



# STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 3 Number 1

Newsletter

August 2001

## Talbotton and Columbus GA June 22-24, 2001

On Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, a group of Straus family members and friends met at the Columbus Hilton Hotel in Georgia to begin a weekend learning about the Straus family, the places where they first settled in America and about the people who live there today. The trip was jointly sponsored by the Straus Historical Society and Historic Talbotton Foundation.



LAZARUS STRAUS

It was an extraordinary weekend. We all expected to learn about the early American history of the Straus family, make new friends and to have a good time. No one could have anticipated how truly special the weekend would be.

Out of town participants were: Jack and Betty Schafer, Anna and Irving Straus, Tom and Carol Straus, Alan F. and

Birgitta Hockstader, Paul A. Kurzman, Leon and Marjorie Auerbach, Craig E. Carlson and Frank and Joan Adler. Unfortunately, Donald Straus was unable to get to Georgia because of the bad weather enroute. Ginnie Bersohn and Nelson Montero also had to cancel. They were all missed.

Thunderstorms in Atlanta kept many trip participants in that airport for five hours before they could make their connection to Columbus. Jack and Betty and Anna and Irving were happy they had the foresight to arrive a day early.

Mike H. Buckner, Margaret Persons, Cindy Straus and Richard K. Straus, Sr. worked very hard to make certain the weekend was well planned. Cindy and Richard secured a hospitality suite in the hotel where cheese straws, nuts, snacks and soft beverages were available. Cindy sent a lovely flower arrangement. The Straus family tree was displayed in the suite along with an



SARA STRAUS

assortment of historical materials. This room proved to be a comfortable place for the group to meet during their very few moments of "down" time.

A welcoming cocktail party was scheduled for Friday evening. Many of the trip's participants had either not previously met or had not seen each other in many years. This was their opportunity to get to know one another. It was also a time to learn more about the plans for the rest of the weekend. There were delicious hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks. Cocktails were served at the adjoining bar. The conversation was animated and it didn't take long for everyone to get into the spirit of the weekend. Michael H. Buckner, co-chair of Historic Talbotton Foundation was on hand with his wife Debbie as was Cindy Straus, Richard K. Straus and his wife Julie.

Mike had arranged for the local TV news station, WTVM, to send a reporter and photographer. Andrea Gage interviewed Paul Kurzman and Irving Straus while Paul Therrien took videos. The Straus Historical Society has purchased a copy of the tape from WTVM. The previous day, Albany GA TV station WALB interviewed Mike about our visit and, although we were unable to see this newscast in Columbus, the Straus Historical Society will obtain a copy of the tape.



The original Straus home in Talbotton GA.

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

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**A Message from the Secretary of  
the Board: Gail K. Nutku**

How exceptionally fortunate we are to be members of an organization dedicated to researching the history of our family - OUR family - a family that, in a very few generations, has made such a meaningful contribution to this country in government - federal, state and city -

diplomacy, education, publishing, the arts, and almost any other field one can name. Few families are so blessed.

Let's all gather together to contribute as much as we can to this important endeavor, the fruits of which add so much to the historical record, and to our knowledge of ourselves as a part of it.



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

My work continues to lead me in new and interesting directions. Each day brings both challenges and rewards.

We recently visited Talbotton and Columbus Georgia, stopped at the home once owned by Lazarus and Sara Straus and have seen the dining room table upon which the family's meals were served. We've learned more about the family's history and more about ourselves in the process.

I continue to work with authors, researchers and students on projects ranging from Straus homes in the Adirondacks, genealogy and health issues.

