



STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



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Straus is the German word for ostrich

August 2014

THE NATHAN STRAUS SOUP KITCHENS IN PALESTINE

We have long been aware of Nathan Straus' philanthropy. He is best known, perhaps, for championing pasteurization, thereby saving the lives of countless children. His philanthropy was not confined to the United States. He is known, and honored, all over the world. A recent article about the Nathan Straus Soup Kitchens in early 20th century Palestine highlights the length and breadth of Nathan's largess.

The Straus family originated in southwestern Germany. In 1852, after the failed Revolution of 1848 and impending inquiries about the part he played in it, Lazarus Straus immigrated to the United States. He settled in rural western Georgia where he remained, with his family who arrived in 1854. At the end of the Civil War (The War Between the States as it is called in the south), Lazarus Straus moved his family from Columbus, GA to New York. In a letter to his relatives in Germany dated July 7th, 1865, Lazarus wrote, "...we have been through very much; the last battle was lost in our town, Columbus, GA. We had to witness robberies, fires and killings and have lost very much ourselves." Isidor wrote, "So disheartened and discouraged [was] my father that he made up his mind that he did not care to waste away the time which he feared would be consumed before normal conditions could be established. And it was on this account that he took his family north."

One can only imagine how difficult Lazarus' decision to relocate must have been. He had to start over at that time. Just 11 years before, his family had joined him in Georgia and now he was asking them to move and start over once again. Lazarus decided to move north, first to Philadelphia and then to New York upon the urging of his eldest son, Isidor.

{NOTE: Information about the early history of the family may be found in past issues of the SHS newsletter on our website. You can do a specific word search using the Search Bar on the upper right hand corner of the Home Page. Or you can scroll through past issues of the SHS newsletter from the Dropdown Menu bar under Archives on the left hand side of the Home Page. SHS's website may be found at: www.straushistoricalsociety.org. }

An incident on the family's trip north is said to have made a great impression on 17 year old Nathan. It changed the course of his life.

During the trip Nathan happened to be wearing grey clothing. As the family was boarding an express train in Nashville, TN, Nathan was jerked from the platform by a Union soldier. The moving train departed with all the Strauses but Nathan, who had only fifty cents in his pocket. After convincing the soldier that he was no threat, Nathan was released, alone in a strange city. He soon realized that he was hungry and found a restaurant that served something he had never seen before, ice cream. He tasted one serving and decided to have another.

Unfortunately, this consumed all of his money. The proprietor of the restaurant learned that Nathan was now penniless and alone. He offered to return the money Nathan had spent on the ice cream but Nathan refused to take it.

The next day he was able to join his family. But for twenty-four hours Nathan had nothing else to eat. He learned what it meant to be among strangers, penniless and hungry. He never forgot it. It is said, there and then he determined that, if he ever became able, he would do something to relieve hunger in the world. 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, which have been written about extensively in previous issues of the SHS Newsletter, and for his philanthropy throughout Israel, then known as Palestine.

Once the Straus family settled in New York City, Lazarus and Isidor opened L. Straus & Son, importers of china, crockery and glassware and manufacturers of lamps. Nathan attended high school but was not interested in further formal



Nathan Straus - GA - about 1860

"If we wish to live and to bequeath life to our offspring, if we believe that we are to pave the way to the future, then we must first of all not forget."

(Prof. Ben Zion Dinur, Yad Vashem, 1956)

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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. You are invited to submit articles or ideas for articles, calendar events, and material relating to the Straus family and to their history.

The Straus Historical Society, Inc. is a tax exempt organization as described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Contributions to the Society are deductible to the extent provided by law. A copy of the annual report of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. may be obtained from the Society or from the New York State Attorney General, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271



**A Message from Outgoing
SHS Chair
Paul A. Kurzman**

It has been a great pleasure to serve as the Chairman of the Board of the Straus Historical Society and to work closely with so many of you in support of this worthy family association. The dedication of the Oscar Straus Memorial in Washington, the Nathan Straus Park on New York's Lower Eastside, and the many events in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the loss of the RMS Titanic -- and the lives of my great grandparents, Isidor and Ida Straus, have been among the most memorable moments of recognition of this very special family. I am so pleased that my cousin, Oscar Straus III, will be assuming the leadership of our Society, continuing to work with our superb Executive Director, Joan Adler, and Assistant Director Catherine Smith - which means we are assured of a bright future. I will continue to remain active and on the Board, and hope each of you reading this newsletter will continue to support an organization of which we all can be very proud.

**A Message from SHS Chair
Oscar S. Straus III**

It is indeed a great honor for me to be elected by the Board as the next Chairperson of the Straus Historical Society.

I first want to thank Paul Kurzman, our outgoing Chair, for all the work he has accomplished over the many, many years he has served in this important role. For two separate periods, Paul has stepped up and assumed the title and the work that goes with the position. Way back in 2003, I succeeded Paul as Chair and he again took over in 2008. Paul's long-term understanding and guidance has made our Society's success a reality. I am extremely grateful that he will remain on the Board to provide his knowledge and assistance to us into the future. Again, thank you Paul!

I am the great grandson of Oscar S. Straus. My two granddaughters are his great, great, great relatives and the sixth generation from Lazarus. I want their generation to know about and to learn more of the depth of contributions to the United States of all their older generations - not just the great, great, great's, but all those in between. These hard working people must be recognized, written about and understood.

