The new method of handling the delivery help has turned out very satisfactorily. They are considering combining Mail Order Delivery and General Delivery as a cost cutting measure. Their efforts to get rid of the 148th Street stable have been to no avail. They have turned the matter over to a man named Payton, a negro who specializes in property for negroes. "I am glad to hear of Mamma's improved condition and I hope she will not suffer a set back this Summer at Elberon. Just received a cable from you telling us that Vivy is fine and that you expect to leave on Friday for Paris and that you intend to sail on the tenth of April on the Titanic. I do not

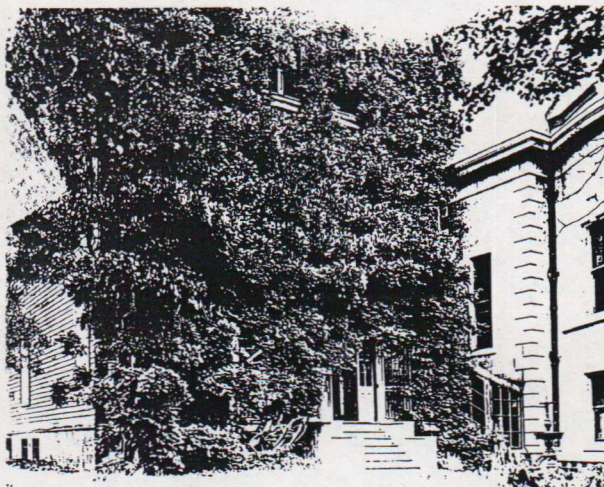
know why you are in such a hurry to return. Everybody in the family continues very well. You have heard of Jack's slight attack of measles. ... Herby and Teddy are evidently enjoying themselves at Aiken as we hear little from them. They are apparently too busy to write."

Ida to Beatrice March 18th: "... we are ready to leave for Cannes, where aunt Vivy is stopping, but we must wait until after lunch because we have invited a lady to share that meal with us, who telephoned she was going to come all the way from Monte Carlo notwithstanding that it is raining hard all morning. ...she is known here about as the lady with the jewels, because she has such magnificent ones."

Percy, March 28th: "This mornings mail brought us a letter from you, Papa, in which you state you have not yet made up your mind whether to sail on the Titanic or not."

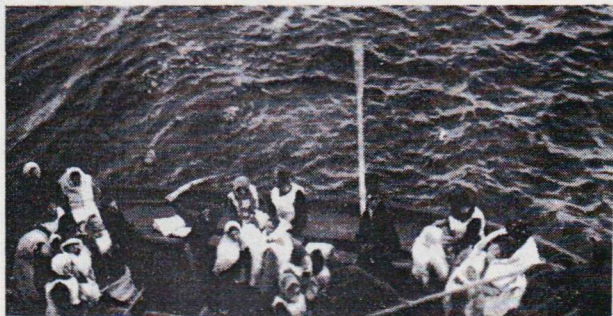
Jesse to Herbert, March 28th: "Irma and I suddenly decided to sail on the Amerika on the 11th, crossing Papa in mid-ocean. We came to this determination because Papa is coming home earlier than usual, and I wanted Irma to get away from housekeeping for a little while before the summer, and as I have not been sleeping well I thought that the sail would do me good. Irma wants to take Beatrice and put her in the Beer girls' school at Neuilly for a few weeks for the sake of the French. We will be back here the first week in June."