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

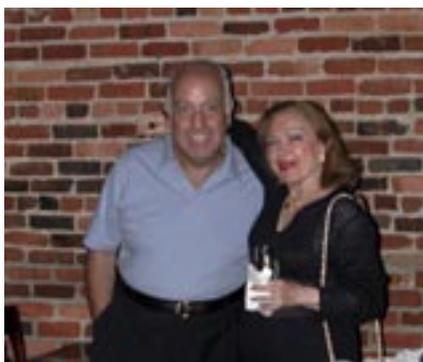
**Georgia Trip June 22-24, 2001** (continued)



Above: Cindy Straus  
Right: Carol Straus



Leon Auerbach, Craig E. Carlson, Mike H. Buckner and Tom Straus



Paul A. Kurzman  
and  
Anna Straus

The cocktail party ended after nine. Some of the group went to a local restaurant for dinner. Others were tired

and decided to call it a night. The next day would be a full one and we were planning an early start.

Saturday morning, after a buffet breakfast at the hotel, the group boarded our bus for a brief tour of Columbus. George Brummist, our driver during the 1997 GA trip, requested this assignment again and we were pleased to see him. We were delighted that Marjorie Auerbach's newfound cousin, Patty Cardin, was able to spend the day with us.

We drove to Second Avenue, a street where older homes around Columbus have been moved and then restored. The home of Gus B. Kaufman's grandparents, Matilda Straus and Julius



Kaufman, is one of the beautiful homes we saw as we drove down this lovely avenue. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time to stop.

We then drove to the beautifully restored Springer Opera House. Clason Kyle met us at the door. He is a retired newspaper editor and a board member of the Springer Opera. He was kind enough to give us a personally guided tour, telling us about their 11 million dollar restoration and about the dinner held at the opera house to honor Oscar S. Straus in 1808. Oscar made a speech on the stage of the opera house after dinner. I will try to learn if a copy of it survives.



Members of Clason's family own the house that once belonged to Frank and Amanda Rothschild. Amanda was the sister of Ida Blun Straus and her house is similar to Lazarus Straus' Columbus house, which is no longer standing. Once again, Clason was an able and fascinating tour guide. After walking around the grounds and listening to his stories, we reluctantly boarded the bus. Our next stop was at the site of the Straus' Columbus house, now the parking lot of a motel. Fortunately, the house on either side of the Straus' is standing and gave us a good idea of what houses on that block looked like.

The 38-mile drive to the Buckner's home, Patsiliga Plantation, took about 45 minutes. We were reminded that it took the Strauses two days to complete this trip in 1863 when the family moved to Columbus from Talbotton with two six mule teams, Nathan's horse Patrick, all their possessions and the goods from Lazarus' store.

Mike is the seventh generation to live on his land. His family settled there in 1830. He is an able guide who seems to have boundless knowledge about the area and about its history. He suggested that, before arriving, trip participants read *The Autobiography of Isidor Strauss* and the sections of Oscar's autobiography, *Under Four Administrations*, dealing with his days in Georgia. Once we began the day, we understood why.



A peddler's cart in front of Mike and Debbie Buckner's home

As we arrived at the Buckner's home, we saw a horse and pushcart painted to resemble the one Lazarus Straus may have used. Mike had filled it with an assortment of goods Lazarus might have sold on his route. Seeing this horse and cart in front of Mike's restored historical house really catapulted us back in time.

More than 100 members of the community came to brunch. We were especially pleased that Gus and Marian Kaufman and their daughters Marianna Kaufman and Lise Dayan could spend the day with us. Gus and Marian hosted my first trip to Georgia in 1993 and was instrumental in bringing the Straus family to Georgia for our October 1997 visit. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend at that time. We were particularly delighted to have him with us on Saturday.

After welcoming speeches by Mike and Paul, we were treated to a delicious meal that included the same kinds of foods the Strauses would have eaten during their days in Talbotton. Throughout the rest of the weekend, Historic Talbotton Foundation made extra efforts to recreate the experiences the Strauses would have had while living there. We visited the gristmill Mike still uses to grind wheat and corn. In fact, all the baked goods served at brunch had been made from flour ground in Mike's mill. We also saw the last cotton baled in Talbot County and heard country folk music played on period instruments. Everywhere we turned there were reminders that the Strauses had lived here and were welcome.

Mike's house was completely open and we were encouraged to see it all. Mike and Debbie have brought antiques from the area to their home, lovingly restored them and use them in their everyday lives. Everywhere we looked, there was something interesting. And everything gave evidence of the love the Buckners feel for their history.