Looking to the future, we must each understand that increased financial assistance from the family is most important. No, it is essential. To those of you who have faithfully supported the Society over its long life, from Robert K. Straus' personal inception of the project in 1990, to the loose association of interested family members who took over, and finally to the formation of a 501(c)(3) organization, I personally thank you.

We will need the continued and increased support of the family from all generations. In addition, the many relations who have chosen not to contribute in the past will, I hope, re-think that decision and begin to assist in a meaningful way. As we will inform you in greater detail later this Fall, seven individuals provided 40% of the general contributions in 2013; and all of the seven are over 70 years of age. Therefore, we must

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education. His father wrote, "Nathan is very valuable to me in business, only he does not have much patience to learn much." Nathan was full of energy and ideas. While on a selling trip one winter he realized that his clothing, while stylish, was not practical. He was freezing. He bought a bolt of woolen cloth and wrapped it around himself in the manner he'd seen on Native Americans. Later on that trip, while on a lake steamer, the boat stopped to rescue victims of a prairie and forest fire. The people had fled to the lake after being driven from their homes and nearly stampeded by animals escaping from the same fire. The steamer picked up the people and Nathan gave them, not only his money, but most of his clothing and the woolen cloth. By the time he got to Chicago he was penniless and half frozen. But he'd done what he thought was right, something he continued to do for the rest of his life.

By 1894 the Straus family was part owner of R. H. Macy & Company and about to become the sole owner. Nathan established himself, not only as an accomplished businessman, but also as one who was acutely aware of the difficulties affecting his employees and the general public. He donated money to buy coal during an especially cold winter when the coal workers were on strike. And he contributed food to the needy. He began anonymously donating turkeys to all Macy's employees each Thanksgiving, a custom he continued for the rest of his life. (The identity of the donor was never revealed.) Macy's was the first company to set up a Mutual Aid Society, add an occupational physician and nurse to their payroll, provide free coffee and a roll to their employees, and low cost lunches when they learned that their employees weren't eating because they wanted to save their money for their elderly parents and ill relatives.

In the late 1890s Nathan became interested in the diseases that could be transmitted through milk. He learned that a process called pasteurization would kill the germs that were found in milk, thereby making it a safe product for consumption. He built a pasteurizing milk laboratory in New York and began distributing free or low cost milk at stations set up all over the city. For the rest of his life, at his own cost, he built milk pasteurizing laboratories anywhere in the world as long as the municipality was willing to send professionals to learn the process.

In 1904, Nathan and Lina visited Palestine. Once again, the course of his life was changed, this time by what he saw during this visit. The poverty and helplessness of the people greatly affected him and he became an ardent Zionist. He vowed he would do something to help alleviate the suffering he witnessed.

A fascinating scholarly article by Hebrew University Professors John Gal and Mimi Ajzenstadt titled, "The Long Path from a Soup Kitchen to a Welfare State in Israel," describes Nathan Straus' efforts in Palestine between 1912 and 1931. This article

appeared in the *Journal of Public History*, Volume 25, Number 2, 2013, pp. 240-263. Excerpts are reprinted below with the permission of the authors and the publisher, Cambridge University Press, for which we are very grateful.

"The first two decades of the twentieth century marked the final years of the Ottoman Empire and its rule in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine. By the end of the first decade of the new century, the Holy City was the country's most populous city and home to an estimated seventy thousand inhabitants, forty-five thousand of whom were Jews and the remainder primarily Christian and Muslim Arabs. ... between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Jewish population of the city had grown as a result of immigration ... Despite the economic growth that

much of the expanding Jewish community in Palestine experienced during the first decade of the twentieth century (which was fueled by immigration to Palestine from Europe and the Middle East), economic activity in Jerusalem remained limited, the sources of livelihood were small, and the Halukkah [charitable] funds did not offer a sufficient source of income for those without work. ... In addition, the Jewish community was characterized by severe internal splits between diverse ethnic, religious and organizational groups."

Nathan Straus, his wife Lina, brother Isidor, his wife Ida and friend J. L. Magnes toured Jerusalem in 1912 where they encountered poverty, hunger and hopelessness. Nathan wrote, "My heart is deeply rooted in Jerusalem, in the historic city that is so redolent in glorious memories, and my sympathy is with the people who live there helpless and suffering and praying." He told a reporter in 1913, that the condition in Jerusalem "appalled me. Starvation and disease held the people in their

grip." When his older brother Isidor and sister-in-law Ida perished on the Titanic in April 1912, Nathan withdrew from business and devoted himself henceforth to philanthropic work, "with a major emphasis on Palestine. By the time of his death in the early 1930s, he was regarded as one of the major contributors to Zionist causes in the United States and is regarded to have given around \$2 million to Zionist efforts in Palestine."

"The situation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem led Straus to establish a number of welfare institutions in the city in the wake of his visit: a soup kitchen, a health department, workrooms for the unskilled, and a school for girls. Although he did not consider the soup kitchen a long-term solution and indeed clearly preferred putting a major effort into bettering their health and education and creating viable employment options, Straus felt that the soup kitchen was a vital and immediate need of much of the population. It was intended, in his words, to offer a much needed "stopgap" solution for the poor of the city. ... clearly regarded the suffering of the poor as primarily a consequence of external forces beyond their control."