Jesse, March 29th: Jack is over the measles, is entirely himself and has grown two inches during his illness, and goes with Baby (Bob) and Mademoiselle to



2745 Broadway

Mt Kisco. Percy and Edith leave the next day for Philadelphia to attend the annual meeting of the Academy of Political Science. Jesse and Irma would have joined them if they were not preparing to leave on their trip. Beatrice wants to go to Europe with Jesse and Irma and they are considering taking her. "Sunday evening Percy and Edith, Sara and Al, and Minnie and Dick will take supper with us at Luchow's - and as Herby and Teddy are still at Aiken this is additional evidence to you that everybody is well and happy. This is probably the last letter that will reach you before you sail, and I hope that you will both return in as good health as you appear to have been in all Winter, and that the "Titanic" will give you a smooth crossing. My only regret is that our proposed trip abroad will postpone our meeting you for a few weeks longer. Irma wanted to leave earlier and meet you in London for a few days, but I did not want to leave Percy and Herbert for so long a time prior to your departure, for business reasons." The remainder of this letter responds to questions Isidor has asked. Jesse responds that they will continue to have hosiery boxed when it



Insufficiently Loaded Lifeboat

At about 3:15 we sighted the first life boat and it was alongside at 3:45, just as day was breaking. This first boat was about three quarters filled with people about one quarter of whom were women. None of those rescued in the first boat knew whether or not your Father and Mother were on the Titanic. The second boat which came alongside about fifteen minutes later was fairly well filled, and almost exclusively with men. There were not more than four or five women in that boat. From one of the passengers on this second boat, I received the information that Mr. & Mrs. Straus were aboard the Titanic. It was not until the third boat arrived that I was able to get a Titanic passenger list and verify the statement that your Father and Mother were booked as passengers. I watched every boat load with intense interest and while it was almost impossible to distinguish the faces of the first arrivals, it was quite day light by the time the fourth or fifth boat arrived. After that they unloaded four boats at one time, two on the port side and two on the starboard side. As I could not watch all these boats unloading, I described your parents to a fellow passenger, so that they would not be brought aboard unobserved by me. After that, however, the boats came in singly. About from the sixth to the ninth boat, two of them came in one with not over twelve people in her and the other not having more than twenty people.

At 7:30, we had taken in all the boats in sight. We then steamed at slow speed into the wreckage and again lay too expecting to find more boats. It was then about 8:30 o'clock and the Captain of the Carpathia seemed to think that he had taken aboard all who were in the boats. I then spoke to an officer who appeared to be one of the White Star men, (he was the third officer) and asked him to tell me whether or not all of the Titanic's boats had been accounted for. He refused at first but when I stated my reason for knowing and insisted on an answer, he told me that all the boats had been accounted for and that in his judgement there was almost no hope for those who were not already rescued. Thinking possibly that your father and mother

had been taken aboard and I had missed them, I covered the entire ship from bow to stern, and searched the saloon, second and steerage. Also looked in every stateroom, irrespective of its occupants, so that I could satisfy myself beyond a doubt whether or not they were aboard. By this time it was almost ten o'clock. I then wrote the message which you received Thursday morning, handed it to the Purser and explained to him the absolute necessity of getting it off at once. He replied very courteously that he would do the best he could but that the muster was just being made and that it must take precedence over private messages. This I accepted as being reasonable. The muster was not completed until noon time when they assured every one that the names had been sent to the offices of the line in New York. I fully expected that such being the case, all the names of the survivors would be published in the New York papers by three o'clock that afternoon. Later in the afternoon, I asked the officer if any of the private messages had been sent and he replied that he did not think any of them had been sent, but that they would surely be sent that night.

(Note: Mr. Badenoch wrote a rather lengthy description at this point about the difficulty he had getting a message sent. He believed his message was not sent until late Wednesday.)

Realizing how anxious you would be to get the most accurate information about the last that was seen of your Father and Mother, I circulated among the survivors and although many claimed to have some knowledge of their actions, those whom you have personally interviewed are the ones I finally decided could give the most authentic account. From what I heard on board and that which I have learned since, I think that the statement given you by Mr. Woolner is the most accurate. All the survivors agree on one fact and that is if the proper discipline had obtained, there is not the least doubt but that your Father and Mother would have been saved.



