

# STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 10 Number 2

Newsletter

February 2009

## The Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company

Oscar S. Straus was one of the investors and a principal in the Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company of Custer County, CO. I had no idea, even after almost twenty years of research into the family's history, of the existence of this company or of Oscar S. Straus' interest in mining. The business papers of the Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company (SC&GRMC) were sent to me by Steve Siegel, archivist of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York City. They include the Articles of Incorporation, the Certificate of Incorporation, a Certificate of the Payment of the Stock and two Annual Reports dated 1881 and 1882. This completely new area to research proved fascinating.

Between 1873 and 1881 Oscar was a partner in a law firm with James A. Hudson. They took on commercial cases with much of their work involving railway litigation. Perhaps it was his interest in the railways that led him to the investment opportunity in mining out west, where railway expansion was exploding as new claims were being staked.

An additional interesting note is that the Oscar S. Straus family became involved with mining when their son Roger Williams Straus married Gladys E. Guggenheim whose family owned the American Smelting and Refining Company. Present day family members seem unaware of Oscar's interest or involvement in mining before his son married Gladys Guggenheim.

The Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company was formed in New York County, New York in 1879. The Articles of Incorporation were filed July 22<sup>nd</sup>. The three

principals in the company were Butler G. Noble of New York, Henry H. Childs of Richmond County, New York and Oscar S. Straus of New York. Butler G. Noble was a former Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin from 1860 through 1862. In 1864 he moved to New York City where he worked in the Customs House first as a weigher, then as the harbor master and finally as the chief clerk of the seizure room. Henry H. Childs was also employed in the Customs House as a cashier. Additionally, Alfred B.

Hinman, a miner from Silver Cliff, Custer County, CO and George W. King, a lumberman from New York were trustees along with Noble, Childs and Straus

The articles of The Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company state, "The said Company is formed for the purpose of purchasing, working and selling mines of gold, silver and other metals." The Certificate of In-

corporation states, "The mining operation of said Company are intended to be carried on in and about the County of Custer in the State of Colorado, but the principal business will be carried on and the principal office of said Company located in the City, County & State of New York." The Certificate of Payment of Stock states that their mining claims were situated in Custer County, Colorado. They were: "Eclipse," "Andobon," "Penfield," "St



Stock Certificate for 500 shares @ \$10 each issued to M. M. Smith in 1880

*"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday."  
Pearl S. Buck*

Straus Historical Society, Inc.  
Newsletter (ISSN 1536-9188)  
is published semi-annually

by the

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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.

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## A Message from the Chair:

### Paul A. Kurzman



Welcome to 2009. Regardless of your electoral preferences, we surely are in for a change. Under Joan Adler's able stewardship, the Straus Historical Society continues to embrace change as well, each year welcoming new exposures and experiences in the public arena. Last year was no exception!

As you may remember, about this time in New York, the American Jewish Historical Society sponsored a lavish dinner entitled, "An Evening with the Straus Family." It was truly a gala occasion for more than 150 family and friends to pay tribute to Lazarus, Isidor, Hermine, Nathan and Oscar Straus for their historic and unique contributions to America. We plan to maintain a close relationship with AJHS, and to plan additional events honoring the Strauses in the future.

Then in June 2008 (with an encore in September) the Straus Historical Society took part in the premier showing of a landmark film, "Making Their Mark: From German Immigrant to New York City." The film was commissioned by the German Consul General in New York to commemorate 400 years of German immigration to the United States. In particular, the documentary was a tribute to three specific German-American families whom the Consul General felt had made especially significant contributions to America. We were all very honored that one of these three families was the Strauses. Every seat in the auditorium was taken! A limited number of copies of the video are available from SHS. Please contact Joan if you would like one.

Our Society also played a lead role in sponsoring and promoting publication last year of three new books of significance to our great family, to wit: *A History of the Jews of Otterberg* by Dr. Hans Steinebrei (\$35); *A Reminder: Witnesses of the Past* by Horter & Tilly (\$25) and *Macy's: The Store, The Star, The Story*, by Robert M. Grippo (\$40/\$30) - all available from the Straus Historical Society. Further information about the books may be found on page ten of this newsletter.

In addition, upon DNA confirmation of the relationship of the Moise Lazarus family to the Lazarus Straus family, we proudly welcomed the first Moise Lazarus descendant to our Board of Directors, Lawrence A. Kahn, who is now serving as our Board Secretary. Larry is a veterinary surgeon living and practicing in Connecticut, an avid tennis player, and an energetic member of the family and new member of the board.

We expect great discoveries and "adventures" to continue during 2009 in this spirit. And, as I assume the helm, I would like to warmly thank my son, David Kurzman, for his strong and committed leadership these past two years as chairman of the board. I will try to steer the ship as well as he did. I truly welcome your support.