First Nathan Straus
Pasteurizing Milk
Laboratory
New York City

After receiving criticism for supplying coal and lodgings to the unemployed in New York in 1894, Nathan wrote, "It is absurd to say that my methods encouraged pauperism. It is organized charity that encourages pauperism. I merely desired to give unemployed workingmen and working women something for their money, so that when the good times come again they would have no occasion to blush or accuse themselves with having been the recipients of charity in times that were distressful through no fault of theirs."

"The establishment of the Straus soup kitchen was neither motivated by a desire to specifically support religious scholars nor by a desire to strengthen any particular group within the Jewish community. Rather, it was a direct nonpartisan response to the externally generated threat of hunger and the source of ill-health among many of the residents. Straus lacked a strong religious affiliation, had longtime ties with non-Jews, and had undertaken philanthropic endeavors on behalf of Jews and non-Jews alike."

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the situation in Palestine became more drastic. "Death from disease and starvation was increasingly commonplace. ... In response to an appeal by the American ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau Sr., for immediate aid to the Jewish community in Palestine, a leading Jewish organization in the United States, the American Jewish Committee, sent an initial sum of \$50,000 to Constantinople." Nathan's brother Isidor had been one of the founders of the American Jewish Committee. "The growing acknowledgment of the dire need of Jews affected by the war in Europe and Palestine, and the sense that the diverse efforts by American Jewry to organize funding for aid should be coordinated, led to the establishment of a central distributing agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in late 1914." Nathan's younger brother Oscar was one of the JDC founders. It is interesting to note that while neither Isidor nor Oscar shared their brother Nathan's passion for Zionism, both were acutely aware of the suffering and unmet need, and were ready to step in to support Nathan in filling that need. "An initial step was the sending of nine hundred tons of foodstuffs and medicine (half of which was funded by Nathan Straus) on the Collier Vulcan to Palestine in 1915."

"... Given the hunger that characterized life in Jerusalem, it is not surprising that this dire humanitarian crisis led to the establishment of additional soup kitchens in the city during these years. ... The Straus soup kitchens increased its capacity during the war years, the number of daily portions growing to more than six hundred in January 1915. ... Straus continued to fund the soup kitchens in coordination with the JDC, to which

he was a major donor. During the following decade ... funding came primarily from Straus, who established a foundation to ensure the continued funding of the soup kitchens 'as long as poverty should exist in Jerusalem.'"

"The Straus soup kitchens were not the only social welfare institutions during this period. ... The most prominent of these were established by Hadassah, a major Zionist women's organization, which was primarily active in the developing of health services in Palestine." Nonetheless, a major clinic in Jerusalem was opened in April 1912 and was named the

Nathan and Lina Straus Health Center. The Straus soup kitchens were moved to this building. Moreover, Lina Straus, Nathan's wife, sold her jewelry and gave all the proceeds to Hadassah to help fund its philanthropic endeavors.

During this period, "the aging philanthropist was not involved directly in running the soup kitchens, but instead they were managed by his representatives in Palestine, primarily Henrietta Szold"- who was the founder and head of Hadassah.



Straus Soup Kitchen
Palestine - 1921

"A survey undertaken at the behest of the Straus family in late 1926 and completed in early 1927 provided data on the running of the Straus kitchens and its clientele. In the report, the soup kitchen in the Old City is described as an orderly and impressively clean kitchen, in which food was ready for distribution at 9:00 every morning. In most cases, the food was



Workers learning a skill
Nathan Straus Foundation
Palestine

taken home. ... The portions consisted of a loaf of bread and a pint of soup and were distributed free of charge. Distribution of relief was apparently tightly regulated by the soup kitchen administration. The needs of applicants were assessed and eligibility was determined on a case-by-case basis."

"By the beginning of the 1930s, after operating for nearly twenty years, the Straus soup kitchens had become a major social welfare institution in Jerusalem.

With a monthly income of \$2,000 from the Straus family foundation, the two soup kitchens were providing soup and bread on a regular basis to 1,405 Jewish families, a total of 5,111 adults and children. In all, the soup kitchen clientele comprised one-tenth of the Jewish population of the city and fully one-quarter of the Jewish inhabitants of the Old City."

"However, despite the move to the modern health center, and the central role that it played in the lives of a significant proportion of the Jewish population of Jerusalem, steps to close it were being taken behind the scenes. The death of Nathan Straus in January 1931, and his wife less than a year before, was one factor that contributed to this process. While their daughter, Sissie (Straus) Lehman, continued

to participate in the family's various activities in Palestine, among them the soup kitchens, she and her brothers were less committed to supporting the kitchens financially and more critical of the type of assistance that the kitchens provided. In a letter to Henrietta Szold in mid-1931, Lehman commented that "free food, if given at all, except during an emergency of short duration, should, in order to do good and no harm, be given as part of a constructive relief program looking at the rehabilitation of the people served." As a result of these concerns, Szold ordered a study regarding the continued operations of the kitchens. The study looked at three questions: "(1) Does every client need free food? (2) Is the ration such as to maintain health? (3) Are the soup kitchens doing constructive social work by temporarily helping a rapidly changing group to become self-supporting, or are they encouraging people to look upon free food as a permanent right?"

"The report concluded that while a considerable number of clients needed the food they received, no conclusive evidence emerged indicating that most of the clients could not get along without the rations or that they could not obtain them from other sources." In response to the report, people feared the soup kitchen would be closed. "It is obvious that the intention from the first was to close the Soup Kitchens, against the principles of the Benefactor, who insisted that every hungry man, woman or child, Jew or non-Jew, should receive food. To ensure the continued existence of the soup kitchens, the committee sought to limit the negative impact of the report by recommending that the kitchens continue to function at a reduced level and to provide temporary relief to elderly and disabled clients until a system of pensions could be established or alternative institutions founded."