Mrs. Straus Refuses to Leave Her Husband

comes over from Europe, gives Isidor information about balancing the D/A accounts, about Mr. Webster and Mr. Byrne's health and details about provisions made at the store in anticipation of the proposed coal strike. "You will undoubtedly have read how Mr. Roosevelt was snowed under in his attempt to get the New York delegates. Uncle Oscar went down in defeat with the rest of the candidates, though I have not seen him since the primary day to hear his explanation and forecast of the future."

Isidor to Julius from Paris, March 31st: "Nathan has been in Jerusalem for over a month ... he is attending a tuberculosis Convention as one of the U.S representatives."

Jesse, April 2nd: "A few days after this reaches you we shall probably communicate with you by Marconi from the "Amerika" on which we sail to your steamer. Everybody remains in the best of health. We had a cable today from Uncle Nathan from Java to be answered at Alexandria. I wrote you last on Friday, and there is no store news to add to the full information I gave you. Have a pleasant trip back."

Throughout this period it is clear from the responses of Percy, Jesse and Herbert that Isidor is still taking an active role in the running of Macy's. Each wrote to Isidor about some aspect of business and in many cases seemed to be explaining or justifying an action or decision. Although we do not have all the matching correspondence, there is enough information to conclude that Isidor was very much a part of the picture even though he was on this protracted European trip.

Ida to Dear Children from Claridge's Hotel, London, April 4th: "Papa enjoys London so much more than Paris, and just revels in going about here. Do not imagine that I am bringing a lot of presents, ... Papa would not allow me to shop for anything in Paris, except a hat pin for myself at Noarys and while there they showed me a gold bag with emerald and diamonds on the bars, which papa gave me - We are just shipping Marie back to Paris, as while there I could not get a maid in her place, ... she has been behaving very badly over here. When papa sours on a girl you know there is good cause, and he is disgusted with her. I have engaged a nice English girl now but as with the other do not know whether I can count on her, ...I suppose tomorrow there will be a big egg hunt up in 105th Street. I wish I could be there to take part in it. You may not know that this is already the third day of Pesach and that you should all be eating Matzos - Claridges does not serve them so we cannot do our duty."

Isidor from Claridge's Hotel, London April 9th 1912 to Rev. H. H. Redgrave, M.A.: "I learn from the London Daily Telegraph ... of the dire distress which you are attempting to aid in relieving in the Pottery Districts, with which my firm has been in business for almost a half Century. I ask you to accept enclosed order on the Manchester & Liverpool District Bank for Fifty Pounds to assist in the worthy work..."

Rev. H. H. Redgrave, M.A. to Mr. Straus, September 13, 1934: "For 22 years now I have kept secret from the world a

matter in which the British public would have evinced the most profound interest, namely, the last letter which your beloved Father, Isidor Straus, wrote on earth, only the day prior to the day he and your saintly Mother jointed their ship of destiny - the Titanic."

On April 14th Isidor and Ida cabled from the Titanic to Jesse on the Amerika: At the time ship to ship cables were a novelty and used most often for friendly messages. Isidor wrote, "fine voyage fine ship feeling fine what news."

On April 15th Nathan cabled Jesse from New York: "Delighted with message everything fine. Nathan."

Unaware that the Titanic had sunk, **Irma wrote to her children from aboard the Amerika on April 17th.** "Two days ago the captain knocked at our door at seven o'clock in the morning to tell us to come on deck and see two big ice-bergs. - We only had time to put on nappers and fur coats and go on deck."

On April 18th Jesse received word from Liverpool: "regret no news yet of mr and mrs isidore straus."

Altmeyer in Paris cabled Jesse on the 18th: "have been exchanging cables with newyork answers are that no definite news will be obtainable until Carpathia carrying survivors reaches Newyork. Altmeyer."

Percy cabled Jesse from New York on the 18th: "Father and mother not on Carpathia which picked up seven hundred survivors just have unconfirmed rumour that baltic due queenstown carries two hundred fifty more survivors walter beer meet you on tender plymouth with later news if any. Percy."