After brunch, Judge George Greene gave a talk about the Haiman family's sword-making business. When Isidor was in Europe during the Civil War, he write home about meeting Elias Haiman and about the business they proposed to conduct together. He frequently complained that letters from Elias' father Louis were arriving regularly while he was getting no mail from home. Judge Greene brought swords and other examples of the items made at the Haiman family's firm

We could have stayed at the Buckner's home all day, but it was time to board the bus for a tour of the area. Mike took us on the proposed route Lazarus might have taken with his pushcart. He had fascinating stories to tell about the families living along the route and about their plantations. Many of these people



Matthews Family Home

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Their owners gave us a real understanding of what Southern hospitality truly means. We were given house tours and offered refreshments.

A very special stop was planned at the last house owned by Lazarus and Sara before they left Talbotton. This house was recently bought by Mr. and Mrs. Daniel L. Skidmore and they've begun to restore it. After researching and writing about the history of the Straus family for more than ten years, visiting this house was especially exciting.



The most moving experience for me was to see the descendants of the Lazarus and Sara ascend the steps of the front porch and look into the house once owned by their grandparents or great grandparents. I will carry this image with me for a long time. Mr. and Mrs. Skidmore were gracious hosts. They gave us samples of what may be the original wallpaper from the house. I will try to have these pieces analyzed to see if their age can be determined.



It was difficult to leave, but we were promised more amazing stops and so we boarded the bus once again for the short drive to the home of Greg Palmer and his family. Besides visiting this lovingly restored house, which was a treat in itself, we saw the dining room table that the Strauses owned while in Talbotton. After a day filled with so much history, and all of it very personal, we could almost imagine the Strauses sitting down

to a meal at this table. The lemonade, cookies and fruit Greg's wife served in this room were most welcome.

Our next stop was Straus-LeVert Memorial Hall where it seemed as though the whole community had gathered to meet us, to exchange stories and to share the evening. Many of the people we had met at brunch, or in our travels around the area during the day, were in attendance. It seemed as though we were meeting old friends. We walked to Zion Episcopal Church to see their restoration and then returned to Straus-LeVert Memorial



Jack Schafer

Hall for a dinner of Brunswick stew and barbecue with hot sauce and cole slaw.

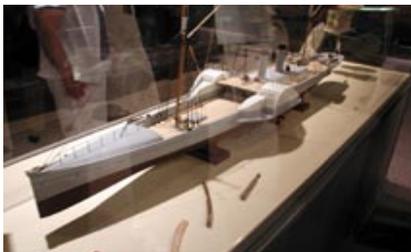
Craig E. Carlson, researcher and expert about L. Straus & Sons cut

glass, was invited to speak after dinner. Craig's meticulous attention to detail, fascinating talk and wonderful slides, kept the audience of more than 200 people enthralled. Historic Talbotton Foundation cochair Margaret Person brought part of her cut glass collection. Craig was delighted to find a water tumbler cut by the Straus firm in the Warren pattern among these pieces. Many people approached Craig after his talk with questions and requests for further information.



It was an overwhelmed and tired group that boarded the bus for the ride back to Columbus. There was much more than barbecue to digest. It has been an emotional day but the weekend wasn't over yet. We would be treated to much more on Sunday.

After a buffet breakfast in the hotel Sunday morning, Richard Straus and Cindy Straus drove us to the newly dedicated Port Columbus Civil War Naval Museum for a private tour. The director, Bruce Smith, led us through some of their fascinating exhibits. In the first room, we saw a restoration of the SS Jackson, an iron clad built in Columbus and burned and sunk by General Sherman in April 1865. Mr. Smith was a wonderful guide who raced us through the museum so that we would have time for all of the activities planned for the day.



The blockade runner, "Mary

Bowers," the blockade-running ship Lloyd G. Bower's company had built in Scotland during the Civil War. Isidor Straus was the secretary to Lloyd G. Bowers during this period and mentioned him frequently in his letters.