"By this time, however, the Straus family was unwilling to continue funding the soup kitchens ... By October, they had decided to close down the institution. ... The family committed

to provide aid for the aged and chronically disabled clients for an additional year."

Professors John Gal and Mimi Ajzenstadt concluded their article with the following observation, "Initially conceived as an ad hoc solution to the poverty and hunger of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Straus soup kitchens developed rapidly into a social welfare institution that provided sustenance to a considerable proportion of the city's inhabitants for nearly two decades. In lieu of any alternative communal-or state-run social welfare services, the soup kitchens were the most prominent social welfare institution operating in Jerusalem."



Nathan and Lina Straus Health Center - Jerusalem

Netanya, a lovely seaside city in Israel founded in 1928, was named to honor Nathan Straus. The Nathan and Lina Straus Health Center in Jerusalem is still in operation today and one can find Straus Street in Jerusalem as

well. True to the promise he made to himself when he was a 17 year old stranded in Nashville, TN, Nathan Straus spent his life trying to alleviate human suffering in its many forms. He



Netanya, Israel

wrote, "To give in life is golden. To give in sickness is silver. To give in death is lead." Nathan Straus lived true to these personal commandments, giving away three quarters of his personal fortune during his lifetime.

We wish to thank the *Journal of Public History* and authors John Gal and Mimi Ajzenstadt for permission to use excerpts from this fascinating article. John is a Professor and the current Dean

of the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Mimi is a Professor at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare and the Institute of Criminology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the incoming Dean of the School. Our appreciation also is extended to Cambridge University Press for permission to quote from this article. Copyright © 2013 Donald Critchlow and Cambridge University Press. "Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press."

Straus Presentations in Chicago, IL September 12th-14th, 2014

Joan Adler and Catherine Smith have been invited to the Chicago area in September for a series of events and presentations relating to the history of the Straus Family and to Joan's book, *For the Sake of the Children: The Letters Between Otto Frank and Nathan Straus Jr.*

Joan will be speaking about her book, *For the Sake of the Children*, midday on Friday, September 12th at The Standard Club in Chicago and after Sabbath services later in the evening at Congregation Sukkat Shalom in Wilmette. On Saturday,

September 13th, Joan will be at B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom and Congregation Am Echad in Homewood where they will jointly host a presentation entitled "The Remarkable Straus Family Saga." On Sunday, September 14th, B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom and Congregation Am Echad will again host a presentation, this time it will be *For the Sake of the Children*.

For more information about these events, check the SHS website, write to us at info@straushistory.org or call us at 631-724-4487. We hope to see you there!

Isidor and Ida Straus Memorial Plaque Rededication

Macy's, Inc.- May 29th, 2014

By Catherine Smith

On May 29th 2014, members of the Straus family, the Straus Historical Society, and senior Macy's Executives gathered for the re-dedication of the Isidor and Ida Straus Memorial Plaque at the 34th Street Memorial Entrance of Macy's Herald Square.

From the Press Release issued by Macy's: "This historic entrance, which had been closed off and shuttered from view for decades, housed two very special bronze memorial plaques mounted on each of the flanking sidewalls. One plaque commemorates Isidor and Ida Straus, who perished on the Titanic and was dedicated to the couple by grieving Macy's employees in 1913. The other honors all those Macy's employees who died in World War I."

"I am so thrilled to celebrate an important piece of Macy's history with the rededication of the Straus Memorial Plaque," said Patti Lee, district vice president and general manager of Macy's Herald Square. "Not only are we commemorating the lives of Macy's owners who brought the store to Herald Square, but we are also celebrating the reopening of Macy's original entrance on 34th Street. Our customers today can still experience a little piece of the company's history upon entering the newly renovated Main Floor."

"This commemorative tablet," stated Straus Historical Society Chairman and Isidor and Ida Straus great grandson Paul A. Kurzman, "was unveiled one hundred and one years ago in a grand ceremony by their granddaughter, Eleanor Straus Hess, age 7. This month, at its rededication, the honor of the unveiling will go to Eleanor Straus Hess' great granddaughter, Jenna Belabed, age 11. This special ceremony will continue the legacy of the Straus family, whose myriad civic contributions and leadership of Macy's made retail history."

Guests gathering in the memorial entrance vestibule were greeted by the musical stylings of violinist Sara Caswell. Flowers adorned the Isidor and Ida Straus Plaque to one side and a plaque dedicated to the Macy's employees lost during World War I on the other. In the center of the room there was a ribbon of flowers that would be cut, symbolizing the official rededication of the Memorial Entrance. Before the ceremony began, the great, great, great granddaughter of Isidor and Ida Straus, Jenna Belabed, handed out pink carnations to all the guests. These carnations were a tribute to Isidor, as he always wore a pink carnation in his lapel.

The ceremony then began with a beautiful rendition of "Nearer my God to Thee" which was chosen because it was believed to have been played by the band aboard Titanic as the ship sank and so many lives, including the Strauses, were lost. Terry Lundgren, the President, CEO, Chairman of the Board of Macy's, Inc. then spoke about the legacy of Isidor Straus and his family had, and the judgment and intuition that led them to move the flagship store of Macy's in 1902 to Herald Square. He noted that it was with this vision that the store embarked on a massive renovation that is being marked today by the rededication of the memorial plaque and entrance.