An undated cable from Percy reads: "Badenoch arrived his story gathered from survivors leaves no hope Mother refused to leave father danger realized too late both showed perfect courage and composure to the end = Percy." John A. Badenoch, Macy's Grocery Buyer, was on the Carpathia, the rescue ship.

April 24, 1912. Dear Mr. Percy: As per your request, I submit herewith the facts as desired. About 1:30, on the morning of April 15th, I was awakened by the unusual sounds of activity on the deck over head. Just then the fog-horn blew and I got up and looked out of the port hole. It was a perfectly clear star light night and the sea was without a ripple. Of course I immediately realized that either we or some other vessel was in trouble. I then went into the companion-way and saw a steward who informed me that it was the Titanic that was in trouble. He said they had been in communication with her since twelve o'clock and at that time, which was about 1:45, had just received her last message in which it was said she was sinking. The discipline aboard the Carpathia was perfect and she was using every ounce of steam to hurry her to the scene of the accident.

Taking the statements of eight or ten of the survivors and comparing them, I believe that the following can be considered the most accurate.

Mr. & Mrs. Straus were in bed at the time of the accident. Immediately after the boat struck they were seen in the companion-way, in bath robes. At this time an officer, as well as several of the passengers assured them that there was no trouble and the best they could do would be to return to their rooms. The maids story after this is that your Mother seemed to realize the danger and prepared to dress, requesting your Father to do likewise. To hurry matters, she sent the maid for his valet to assist him in dressing. Shortly thereafter they both appeared on deck, fully clothed, mingled with the other passengers and discussed the danger in a perfectly calm and collected manner. They evidently did not believe that there was any great danger of the ship sinking. On the advice of the Captain, they put on life preservers over their fur coats, and assisted other passengers in doing the same. By that time the boats were being filled with women and children, and your Mother was asked by the officer in charge and urged by your Father to get into one of the life boats. She refused to do so and insisted that the maid take her place in boat No. 8. They stood by while other boats were being filled, all the while your Father continuously urging your Mother to enter one of them. Finally when it became apparent that there was no hope of the Titanic staying afloat, your Father insisted that your Mother enter the second from the last boat that was being launched from the side they were on. She still refused, saying she would not go without him and when the officer in charge, again urged her to enter, and, in fact, attempted force, aided by the urging of your Father, she placed her foot in the boat, thinking at that time that your Father would accompany her. Just then, some demonstration seems to have been made by the men standing around and the officer in charge ordered all the men back. Mr. Isidor, thinking that your Mother was safe in the life boat, stepped back with the other men. Your Mother, looking around and seeing that your Father was not with her, got out of the boat, went to where your Father was standing and put her arms around him. The officer in charge seeing that it was no use in trying to

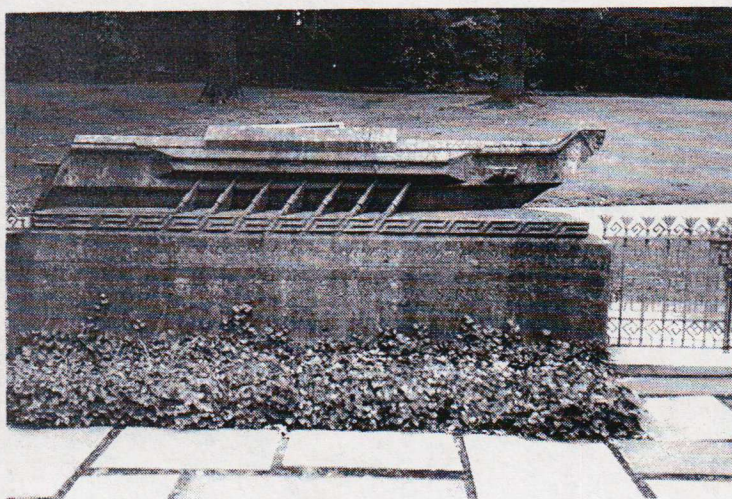
get your Mother to leave your Father, ordered the boat lowered away. Your Father and Mother then walked to the opposite side of the ship and when last seen were standing, clasped in each others arms, calmly waiting for any help that might come. Just what happened after that is not quite clear, but I believe they did not attempt to enter any other boat or make any effort to get away, caused, I believe by the unruly behavior of a number of the men passengers.