We were fortunate to have Mrs. Effie Bowers, widow of Lloyd G. Bowers Jr.,



We were particularly interested to see a model of the "Mary Bowers," the blockade-running ship Lloyd G. Bower's company had built in Scotland during the Civil War. Isidor Straus was the secretary to Lloyd G. Bowers during this period and mentioned him frequently in his letters.

and Mrs. Janet Bowers Hollis, granddaughter of Lloyd G. Bowers, with us. Once again, history became alive through their stories. It was far too soon when we were escorted back to the car for the drive to Miss Effie's home, a beautifully restored Italianate house.

Miss Effie has the desk and diary Lloyd G. Bowers used in his office. It is likely that Isidor Straus wrote at this desk and may have made entries in the diary. The book was fragile and so we resisted the urge to read it. A photographer from the local newspaper, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, was on hand to record the occasion. She promised to send us copies of her photographs. Miss Effie and her son showed us around



The desk and diary of Lloyd G. Bowers. Straus family members looking for entries about Bowers' secretary Isidor Straus.

the Bowers house and its gardens. We could understand why this house is so famous. Once again, we were overwhelmed by the generosity shown to us by people who had been strangers just a short time before. We felt we were in the company of good friends.

With time pressure forcing us to move on, we reluctantly got back into the car for the drive to the former home of Lloyd G. Bowers and his family. Janet Bowers Hollis graciously told us its history from the parking lot across the street, even though we were unable to gain entrance.

Then we were driven to The Columbus Museum where yet another treat was waiting for us. Les Reker, Director of Collections, and Jeanne Marie Warzeski, Curator of History, explained that we would be shown a short video about the history of the Chattahoochee River, the river upon which Columbus was built, and that we would be seeing a surprise in the film. As the small theater dimmed, thunder crashed and we saw lightning bolts on the planetarium-like ceiling. It was a dramatic beginning. The film was fascinating and delighted all when Mike Buckner appeared in it at his mill, explaining his family's connection to the land. There wasn't enough time remaining for a tour of the museum but we raced around, looking at the interesting exhibits and confirming in our minds that we would all have to return for a longer visit.

Everyone felt there was too much to learn, too many places to visit, too much to see, and not nearly enough time. We were amazed and overwhelmed. It would take days to absorb it all. We were so grateful to all of our wonderful hosts. We were fascinated by the Georgians sense of history and connection. And, we felt honored to be allowed to share it for the weekend. As we made our way to the airport to catch planes back to our "real lives," we were already talking about our next visit. No descriptive article could do justice to what each of us experienced June 22 -24, 2001 in Talbotton and Columbus Georgia.

## Comments from trip participant

### Alan F. Hockstader

The highlights of the trip were many. However, what really impressed me were the following:

1. The overwhelming and gracious reception from the residents of the area which certainly indicated the respect the descendants of the people who knew the Strauses had for the accomplishments of an immigrant family that landed in their grandparent's and great grandparent's midst one hundred and fifty years ago.

2. The quality of the houses that Lazarus Straus and his family lived in both in Talbotton and Columbus. Both were quite large and well located and the fact that they were affordable after having lived and worked there for only a few years was mind-boggling.



Alan F. Hockstader and Gus B. Kaufman at the Straus Homesite Plaque

3. The thrill I had when I met the descendants of Lazarus' business partners, the Kaufmans, the people who provided Lazarus with a horse and cart so

that he could peddle his wares to the residents of the plantations in the area; or the descendants of Captain Curley, the tailor who rented Lazarus and the Kaufmans a portion of his own shop that enabled them to open a retail store in Talbotton; or the descendants of Lloyd G. Bowers, the man whose company built blockade running ships to carry cotton out of the South and much needed supplies back in and to whom Isidor was a secretary during the height of the Civil War.

4. The getting to meet as well as know better some of my cousins and their spouses in a setting that was almost magical for all of us.

The weekend was truly memorable and one that other members of the Straus family should experience if the opportunity to return to Talbotton and Columbus is ever offered again.