He then introduced Paul Kurzman, the Chairman of the Board of the Straus Historical Society and the great grandson of Isidor and Ida Straus, who thanked all of the Macy's executives who were involved in planning the beautiful rededication and the guests and family members who attended. He recounted his own memories of visiting the Executive Suite at Macy's to ask his "Uncle Jack" [Straus] for tickets to the grandstand at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. He noted that the plaque was thought of and funded not by management but by the mournful employees of Macy's who must have had great admiration for their lost leader. Finally, he commented on the sense of intergenerational continuity, as his mother, at the age of 7, had originally unveiled the plaque in 1913, and now his own granddaughter would cut the ribbon at this rededication.



Terry Lundgren, Macy's CEO; Jenna Belabed;
Paul Kurzman, Patti Lee, Macy's Store President;
Peter Sachse, Chief Stores Officer

Terry Lundgren, Paul Kurzman, and Jenna Belabed then cut the flowered ribbon, officially re-dedicating the plaque and reopening the Memorial Entrance to Macy's.

The guests then were escorted to the Executive Suite on the 13th Floor where a lovely reception was held. SHS set up historical materials and Macy's provided cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Guests were invited to venture to the terrace overlooking 34th Street,

as well as to the offices where Macy's senior executives have worked for the past 112 years. It was truly a lovely event.

A video and photographs of the occasion may be found on the SHS website:

www.straushistoricalsociety.org

The Educational Alliance

By Ilene Scholnick Ausubel
Vice President of Development

In 1889 Isidor Straus, along with other leading German-Jewish philanthropists Samuel Greenbaum, Myer S. Isaacs, Jacob H. Schiff, Morris Loeb and Edwin R. A. Seligman, came together to build a place that would combine social, educational, cultural, and religious services. The Educational Alliance, with Isidor as its first president "offered the immigrant an amazing array of activities, organized under the headings Educational, Social, Physical, and Moral." The educational programs were the best attended of all the programs with their chief goal being the "Americanization" of the immigrants. Immigrant children were given free English language classes (because in order to go to school they needed to know English), kindergartens, religion and Hebrew classes. For adults there were English classes offered day and night, general courses in American history and civics, English literature, applied science, biology and music and lectures on practical, philosophical, moral and literary topics. For women, there also were classes on sewing, stenography, cooking, dressmaking and millinery.

In 1896, the Educational Alliance opened their Roof Garden, and by 1903 an estimated 10,000 people a day would visit during the summer. On hot summer nights the tenements of the Lower East Side were stifling, hot, malodorous and infested. In addition to providing lectures, a circulating library, nurses, kindergarten classes and wooden benches to relax on there also was a refreshment stand and milk bar courtesy of Nathan Straus!

In 1907 Mark Twain praised the work of the Educational Alliance in an interview with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle saying,

"Now, then, is there a new cult forming on the East Side? Are we to learn what true citizenship means and what true patriotism means from this new cult? Is the beginning here to extend universally? For fourteen years Isidor Straus, the president of the Educational Alliance, has devoted himself to educating these future citizens. The Educational Alliance greets them at the steamship landing and from that time onward never loses track of them. Their morals are watched; they are educated in the practical things of life – the things that make for this

very citizenship which we, as a nation have lost. We have good reason to emulate these people of the East Side."

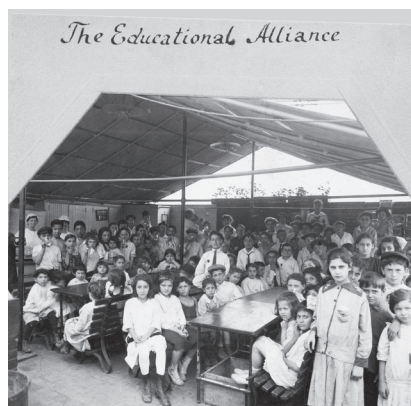
The legacy of Isidor Straus and the other founding philanthropists continues on today. For 125 years, the Educational Alliance has been the place where the people on the Lower East Side and East Village have come for the opportunity to create a better life. Today, the Educational Alliance serves 50,000 people through 36 programs and remains focused on providing educational projects and culture, social services and recreation.



The original facade of
The Educational Alliance
197 East Broadway in New York City



197 East Broadway today
after extensive renovation



A corner of the roof garden
showing a milk station
and lunch counter

The Educational Alliance just finished a complete renovation of the building at 197 East Broadway that Isidor helped build 125 years ago. The building houses a beautiful community space, fitness center, senior center, teen center, and early childhood programs (including Early Head Start, Head Start and a Jewish preschool, where two of Isidor's great great grandchildren attended). You are encouraged to learn more about the Educational Alliance by visiting www.edalliance.org. If you would like to arrange a tour, please contact Ilene Scholnick Ausubel at ilenea@edalliance.org or 646.395.4090.

{Note by Joan Adler: On June 5th Catherine Smith and I gave a talk about the history of the Straus family to an appreciative audience at an Educational Alliance building on East 12th Street in New York City. We brought many photographs which were prominently displayed in the large auditorium. The question and answer period following our talk was lively, with many people sharing their knowledge of the Straus family and of their experiences at Macy's and Abraham & Straus Department Stores.}

Ilene Ausubel, Catherine Smith and I plan to work together to create future presentations for the large Lower East Side population the Educational Alliance serves. We also have spoken of co-writing a grant proposal that would facilitate the creation of a curriculum regarding the

history of the Straus family.