It is now history all over the world that they displayed the most magnificent courage, self sacrifice and devotion known to modern times.

Yours respectfully, John A. Badenoch

The family was notified on April 26th that Isidor's body had been recovered and was sailing to Halifax aboard the steamer

Mackay Bennett along with the bodies of 205 other victims of the Titanic disaster. Isidor's body was returned to New York on the Boston Express on May 3rd, accompanied by Mr. James Reilly of Macy's. Maurice Rothschild acted as the family's agent, arranging all details of the identification and transfer of Isidor's remains. A private funeral was held at Percy's home at 2745 Broadway (105th Street) on May 8, delayed a day in the hope that Ida's body would be found. Ida's body was never recovered. Rabbi Samuel Shulman of Temple Beth-El officiated.



Monument to Isidor and Ida Straus at the Straus Family Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx NY - Isidor's remains are entombed in the ark.

Isidor was buried at Beth-El Cemetery on Long Island. On May 4, 1928 a deed was drawn for a family plot on Myosotis Street in Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, New York and a Straus family mausoleum was erected. Isidor was moved to Woodlawn. The stone contains Isidor and Ida's date of birth and death. An inscription reads: "Many waters cannot quench love - neither can the floods drown it." R. H. Macy and his family are also buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Memorial services for Isidor and Ida were held around the world. 6,000 people attended the service at Carnegie Hall on May 12th and many thousand stood outside in the rain, unable to gain admittance. A reported 40,000 attended memorial services for the Strauses. Within two months of the sinking of the Titanic a committee was formed, contributions were being collected, and Straus Park was planned as a memorial to the nobility and heroism of the Strauses. It was dedicated April 15, 1915.

Straus Park Renovation A Progress Report

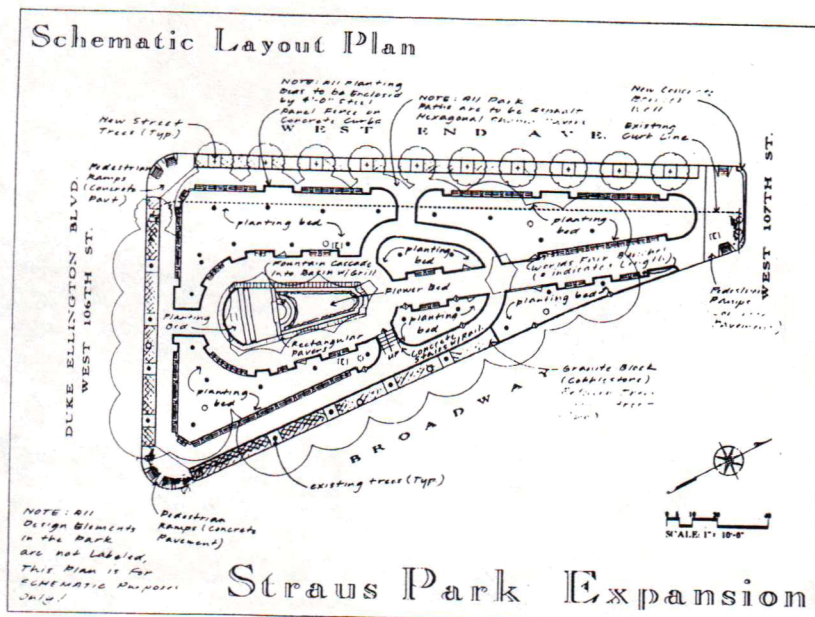
Since the last newsletter, two meetings have been held regarding Straus Park to which various members of the Straus family and I have been invited. What follows are reports of both meetings and the status of the Straus Park Renovation Project.