Albens,” “Little Doritt,” “Kettle - Lode,” “Ida Fellows,” “Forlorn – Hope,” “Exchange,” “Ettawah River,” “Maggie,” “New Castle,” “Orwell,” “Urilla,” “Salem Boy,” “South River,” “Chicago,” “Clifton,” “Ida,” “Rob Roy,” “Joe Davis,” “Evergreen,” “Turtle Dove,” “Silver Boy,” “Rothschild,” “Morning Star,” “Lost Trail,” and “Lemonade.” Capital stock in the company was \$3,000,000 with 300,000 shares issued at a par value of ten dollars per share. In the annual reports of 1881 and 1882 we learn that the amount of the capital stock of said Co. “was issued in payment of mining property situated in the County of Custer, State of Colorado, and that the Company had no indebtedness.”

Researcher Jacke Barnes in Westcliffe, CO has been invaluable source of information about the Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company and about mining in Custer County in general. She’s found the deeds for some of the mines showing that they were purchased for \$1. One deed lists seven of the mines: Turtle Dove, Evergreen, Lemonade, Lost Trail, Rothschild, Morning Star and Silver Boy.

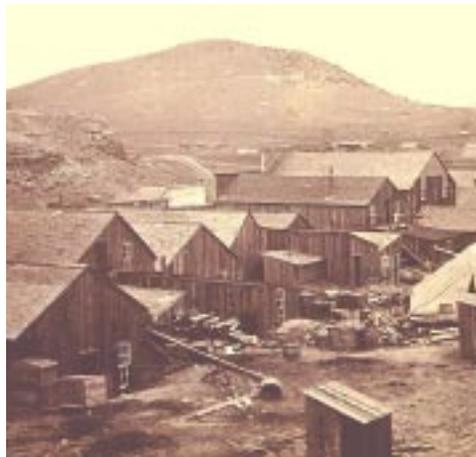
But why, one could ask, would three New York gentlemen form a company to mine silver, gold and other minerals in Custer County, CO? An Internet article by Wayne I. Anderson sheds light on this question. The silver deposits of Custer County lie east of the Colorado Mineral Belt and were formed about 40 million years ago when the Rocky Mountains were undergoing mountain building. “The lush bottom lands of the Wet Mountain Valley in Custer County were settled by persons with farming and ranching interests.” The first permanent settlers came in 1869. About a year later a colony of more than 100 German families from Chicago homesteaded there. “Later, significant mineral wealth was discovered in the neighboring hills of the Wet Mountains, or Sierra Mojada as they were once known. The grassy slopes and valleys of the Wet Mountains were favorite pasture lands for cattle of the local ranchers, and the first specimens of ore were picked up as curiosities by herdsmen who wandered over the hills in search of stray cattle. Some of these intriguing specimens were found to contain silver.”

Prospectors came to the area in increasing numbers by 1872. Many mines held great promise, were developed, and then abandoned when they failed to live up to that promise. The Humboldt-Pocahontas vein was discovered near Rosita in 1874. It proved to be a steady producer for nearly fifteen years, yielding more than \$900,000 worth of ore. “By 1878 the Rosita Hills had been thoroughly prospected and exploration shifted to the Silver Cliff Volcanic Center, near the present town of Silver Cliff. Three lumbermen, engaged in hauling timber from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to Rosita, noticed black-stained cliffs along the north side of what is today called Chloride Gulch.

They discovered that the mineral melted to form silver after being heated. ... Another boom of mining activity resulted as the Racine Boy, Silver Cliff, and other claims were quickly developed. The bustling town of Silver Cliff grew rapidly, adjacent to the new mines and prospects.” The greasy-looking mineral the three men discovered in June 1878 was 75% silver.

Colorado obtained statehood in 1876 and Custer Country was created in 1877 because of the mining boom. It was named for General George Armstrong Custer who was killed in the Battle of the Little Bighorn the previous year. On February 10, 1879 the new town of Silver Cliff was incorporated. By 1881 it was estimated that between 6,000 and 16,000 people lived there. The 1880 US census lists Silver Cliff as the third largest city in the state behind Denver and Leadville. It sits at an elevation of 7,982 feet above sea level.