The Alzheimer's Diary:

One woman's experience from caregiver to widow

A book by Joan Sutton Straus

As historian for the Straus family it has been my privilege to meet and get to know many family members. One of my more memorable meetings was with Oscar Straus II of New York City and Bellport, NY. Several years ago Oscar's wife, Joan Sutton Straus informed me that Oscar was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Joan is a journalist who finds therapy in her writing. She began writing articles that were published on *WordPress.com* and the *Huffington Post*. These articles have been put into book form, *The Alzheimer's Diary: one woman's experience from caregiver to widow*.

Joan wrote, "My husband and I had been together for 26 years when, in 2006, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD). Seven years later, I observed our wedding anniversary as a widow. For me, the intervening years were a roller coaster of emotions as I assumed new responsibilities, learned new skills and lived with an aching loneliness of the heart. Although my husband could not communicate his feelings as he passed through the various stages of Alzheimer's, I am certain he experienced great frustration, embarrassment, anger, fear - all the emotions one would expect when a proud and productive man finds himself being robbed of dignity and self. But then, I firmly believe that even in the worst stages of Alzheimer's, there is a human being in there, lost but still present.

"Writing has always been therapy for me, and these essays began as a way for me to sort out my own emotions and express

my frustration at the lack of curative treatment as well as my fury at the gods for letting this happen to my beloved partner. As I had been a journalist, writing a daily column for the *Toronto Sun* and then the *Toronto Star*, friends suggested that I post my thoughts as a blog on *WordPress.com*. I hesitated. It was one thing to write about myself but it was quite another to discuss my husband's illness in public."

"As I began to learn about AD, I recognized the need for public pressure to support research. In speaking out, I was encouraged by the examples of Nancy Reagan, Yasmin Kahn (the daughter of Rita Hayworth)-" and others.

"It is my hope that anyone struggling with the impact of Alzheimer's disease will find something helpful in these essays, that those who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's will be encouraged to take part in clinical trials and, above all, that readers will speak

out about the need for more research, more geriatric specialists and more assistance for families caring for their loved ones at home."

Joan Sutton Straus' book, *The Alzheimer's Diary: one woman's experience from caregiver to widow* is available on Amazon.com and on bookstore.iuniverse.com. All profits from the sale of this book will benefit The Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation.



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Public School 199

Jesse Isidor Straus School, New York City

Congratulations to the Jesse Isidor Straus School, Public School 199 located at 270 West 70th Street in New York City for its designation as the city's only National Blue Ribbon School for 2013. This award is given by the United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. It recognizes "public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students either achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements toward those standards. Since 1982 the US Department of Education has sought out and celebrated great American schools. The National Blue Ribbon School award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in outstanding schools."

Thank you to Mark Maas of New York City for alerting us to this admirable distinction for Public School 199, the Jesse Isidor Straus School.



remarkable Straus family and it's accomplishments. We'll keep you posted once we speak with the principal or member of the school's PTA.

Tuteur Family Holds Its Third Worldwide Family Reunion

June 20th-22nd, 2014 - Boston, MA

By Michael J. Tuteur



Over a sparkling New England weekend in June, 81 cousins, spouses and guests of the Tuteur Family came together in Boston to celebrate their Third Worldwide Family Reunion. The Tuteur cousins came from 7 different countries, including Argentina, Belgium and the UK, and ranged in age from 18 to 94. Everyone had a very good time.

The Boston event followed two previous Worldwide Reunions: the first, in Boulder, CO in 2008 – celebrating the bicentennial of the adoption of the “Tuteur” name; and the second, in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, in 2011 – when the members of the Tuteur Family returned to the ancestral homes of Neuleiningen, Winnweiler and Kaiserslautern, in the German Palatinate, to see where and how the original Tuteurs had lived.

As part of the Reunion, organizers Michael and Amy Tuteur revised and self-published a third edition of the Tuteur Family History – now nearly 500 pages. (Those interested in a copy can purchase it at cost (about \$18.00, plus shipping) from lulu.com: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/michael-tuteur/tuteur-family-history-2014/paperback/product-21646673.html>.) They also had printed a complete Tuteur family tree, with over 1900 names, that stretched 36 feet across the event rooms.

The Tuteur family traces its roots to two half brothers, Aron and Moses, who adopted the name “Tuteur” in October 1808, in response to the Napoleonic decree. Aron and Moses Tuteur and their families settled in Winnweiler, a small town approximately 11 miles to the northeast of Otterberg, home of the Strauses. Together, Aron and Moses had at least 24 children, and some of these children married members of the Straus family. Research has revealed at least three Strauses who married members of the Tuteur family in the early 19th century: Gütel Straus (1799 – 1870), who married Ezechiel Tuteur; Moises Straus (1799 – 1854), who married Magdalena Tuteur; and Samuel Straus (1810 – ca 1873), who married Marie Anne Tuteur.

Among the guests at the Reunion were two descendants of the Straus/Tuteur connection: Dr. Peter Tuteur, great-great grandson of Gütel Straus and Ezechiel Tuteur; and Tim Oppenheimer, great-great grandson of Moises Straus and Magdalena Tuteur. In addition, the Tuteurs were very pleased to welcome Joan Adler and Catherine Smith of the Straus Historical Society. Joan and Catherine displayed the beautiful artistic Straus Family Trees that are available through the Society. A number of Tuteur cousins have already contacted Joan about the possibility of having such a tree prepared for their “clan” within the Tuteur Family.