## Comments from trip host and participant

### Michael H. Buckner

The Straus family visit came and went too fast and is now a part of our history. It was a great deal of fun and pleasure to host the event. We always learn from each other. Maybe in the late fall or before Christmas, a group of Historic Talbotton will visit New York.

**A note from Joan:** Thank you to Sonny Edwards for giving Mike a large packet of photographs taken during the weekend. Several appear in this article and many more will be included in the photograph album of our trip.

## Comments from trip participant

### Paul A. Kurzman

Visiting Talbotton was a moving experience. The recognition of our common ancestors, Sara and Lazarus Straus, was both awesome and awe inspiring - plaques, newspaper articles, buildings and memorabilia. As newly arrived immigrants (and the only Jews in this small Georgia town) they won the respect of neighbors and community leaders due to their obvious intelligence, industriousness and probity. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the home (largely untouched) in which Sara, Lazarus, Isidor, Hermina, Nathan and Oscar lived, and gathering around the ACTUAL table at which they enjoyed dinner as a family. For our next trip to Talbotton, I hope EVERY descendant - like this great grandson - will have an opportunity to share in the joy and the honor of revisiting their roots - of "going back home."



Paul A. Kurzman and Craig E. Carlson at Mike H. Buckner's mill



At the site of the first home of Lazarus and Sara Straus and their family: Anna Straus, Alan F. Hockstader, Birgitta Hockstader, Paul A. Kurzman, Tom Straus, Jack Schafer, Irving Straus, Gus B. Kaufman, Mike H. Buckner

**A note from Joan:** I will be preparing an album of color photographs and other memorabilia from the trip. If you were not on the trip but would like to receive a copy of this album, please let me know. It will be necessary to charge for a paper copy due to the high cost of color printing. A CD containing the same material will also be made available at a nominal charge.

## *300 Jahre Auswanderung aus Otterberg* *Three Hundred Years Emigration from Otterberg*

By Dr. Hans Steinebrei, Letters translated by Robin Schafer Dillon

Dr. Hans Steinebrei has, for many years, been conducting research on the Jews of Kaiserslautern and Otterberg. When I (Joan Adler) first became involved with the Straus family project, Robert K. (Bob) Straus told me about the important information Dr. Steinebrei had uncovered about the Strauses in Germany. Over the past ten years, Dr. Steinebrei and I have kept up a running correspondence; trading research and answering each other's questions. His book, published in 1999, contains material from our correspondence.

Otterberg, a town located in the Pfalz region of Germany, is where the Straus family settled at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lazarus Straus was born there in 1809. Dr. Steinebrei's book deals with the story of emigration of the locals to places all over the world from 1579 to the present. It also covers some who returned. The first section contains an alphabetical listing with biographical information about the people who emigrated from Otterberg. A second section presents letters written by some of these people. It is in this section that we find the letters of Lazarus and Isidor Straus. Robin Dillon has been kind enough to translate them.

From Talbotton Geo Sept 28/59: Dear Parents, After another year comes to an end, and we are a year closer to death. Our time on this world is very short and I have this privilege before me. I wish to beg you Dear Parents for forgiveness for all the wrong I have done and thank you for all the good you have done in my childhood. Alone you beloved parents went to the trouble to bring me up, for which I cannot thank you enough. You have always worked to clothe me, nourished and well-bred. Because of this shouldn't I be thankful and act thus so, in order to make you happy when you have only given me happiness throughout my entire life? Oh when I have sometimes done what I have not meant to I beg you now to forgive me and to let me be a truer son. Were I silent would be to ignore something. While others sought pleasure, you stayed at home and looked after your children, those who were incapable of looking out for themselves, that was your pleasure. Another time, before I end thanking you for your good and confessing my faults and begging for forgiveness, Salomon said, "He who does not confess his faults should not prosper, but he who confesses some and gives them up will be rewarded." This is why I want to follow the dictates of sacred man. I want only to close Dear Parents and hope, that God will grant us a wish, that we can live with one another and that I can write this dictate in the future. I am always your true son Isidor.