On March 3, 1879 the New York Times declared, “Discoveries That Led To The Birth Of The Town Of Silver Cliff – The Home Of The Carbonates – This Year’s Yield Of Silver Estimated At From \$20,000,000 to \$40,000,000. ... It was not until the wonderful discoveries at Leadville had set everybody into the fever for prospecting that a party of Denver men, who had been looking to see what they could find in the Greenhorn Mountains, in climbing a small cliff one afternoon in August last, discovered a “good show” of silver, which, when assayed, proved to be very rich. They named the opening of this horn silver. The news



Silver Cliff, CO in 1880 and 1882



of this discovery soon spread and, within ten days the whole surrounding country had been claimed, and fortune-seekers were thronging in from all directions. A town company was formed, and the level tract at the base of the cliff was laid out into lots and streets. Within 60 days 300 buildings had been put up, two daily stage lines were in operation from Canon City, and a tri-weekly line ran from Pueblo. Most of the business men of Rosita moved their stocks and wares to the new camp, ... as excited and lively a mining town as has yet sprung up in the Rocky Mountains. ... During the past 10 days the warmer weather and promise of an early Summer has revived the interest, and many new claims are being staked, and the next 60 days will decide, in a great measure, the permanency of this place. Mining experts, who have carefully examined the formations hereabout, seem to think well of this region.



Below: Silver Cliff Mine

“... There have been rumors during the past few days of great strikes about two miles north-west of this place, and there had been a stampede in that direction. The farther accounts that come in today seem to set everybody wild. Those who have never been in a mining town at such a time can hardly picture to themselves the “craze” that follows the news of “big finds” in other camps. Men seem beside themselves. They will drop business and everything else; sometimes will sell out for a song and mount a mule, or start afoot and on the run, straining every nerve to be first on the ground. There is “mustering in post haste” on every hand, a clambering over mountains and cliffs, striking the pick in here and overturning rocks there, and always staking off claims hurriedly as a keen run will admit. But the new discoveries seem to justify the mad rush if anything can. True carbonates of lead has been found, as experts have predicted there would be. ... A thousand claims have been made during the last three days and what astonishes all examiners is that all the ground appears of like wonderful richness.”



At the same time, accounts of fabulous wealth acquired quickly through investments in Western mines were rampant in the East, where considerable capital was available for investing. In addition, many inexperienced individuals, looking to get rich quickly, came west to develop mines. Some of the surplus Eastern capital found its way to the Silver Cliff District. By 1882 the decline of Silver Cliff had begun. The railroad terminus was placed one

mile west of Silver Cliff in 1881 securing the formation of the town of Westcliffe. Once the mining boom was over, and the mines and mills began closing, the town’s population decreased. Businessmen and homeowners put their buildings on rollers and moved them to Westcliffe. The railroad line was abandoned in 1888 further isolating Silver Cliff. In 1890 the census lists only 546 individuals as residents of Silver Cliff, down from more than 5,000 ten years before.

According to an article in the Wet Mountain Tribune of June 13 and 14, 2008, in the early 1870's the US experienced a series of financial panics. The government tried to ameliorate the economic woes by artificially propping up the silver price. Wealthy eastern industrialists bought a controlling interest in most of the western silver mines. But the inflated silver prices threatened the US Treasury's gold standard. "Contentious political fights resulted in

the abolition of the artificial silver prices, causing the bottom to fall out of the nation's silver industry."

An introduction in the Colorado Mining Directory of 1883 states: "The mines located around Silver Cliff, and which created its prestige as a thrifty camp, have been idle for some time; and the same remark holds good in relation to the mills. In explanation of this condition of things the State Geologist's report says: 'Those familiar with the situation will readily understand the cause. The better mines



Map from 1881 showing the mining claims in Custer County.  
Some of the mines owned by the Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company are indicated.

are in the hands of corporations who do not work them, owing to the failure of conclusions drawn from false premises respecting the character and value of the principal deposits and the course of treatment required for the profitable extraction of the precious metals. Having reached the limit of speculation in stocks, the projectors have no further use for the works, and therefore, with a few exceptions, the whole mining interest of the County had fallen into decay." In fact, in later years, scams perpetrated mainly against investors who lived in New York and other large eastern cities, continued excavation in several of the larger mines in Custer County, CO.

Wayne I. Anderson wrote in his article about the mines of Custer County, "According to Emmons (1896), it is not fair to ascribe the decline of the Custer County mines entirely to the nature and distribution of the ore bodies. Although the value of many of the mining properties were likely exaggerated during the mining boom of the 1870s, some of the ore bodies that were worked systematically and persistently proved to be profitable. Although records are incomplete, Emmons notes that the value of silver and gold produced in Custer County from 1880-1894 totaled \$5,877,952. Most, if not all, of the gold production

came from the Bassick Mine near Querida. ... Many of the mining failures can probably be blamed on the lack of experience of mine owners without proven mining techniques and smelting practices. They often disregarded fundamental principles of chemistry and metallurgy during the processing and treatment of ore."