Joanne and Tim Oppenheimer
Tim is a Tuteur and Straus descendant

A special guest at the Reunion was Roland Paul, director of the Institute for the History of the Palatinate, in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Roland gave a lecture on the heartbreaking story of two siblings, Claus and Carola Tuteur, who were hidden by their parents in Belgium during World War II. Tragically, they were found by the Gestapo in 1944, transferred to Auschwitz, and murdered. Their parents, Dr. Paul and Theresa Tuteur, who had been

able to flee to England, only discovered the deaths of their children when the war was over. Roland brought with him copies of Carola Tuteur’s autograph book, a beautiful and deeply moving artifact that the Institute was recently able to purchase from an antiquarian book seller. The book features beautiful drawings and poems by Carola, her friends and her family, some of whose descendants were at the Reunion.

During the long weekend, the Tuteur cousins also had the opportunity to enjoy Boston’s attractions: kayaking on the Charles River, taking a private tour through the incomparable Museum of Fine Arts, walking the Freedom Trail, and taking a Duck Tour through Boston’s historic sites. All of the attendees indicated that they are already looking forward to the Fourth Worldwide Tuteur Reunion, which will be held in June 2017, in a location to be named later. The Tuteurs welcome all their Straus cousins, and hope that you can join us!

Virtual Museum of Public Service

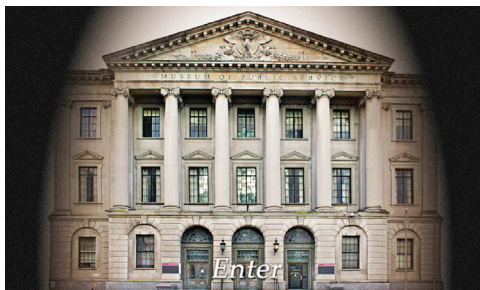
Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration

The Straus Historical Society is pleased to announce that we have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Rutgers University School of Public Affairs and Administration. They have created a Virtual Museum of Public Service (VMPS) whose mission is "to depict the largely unrecognized achievements of individuals in public service. We do so by drawing upon digital representations of great works of visual art, film, video and significant documentary artifacts which reflect the long history of public service. The Museum highlights how individual or collective efforts can contribute to the common good."

Marc Holzer, Dean of the Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration, Al Berr, Joan Adler and Catherine Smith of SHS worked out the details of our agreement over a pleasant lunch at Henry's Restaurant on West 105th Street and Broadway in New York City, the site of Isidor and Ida's home. The Society will provide images and text that will be added to the Rutgers Virtual Museum's newly created "Straus Room." Each image will highlight some aspect of public service of the many members of the Straus family, not only from the

generation that includes brothers Isidor, Nathan and Oscar but from subsequent generations as well.

We have been submitting these images and text to the Museum all summer while Elizabeth Hall, assistant director of VMPS, has been busy creating the "Room" and uploading the material we send. We are selecting images and providing text from our extensive Straus Archive that reflects the public service of



the entire family. While we often cite the outstanding public service record of Oscar S. Straus, there were many other family members who were public spirited. Our goal is to highlight their record of service and accomplishments as well as those of Oscar. The "Straus Room" is projected to open sometime in the early Fall. In the meantime, please visit the Museum: www.vmps.us

to see their other interesting exhibits.

If you have suggestions for materials you think should be included, by all means, let us know. We welcome your input and comments.

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L. Straus & Sons American Brilliant Cut Glass

Craig E. Carlson is a collector of L. Straus & Sons American Brilliant Cut Glass. We've worked with Craig for many years and are always impressed by his breadth of knowledge and dedication to the Straus family's cut glass enterprise.

When it sold, each piece of glass had a paper label affixed. Because these pieces were used in the home and not simply put on display, the paper labels were lost after continued washing and have not survived. And so, the only way to tell if a particular piece of American Brilliant Cut Glass was made by a particular company is by its image in a catalog.

Several years ago Craig appealed to the readers of this Newsletter, asking them to check their personal collections for copies of old L. Straus & Sons catalogs. In 2000, he was able to compile a definitive L. Straus & Sons catalog after years of exhaustive research and collection.

Our SHS chair for many years, Paul A. Kurzman, stepped down in June. He has been succeeded by Oscar S. Straus III. Craig and his partner John Niemiec of Fountain Hill, AZ donated a lovely carafe created by L. Straus & Sons in the "Warren" pattern which we presented to Paul in appreciation of his many years of service.

Craig wrote, "The piece we have selected is one of the first Straus pieces we purchased. It has always had a special meaning to us

because the carafe we are sending is named "Warren" in honor of the street on which the first Straus cut glass factory and the L. Straus & Sons showrooms were located. The exact piece can be seen on page 21 of the 1893 L. Straus & Sons (tan colored) catalog. At this point in time the Straus family was purchasing special formulated glass from the 'Cristalleries De Baccarat' so the blanks could possibly have been made by them. If not, the blank on which the "Warren" pattern was cut could have been made by any number of American factories.



Now would be a good time to remind the SHS board (family members and SHS Newsletter readers) of the importance of catalogs in preserving the history of our early important manufacturers. Without the above referenced catalog one would never have known that this was such an important piece of cut glass - especially because of the significance of the pattern name, "Warren."