From 18 year old Isidor to his parents during his stay in Otterberg during the Civil War. August 1863. My loved ones at home, When this letter finally reaches you, know that it was forwarded by order of the General of the US armed forces in Fort Monroe "by flag of truce." Use this same address when you send me

subsequent letters. Write only on one side and only of family affairs. Lay the letter in an unsealed envelope with my address and stick this envelope in another envelope addressed to the Commander in Fort Monroe, with 10 cents of silver or a US stamp, however you can figure out the details at home. Everything at home in Otterberg is the same, as we have left it 9 years ago, the entire family with the exception of Uncle Lazarus Straus, living and well, thank God. Grandfather is as youthful and full of life as ever. Grandmamma is just as good. Augusta so beloved and pretty like one would expect. The other Grandmother was well ... as when we departed. Emanuel and Moritz are still in California and they are doing extremely well, I think they both will come out in 1 year. Lina is married and has 2 children: I want to visit her next week. To make a long story short, the entire family with the above-mentioned exception is as you left them.

Recently I received a letter from Mr. Kaufmans parents, through whom you received the receipt of money that all is well with them and they hope and beg me to visit them, which I will do next week. Grandfather and Grandmother treat me as their own child, Augusta like a brother and to make a long story short the entire family tries to do everything possible to make me happy, so that I feel at home. I cannot describe to you the good nature and ways with which I am being treated. I hope, that you are all well and I remain your truly Isidor Straus.

A letter from Isidor to his grandparents in Otterberg. 12 September 1865. Dear Grandparents! One day before my arrival here I wrote to my dear parents a longer letter in which you can share all the news. This and also the knowledge of my return that Uncle Jacob shared with you will allow me to postpone my letter. I am still rather undecided about what I want to do. I think often about going into business with my beloved Father. Shouldn't we settle on an important business, which is very possible. That way I would have the opportunity to visit you soon and often. With heartfelt kisses to all relatives I remain your beloved Isidor.

Dr. Steinebrei believes that Lazarus and Sara Straus visited Otterberg in the early 1870's. Although, in their letters written in the US, they mention that they would like to visit, we have not found any letters confirming that they did.

Strauses mentioned in the biographical section of this book are: Magdalena, nee Tuteur and her children Mathilde and Fanny, who married Lazarus Straus' partner Julius and Jacob Kaufman, Jacob, Therese and Abraham; Lazarus, son of Isaac Straus and Jeanette Grunebaum and Lazarus' children Isidor, Hermine, Nathan and Oskar Salomon; Moritz, brother of Sara Straus, son of Salomon and Johanna Weil (Moritz emigrated to San Francisco CA and went into business with Lazarus' brother Emanuel); Emanuel, brother of Lazarus, (who also went to San Francisco CA); August, son of Lazarus and Magdalena Straus (This Lazarus was the brother of Isaac and Salomon Straus); Jakob, son of Salomon and his third wife Sara Mayer; Ludwig, son of Joseph and Johanette Herzog (Jakob was the son of Ester, sister to Isaac and Salomon).



## Profiles: Roger Williams Straus, Jr.

Roger Williams Straus, Jr. has not lost his enthusiasm for discovering a new author or publishing a work of literary excellence. His authors include more than 18 Nobel Prize winners. He has been an astute business man as well as a serious literary publisher for more than 55 years.

Roger was born in New York City in 1917 to Roger Williams and Gladys Guggenheim Straus. His father's family was known for public service. The Guggenheims owned American Smelting and Refining Company. Unlike some other Strauses, Roger never felt pressured to join his family's business.

Roger attended the Beauvais School in New York City until its demise. He also attended St. George's School in RI where he and Bob Straus were the only Jews. At the end of his junior year, Roger dropped out and spent the following year cruising. Upon his return, he attended Hamilton College in Clinton, NY for two years and then the University of Missouri School of Journalism where he graduated with a B. J.; a degree in journalism. He served as an intelligence officer with the US Navy between 1941 and 1945, retiring from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant.