It is not known whether Oscar S. Straus and his partners made any profit on their venture into mining, were able to salvage any of their investment or if they sold their individual stock on the mining companies at any time. On October 25, 1894, 2,600 shares of the Silver Cliff and Gold Rock Mining Company were sold at auction for \$10 each. By 1910, 2,500 shares of the stock in the estate of C. S. Smith were declared worthless.

If after further research, anything about this venture can be found, I will report it in a subsequent issue of the newsletter. Researcher Jacke Barnes is currently working her way through the newspapers of the day in the hope of finding information about this mining company's operation. In addition, Jacke ordered several books through interlibrary loan that have not yet been received. Information in these may also shed more light on this previously unknown business venture.

# Cleveland Cottage

This article started out as a response to a query about Cleveland Cottage in Lakewood, NJ. As my research progressed I found that any cottage President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland stayed in, and there were many, was called Cleveland Cottage. And once it was so named, it retained that name forever.

We have long known of the association and friendship between the Straus brothers and Grover Cleveland. Cleveland was a Democrat who was the Governor of New York from 1883 to 1885. In 1885 he was elected president. The Strauses were politically active and shared similar concerns including tariff and currency reform. Grover Cleveland and Oscar S. Straus were lawyers and both were interested in railroad reform. Oscar was appointed Minister to Constantinople from 1887 through 1889 during Cleveland's first presidency. Nathan Straus and Mrs. Grover Cleveland worked with Father Healy to build a Roman Catholic Church in Lakewood, NJ. In addition, the Clevelands and Strauses were avid fishermen who vacationed in upstate New York, Maine and in New Jersey.

Nathan Straus was denied admission to a prominent hotel in Lakewood, possibly Laurel House, because he was Jewish. In 1890 he and partner Max Nathan formed a company along with multiple investors called the Lakewood Hotel Company. Their purpose was to build a hotel that would be open to all. Eventually all the investors withdrew except for Max Nathan and Nathan Straus. The Lakewood Hotel Company built the luxurious Lakewood Hotel and the cottage at Lakewood, NJ. The cottage became known as Cleveland Cottage when Nathan Straus gave his friend ex-President Grover Cleveland and his wife use of it in 1891. *The American Jewish Yearbook* reported that President and Mrs. Cleveland became guests at the hotel to show "their appreciation for his stand and their disapproval of prejudice." They enjoyed it so much they returned in 1892 and after Cleveland was elected president in 1893, they stayed throughout the winter. It was at Cleveland Cottage that the President-elect selected many of his top Cabinet officials. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Grover Cleveland's first term of office was from 1885 to 1889. On June 1, 1886 President Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom in the Blue Room of the White House. They honeymooned at Deer Park Hotel Cottage in Deer Park, Garrett County, MD. This was the first Cleveland Cottage I've found. Today an historical marker proudly proclaims that Cleveland Cottage stands on that spot.

Later that summer, from August 10<sup>th</sup> through September 17<sup>th</sup>, President and Mrs. Cleveland vacationed at Upper Saranac Lake in Franklin County, New York. News stories reported that they exchanged the luxury of their million dollar mansion for a rustic log cottage in the Adirondacks. Once again the cottage was described as Cleveland Cottage. In an article about Saranac Lake in 1886 Phil "Bunk" Griffin described Cleveland as a broad



Cleveland Cottage  
Saranac Lake, NY

Photo Courtesy Phil "Bunk" Griffin

man with a checked flannel shirt and a grey slouch hat; his wife as a handsome lady wearing a plain, grey woolen dress and a broad brimmed straw hat. Both were avid fishermen, catching numerous trout during their vacation.

In the early 1890's Isidor and Nathan Straus owned neighboring houses on Lower Saranac Lake. Brothers Isidor and Nathan took turns visiting their fami-

lies at their vacation homes. When one was at Lower Saranac Lake the other was in New York City tending to business at Macy's. Ida wrote to Isidor daily when it was his turn to be New York City. From these letters we have a very detailed look at the lives these people led and the various activities that occupied them.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1890 Ida wrote to her husband, "Nathan has taken Mr. Nathan out driving this morning. They will call on Cleveland who is at the Prospect House." Mr. Nathan was the father of Irma Nathan. She married Isidor and Ida's oldest son, Jesse Isidor in 1895. He was also his business partner in Lakewood, NJ.

On September 15, 1890 Sara, Isidor and Ida's oldest daughter wrote, "Yesterday Mr. Nelson, Uncle Oscar, Percy and Jesse went to see the president at Upper Saranac Lake. They seemed to have enjoyed themselves very much but on the way home Percy became sea-sick.