On March 7, 1995 Edward Kuhn Straus, Leon Auerbach, President of the West 106th Street Block Association and I were invited to a meeting of the City of New York Parks and Recreation Department at the Arsenal Building in Central Park. Representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation were: Commissioner Henry Stern, Manhattan Commissioner of Parks Michael Cuomo, Designer Eric Mattes, Chief of Design Robert Johnson, Historian Jonathan Kuhn, Manhattan Borough Liaison Bob Redmond, Monument Restorer Allan Cox, Parks Planner Stephen Whitehouse, Elliot Regenstein, and Kuo M. Tsu. At this meeting the progress, or lack of progress, of the restoration project was explained. Although bids had gone out and been accepted, the winning contractor had defaulted. Since that time Commissioner Stern decided that an additional 19 feet bordering the park from 106 to 107 Street on West End Avenue should be added to the plans. Commission of Transportation Elliot Sander had to approve the transfer. This required another delay while Commissioner Sanders decided if he would give the 19 feet to the Parks Department. His response was to ask the Community Board in the area of Straus Park to approve the proposal because it would mean losing 10 parking spaces if the land were returned to the "Green Streets" program. On April 24th representatives of the Transportation Department and the Parks Committee met with community members to hear their views. Tom Flood of Ruth Messinger's office stated that Mrs. Messinger wanted the construction to begin immediately. The

Community Board held its meeting May 2nd and voted to support the transfer. On May 10th Commissioner Stern's office called Leon Auerbach to say that construction would begin this year and be completed by May 1996. Since that time the designers have been working on the new design which includes additional trees and plantings on the newly acquired land.

On June 8, 1995 a breakfast meeting was held at the Westbury Hotel in New York City. Present were Robert K. Straus, the host, Ruth Messinger, Manhattan Borough President, Leon Auerbach, Donald Blun Straus, Edward Kuhn Straus, Herbert (Buzzy) Scheffel and me. Although informal in nature, this meeting served to allow the Strauses to meet Ruth Messinger and Leon Auerbach. After breakfast, Bob, Buzzy, Leon and I went to Straus Park where we met Michael Cuomo, Hector Aponte, APRM, Jonathan Kuhn, Eric Mattes, Bob Redmond, Ken Lewis of DPR and his crew who are responsible for hands-on care of the park, Sgt. Erin O'Reilly with members of the New York Police Department 24th Precinct neighborhood police, and many people from the community. Eric brought drawing boards with renderings of the proposed expansion and restoration projects for Straus Park. It made for a dramatic presentation when we could all see exactly where the new trees, benches and plants would be placed. We were also able to better understand why Commission Stern was insistent on obtaining the additional 19 feet.

As of July 10th, 1995, the new design was about to be brought before the arts committee for approval. There was some concern that an environmental impact hearing might be required before the bids could go out. This, of course, would further delay the project. Leon states, "... this is the closest we have come to action on the renovation that was first proposed in 1988 and was funded by a grant from Ruth Messinger's office in 1992." We can trust Leon to keep the pressure on. He has been a good friend to the family and a true champion of the Straus Park Renovation Project.



Historic Talbotton Foundation

On March 17, 1995 the Historic Talbotton Foundation held its annual meeting at Straus-Levert Hall. Gus Kaufman, of Macon, GA, was invited to speak. He has sent me a copy of his talk. I will be happy to send you a copy of it upon request.

In his letter Gus wrote, "The meeting was held in conjunction with their annual wild game dinner and was a lavish affair attended by one hundred mostly local residents. Following my talk Mr. Mike Buckner, Co-Chairperson of the Foundation and Mr. Frank J. Jordan, a long time supporter of the Straus family gave me a beautiful framed portrait of Lazarus Straus, copied from the one which hangs in the hall." Gus has offered this 17 x 21 labeled portrait of Lazarus Straus in a heavy frame to any interested member of the family. He can be reached at 590 Eldorado Drive, Macon, GA 31204-1315, 912-477-3889.