Throughout his teenage years, Roger wrote for newspapers in Westchester County where his family had a home. He was a reporter and feature writer for the Daily Reporter, an editorial writer and reporter for the Columbia Missourian; the editor and publisher of Asterisk; associate editor of Current History; associate editor of Forum; and president of Book Ideas. His love of journalism prompted Roger to open the publishing house of Farrar Straus and Company in 1946 with John Farrar, formerly the chairman of the editorial board of Farrar & Rhinehard. Their capital came from Guggenheim money and from the investment of a handful of friends and acquaintances. Although their first title wasn't successful, they weren't discouraged. Roger's contacts in Europe, made while in the Navy, served him well. He signed the Italian author Alberto Moravia, whose book, *Woman of Rome*, became the company's first best seller. In 1955, Robert Giroux joined Farrar Straus and Company, bringing with him T. S. Eliot from his previous publishing house, Harcourt Brace. Other authors soon followed.

Roger Straus is committed to his authors. He does a fair amount of serious literature pro bono. His style is direct, often bordering on the abrasive. He expects honesty and integrity from his staff. He encourages dialogue. His staff meetings are conducted without rules or restrictions. Everyone is heard and everyone's

opinion is valued. Some of Roger's authors trust him to such a degree that they negotiate their contracts directly. They are nurtured, sometimes coddled and they become friends. They are given great latitude with deadlines and commitments. And, in turn, they produce the kind of literature that has made Farrar, Straus & Giroux a respected publishing house.

Roger has been honored for his many accomplishments. He was made an honorary Doctor of Literature by the University of Missouri in 1976 and by Hofstra University in 1989. He has recently been made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres by the French government. He has served, or is currently, on the board of the Partisan Review, American Judaism, Manhattanville College and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. He was on the book committee of People-to-People. He is a Fellow of the New York Institute for the Humanities. Roger was on the Advisory Panel, Literature Program, of the National Endowment for the Arts and is a member and former vice president of P.E.N. He is the author of *War Letters from Britain* and *The New Order* and co-editor of *The Sixth Column*.



Photo: (c) Gaspar Tringale, 1996

Roger Williams Straus, Jr.

Roger and Dorothea Liebmann have been married for more than 60 years. She is a well known author whose sixth book is being published in August 2001. When I met with Roger in his office in late July, he had just returned from Florida where he was "hawking" his wife's new book. She understands that publishing is his life and encourages his nearly fanatical devotion to his work. Their son, Roger Williams Straus III, left Farrar, Straus & Giroux to pursue a career in photography and book packaging. Roger III has three daughters, all of whom are close with their grandparents.

Although a controlling interest in Farrar, Straus & Giroux was sold to the German publisher Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck in 1994, Roger Straus has remained president of the firm he founded. He likes the permanence of books and the idea that in the year 2601, someone may still be enjoying a book he published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Roger has no plans to retire. It is clear that publishing is his passion, a passion that has not diminished over time. In 1996, he wrote, in the preface of *Fifty Years: A Farrar, Straus and Giroux Reader*, "And now, after fifty years, there is still that surge of adrenaline that flows when I get up in the morning, go to the office at Union Square to see what this author or that author had done, or what this editor or that editor has brought in. That's publishing."

## Dinner and Theater: "Titanic"

By Michael H. Buckner

On July 7, 2001, Gus B. and Marian Kaufman invited Debbie and Mike H. Buckner for dinner and to see "Titanic - A Musical" at Theatre Macon. It was a grand production and featured some of Macon's most talented performers.

The musical gave much attention to Mrs. and Mrs. Isidor Straus, played by Natalie Barfield and Jerry Dorriety. We were very pleased and proud they were portrayed in such a dignified manner.



The performer who played Edgar Beane is Carson Flournoy. He has strong ties to Talbotton. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, he came to Talbotton to the dinner honoring the Straus family. He had read about the family trip and was eager to meet the Strauses. Playing in the musical the following week was even more memorable after meeting the family.