Jesse drove both ways.” Percy was Jesse’s younger brother. In the same letter Ida wrote, “Jesse came home in high glee yesterday having sat with Mrs. Cleveland for several hours. She showed him her gun and entertained him very well while the gentlemen engaged with her husband. Cleveland told Oscar among other things that your speech on the tariff question was the best effort that had been made on the subject calling you by your first name while speaking of you, so you see it made an impression on him.”

Lakewood, New Jersey at that time was a winter vacation destination. It was close enough to New York City and to Philadelphia that prominent people went there for a weekend. Some families stayed longer and the man of the family visited from the city, even for the day. Regular reports in the *New York Times* announced the Lakewood arrivals and the events being held there.

February 8, 1891 the *New York Times* reported, “Mr. Cleveland has come to secure a little relief from close business and social cares and to give Mrs. Cleveland the rest that she has craved for some time. The rooms of Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland are in the cottage row wing of the building overlooking the pine groves. They can here be as secluded as they please...” It is my understanding from the descriptions in the *Times* and from photographs in Lina Gutherz Straus’ book, *Disease in Milk*, that the cottage was not part of the hotel but was set on eight acres adjoining the hotel property.

On December 1, 1891 Mrs. Cleveland and their baby Ruth arrived in Lakewood for what was described as a much needed rest. The family expected to remain there until spring. “The cottage is a handsome one and provided with all modern comforts. It nestles in a grove of pines and cedar not far from the Lakewood Hotel.”

On January 9, 1892 baby Ruth Cleveland was baptized at Cleveland Cottage in Lakewood, NJ. The Clevelands spent the winter there, leaving at the end of May for their New York City apartment and then on to Buzzard’s Bay, ME where they had a summer home. By November of that year they were back in Lakewood. On January 11,

1893 the *New York Times* reported that President-elect Cleveland would take up residence in Lakewood for the remainder of the winter and until his inauguration for his second, but nonconsecutive, term on March 4, 1893. “Mr. Cleveland will take possession of what is known as Straus cottage, occupied by him last Winter. This is a small but comfortable house, ready furnished for occupancy...” President-elect Cleveland wanted to rest after the election, work on his inaugural address and on the selection of his Cabinet. During his stay he received visitors who shared their opinions about these Cabinet selections as well as on policy matters such as the tariff and the silver question. Because of this activity, Cleveland Cottage became known for a time as “The Little White House.” It should be noted that in 1894 President Grover Cleveland prevailed upon Isidor Straus to run for the unexpired seat

in the House of Representatives that became vacant when Representative Ashbel P. Fitch resigned. He represented the Fifteenth Congressional District of New York.

In 1901, after running the Lakewood Hotel at a deficit for several years, Max Nathan and Nathan Straus each took half interest stock in the company. Alfred Nathan, Max Nathan’s son became the director. In 1901 Max Nathan made a gift of the cottage to Nathan Straus

for his personal use. Straus made several alterations to it and even stocked the cellar with his own wine.

On February 5<sup>h</sup>, 1905 the *Times* reported that Grover Cleveland once again visited Lakewood. “One of the first places he visited was “The Little White House,” ... It was there that he wrote his famous message on the Venezuelan controversy.” He spent some of the last weeks of his life at Cleveland Cottage in the spring of 1908.

On November 10, 1909 the *New York Times* reported , “Cleveland Home To Be A Sanitarium. ... The old Grover Cleveland cottage at Lakewood, N.J., has been converted into what is called a tuberculosis “preventorium” for children and, unknown to the outside world, it has been running as an experiment since last July. ... The work has been made possible largely by the generosity of Nathan Straus, who made a gift for the purpose of the old Cleveland Cottage, which he owned and which, for years, the



Cleveland Cottage - "The Little White House" at Lakewood, NJ  
With President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland at the door

late President rented. The cottage stands in the pines and is surrounded by eight acres. Besides giving the cottage, Mr. Straus donated a majority of stock in the Lakewood Hotel, in which he has been interested, the proceeds from which will be applied to the running expenses of the "preventorium." ... Under the direction of Mrs. Cleveland the house was slightly remodeled, the porch being arranged so that six beds could be put upon it, while fourteen beds were put in the interior." It should be noted that Dr. Alfred F. Hess, husband of Sara Straus, was on the Board of Trustees and the attending Physician-In-Chief. Mrs. Cleveland was also on the board of Trustees.

Residents and businessmen of Lakewood immediately protested against the preventorium's establishment on the grounds that it would reduce the property values in the area. It was pointed out that no child with tuberculosis was ever at the preventorium. The children came from homes where others had tuberculosis. Lina Gutherz Straus, Nathan's wife wrote in *Disease in Milk*, "He felt convinced that if these children were once built up physically by a sojourn in the country, with good food, fresh air and a proper amount of rest and exercise, they would thereby develop a definite resistance to the inroads of this dread disease." The children were not sick themselves. No child with tuberculosis was ever admitted to the preventorium. In spite of these facts, public favor could not be won.