I am still convinced that in the libraries, basements and attics of some of the family members there are catalogs which would be of great importance to collectors around the world."

We are indebted to Craig and John for their thoughtful donation of this lovely piece of L. Straus & Sons cut glass and for their years of scholarly research which enhances our knowledge and preserves the history of the Straus family.

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF STRAUS PARK

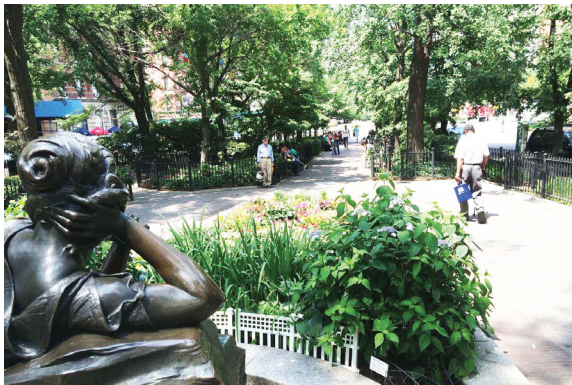
By Joe Arbo

Straus Park has been the recent recipient of some lovely changes. I am the Park's gardener. I've planted many new flowers and bushes this spring. Many of these were donated to Friends of Straus Park. The next time you're in the area, look for the 12 new azalea bushes, three new rose tree bushes and two large hibiscus trees in the front southern entrance. Two new yellow rose bushes will most likely be planted by the time you receive this Newsletter as well as four red Mandevilla vines. The flowers in front of "Memory," in the former reflecting pool area, -- rose begonias, pink hibiscus, pink geraniums, pansies, and several sun impatiens, -- certainly provide a colorful and lovely focal point for the Park.

There are issues that require resolution by a very busy New York City Parks Department which we are hoping will be dealt with before too long. Improvements have been made to the pipes for the water fountain so that it will function this year. And, on July 1st our hose system was repaired. Eddie and I are happy to use the hose to water now that the warmer temperatures are here.

Our annual "Art in the Park" will be held on Saturday, October 18th this Fall. This is a day-long celebration of Music, Art, Dance and Food. Artwork, crafts, books, clothing items and locally donated food also will be provided by local restaurants. All monetary donations go to the nonprofit Friends of Straus Park to help support activities such as Art in the Park. All throughout the day there will be performances by musicians. If past years are any indication, this should be a wonderful celebration. All we need is for the weather to cooperate and welcome everyone to come and join in the festivities. Unfortunately, no rain date will be scheduled, so let's plan for good weather!

ART IN THE PARK A Celebration of Music, Art, Dance and Food Saturday, October 18th, 2014 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM



Looking north from the statue "Memory"
Plantings in the reflecting pool
Photo by Richard Gerstman



Left: Photo by
Richard Gerstman

Below: Three photos by Joe
Arbo





A Message from SHS Chair Oscar S. Straus III

(continued from page 2)

have renewed and continued funding from the next generations to ensure our continued activity.

Without Joan Adler, our Executive Director, we would have little ability to exist. Her dedication to the research, and dissemination of those

findings; her public speaking on the family's achievements; and her role as the provider of detailed Straus information to the many inquiries that she receives each month, has put us on the map. My thanks also to the David A. and Mildred H. Morse Charitable Trust and to Joan Sutton Straus whose support has allowed the funding of Catherine Smith as Joan's assistant and enabled the Society to fully enter and embrace the digital age. Our Straus Historical Society website and Facebook pages are just two examples of Catherine's good work. She also has been able to continue cataloging the information and artifacts that many of you have so generously provided. We are now an internationally recognized repository and research center! Catherine's current research into the grant making process will become useful as we begin to reach out to potential non-family funding sources.

The Straus Historical Society is an organization unique in its direction and outlook. The work that your Board of Directors, Joan Adler and Catherine Smith have done, and are doing, continues to be of current importance. The Society has become a model for others to look at, study and emulate. We all should be proud of its accomplishments.

I look forward to working with all of you to enhance the image of The Straus Historical Society, and to working with you to put it on a strong and sustainable financial footing.

As my term commences, I want to wish each of you a wonderful summer. I am sure that we will be in contact in the fall and in the winter.



Drawing of
Isidor and Ida Straus

Contributed by artist
Lynnet Toole

Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

For the Sake of the Children: The Letters Between Otto Frank and Nathan Straus Jr. by Joan Adler published in 2013. When Otto Frank realized he had to get his family out of Europe in April, 1941, he wrote to his Heidelberg University roommate and lifelong friend Nathan Straus Jr. for help. This book describes their struggle to find a way to save the Frank family. In hard cover with dust jacket - \$30.00

The Autobiography of Isidor Straus privately published by Sara Straus Hess in 1955, greatly expanded and updated by SHS in 2011, including the addition of many photographs and articles. In hard cover with dust jacket- \$40.00

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

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

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

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

Shipping and handling is included. **Straus Historical Society, Inc.**, P. O. Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. You can contact Joan by phone: 631-724-4487, or e.mail: info@straushistory.org

You Are Invited

The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. invites you to attend a meeting of the board. Attendance need not be in person.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, September 18th, 2014 in New York City at 6 PM. Participants may join in by conference call. There is no obligation to join the board or to contribute to the Society. This invitation is extended so that all those interested in SHS may have an opportunity to participate and to share their views. Please contact Joan Adler by phone at 631-724-4487 - or at info@straushistory.org for further information.