Another special person we had not seem in some time was Mrs. Betty Sweet Williams. Her "Ragland" family ancestors were next-door neighbors to the Straus family in Talbotton. The Ragland home was a two story Greek Revival on the adjoining property to the last Straus home in Talbotton and across the street from the present-day Greg Palmer home.

Debbie and I had a wonderful visit with Marian and Gus and can truthfully say a good time was had by all!



Left to Right: Debbie Buckner, Mike H. Buckner, Carson Flournoy (Edgar Beane), Gus B. Kaufman, Natalie Barfield (Ida Straus), Jerry Dorriety (Isidor Straus)

**Did You Know?** An article, written by Joan Adler, about Isidor and Ida and their last voyage aboard "Titanic" appears in the Titanic Historical Society's annual glossy magazine, The Titanic Commutator. A copy of the magazine is available from the Titanic Historical Society at P O Box 51053, 1208 Main Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151-0053. A copy of the article is available from Joan Adler. (Address in sidebar on page 2)

## Friends of Straus Park

Since the last newsletter, there have been several activities sponsored by FSP. We are pleased to report that membership is up as is participation in our events.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, board member and author, Andre Aciman, read selections from his new book, *False Papers* and from a yet to be published new work. A group of more than 55 neighbors and friends, including Andre's publisher, Roger W. Straus Jr., president of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, gathered at the home of Leon and Marjorie Auerbach for the reading. What a stimulating evening!

On Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, FSP held their Fourth Annual Straus Park Commemorative Celebration. It was a great brunch in the Park with the Bota Fogo Quartet playing Bossa Nova music. Suzi Schwartz led the group as before. These festivities get better every year.

The May Spring Concert to benefit Straus Park was postponed until late November. On May 19<sup>th</sup> the annual Planting Flowers



in the Park was held. Local residents have been planting flowers in the Park for many years and their efforts are well rewarded by the colorful displays in the newly planted reflecting pool garden and walkways. FSP cochairs Mary Walsh and Jo Abrams

hosted a pizza party at the Ascension School for the students who helped out at our Anniversary Celebration. Mary Price and Jon Mazza of the Parks Department presented certificates of recognition to participating students.

June 13<sup>th</sup> saw a musical presentation by The Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. These early evening performances was well received. They provide a congenial atmosphere for neighborhood picnics



and children playing in the fountain. What a relaxing end to a busy workday. On August 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a Salsa Concert in the Park starring Sonido Costeno led by Juan Ma Morales.

Plans are underway for the Fifth Annual ART IN THE PARK; a full day celebration of Music, Art, Dance and Food to be held Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 11 AM to 5 PM (rain date October 14<sup>th</sup>). If you have never come out for ART IN THE PARK, you have missed a real treat. It is safe to say that Friends of Straus Park has brought community spirit back to this neighborhood and vitality back to the Park.

## Unsent Telegram From Lee Kohns After "Titanic"

No. 1

**MARCONI WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED**  
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READ THE CONDITIONS PRINTED ON THE BACK OF FORM.

To: *Miss Caroline Endus Carpathia.*

*Can you give us any tidings of Mr & Mrs Isidor Straus please wire fully.*

*Lee Kohns.*

April 17, 1915. From Lee Kohns in New York to Miss Caroline Endus aboard the rescue ship Carpathia. "Miss Caroline Endus, Carpathia. Can you give us any tidings of Mr & Mrs Isidor Straus. Please wire fully. Lee Kohns"

This Marconigram was to be sent to the Carpathia, but was not transmitted due to the location of the ship. It was accompanied by a Service Form of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of Canada Limited which informs that the original message was undeliverable as Carpathia was either out of range or not receiving personal messages and advises a refund of Marconi toll.

Thank you to Daniel Kohns for sending us the URL for this interesting website that contains a listing of untransmitted telegrams about the sinking of Titanic. <http://www.marconicalling.com/museum/messagegroups/messagegrp-i=1009.015.html> If you visit this website, please be advised that the telegram from Lee Kohns is reversed with that of Vincent Astor.

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### Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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