Max Nathan, Nathan Straus' business partner in the Lakewood Hotel Company, sent a message through his attorney, Samuel Untermyer on December 10, 1909. *The New York Times* reported, "Mr. Untermyer contends that when Mr. Nathan sold Cleveland Cottage to Mr. Straus, he understood he wanted it for his personal use. Mr. Nathan

offers his interest in the Lakewood Hotel property, representing an investment to him of more than \$300,000 provided the officials of the preventorium will agree to move out of the Cleveland Cottage and leave Lakewood." Nathan Straus responded through his agent, "The agree-

ment made several years ago between Mr. Straus and Mr. Nathan concerning the use of the Cleveland Cottage at Lakewood was a verbal one. By the terms of this verbal agreement, Mr. Straus used the Cleveland Cottage, so called because the late President Cleveland had occupied it at one time. Mr. Straus occupied the cottage for some time as a Summer home. Although plans were being carried out as early as last May for the conversion of the cottage into a preventorium, no protest came from Mr. Nathan until a few weeks ago. ... Mr. Straus was under the impression that Mr. Nathan was going to give his share in the property for the preventorium."

On January 10, 1910 correspondence printed in the *Times* outlined Max Nathan's willing-

ness to sell his half share in Lakewood Hotel if Nathan Straus would also sell his half share. Together the money would go toward reestablishing the preventorium somewhere other than in Lakewood. "Nathan Straus announced yesterday that he had offered to give the trustees of the tuberculosis preventorium established by him at Lakewood, N.J., \$100,000 cash if they would accept the offer of his partner, Max Nathan, to re-establish the institution elsewhere, near Lakewood." Nathan Straus also stated that he intended to continue the work of the preventorium at Cleveland Cottage at his own expense.



Cleveland Cottage  
Above: Girls Sleeping Porch  
Below: Boys Outdoor Sleeping Area



On January 12<sup>th</sup> it was reported by President Marcus M. Marks of the Tuberculosis Preventorium for Children that the trustees "voted unanimously to give up the work at Lakewood, and made an appeal for funds to aid it in re-establishing itself elsewhere." The preventorium was moved to nearby Farmingdale, NJ onto one hundred and seventy acres donated by Arthur Brisbane.

On February 4, 1910 Mrs. Frances Cleveland wrote to Lina Straus, "I cannot bear to speak of all the trouble at Lakewood. ...You can think how gratifying it was to me to contemplate that place in which my husband passed so nearly the last weeks of his life being given over to the alleviation of human suffering."

On February 29, 1916 former preventorium president of the Board of Trustees and Manhattan Borough President Marcus M. Marks wrote about Nathan Straus, "The name "Preventorium" was a unique gift of his, and the spirit and idea of preventing the spread of the disease among chil-

dren was greater still. Other institutions the world over have copied the preventorium idea, and Nathan Straus of all men fully understands the great blessing which flows from "prevention," rather than the much more difficult "cure."

It is not known at this time what happened to Cleveland Cottage after the preventorium closed. What is known is that the preventorium concept quickly took off across the country and remained popular for thirty years. A secondary goal, although less well publicized, was the indoctrination of American values to the immigrant children. It wasn't until the 1930's that the public began protesting the removal of a child from its home, calling it horrifying. Dr. Cynthia Connolly, an historian and an assistant professor of nursing at Yale said, "Certainly there were altruistic motives. Few people cared more about infant and child welfare in the U.S. than Straus. But in the culture of the times, trying to Americanize foreigners was considered beneficial to recipients and society."



## My famIl y: i CouLd WriTe a Book

The Straus Historical Society is pleased to announce the publication of *My Family: I Could Write a Book* by Edith Maas Mendel with additional stories by Marcella Mendel Sabo. This volume of charming vignettes begins with stories about Edith's ancestors. They are followed by stories of her own immediate family's adventures. They are made more interesting by the inclusion of many photographs of the people and places she has written about.

Some of these vignettes were previously published in the Society's newsletter. They can be found on the Archives page of our website; [www.straushistoricalsociety.org](http://www.straushistoricalsociety.org) (February 2005, August 2006)

Edith describes the people she wrote about as "a charismatic group of attractive, bright, witty, individualistic personalities. They are cousins of the Straus family via the marriage of Abraham Maas to Barbara (Babette) Straus in 1842."