Although he has been unable to prove that his grandmother Mathilda Straus was related to our Straus family, the connection between these two families has been well documented. The Kaufman Brothers opened two retail stores in Oglethorpe Georgia in 1851. The first Southern town Lazarus Straus came to after his emigration to America was Oglethorpe. It has been suggested that Lazarus knew the Kaufman family in Otterberg and came to Oglethorpe because the Kaufman brothers had settled there. When Lazarus opened a store in Talbotton, Julius Kaufman became his partner. Charles Kaufman, Julius' brother opened a store in Geneva and Jacob Kaufman, a third brother, opened a store in Carsonville, 17 miles from Talbotton up the Wire Road, towards Macon. On December 26, 1859 Isidor wrote home from Carsonville to wish his family Merry Christmas and to tell them about his activities. He wrote that Mr. Jacob had just returned with greetings from Isidor's mother Sara. Isidor wrote about the business at the store and asked Lazarus to send "some of your grey nigro blankets..." I have visited this site and seen what Gus believes to be the original building that housed Jacob's store.

In 1860 Jacob married Fannie Straus and in 1870 Julius married Matilda Straus, both of Otterberg. In 1861 Julius Kaufman enlisted in the 4th Georgia Regiment and Isidor Straus dropped out of Collinsworth Institute to help his father in the store. The Georgia Importing and Exporting Company was formed in June of 1863 "for the purpose of opening and carrying out direct trade with foreign countries." (blockade running) Isidor sailed to England on one of their ships as the secretary to Lloyd G. Bowers whose descendents still live in Columbus Georgia. In many letters home during the Civil War Isidor sent greetings from the Kaufman parents to their children in Georgia. February 8, 1894, after having been elected to the House of Representatives, Isidor received a letter from J. Kaufman. It reads, "This is one time in my life that I wished I was able to express my feelings when I heard that you was Elected as a representative to Congress. I congratulate you very heartily. If you were my own child I could not have been more pleased. Can you remember in 1860 when you and Edgar

Lynn made Speeches in the little back room in Carsonville. I thought then that some day you would be a great man. Your dear Father must feel proud of all of his children."

Gus Kaufman is researching the origin of the building in Carsonville he believes housed his great uncle Jacob's store. I have visited Talbotton and the Carsonville store. To see the places where Lazarus and his family lived and worked, and to take part in filling in the gaps in the history of the family, is quite exciting. As the family historian, it is wonderful to add one more piece to the puzzle and to see the stories and connections come full circle.



Did You Know?

On February 19th, 1912 Percy Straus wrote to Isidor and Ida who were vacationing in Cap Martin. "I was rather surprised that you made no mention of receiving a present from Paris from the **whole dam fam**, ..." (The emphasis is mine.) When I decided to call our newsletter "whole dam fam", I borrowed the phrase from Sara Straus Hess who used it in 1955 when she invited the wholedamfam to dinner at her apartment. It seems this phrase had been used as early as 1912 by Percy.

When Ken Straus became Manager of the Flatbush Avenue Macy's, he called an informal coffee and cake, get acquainted, meeting so that he could reassure his new staff that the wasn't as bad, tough or mean as they had heard. When the 35 or 40 executives had all arrived and enjoyed some coffee and danish, he invited them to sit so that the meeting could begin. He sat in his desk chair only to lean back and be tossed, head over heels, over the back of the chair. He came up with his head in the wastebasket. Imagine the impression **that** made.

Isidor's body was buried at Beth-El Cemetery and later moved to Woodlawn Cemetery. This fact once panicked the Beth-El custodians when a researcher, looking for his grave, couldn't find him. The cemetery's records still showed him in residence. They thought they'd lost him.