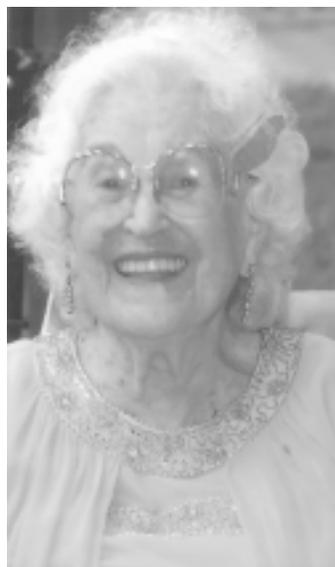
She began writing the stories in response to queries by younger cousins who asked her about a relative or an incident from the past. She enjoyed writing them and family members enjoying receiving them. They begged for more.

After reading a few of Edith's vignettes, I also begged for more. When there was space in a newsletter, I included one or more per issue, always wishing there was more space. It became apparent to me that publishing a volume

of these lovely vignettes was the only way to get them the audience they deserved. Edith was only too happy to comply with my request for more stories. What has resulted, I think, is a true treasure; a book that will be enjoyed time and time again by anyone with relatives - it is that universal and loving in its approach. Anyone can relate to the delightful anecdotes and misadventures of the people as told in these pages.

SHS is taking pre-orders for *My Family: I Could Write a Book* which should be available in early April. If you would like to reserve your copy, please send a check for

\$25 made payable to Straus Historical Society, Inc., and send it to the address in the side bar on page two. Shipping and handling are included.



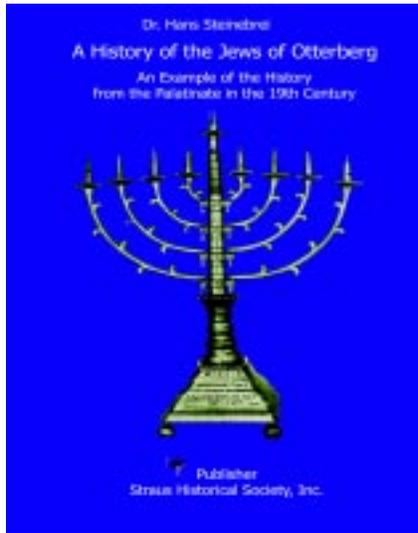
**A limited number of books will be printed. It will be helpful to know the demand before SHS orders them from the printer.**

# A History of the Jews of Otterberg

## An Example of the History from the Palatinate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

by Dr. Hans Steinebrei

The Straus Historical Society, Inc. is pleased to announce the publication of the English language version of Dr. Hans Steinebrei's book, *A History of the Jews of Otterberg: An Example of the History from the Palatinate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. Dr. Steinebrei is an historian and researcher. His meticulous work has resulted in a comprehensive and interesting volume that includes many photographs, maps and letters written by Straus family members.



by SHS which he's expertly woven, along with the information he's researched, into an historical context that allows one to glimpse at the Straus' world in a unique manner. His book brings the fruits of his many years of labor into a comprehensive and enjoyable document.

My work with the Straus family began in 1990. One of the first people I corresponded with was Dr. Steinebrei of Kaiserslautern, Germany. He is interested in the Jewish history of Otterberg and, therefore, in Straus family history. For the past 19 years Dr. Steinebrei and I have been corresponding; exchanging information and requests for research. Our long relationship has borne fruit on both sides of the Atlantic. This book, *A History of the Jews of Otterberg*, contains information given to Dr. Steinebrei

Otterberg and why they eventually left, and to the social and religious fabric of their lives in their town.

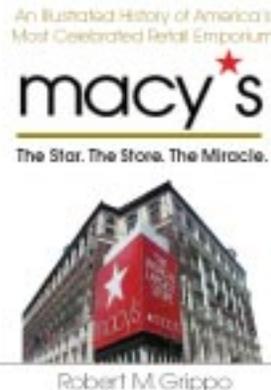
*A History of the Jews of Otterberg* is available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc., Post Office Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416 for \$35.00. This includes shipping and handling.



## Macy's: The Star, The Store, The Story

*Macy's: The Store. The Star. The Story.* traces a hundred and fifty years of one of the country's premier retailers. The story begins with Rowland Macy's colorful roots in Massachusetts. It then details the founding of the store. Later chapters describe how Macy's made history by being the first retailer to promote a woman to an executive position, how Isidor and Nathan Straus and their sons created the beautiful flagship store on Herald Square, how the once-cluttered lower level became the famous cellar, and much more. Throughout, lively text, rare photographs, and colorful illustrations highlight the people and events--the trends, tragedies, and traditions--that transformed Macy's from a modest storefront into the World's Largest Store.

About the Author: Robert M. Grippo grew up on Long Island, New York. His earliest childhood memories include watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and enjoying the classic film *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*. This led to a lifelong avocation as a Macy's historian, and even to a brief stint as a Macy's balloonist. Now retired, Robert is a full-time writer whose works include *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*.



The Straus Historical Society worked extensively with the author and the editor in the creation of this book. Many photographs from SHS's archives were used. Family members and friends of the Straus family will find the information compelling. After all, the story of Macy's includes the history of the Straus family, owners of the World's Largest Store for almost one hundred years.

More than just the account of a successful business, Macy's is the story of how one man's dream found a home in the heart of Manhattan. Whether you're a long-time Macy's customer or just someone who enjoys watching the legendary Thanksgiving Day Parade, this book will draw you into the continuing miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

*Macy's: The Store. The Star. The Story.*, published by Square One Publishers, is now available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc. in either hardcover or quality paperback. The hardcover is \$40 and the paperback is \$30. Both include shipping and handling. A portion of each sale supports SHS.

## Friends of Straus Park

By Joan Adler

Photos by Margaret G. Kavanau

Friends of Straus Park held their 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Art in the Park on October 18, 2008. We were blessed with perfect weather and a good turnout. Friends and neighbors alike enjoyed the lively music, the merchandise sold by our many vendors, the artwork on display and the delicious foods available for sale.

We have a full schedule of events planned for 2009 and we hope to see you there.

**Thursday, May 14**  
**Evening Concert in the Park**  
**5:30 pm to 7:30 pm**

**Wednesday, June 17**  
**Evening Concert in the Park**  
**5:30 pm to 7:30 pm**

**Saturday, September 12**  
**Book and Photography Fair**  
**10: am to 4:00 pm**

**Saturday, October 3**  
**(rain date: October 4)**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Annual Art in the Park**  
**A day-long celebration of**  
**art, music & food**  
**10: am to 4:00 pm**

If you would like more information about any of these events, wish to become a member of FSP, or would like to volunteer for any project, please contact FSP president Kate Ford. Her phone number is: 212-666-1439. You can reach her by e.mail at [OTCSings@aol.com](mailto:OTCSings@aol.com)



## Did You Know?

In 1952 Jack Straus, then chairman of Macy's, introduced a family board game at his store. He'd played this game while on vacation on Long Island and thought it had potential.

The game was invented in 1931 by Alfred Mosher Butts, an architect from New York. It's first version was called Lexiko. In 1938 the name of the game was changed to Criss-Cross-Words and refinements made between 1931 and 1938 were codified. Butts made all of the sets he sold in his own home. Slowly the game became more popular but he was not adept at marketing it and he became tired of its unprofitability.

James Brunot, who was the executive director of the War Relief Control Board under President Roosevelt approached Butts with a business plan. He would arrange to manufacture the game, market it and pay Butts a royalty. Brunot changed the game board and the rules slightly and changed the name to Scrabble. But it wasn't until Jack Straus introduced it at Macy's that sales took off. They couldn't keep up with the demand.

I was visiting the home of Irving Lehman Straus and his lovely wife Anna. She is a German born woman who was raised in Israel. She told me that she was in New York as a teenager and saw Scrabble at Macy's. She thought it was a great game and brought the idea back to Israel. She invented an Israeli version of it with Hebrew characters which she marketed there. It was enormously successful.

Anna had no idea that Jack Straus introduced Scrabble to the masses, was responsible for its popularity, nor that she would one day marry a Straus. Whether one calls this serendipity, or recognizes the interconnectedness of people, I thought the story fascinating.

Anna told another delightful story about when she and Irving were dating. They took a trip to Italy together. She said she wanted to see if they were compatible.

Anna and Irving were on a ferry boat going to the Isle of Capri when, out of nowhere, a water spout formed. Everyone aboard the ferry was terrified. She told Irving that, if they were ever on a boat together and it was sinking, she would not be going down with the ship with him as Ida Straus did with her husband Isidor when Titanic sank.

Irving must not have cared because they have been married for a very long time and still appear to be newlyweds.

## Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

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

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

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

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

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

Masters Thesis of Saul Viener, "The Political Career of Isidor Straus." West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, 1947 - \$25.00

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

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

Send your tax deductible check to Joan Adler, payable to: **Straus Historical Society, Inc.**, P. O. Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. You can contact Joan by phone: 631-265-0383, fax: 631-724-4487 or e.mail: [info@straushistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@straushistoricalsociety.org)

**Coming Soon: *My Family: I Could Write a Book***  
by Edith Maas Mendel

## You Are Invited

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

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, May 19, 2009 at the office of board member Paul A. Kurzman, 129 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York at 6 PM. There is no obligation to join the board or to contribute to the Society. This invitation is extended so that anyone interested in the SHS may have an opportunity to participate and to share his/her views. Please contact Joan Adler 631-265-0383 or Paul A. Kurzman 212-452-7035 for further information.